Winged Warfare and the League of Nations

Winged Warfare and the League of Nations: World Federation Necessary to Enforce Regulations for Air Fleets, Neutral and Belligerent, in Time of War---"Freedom of the Seas" Involved

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The more thoughtful of the advocates of the League of Nations discuss as to the necessity of a League of Peace or a League of Nations, such a league as we profess to have desired, or attained, or attained by arguments based on conditions of warfare and on relations of nations as they are now, and not as they were at any past or as they may ever be.

One may, however, grant the proposition that a League of Nations could not have been formed with a world constituted as it was in 1914 and warring with the weapons of 1914; and at the same time, that the world consistently must urge the absolute necessity of a League of Nations, as a condition of the international conditions of the future. Wise regulation of the future, and not merely present conditions, is the proper aim of all law making and of all efforts toward social and political adjustment.

In August, 1914, the international law of the sea had been framed (and military and naval arms had been planned) with a view to meet and disarm with the newly appearing weapon--the submarine. The difference in the history of the last two years has been

is the ease and speed with which air attacks can be launched to have on the rules as to declaration and cessation of war. What actual protection can neutral territory have against aerial passage?

How is the law as to the bombardment of cities to be framed with reference to air attacks? Is a city containing munition works, barracks, camps, &c., or surrounded by forts, to be immune from such attacks? If not, what are to be the restrictions on the scope of such attacks? If such a city is to be immune, what is to be the right of refuges to surrender on demand of the attacking air forces? Are the laws as to sea navigation of neutral by neutrals to apply to neutral airships transporting contraband in the air over the land? What are the rights of enemy airships flying over the sea coast territorial waters of neutrals? These are only a few of the questions to be considered.

The most immediate danger threat of the League is to international law, as the minds of international jurists inevitably tend to become past-entwined rather than projecting. The reality of progressive legal imagination, of legal vision, is often lacking.

To what extent is the value of the maintenance of a great fleet by a naval power likely to be modified by the increased danger of attack upon it from the air? How far should this increased danger modify the right of a naval power to insist on the necessity of framing doctrines of international law? How far will the possession of an adequate air force by a leader power neutralize the advantage heretofore held by a stronger land power possessing large armies?

If possession of adequate sea forces by all nations shall tend to lessen the influence of navies and militarism, and to neutralize the advantages now held by those nations having the largest armies and fleets, how will this condition affect the arguments against disarmament?

All these problems must be met and solved. The League of Nations is now in its infancy. Any treaty of peace, which shall be framed now, on the basis merely of the problems that have been considered here, will have a very precious tenure of life.