To the Air Council: —

By our terms of reference we were invited inter alia to consider the development and regulation of civil aerial transport from an international standpoint. We have been informed by the Foreign Office that their opinion of that Department, if it is desired to set in action negotiations for the development of military aviation, is that it would be desirable to present the reports in their original and complete form. Exclusions of passages in the reports or of appendices are inadmissible.

INTERIM REPORT OF THE C.A.T. COMMITTEE AS TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF CIVIL AERIAL TRANSPORT.

1. By our terms of reference we were invited inter alia to consider the development and regulation of civil aerial transport from an international standpoint. We have been informed by the Foreign Office that their opinion of that Department, if it is desired to set in action negotiations for the development of military aviation, is that it would be desirable to present the reports in their original and complete form. Exclusions of passages in the reports or of appendices are inadmissible.

2. At the outset of our enquiry we found it necessary to divide the subjects covered by our terms of reference under various heads, and to refer particularly to certain salient points which seem to us to call for emphasis in approaching certain Allied and friendly Governments. We therefore propose to submit an Interim Report on this branch of our business.

3. It will be observed that the Special Committee, in considering the first part of their subject, have taken as a basis the Draft International Convention to which our Committee and its Special Committees were based, and that we should therefore be entitled to draw attention to certain salient points which seem to us to call for emphasis or an early treatment with respect to the latter part of the subject matter of the report of Special Committee No. 1, which is concerned with questions of sovereignty and national security.

4. It will be observed that the recommendations in the preceding paragraph relate to the right of the State to sovereignty in the air space over its territories.

5. The argument, however, for the doctrine of State sovereignty in the air space quaere ad coelum is in the main a military one. Military considerations agreed to in 1914, more particularly since such regulations were at that time regarded as of major importance in this connection.

6. In paragraph (3) of Part I of this report the Special Committee referred to Special Committee No. 2 of our Committee, and we further approve the recommendation that Special Committee No. 2, charged with the consideration when it is remembered that, unless an aircraft is itself damaged, the question of its restoration is in a peculiarly advantageous light from the legal consequences of its act. We agree with the Special Committee that, if some system of insurance could be arranged between the Contracting Powers, or at least between His Majesty's Government and States whose aircraft are most likely to fly over the territory of the State to sovereignty, our own aircraft are most likely to fly, such an arrangement would be of advantage to civil aerial transport.

7. In the Report of the Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, dated July 1916, we referred to a recent International Conference held in Paris in 1910. We think that the possibility of damage by foreign aircraft falling within the State, and the consequent regulations which may be necessary, is a matter of acknowledged international law, and that the principles of liability for damage caused by aircraft should be established upon the basis of the Draft Convention prepared by the Conference held in Paris in 1910. We think that the possibility of damage by foreign aircraft falling within the State, and the consequent regulations which may be necessary, is a matter of acknowledged international law, and that the principles of liability for damage caused by aircraft should be established upon the basis of the Draft Convention prepared by the Conference held in Paris in 1910.