February 28, 1942

My dear Mr. President:

In accordance with the request contained in your memorandum of February 13, I am enclosing herewith a suggested reply for you to send to Mr. Adamis in response to his letter to you of February 3.

I am sorry the suggested reply is in such general terms, but I cannot as yet ascertain that any decision has been reached by any authority within the Government concerning foreign army units, commandos, et cetera.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Enc.

The President,
The White House.
My dear Mr. Adamic:

Your letter of February 3 has been very useful in the studies and discussions which are in progress concerning eventual methods of military operations in enemy-occupied countries.

While the projects which might be worked out would by their nature be unsuitable for discussion in correspondence, I can assure you that the Government departments and agencies interested in work of this kind are giving serious examination to many factors such as those you mention. They are obliged of course to coordinate their discussions, since questions regarding foreign enlistments, finance, selective service classifications, etc., all enter into the matter, as well as considerations of general war strategy.

The information and suggestions contained in your interesting letter, concerning Yugoslavia and Greece in particular, will be most helpful in this work.

Very sincerely yours,

Mr. Louis Adamic,

Milford, New Jersey.
February 14, 1942

Eu - Mr. Atherton:

Please have drafted some reply for the President's signature and have it sent to me.

U:SW:GES
February 3rd, 1942

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

When I was at the White House on January 13, I took the liberty of mentioning to you the problem of General Drazha Mihailovich, head of the Yugoslav fighting forces -- the so-called chetnital -- in the mountain regions of Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro and Dalmatia. Lately I have learned from reliable sources that, in view of the approaching spring, his situation is apt to become soon very pressing. This is confirmed in a dispatch in yesterday's New York Times.

My concern for Mihailovich and his men does not spring mainly from the fact that I am of Yugoslav origin; rather it hinges on my interest in the eventual total victory of the forces of freedom to which we will have to offer full leadership to make them really effective. When I spoke with you, I felt that you were well-informed about the situation in Yugoslavia and keenly interested in doing something about it. Now I hope that something can and will be done to help General Mihailovich, so that he can maintain himself -- or that, if worse comes to worst, he can evacuate some part of his force, which numbers over 100,000 men.

In this connection, as well as in connection with my memorandum to Mrs. Roosevelt of January 25th which she turned over to you, I wish to suggest that the United States create as soon as possible a kind of American foreign legion -- it could be called the American Legion of Freedom, or something like that -- with bases in northeastern Africa or/and the Middle East. This Legion would consist of small and extremely mobile units of Yugoslav, Greek, anti-fascist Italian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Jewish and other foreign soldiers now not functioning as warriors, and would be under the Stars and Stripes, commanded by American field officers.

Such a Legion could be recruited in part here, in part in Africa or the Middle East, and in part from among men who, on hearing of it, would surely escape from Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Albania and other countries with the purpose of joining it.

Such
Such a Legion would develop commandos for raids on the occupied countries, establish contact with anti-Nazi leaders there, serve as a factor in psychological warfare, and prepare for the eventual invasion.

This suggestion is similar to the plan of my friend, Mr. N. J. Cladakis of New York, a native American of Greek descent, which was lately submitted to the War Department by Colonel William Donovan. May I request, Mr. President, that, if at all possible, you personally interest yourself in this? I don't doubt that Colonel Donovan could carry out this project with imagination and expedition. And there are officers in the United States Army who are qualified, or would quickly qualify, for commanders of the suggested American foreign Legion.

Let me emphasize: such a Legion would exist and operate under the American flag -- which would have immense value in maintaining morale in the occupied lands. I don't need to elaborate this.

The commando units would be invaluable in establishing and maintaining contact with forces which are getting ready in most occupied countries to spring at the Nazis when the invasion begins. They could organize the various anti-Nazi and anti-fascist elements along the various coast lines: fishermen, for instance. Specially trained men, with special missions, would be sent in various ways into different countries.

Slovenia is a case in point. It happens to be my "old Country." A part of it is under Italy, a part under Germany. But the whole province is extremely well organized for The Day. Three thousand young men, mostly students and former officers in the Yugoslav Army, form a Slovenian chetnik force, which is apart from Mihailovich's army and conducts military operations against the Italians and the Germans in a systematic manner. They have blown up bridges and tunnels, killed hundreds of Germans and Italians. They are supplied by the populace from the meager resources of the country. And in the populace at large are 40,000 men with hidden arms and munitions, ready to get into action as soon as invasion begins. These 40,000 men have a supreme military commander, who is in touch with Mihailovich but act independently. I mentioned some of these things to you during our conversation on January 13. I did not have a chance to say that eventually it will be urgent to have contact with these commanders and their forces. So far as I know, it can be done only through the commando technique. There are men in Cairo now--Slovenians and other Yugoslavs, Greeks and other nationals -- who are not functioning now according to their special
special talents and abilities, who are uneasy about the British, but who, I am sure, would passionately and intelligently throw themselves into this work if it were under American auspices and direction. "America" is a magic name.

Faithfully,

Louis Adamic