Dear Mr. President:

You will recall the conversation which we had towards the end of January or early in February, when I had the privilege of seeing you in Washington, and during which we discussed the possibility, desirability and feasibility, from various points of view, of a Mexican combat unit or units participating at one of more of the combat fronts. I told you at that time of the increasing interest of the President of Mexico and of the Mexican Government in Mexico's making such participation even if it were only in token form, and I was happy to find you in complete agreement that such participation by the Mexicans would be desirable. In view of the fact that it seemed most feasible from every point of view that such participation should take the form of one or more air squadrons, with which point of view the President of Mexico I knew was in accord, you stated that you would discuss this matter with General Arnold, the head of our air forces.

A few days after our conversation and before I returned to Mexico, at the request of General Arnold, I called on him and he informed me that you had discussed this matter with him and there was agreement that I could say to the President of Mexico on my return that we would welcome the participation of a Mexican air squadron at a combat front, and General Arnold informed me that as soon as I could give him word that the Mexican Government was prepared to proceed, he was ready to follow up the matter actively in the form in which he indicated to me, but with which

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.
which I will not burden this letter. It was agreed that nothing should be said about this matter in public until all the appropriate arrangements of a preliminary character had been made.

On my return to Mexico, I immediately took up this matter with the President who was delighted to have this word from you and he said that he would immediately give the matter his attention and that he would shortly get in touch with me. I realized that there were certain further measures which he would have to take here in order to prepare public opinion in Mexico for this step. Within about two weeks after my return to Mexico and this conversation with President Avila Camacho, air maneuvers were held by the Mexican air force near Mexico City taking the form of an attack on an airfield. The maneuvers went off very well and, in view of the short time which they had to prepare, it was a very significant evidence of the degree of training which the Mexican air force has carried through and the discipline which has been achieved, as well as proof of their capacity to make use of the equipment which we have furnished them. There were hundreds of thousands of spectators and the press gave the maneuvers a great deal of attention.

Almost immediately thereafter the President attended a luncheon given by some of the officers of the air force, during which he indicated that although Mexico's Allies, who were carrying on the war so vigorously, had not asked her military aid, he thought the time was coming when Mexico should participate actively in the conflict. His remarks were received vociferously by the officers, and I am informed that after the luncheon the President and the Ministry of Defense received thousands of telegrams from officers and men indicating their desire to form part of any active combat force which Mexico might supply.

Yesterday the Minister of Foreign Relations, Dr. Padilla, sent for me and said that with reference to my conversations with the President on my return concerning the participation of an air squadron at the combat fronts, the President now wished me to know that Mexico wished to offer this participation and was prepared to go ahead with the appropriate arrangements.
I had told the President that the first step would be for General Arnold himself, or for some officer or officers whom he would designate, to come down here to talk this matter over with him and with the Mexican air force and that then the appropriate arrangements would be worked out along the lines which General Arnold had indicated to me in the conversation I had with him in Washington. The Minister, Dr. Padilla, said that he thought it would be best that there be no publicity until General Arnold, or some one whom he sends down here, has been here to work out certain details with the President and the Mexican military. After such conversations the announcement could be made both here and at home.

I am sending you this letter in duplicate in case you wish to send it to General Arnold. I have kept General Arnold informed through the State Department of my conversations with the President since my return from Washington, so that he has the details. The important thing for the moment is that the President of Mexico has now indicated the desire of Mexico to participate and to send at least an air squadron to the combat front, and has at the same time indicated that no announcement of the plan should be made until General Arnold, or an officer of the air force designated by him, has been here to complete certain arrangements.

While I am sure it will be difficult for General Arnold to leave Washington and his arduous duties, I am hoping that he himself may be able to come for a few days as he could make the trip without the purpose thereof being known, and I am sure it would be a gesture enormously appreciated by the Government and people of Mexico, as was the visit of General Marshall during the last Independence Day celebrations here.

While the participation of Mexico may not grow beyond more than an air squadron, or two or three, the moral effect of such Mexican participation in Mexico, and in our own country, and I think in general, will be excellent, and I am very happy indeed that you have viewed this idea with the favor which you have and have made it possible for this development to take place. One thing I am confident of and that is that the
that the Mexican aviators will give good account of
themselves and we need have no fears on that score.

I am writing fully to the Department of State.
I am writing a secret letter to Secretary Hull covering
the details, with which I do not wish to burden you,
and he will make available a copy of my letter to
General Arnold.

Believe me, with all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH