My dear Alec,

Herewith Ike’s answer to my letter about the Finer story of the row and the ultimatum on the telephone neither of which ever took place. It is I think entirely satisfactory and effectively disposes of the two stories.

These shortcomings on Finer’s part and one or two others do not however alter the fact that the first half of his book is a ruthless and, as I believe, accurate account of Foster’s policies and methods.

If ever you have a moment, which is unlikely before the autumn, it might interest you to look at that part of the book.

Please do not trouble to answer this.

Very good wish and take care of yourself. Yours ever

Regret

Copy of letter from General Eisenhower to Lord Avon dated June 23rd 1964.

Dear Anthony,

Your letter of the seventeenth gave me my first information that a man named Finer had written a book called, "Dulles over Suez." Some months back he sought and was given an appointment with me to talk about different aspects of Foster Dulles' actions at that time, but up until now I had not known that he had actually written a book.

If the clipping you sent me is a fairly accurate description of what the man wrote in his book then he must be either very stupid or is quite ready to stoop to distortion. For example, his description of one of our telephonic conversations is completely false, saying that I used "less official and rougher, army-life, tongue-lashing language." I have never spoken to one of my colleagues in such tones, much less to a friend! In fact, my notes show that all of our conversations were carried on in an informal fashion and an examination of all the letters and telegrams I sent to and received from you show no trace of anything of this kind. The story is manufactured out of whole cloth.

My notes on the November sixth conversation, while not elaborate, at least show no other conversations between us that day.

Moreover, the implication that, at any time, I tried to lay down an ultimatum to my British friends is simply ridiculous. I was emphatic in trying to present the American viewpoint that we must have a cease fire so that the trouble would not get worse, but to call any such thing an ultimatum is just to make a mockery of the dictionary.
I agree with you, there is scarcely any reason for any of
us to make a public statement but if ever I am questioned on
the subject I shall certainly lose no opportunity to assert
that neither of us ever forget that we were friends, even though
at times we did not see eye-to-eye on some political matters.

You might be amused by the final sentence in my notes
reporting our November sixth conversation. It was sometime
during the daylight hours of our election day and you asked me
how the election was going. I responded to the effect, "I am
so busy with the Middle East and the Hungary affair that I have
no time for politics. I don’t give a damn how the election goes.
I guess it will be all right."

Added in manuscript: as ever

Ike

My affectionate greetings to Clarissa
- and all the best to yourself.
MILITARY OPERATIONS

(Official Historians)

Q. Mr. Hughes asked the Prime Minister how many official historians are now employed writing histories of military operations.

The Prime Minister: The number of historians employed in writing the military histories of the Second World War is 11.

Mr. Hughes: Is the Prime Minister aware that students of history at Eton and Oxford are greatly handicapped because no official historians have written the story of the war in Suez? Is he satisfied that this history should be written by a Chicago professor who, if his version is correct, has some very serious aspersions to cast upon the Lord Privy Seal? Are there not unemployed historians in this country who are perfectly capable of writing the history, including one eminent Oxford historian, Mr. A. J. P. Taylor?

The Prime Minister: I have no doubt that we could mobilise plenty of historians to do the job, but I do not think the Question on the Order Paper has anything to do with Suez. It asks how many official historians are employed writing the histories of military operations. I have already answered Questions about Suez. Official historians deal with military matters and I do not think there is any case for an official history of the Suez operation.

Q.: Mr. Hughes: Does the Prime Minister take the view that Suez was not a military operation but a financial operation?

The Prime Minister: That may be the hon. Member's view of it, but I do not think that this matter would be carried any further by having an official historian construe or deny it.
On a point of order. If the Minister is answering the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Eton and Slough (Mr. Brockway) which is on the Order Paper, is he allowed to preface his remarks by reference to a political propaganda speech apparently being made by the Prime Minister in the country? If he is, are we entitled to ask supplementary questions in the initial part of his Answer?

Mr. Speaker: I think that some degree of indulgence is permissible. (Hans. Master: "No.") I think so. The last monosyllable uttered before the right hon. and learned Gentleman started answering was, "Why?" The House might be sufficiently indulgent to allow him to answer that question.

Mr. Brockway: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the Prime Minister is not, himself, supplementing the Answer which he previously gave, because that Answer does not reply to the Question which is on the Order Paper? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that he made a reference to the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia and it made no reference whatever to the Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia? Is it not the case that Northern Rhodesia is not to receive its independence in October, as would be desirable that the precedent set in the case of Uganda, when Mr. Milton Obote the Prime Minister was invited as an observer before the day of independence, should now be repeated in the case of Northern Rhodesia?

Mr. Lloyd: I do not think that the House may have it both ways. The opinion taken, on which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister referred earlier this week, was that the month should be confined to the heads of independent Governments.

Mr. Williams: Is it my right hon. and learned Friend aware that some of us would have been quite happy to have seen a package deal done and to see both Northern and Southern Rhodesia invited, but since it was not possible may I ask whether that will not make it impossible to take different approaches to Northern Rhodesia and the other Colonial countries waiting in the queue to become independent?

Mr. Lloyd: I said that what we done was in accordance with the majority view.

Mr. Bottomley: Is it not for proper for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference to invite to the conference whom it wishes? In these circumstances would the Prime Minister remind himself of the Question, which I put on the 9th, when it was suggested that Mr. Smith and the African leaders be invited and also Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, the Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia?

Mr. Lloyd: It is not for me to say what is within the competence of the conference. It will decide that for itself. It has been said again and again by my right hon. Friend that it has been the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government to arrange the conference in accordance with the views of the other members, and that is what has happened.

Mr. Bottomley: Have not Her Majesty's Government a responsibility in this matter and the House of Commons right to ask whether the Prime Minister himself will make this suggestion on behalf of the United Kingdom to the Prime Ministers' Conference?

Mr. Lloyd: The right hon. Gentleman has the right to ask it but I do not think that he has a right to an answer and I do not think that I can give it.

SUEZ CAMPAIGN

Q2. Mr. Emrys Hughes asked the Prime Minister if he will now appoint an official historian to write the history of the Suez campaign and its consequences.

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd: I have been asked to reply.

I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer my right hon. Friend gave to this subject on 15th May.
b) "Of the Suez affair, with its long history, a great many things have been written and said. I and learned Gentleman have heard and read many books and have been aware of the facts."

Mr. Lloyd: A great many things have been said by a great many people, and a great many books have been written, but I do not propose to add anything.

Mr. H. Wilson: Now that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has had the Whippet's Raccoon to reflect on his refusal to answer previous Questions, if he will not add to what has been written in these books, will be subtract from it and stand up and deny the statement that has been made, in order to make it unnecessary to consider the appointment of an official historian?

Mr. Lloyd: For the reasons given by my right hon. Friend, and which I have given from time to time, I do not intend to add to what has been publicly stated.

Mr. H. Wilson: The assurance given by the noble Lord the Earl of Attlee at the end of 1956 was simply a plain statement that there had been no collusion. Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that at that time no one had suggested in the House, or anywhere else, that there had been any collusion? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman himself aware that the House has been told over and over again that there has been no collusion?

Mr. Lloyd: Is it true that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was present in the House, and that at the time no one had suggested in the House or anywhere else that there had been any collusion?
THE GUARDIAN

Wednesday, May 6, 1964.

Joint plan over Suez admitted

From Richard Scott

Washington, May 5

For the first time, collusion by the British, French, and Israeli Governments over the 1956 Suez campaign against Egypt has been admitted. Such collusion has always been vehemently denied by Lord Avon, British Prime Minister at the time.

Yesterday, in a television interview here, Mr. Herman Finer, author of the recently published book “Dulles over Suez,” produced a letter he had received in March last year from M. Pineau, the French Foreign Minister at the time of the Suez fiasco. M. Pineau wrote:

“De Gaulle (French Prime Minister in 1956) had visited the Paris region, near the aviation field of Villacoublay, and spent October 22 to 24, 1956, there and had met Ben-Gurion (Israeli Prime Minister in 1956) there and had met Ben-Gurion (Israeli Prime Minister), and there and there and there were meeting with Ben-Gurion (French Prime Minister), and then there and there and there were meeting with Ben-Gurion (French Prime Minister) on the twenty-third.

“The only thing that was Ben-Gurion put was the was the one to discuss with Ben-Gurion the terms of the written agreement on joint intervention, the original of which has been kept by the Archives.”

The Israeli attack in the Sinai peninsula began on October 29, 1956. Two days later came the British and French military intervention.