

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

COMMITTEE ON JERUSALEM

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Letter dated 31 May 1949, addressed by Mr. Walter Eytan, Head of the Delegation of Israel to the Chairman of the Committee on Jerusalem in response to the Questionnaire dated 3 May 1949 concerning an International Regime for the Jerusalem Area. (Document Com. Jer./6)

Sir,

My delegation has now had an opportunity of considering the questionnaire submitted to it by your committee on 3rd May 1949.

In reply to the first question - about the kind of guarantees and international sanctions we consider necessary to ensure the permanence and stability of an international regime for the Jerusalem area - I wish to say that in our view it would not be possible to devise effective guarantees if by "an international regime for the Jerusalem area" is meant a system of direct international government of the Jerusalem area as a whole. We consider a scheme of this kind impracticable and, partly on account of its impracticability, undesirable.

With regard to the second question - whether we consider that the Jerusalem area should be placed under the exclusive authority of the United Nations - I would refer you to a statement made officially on 5th May 1949 by Mr. Aubrey Eban before the Ad Hoc Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly: "The Government of Israel advocates and supports the establishment by the United Nations of an international regime for Jerusalem concerned exclusively with the control and protection of Holy Places and sites".

Your committee's third and following questions deal with the eventuality that the area of Jerusalem might be divided into two zones, in which the authority of the neighbouring States could be exercised in respect to all matters not reserved to the exclusive competence of the international regime. My delegation is of the opinion that the division of Jerusalem into two zones offers far better

prospects of an acceptable solution than the establishment of an international administration for Jerusalem as a whole, which my Government is not able to countenance. The integration of the Jewish part of Jerusalem into the economic, political and administrative framework of the State of Israel has taken place as a natural process arising from the conditions of war, and has been paralleled by a similar process on the Arab side. This integration, as Mr. Eban pointed out on the occasion I have referred to above, is not incompatible with the establishment of an international regime charged with full juridical status for the effective protection of the Holy Places. My Government favours an international regime which applies to the whole area of Jerusalem, but which is restricted functionally so as to be concerned only with the protection and control of Holy Places and not with any purely secular or political aspects of life and government.

Concerning the protection of Holy Places, may I refer you to the statement of policy made on behalf of my Government by the President, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, on the 23rd April last: "The Government and people of Israel are conscious of the international interest in the safety of the Holy Places and the right of free access to them. We pledge ourselves to ensure full security for religious institutions in the exercise of their functions; to grant the supervision of the Holy Places by those who hold them sacred; and to encourage and accept the fullest international safeguards and controls for their immunity and protection".

My Government is ready to discuss administrative arrangements (e.g. for the organisation and use of common public facilities and services) in the Jerusalem area with the authority which controls the Arab part of the area.

For a full statement of my Government's views on the future of Jerusalem I should like to refer you to the detailed statement of Mr. Eban which I have mentioned above. My delegation has already made copies of this statement available to the Conciliation Commission. Members of the delegation will be glad to furnish any further information that may be desired in the course of a meeting with your committee.

Yours faithfully,

S/ Walter Eytan
Head of Israeli Delegation.