the illegal bombings by the United States (1965–73) in monastic mortality prior to 1975.

This book is a major accomplishment for Cambodian Studies, as it skilfully compiles and narrates in one place the experience of Cambodian Buddhism under the various socialist regimes from 1975–1989. For graduate students and scholars of Cambodia, Southeast Asia, and modern politics, this book will serve as a central resource on the topic and period. For students of Buddhism, the book will fill a critical need in the study of Buddhism's continuity across revolutionary disruption, accomplished with scholarly distinction. Additionally, this book could easily be used in undergraduate courses. I'll be using it in one of mine.

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Britain and Sihanouk's Cambodia

By NICHOLAS TARLING

Singapore: NUS Press, 2014. Pp. 375. Maps, Notes, Bibliography, Index.
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Nicholas Tarling continues his series of close studies of British strategic foreign policy and the international relations of Southeast Asia, during the post-Second World War era of decolonisation, state-building, and Cold War, by this forensic examination of Cambodia's efforts to keep conflict at bay. Working primarily through the very familiar sources housed at the UK National Archives in file series FO371, drawing principally on British perceptions, policies, and actions as the vantage point from which to engage this Southeast Asian story in international history, Tarling presents what an attentive reader will recognise as an insightful, richly documented, and fair assessment of the mercurial Prince Norodom Sihanouk and his long effort, from 1954 into 1970, to preserve the independence and territorial integrity of his small and vulnerable nation. This is not by any means an exercise in external scholarship. British and Western diplomats, especially in the region, paid very close attention indeed to the agendas, calculations, intentions and policies of the regional governments with whom they worked. Their files contain a great deal of insightful analysis of this volatile period in the international history of Southeast Asia, composed first hand and on the spot by very interested but often well informed and thoughtful parties. As he has in previous volumes, Tarling's deep immersion in these files brings this out very well. And until Southeast Asian governments abandon their lamentable policy of refusing to release any significant records of their own for serious research, these 'outsider' records, with all their inherent limitations, remain the indispensable source.

Tarling points out that throughout this turbulent and confusing period the British government and Prince Sihanouk actually shared a broad general diagnosis of the region's long-term future and how best to approach it: sooner or later the Western military and political position in mainland Southeast Asia would become

untenable, China's influence would rise in its stead, and regional powers would be well advised to plan accordingly; for Cambodia this meant pursuing its own policy of neutralism and lobbying for the wider neutralisation of its immediate region. But each faced daunting problems. For Sihanouk, the intractable problem was the clash between his vision of the long-term future of the region and Cambodia's most pressing and permanent problem: the threats posed to its existence by the irredentism of its neighbours, Thailand and Vietnam. This was greatly aggravated by American intervention in the region, as a patron and ally of both these powers. For the British, the idea of neutralising the region ran afoul of this same American intervention. Sihanouk made it more difficult for quietly sympathetic powers such as the British to make much headway because he practised such a mercurial and eccentric approach to foreign policy. By appearing to lean too willingly towards the Communist powers, especially China, and seeming to be too hostile to the United States, Sihanouk complicated everyone's efforts to carve out a space in which Cambodia could weather the storm. But the real problem was the storm: the war in Vietnam. Until and unless there was a larger settlement of that conflict, Cambodia was caught uneasily between the Cold War of the Great Powers and what Sihanouk saw as the even more dangerous menace posed by his neighbours. Sihanouk's central purpose remained constant and rested on a logical analysis, but his approach necessarily involved responding to the ebb and flow of events. Those responses were not always effective, but the British generally understood what Sihanouk was trying to do, and most of them sympathised. Sihanouk's idiosyncratic conduct of foreign policy probably helped shatter his domestic political position, but the real problem remained the war next door.

Few if any scholars would be as well qualified to present a definitive scholarly analysis of these problems in the international history of Southeast Asia, working through the sources and vantage points of the Western powers, as Professor Tarling. Would that he tried. The problem with this latest volume is a familiar one: approach and methodology. Tarling declares in his Acknowledgements the intention to follow the lead set by Elie Kadourie and give his readers the chance to walk into, and through, the thoughts and actions of those whose history they are engaging. He is concerned with 'what men and women thought as well as what they did, with the options they argued over and the dilemmas they faced, and not merely the events that took place.' Quite right. But Tarling's method goes well beyond drawing 'extensively from original documents in published and unpublished forms and often quote [ing] them.' Once again this volume is really more a wholesale reproduction of the long and detailed British discussion of events, debating of options, and formulation of policies that can be mined from comprehensively excavating FO371. This reduces the voice of this most learned and erudite scholar to an editor annotating a published collection of documents, as opposed to an analyst presenting his own interpretation of what is to be learned from them in a scholarly monograph. Tarling declares that he 'does not refrain from judgement but aims more to expose than judge'. But the challenge to the scholar is to analyse, which is more stimulating, useful, and challenging than to judge. When we find the authorial voice in this volume, its conclusions are sharp, crisp and persuasive. But we need to look too hard for it. Only the brief final Retrospect and portions of the last chapter make any real effort to harness the documents to a scholarly interpretation. There really

is too little monograph here, too much weaving together of 'what one clerk said to another', in daunting detail. Serious readers who apply themselves will be rewarded, and this volume in the Tarling corpus can add something useful for all students of the international history of the region. Perhaps we may yet tempt the Professor to elbow his way into the discussion with a volume driven by his own interpretation of the sources, rather than his running commentary on them. I have no doubt it would be a memorable monograph.

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Indonesia

Islam, nationalism and democracy: A political biography of Mohammad Natsir
By AUDREY R. KAHIN
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Veteran Indonesia observer Audrey Kahin has written a concise biography of one of the country's most prominent Muslim activists and politicians in the twentieth century: former Masyumi party leader Mohammad Natsir (1908–1993). Although she notes that Natsir considered his engagement with Islamic history and philosophy as his key lifetime occupation, Kahin admits that she lacks the competence to deal with this aspect of Natsir's life, focusing instead on his political career. For this she relies on meetings and interviews with Natsir, his relatives, and close associates since the late 1960s, as well as her late husband George Kahin's encounters dating back to the 1940s.

Presenting a largely straightforward linear account of Natsir's life, Kahin's narrative revolves around four questions: first, the apparent contrast between his early intellectual broadmindedness and evident confidence in the merits of a political system shaped by Western ideas of democracy and his later conservative and at times even anti-cosmopolitan attitude. This brings up the second question: whether Natsir's significance lies primarily in his role as an early independence leader or as a critic of Suharto and his New Order regime. Third, after gaining increasing international recognition from the 1960s onwards, did Natsir see the shortcomings of Islamic thinking originating in the Middle East and its limited value in the multiethnic and multireligious context of Indonesia? And finally, to what extent did his evangelical and missionary organisation the Dewan Da'wah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) play a role in breeding Muslim radicalism in Indonesia.

Originally from the Minangkabau region of West Sumatra, Natsir's formative years were shaped by the combined exposure to the colonial state education system, the relatively egalitarian politics of Minangkabau internal self-governance and the