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Item 19 of the Provisional Agenda

QUESTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL REGIME FOR THE
JERUSALEM AREA AND PROTECTION OF THE HOLY PLACES

Letter dated 16 January 1950 from Mrs. Freda Kirchwey,
President of The Nation Associates to the President of
the Trusteeship Council.

Note by the Secretariat

At the request of the President of the Trusteeship Council, the following letter is transmitted to the members of the Council.

"On the eve of the meeting of the Trusteeship Council, I am taking the liberty of bringing to your attention and, through you, to the members of the Trusteeship Council a plan offering a solution for the Jerusalem question entitled, 'A Proposal for an International Curatorship for Holy Places.'

This proposal was submitted by the signatories, a group of distinguished Americans, to the General Assembly recently concluded. This proposal, like many others, failed to receive detailed study for reasons with which you are familiar and which need no recounting at this time.

I invite your attention to the plan at this moment in view of a disposition on your part and seemingly of other members of the Trusteeship Council to look for solutions of the Jerusalem question on a basis different from the resolution of December 9.

This plan calls for the establishment of a United Nations' Commission composed of representatives of the principal faiths for the purpose of:

1. Authenticating the Holy Sites in Palestine.
2. Assuming responsibility for their preservation.
3. Insuring freedom of access at all times.
4. Supervising the restoration of such Holy Sites, if any, as may have been damaged in the Palestine War.

The Commission to be established would be responsible to the Security Council and be authorized to employ guards.

In the judgment of the signatories, this plan is in accord with the general purposes of the United Nations respecting the Jerusalem question. It does, in fact, protect the Holy Places, since any violation of their sanctity would immediately become subject to the action of the Security Council. It is in accord with the basic principles of the Charter. It would, we believe, find acceptance on the part of Jordan and Israel.

It would be possible under the plan proposed to fly the U.N. flag over each Holy Site so designated and to proclaim the area occupied by each a demilitarized zone.

The principle underlying this proposal is precisely the same under which you, as we understand it, have proposed that the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem should be internationalized and demilitarized. In the case of Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity, you have not suggested either the internationalization of the city as a whole or the internationalization of its population. We see no reason why the same principle is not equally applicable to all other Holy Sites.

On behalf of the signatories, may I ask that consideration be given to this plan as fulfilling the basic purposes of the United Nations regarding this question.

(Signed) Freda Kirchwey."