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Introduction by Karl Hack, The Open University

S.R. Joey Long. *Safe for Decolonisation: The Eisenhower Administration, Britain, and Singapore.* Kent State University Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-60635-086-7 (cloth, \$60.00).

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A review by David L. Anderson, inadvertently omitted from this roundtable, is available at <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF-Roundtable-XIV-31-Supplemental.pdf>

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Introduction by Karl Hack, The Open University, United Kingdom

If you want to understand what works in foreign policy, and what flounders, you need a particular type of study: one that is truly multi-archival and multicultural in scope. Only that way can you assess how accurate foreign policy evaluations have been, and the 'reception' and impact of actions vis-à-vis the target state and society.

Joey Long's *Safe for Decolonization* attempts this sort of joined-up foreign policy analysis, blending intimate knowledge of local historiography with a forensic reading of American archives. He is - as a foreign policy analyst really should be - as sure-footed quoting Malayan communists such as Fang Zhuangbi and Chin Peng as State Department officials.¹ He has, therefore, done a significant service to scholars both of United States foreign policy and of Singapore history. Beyond those fields, his work will also provide a valuable casestudy in the intersection of the Cold War and decolonization. In American eyes the two came together in a worrying way in Singapore from early 1955.

Why in 1955? Previous to that American governments had first encouraged the European powers to accelerate moves towards colonial self-government, then soft-pedaled after 1949, as they became more worried about the Cold War and rise of a communist China. Even after communist insurgency broke out in Malaya in 1948, the United States viewed Malaya and Singapore as areas fairly firmly under British control, and where little U.S. intervention was required. Then, however, the British decided that they needed to engage more Chinese in electoral politics in Singapore, to avoid them being won over instead by resurgent communist attempts at subversion and labor penetration. There had been periodic elections to the local Legislative Council since 1948, but those for 1955 were to feature a greatly expanded electorate, with for the first time a very heavy preponderance of voters from amongst the Chinese, who provided more than seventy percent of the strategically important colony's population. The moderate, almost nonchalantly accommodationist Progressive Party were swept aside by a Labour Front (LF) led by the brilliant but mercurial David Marshall, which itself was trailed by the more stridently leftwing People's Action Party' (PAP). In power, Marshall was almost immediately assailed by a strike and riots over the Hock Lee Bus company, leaving four dead in May, a trail of destruction, and him having compromised with radical unions and their student supporters.

This is where Long's story really takes off, with the U.S. Consul-General and State Department machinery concluding that Singapore's Chinese population would naturally incline to the PRC, and that the British were losing their grip. As all three reviewers note, the Anglo-American relationship over colonial areas had long been an ambivalent one. The Dwight D. Eisenhower administration now determined that more must be done to shore up Singapore's non-communist nationalists: to make it 'Safe for Decolonization', while not too

¹ Long quite reasonably cites the Chinese language version of the former, but readers might like to know there is also an English translation, as Fong Chong Pik [alias Fang Zhuangbi and Fang Chuang Pi], *Fong Chong Pik: The Memoirs of a Malayan Communist Revolutionary* (Petaling Jaya: SIRD, 2008).

overtly undermining Britain as the decolonizing power. Indeed, had they had their way in 1955, they might have persuaded the British to suspend the constitution, revert to direct rule, and slow down decolonization.

Long describes two main types of action that the U.S. stepped up from 1955: the covert, and the open. The drift of his study is that here – as in Indonesia in 1958² – the more covert sort of intervention caused more harm than good. The U.S. gave moral support to Marshall's LF (which merged from 1958 into the Singapore Progressive Alliance or SPA) successor Lim Yew Hock.³ But when they proffered financial support and the PAP got whiff of this (interpreting other foreign donations as U.S. inspired) it wrecked the SPA's already poor electoral chances, cementing an impressive PAP win in May 1959.⁴ Attempts to penetrate the PAP in 1960-61 likewise merely provided embarrassment when revealed, and a good excuse for Lee Kuan Yew to berate the U.S. and so further increase his credentials as a nationalist and as a fearless political bruiser

The reasons for the failure of the more covert U.S. actions go to the heart of recent shifts in diplomatic and Cold War history. Odd Arne Westad called for more serious attention to the agency and complexity of local players as early as 2005, and subsequently as a co-editor of the *Cambridge History of the Cold War*.⁵ In the introduction to a 2009 special edition on the origins of the Asian Cold War, meanwhile, I specifically argued that local actors, often in far more complicated power plays than western analysts understood then and often since, had self-consciously tried, for their own purposes, to embroil their regions in the wider Cold War in 1947-8. There were almost 'civil wars' within some communist parties – which appeals to wider international communism might help to settle – as well as between various local parties over what 'decolonization' should mean.⁶ In 2009 Christopher Goscha and Christina Ostermann appealed for histories which would take more seriously the intersection of decolonization and Cold War, of regional and global, and which would adopt

² George and Audrey Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy* (New York: The New Press, 1995).

³ Long, p. 54, makes the US's 'moral support' significant for Lim Yew Hock's October 1956 crackdown on 'leftists'. In reality the Lim government may have simply been doing due diligence in trying to ensure that key players (such as the PAP 'moderates') and states (such as the US) were onside to actions it was going ahead with anyway. But what Long does do here and elsewhere, and the reviewers perhaps understate, is use American sources to add a lot of interesting detail on Singaporean's such as Lim, and their dealings with and attitudes towards the US.

⁴ Pp. 162-4, it emerged the contributions came from Taiwan-based donors.

⁵ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), and (edited with Melvyn Leffler) *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3 volumes.

⁶ Karl Hack and Geoff Wade, 'Introduction: The origins of the southeast Asian cold War', in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* special edition on the origins of the Southeast Asian Cold War, 40, 3 (October 2009), 441-8.

genuinely multi-archival, multi-cultural approaches. In short, they called for more genuinely 'connected' histories.⁷

Long confirms, and feeds into, these historiographical trends. He shows how U.S. attempts to intervene covertly in Singapore were to a large extent stymied by a shallow understanding of local Chinese attitudes (including a naïve assumption that the vast majority would strongly incline towards the PRC) and of the internal dynamics of parties such as the LF and PAP. Covert or hidden American intervention was also potentially poisonous in its own right, since the very whiff of U.S. shenanigans was likely to alienate many.

By comparison, according to Long, the soft power options such as pushing USIA (United States Information Agency, also known as USIS or the United States Information Service) materials from 1953, and Voice of America (VoA) broadcasts, had a degree of success. Chapter 4 specifically deals with 'Developing Political-Cultural Capital', including USIA getting short films with 'hard-core US messages' before cinema audiences (67). Other soft power interventions, such as attempts to shore up non-communist unions (Ch. 5, 80-100), had more variable success. Now, any author will be tempted to upsell the impact of his pet area, and Long elsewhere is not above hinting that U.S. actions had more influence on UK policy than others have detected.⁸ But if Long's case for Singapore replicates elsewhere you could argue that this has a resonance for discussion of future U.S. conduct too. Post-Afghanistan and Iraq, possibly post the era of big-counterinsurgency (COIN) combined with a doctrine of 'if we break it we own it', perhaps soft power may enjoy increased attention. On the other hand, perhaps the shift will not be just from intervention to non-intervention and soft power, but also from sustained, high-level COIN towards more use of what was once termed 'gunboat imperialism'.

Anyway, I digress. Here we have Long's case-study of U.S. foreign policy, focusing on the Eisenhower administration's attempts to shore up Singapore from 1955 especially, and make it 'safe for decolonization'. What do our three reviewers make of the book?

⁷ Christopher F. Goscha and Christian Ostermann (eds.), *Connecting histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (Stanford University Press, 2009). For instance the latter cites the way both Indonesian nationalists and Algerian FLN tried to manipulate international context to help their campaigns, in Matthew Connelly, 'Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonization: The Grand Strategy of the Algerian War of Independence', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 33 (2001); and Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁸ See for instance Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation in Southeast Asia*, for explanations of UK and local policies in Malaya and Singapore on which US policy is made to have relatively little significant impact. In each case, the inherent danger is that the actions of those writing the sources most used may be ascribed too much agency, and others too little.

First and foremost, all three reviewers recognize this as a valuable, detailed and careful case-study, which contributes to the historiography of the Eisenhower administration, and of Singapore. But beyond that each review takes a very different approach.

Nicholas Tarling highlights Long's contrast between covert failure and the assertion of success for more overt actions. He also points out that Long's analysis may feed into the revisionist and post-revisionist debate on the Eisenhower administration, showing how Eisenhower favored intensifying both soft power and more covert interventions. Tarling does question, however, some of Long's claims, particularly his claims for the significance of SEATO (the South East Asian Treaty Organization) in this story. Was its foundation in 1954 an American initiative (Long) or British (Tarling)? My own understanding is that it was neither, and both. Both wanted *an* organization, but neither wanted precisely what emerged. The U.S. wanted a defence organization to include the non-communist elements of Indochina in it, the British one that excluded them. The messy compromise was that SEATO excluded those territories, but guaranteed them. Long also sees SEATO as intensifying pressure on Britain to reduce its role in Southeast Asia, and here I tend to agree with Tarling that there is scant evidence for that, if only because Britain committed almost nothing substantive to the organization. Beyond, as I noted in 2001 and as Long now details, the British commitment to contribute nuclear bombers to any SEATO nuclear counterstrike.⁹ The irony of course being that Britain was utterly determined that no such strike should actually be launched, and had worked hard in 1954, around the time of Dien Bien Phu, to ensure that any hint of American use of tactical nuclear weapons be squashed.

Where Tarling brings expertise on British policy towards the region to bear, Anne Foster applies detailed knowledge of American policy in the region. While Tarling highlights the significance of SEATO to Britain, Foster highlights the American defeat of Britain's admittedly feeble calls to have SEATO headquartered in Singapore. She also brings out how internally contradictory U.S. policies could be. Hence, while the U.S. wanted to use soft power, the ban until 1956 on the sale of strategic goods to China damaged Singapore with its entrepôt role for Malaya's rubber, and thus perceptions of the U.S. locally (Chapter 6, 101-16). The U.S. was saying it was a friend, while its strategic actions were saying something else. Finally, Foster highlights Long's account of the muddled and ultimately embarrassing attempt to penetrate the PAP around 1960-61, and how this fits into a broader analysis of the Eisenhower regime. She finishes by wishing the study had gone even further in analyzing how the different components of the Eisenhower Administration's foreign policy had played out in Singapore, and even more on their reception and effectiveness.

Last here but first below and in length is Kenton Clymer's generous, and generously detailed, analysis. It is particularly valuable in surveying the proliferation of works and historiography on American relations with individual Southeast Asian states, and in its closer analysis of how Long's conclusions feed into the debate on the Eisenhower Administration's foreign policy. Where Long focusses on Singapore, Clymer gives this a

⁹ Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation*, pp. 166-219.

regional context. Hence Eisenhower was clearly closely involved in policy, but that meant he was also involved in initiatives that went badly. Yes, the administration bungled penetration of the PAP from 1960-61 (172-8), but this related to the Administration's 5412 committee, which oversaw secret projects more generally. As Clymer points out, Singapore can be added to a long list of the Eisenhower Administration's counterproductive covert activities, in Guatemala, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. So for Clymer, the truly interesting question is whether Long's claimed success of U.S. soft power in Singapore may have been replicated to some extent elsewhere. If eighteen percent of Singaporeans polled in 1963 had listened to VoA, compared to five percent to Radio Peking, what of other areas? This more 'complex' picture of Long's, Clymer suggests, sets a challenge to other historians as they analyze American efforts elsewhere, and as they look again at the detailed historiography on the Eisenhower Administration.

Participants:

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Karl Hack took his doctorate at the University of Oxford, publishing it as *Defence and Decolonisation in Southeast Asia: Britain, Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1968* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001). He subsequently taught at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University from 1995 to 2006, before moving to The Open University to help launch a new course on Empires. Publications include *Dialogues with Chin Peng* (co-edited with C.C. Chin, 2004), *Singapore from Temasek to the 21st Century* (co-edited with Jean-Louis Margolin, 2010), and *War Memory and the Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore* (with Kevin Blackburn, 2012). He is currently working on a book on Empires, and on a monograph on the Malayan Emergency.

Kenton Clymer is Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of History at Northern Illinois University. He is the author of six books, including a two volume history of U.S. relations with Cambodia (Routledge, 2004), which won the Robert H. Ferrell Book Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations in 2005. He is currently completing a history of American relations with Burma from World War II to the present.

Anne L. Foster is Associate Professor of History at Indiana State University. She earned her Ph.D. at Cornell University. Her first book, *Projections of Power: The United States and Europe in Colonial Southeast Asia, 1919-1941* was published by Duke University Press in 2010. She is currently writing a book tentatively titled *The State of Opium*, an exploration of the international and transnational issues surrounding the movement to regulate and eventually prohibit opium in Southeast Asia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Nicholas Tarling, Litt.D. Cantab, was Professor of History at the University of Auckland 1968-96 and is currently a Fellow of its New Zealand Asia Institute. Among his recent publications are *Britain and the Neutralisation of Laos* (NUS Press, 2011) and an edited volume in memory of C.M. Turnbull, *Studying Singapore's Past* (NUS Press, 2012). Forthcoming are *Britain and Portuguese Timor* (Monash UP) and *Status and Security in Southeast Asian State Systems* (Routledge).

Review by Kenton Clymer, Northern Illinois University

The war in Vietnam had only one good consequence: it resulted in much scholarly interest in Southeast Asia and in American relations with the region. The large preponderance of that literature has naturally been on Vietnam. But there are now significant accounts about American relations with Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, and most recently Laos, with excellent books by William Rust and Seth Jacobs having appeared in the last year.¹ Singapore has been an exception. Though given some significant attention by such scholars as Pamela Sodhy and Matthew Jones,² S. R. Joey Long's account is the first to focus at length on the United States and the decolonization of Singapore.

Long examines the relationship in nine chapters, plus a conclusion. One of the first important themes to emerge concerns tensions with the British over decolonization strategies and the best way to fight communism. Although the United States and the British were close allies in the Cold War, they were, as Christopher Thorne wrote many years ago, "Allies of a Kind."³ Disagreements between them in fact predated the Cold War. During World War II, for example, the British were convinced that American efforts to encourage the British to grant India independence were merely a cover so that the United States could gain economic and political advantages. As Leo Amery once remarked, the United States "must keep off the grass."⁴ The British were equally suspicious of American intentions in Burma, fearful that the United States only intended to supplant them there as well. Given

¹ On Indonesia, see Robert McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-49* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981); Audrey R. Kahin and George McT Kahin, *Subversion As Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia* (New York: New Press, 1995); and Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian relations, 1960-1968* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008). On the Philippines, see *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994). On Thailand, see Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997). On Cambodia, see Kenton J. Clymer, *The United States and Cambodia, 1870-1969: From Curiosity to Confrontation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), and Kenton J. Clymer, *The United States and Cambodia, 1969-2000: A Troubled Relationship* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004). On Malaysia see Pamela Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian Nexus: Themes in Superpower-Small State Relations* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia, 1991), and Matthew Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961-1965: Britain, the United States and the Creation of Malaysia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002). On Laos, see Seth Jacobs, *The Universe Unraveling: American Foreign Policy in Cold War Laos* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), and William J. Rust, *Before the Quagmire: American Intervention in Laos, 1954-1961* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2012).

² Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian Nexus*; Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation*.

³ Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945* (London: Hamilton, 1978).

⁴ Kenton J. Clymer, *Quest for Freedom: the United States and India's Independence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 149.

that the United States and the United Kingdom had some significantly different interests (while also sharing much in common), this was not altogether unexpected. As Bradford Perkins once put it in a review of Thorne's book, the two countries were really "allies of the usual kind."⁵ It was therefore not surprising that differences should emerge among the allies a bit later in Southeast Asia. The British were determined to retain predominant influence in Singapore, even as they were prepared to grant ultimate independence to Singapore in some form. The Americans were concerned about colonialism and even more about stopping communism.

Long shows convincingly how the Americans, while acknowledging British preeminence in Singapore, were not prepared to follow their advice in all situations (indeed, as elsewhere in Asia, the United States deliberately distanced itself from colonial states) and often proceeded to act on their own. Long does, however, give considerable credit to President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles for not pushing the British too hard on colonial issues. Although the Americans "tested British patience," they did not "critically disrupt Anglo-American relations over Singapore." The State Department repeatedly urged "American diplomats to be controlled when they raised colonial issues with the British" (44). But this restraint was not as evident when it came to covert actions.

Another related theme that emerges in the book is the deep American distrust of Lee Kuan Yew, leader of the leftist People's Action Party (PAP). Affected by McCarthyism, American diplomats in Singapore saw Lee as a communist, or at best a communist sympathizer. The British, though not liking Lee much better, were convinced that he was essentially a strident nationalist, not one beholden to the communists. But the Americans engaged in a variety of efforts to weaken Lee and the PAP, sometimes without informing the British, and in any event without much to show for it.

An important aspect of the book is Long's testing of the revisionist view of Dwight D. Eisenhower's foreign policy.⁶ He agrees with the view – now long accepted – that the President was far from the pleasant, but bumbling and disengaged, executive who preferred playing golf to making policy and leaving foreign policy to Dulles. In fact, as Long makes clear, even in the case of Singapore, the President was very actively involved. He determined what policies should be pursued.

The other side of the revisionist story, however, is that, although the President was in charge, the policies that he adopted were often not wise. On this point Long offers a mixed judgment. In the case of covert actions (and his discussion of covert actions is one of the strongest parts of the book), he generally agrees with the critics. The CIA's covert efforts to

⁵ Bradford Perkins, "Allies of the Usual Kind," *Reviews in American History*, 6 (December 1978): 543.

⁶ Examples of early revisionist views of the Eisenhower Presidency are Richard H. Immerman, "Eisenhower and Dulles: Who Made the Decisions?" *Political Psychology* 1 (Autumn 1979): 21–38; Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); and Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

infiltrate the Lee Kuan Yew government were discovered, the operatives arrested. “We got them by the throat,” Lee Kuan Yew recalled (176). The CIA then tried to bribe Lee Kuan Yew to have the men released, which only angered Lee. Ultimately the British intervened, the CIA apologized, and Lee released the imprisoned men. The American action was, writes Long, “unwise, . . . imprudent and unnecessary” (177). And Lee and other Singaporeans long remembered, and resented, the covert intervention, even after they became staunch allies in the Cold War.

Furthermore, the President himself was ultimately responsible for this situation. By constituting the 5412 Committee, which oversaw secret projects, he allowed the CIA to engage “in activities that often undercut the authority of American diplomats” (177). This was very similar to what happened in Burma, where the CIA secretly supported the activities of the remnant Chinese Guomindang forces without informing the American ambassadors, David McKendree Key and William Sebald, who served in Burma from 1950 to 1954. When the ambassadors found out about it, they protested vigorously that this was a very misguided policy; Key actually resigned when he found out about it, rather than continuing to assure the Burmese government that there was no American involvement. In this regard, then, Long agrees with previous accounts of American covert activities during the Eisenhower administration: in Iran, Guatemala, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Indonesia – all of which were terribly counterproductive, indictments of the Eisenhower foreign policy.⁷

However, Long does not stop there. Though he fully agrees that the covert activities were misguided at best, his analysis takes into account other aspects of American policy toward Singapore which, he argues, were successful. Not only does he generally credit the way the Americans approached the British on issues of colonialism, but he also thinks that American public diplomacy was highly successful. When he became President, Eisenhower strengthened the country’s ability to conduct psychological warfare, which included establishing the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1953 (it was known overseas as the United States Information Service [USIS], lest the initials be confused with those of the CIA). Long concludes that American radio, such as the Voice of America, was clearly “winning the battle of the airwaves with Beijing among Singapore’s population” (65). He also believes that Americans produced positive images of the United States by bringing in popular American artists, musicians, and athletes, including the African American Olympian Jesse Owens. American films were also popular, though here Long is more inclined to credit Hollywood productions than the more propagandistic films that were available through the USIS. Finally, he credits American efforts to influence the local

⁷ For example, Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982; John Prados, *Presidents’ Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II Through the Persian Gulf War* (rev. ed.; New York: Ivan Dee, 1996); Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer. *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (expanded ed.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1999); David W. Lesch, ed. *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment* (2d ed. Boulder: Westview Press, 1999); James F. Goode, *The United States and Iran: In the Shadow of Musaddiq* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1997); David H. Anderson, *Trapped by Success: The Eisenhower Administration and Vietnam, 1953-1961* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Clymer, *The United States and Cambodia, 1870-1969*.

newspapers and magazines, noting that when the PAP came to power in 1959 it restricted the circulation of American materials, albeit only temporarily. This, Long concludes, was “the greatest compliment . . . to the effectiveness of U. S. materials” (76).

In sum, Long sees a more complex outcome of American policy initiatives in Singapore than in some other places. There were failures, to be sure, but there were “some long-term successes as well” (182), of which the most important one overall was that Singaporeans, by and large, found the American-Western side in the Cold War to be more appealing than the Soviet-Chinese side.

It is good to have a more complex picture. Perhaps it was only in Singapore that the Americans enjoyed relatively more success. But it may also be that studies of other countries during this time have not given sufficient attention to public diplomacy, to work with labor unions, and other ‘softer’ sides of the bilateral engagement when judging the success or failure of American policy. Long has set out a challenge to other historians as they continue to analyze American efforts in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

Review by Anne L. Foster, Indiana State University

Joey Long's book has one of the best titles among the cascade of new, interesting work on decolonization, and one of the most important of topics.¹ The title is apt, because scholars seem to agree that, all things being equal, most U.S. policymakers during the great wave of decolonization following World War II did favor a world with no colonies, but only if those countries could be *made safe* for self-governance. That caveat contains a world of (potential) objection, as Vietnamese, Malaysians, and Angolans (among many others) found out. Long's topic is also of crucial importance, not least because it has been so neglected by scholars of U.S. foreign relations, but also because of Singapore's strategic and economic importance during and after the Cold War. Today we think of Singapore as the successful city-state with a per capita GDP well above U.S. levels, or as the place which values communal over individual rights to such an extent that there is a law against selling chewing gum. Long reminds us that Singapore in the 1950s was a very different place, and that American officials were concerned about the perceived radicalism of Singaporean politics.

The book begins with a brief reminder of Singapore's strategic and economic importance to Britain during the 1930s and 1940s, a time when the United States paid little attention to the islands. As Long tells us, the United States steadfastly refused during the 1930s to promise to help defend the islands, and when the Japanese attacked in early 1942, the United States did not divert resources from its fight in the Philippines to help the British in Malaya and Singapore. Long notes that this inaction by the United States was frustrating to the British, but their inability to protect the island without U.S. assistance also was a sign they did not have sufficient resources for the defense of their empire. He suggests that Singapore was not important to the United States before 1945. Certainly Singapore's political and strategic importance for the United States increased as U.S. military commitments in Southeast Asia did, but even in the 1920s and 1930s, Singapore was one of only two colonies in Southeast Asia to have a Consulate General (rather than mere Consulate). Singapore was a key port for the transshipment of Southeast Asian raw materials, of which the United States purchased a substantial amount. But this relationship was not contentious, and before the 1950s, Singapore was not a controversial place for U.S. policymakers.

Long then discusses the U.S. reaction, more properly its over-reaction, to local politics in Singapore in the aftermath of Britain's decision to move the island toward self-government.

¹ The best starting place is William Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez, and Decolonization* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2006) since Louis has been thinking about decolonization for a long time. For additional examples, see also Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann, eds., *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); Ryan Irwin, *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

The 1955 victory of what U.S. officials considered radical political parties, the Singapore Labour Front and People's Action Party especially, and an apparently left-motivated labor action in which striking transportation workers clashed with police resulting in four deaths and many injured, prompted U.S. officials there to judge the British as being "unable to cope" (36), and to begin planning an intervention if necessary. Chapters two and three are traditional diplomatic history, telling a familiar tale of reflexive American anti-communism prompting U.S. officials to recommend political intervention in the domestic affairs of another country in order to prevent left-leaning parties from gaining power. And, also familiar, those U.S. officials had learned little about the specific dynamics of the society or its politics, leading to misinterpretations. Most significantly, the American assumption that Singapore's ethnic Chinese were mostly loyal to the People's Republic of China was based on a shallow understanding of them and on racial stereotypes. British influence was strong enough, however, that U.S. actions amounted primarily to courting local anti-communist politicians and planning psychological warfare programs.

The remaining chapters explore the ways in which some of the most important trends in U.S. foreign relations during the 1950s played out in Singapore. Long explains the extent and effectiveness of Voice of America programming, the myriad ways in which the United States intervened in other media in Singapore, from promoting U.S. films to sponsoring journalists to come to the United States, and the involvement of U.S. officials and U.S. union leaders in labor disputes, including at the local Ford factory. Singapore and the United States historically have been important to each other primarily for economic reasons, and Long explains well how both politics and changing technologies challenged that relationship in the 1950s. Singapore was cut off from exports to the People's Republic of China until 1956, when Britain observed the U.S.-led ban on trade with the PRC. That, combined with the challenge posed by synthetic rubber to the natural rubber market in Southeast Asia, caused severe dislocations in the Singaporean economy. (104-06) Unemployment rates of 10 %, and underemployment of 10-25% throughout much of the decade may have prompted Singaporeans to consider the leftist parties feared by the United States. (174) The United States took some steps to shore up the natural rubber market, but the continued insistence on an embargo of the PRC did not improve Singaporeans' views of U.S. power in the region.

The founding of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), and Singapore's inclusion in it when Britain joined was another difficult issue for the U.S.-Singaporean relationship. Britain wanted SEATO headquarters to be located in Singapore, while U.S. policymakers believed that choice would be insufficiently anti-colonial, and therefore not appealing to Southeast Asians. The Americans were right, and carefully maneuvered to undercut the already minimal support for the British plan. Those efforts did not make SEATO any more popular with Singaporeans, however. Britain needed SEATO, though, since it could no longer afford a defense capability sufficient to protect Singapore and Malaya. Less well known, but also unpopular, was the role Singapore played in the nuclear strategy of the United States and Britain. Britain based its medium range nuclear warheads and the planes to deliver them in Singapore.

Long's final chapter explores U.S. covert efforts on the island, especially after the 1960 victory of Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party. U.S. officials did not know how to assess Lee's politics. They worried that he was not sufficiently anti-communist, and had even graver concerns about some members of his party. The U.S. agents in Singapore were not subtle, however, and their efforts to recruit Singaporeans as informants were soon discovered, creating an embarrassing mess for the new administration of President John F. Kennedy to clean up.

As an object of U.S. foreign relations, Singapore provides a microcosm of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's foreign policy efforts. Singapore was important enough to the United States that the full range of U.S. foreign relations efforts were implemented there, from its role in the New Look, Eisenhower's plan to cut spending on conventional armed forces while increasing reliance on nuclear weapons, covert operations, and better relations with the previously nonaligned countries, and SEATO to the extension of Voice of America broadcasts and the visits of Vice President Richard Nixon. It was also not the location of a war, a coup, or even a major crisis, meaning that the volume of material on any one of these issues is small enough to be managed relatively easily. Long himself does not make much of the well rounded and integrated look that Singapore provides us into Eisenhower's policies. Singapore functions as a kind of case study, allowing readers to see how Eisenhower's policies worked together, sometimes effectively but other times at cross purposes.

Like many attempts to tell a story not yet told, however, the book raises questions that it does not answer. I kept hoping that Long would push the analysis a little further than he did. For instance, a key theme is that the British were trying to craft a graceful exit strategy from Singapore which allowed them a large degree of continued influence, while American officials seemed to believe that the British were naively ignoring the potential for Communist influence. Did Singapore politicians perceive this conflict and exploit it to their own ends, as Long sometimes seems to suggest? Or were U.S. misunderstandings of Singapore mirrored in Singaporean misunderstanding of the United States?

Likewise, in the discussion of economic transformation, the 1950s after the Korean War clearly posed an enormous challenge to Singapore. Its wealth came from its status as an important trading port, but as the value and importance of traditional Southeast Asian commodities declined, Singapore had to forge a new basis for wealth. Eventually it did so, quite successfully. The wrenching transformation was beginning in the 1950s, but the impression given here is that economic troubles were more about trade disputes than a larger economic transformation. Perhaps policymakers did not yet perceive the coming shift, but it would have been enlightening to get a glimpse of the bigger picture.

And as noted, the narrative encompasses all the different methods the United States used to exert its power in the 1950s: economic, political, military/nuclear, covert, and cultural. Long does little to assess the relative success of these methods, however, and even less to consider whether any success depended on strengths inherent in the method, or whether success depended on more contingent factors such as the personal abilities of those carrying them out or the receptivity of Singaporeans. He is one of few scholars to provide

such a complete narrative of U.S. foreign relations efforts, and of their reception, but it would have been an even more important study with more of an attempt to assess how it all worked together, or how it did not.

Long comes at his study of Singapore-United States relations from training in Southeast Asian politics and history, and one of the most important aspects of the book for scholars of the United States will be what they learn about how developments in Singapore itself shaped both how Singaporeans viewed the choices and policies presented by the United States, and also the success and failure of U.S. initiatives. In this regard, Long's book exemplifies the best of international history.

Taking up a less than obvious subject, the role of the U.S. in respect of the decolonisation of British territories in Southeast Asia, this book offers some novel material and some interesting food for thought even to those who think themselves familiar with that piece of history. Drawing on a wide range of published and unpublished UK and U.S. records, Joey Long offers some new perspectives on David Marshall and Lim Yew Hock, Chief Ministers in the 1950s, and Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister after the 1959 elections. He also offers a contribution to the study of the Anglo-American relationship, reminding us that it was indeed 'special,' but not quite in the way the British wanted to think.

An early chapter deals with the developments in the turbulent Singapore of the mid-1950s, the elections of 1955, the Hock Lee bus strike and the riots.¹ The reports of the American Consulate-General, Long shows, were affected by a McCarthyist fixation on the Cold War, and preoccupied with communist intrigue. Singapore could not be considered "firmly in the Free World camp" (35).

They also suggested that the British approach was too temperate. Officials in the State Department of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson came to share that view. Yet they were cautious about intervening in a territory that was still in the hands of their British ally, especially given its sensitiveness on the matter. Moreover they recognised that displaying too open an interest might have suggested that "US dominance [would] follow British rule" (46).

Consular officials, however, made informal contacts with local politicians, despite British attempts to limit them. Disappointed with Marshall's antics, they found a ready listener in Lim Yew Hock. His moves against the leftist unions located on Middle Road were welcomed, and the Consul-General offered "moral support", which Long considers to have been "crucial" to sustaining Lim's resolve (54-55). Subsequently the State Department considered offering more substantial support. Though it seems that it never managed to do so, the rumours that Lim and his party were funded by a foreign power helped the People's Action Party (PAP) electorally to destroy him.

This Long qualifies as one of the failed 'covert actions' or 'snafus' in which the U.S. engaged. Others, as he points out, were also counter-productive, such as the support given the Indonesian counter-government in 1958, which was finely analysed years ago by George and Audrey Kahin,² and, less well-known, the moves to support a moderate unionism in Singapore and the CIA's blundering attempt to infiltrate the PAP government, made without even consulting the Consul-General.

¹ This involved a strike by union workers, advised by lawyer Lee Kuan Yew, and led to the owner firing the strikers who retaliated, with support from Chinese students and others, by blockading the bus depot. When police attempted to break the strike, violence ensued.

² George and Audrey Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy* (New York: The New Press, 1995).

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, as Long argues, has to share “some of the blame for the mess” (177). The book contributes to the revisionist and post-revisionist literature on the President. In another chapter he discusses the impact on Singapore of American soft power, including setting up the United States Information Agency USIA and seeking air-time on the media for Voice of America (VOA) programs. Both psywar and covert operations were policies that Eisenhower favoured. In both cases he was drawing on his experience in the Second World War. But its relevance was questionable. Generals tend to fight a new war with the methods of the old, we are often reminded. If we were to pursue the notion outside the ambit of the present book, we could argue that in Vietnam, Eisenhower had the Korean war in mind, a war of movement, and sought a new Syngman Rhee, the U.S. backed President in South Korea in Ngo Dinh Diem, the U.S. supported first President of the Republic of Vietnam.

Questioning the competence of American officials and the wisdom of the President does not imply that their British ally was always right. The book does not offer much that is new on their handling of Singapore’s politics, though there are interesting suggestions about the impact of the Suez debacle (128). Less familiar is the account of Britain’s decision to deploy nuclear weapons in Singapore, keeping the local politicians in the dark even while extending the runways at Tengah for the bombers then needed to deliver the weapons. But what was the alternative?

Another chapter deals with the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). Like most who have written of it, Long sees it as an American initiative. In fact it was the British who sought it in 1954, trying to turn Dulles’s talk of ‘united action’ into a firmer U.S. commitment to Southeast Asia. They wanted, however, an arrangement that would be acceptable to other Asian powers, including India, even if it did not join. They were far from wanting the kind of alliance that might lead to a regional war, if not a third world war. Trying to restrain the U.S. was a task the British pursued with a neutral Southeast Asia as the preferred option. But, given their reliance on the U.S. in Europe and in general, they could never risk pushing that proposal. The neutralization of Laos was as far as they got.

The author’s chapter on SEATO would perhaps have benefited by being placed in a larger discussion. Long seems to exaggerate the extent to which it was the SEATO burden that compelled the British to reduce their role in Southeast Asia and finally leave the Singapore base. In fact it was the more general burden of defence expenditure. Southeast Asia had become a lower priority when choices had to be made. Singapore would have been dropped sooner had it not been necessary to give the British some influence on U.S. policy and had not the Indonesians turned to Konfrontasi, Indonesia’s political and armed opposition to the creation of Malaysia.

Written in a sober style, this is yet a stimulating book. It suggests the possibility of a similar work on Malaya/Malaysia and perhaps on other decolonising territories. But it would be nice if copy-editors learned the rather important difference between ‘disinterested’ and ‘uninterested’.

Author's Response by S.R. Joey Long, Nanyang Technological University

I am grateful to Professor Tom Maddux and H-Diplo for commissioning this roundtable. I also thank Professors Kenton Clymer, Anne Foster, and Nicholas Tarling for taking the time to read and critique my book. I have learned much from, and value, their distinguished scholarship, and am thus gratified and humbled to find that they regard the study to be novel and worthwhile. . It is pleasing to note that the members of this roundtable think the work makes a useful contribution to research on U.S. relations with other Southeast Asian states situated on the periphery of the Vietnam conflict. Equally satisfying are comments that the analytical approach employed in *Safe for Decolonization* to examine the nature and outcomes of the interactions between Americans, Britons, and Singaporeans on traditional security matters as well as what Clymer calls the “softer” dimensions of diplomacy could potentially yield new insights into the history of U.S. relations with other countries. There are undoubtedly areas where I could have undertaken more research and discussion in the book, and I am immensely grateful to the reviewers for pointing them out to me. I will address them in this response.

Looking again at the number of documents that I managed to unearth from the archives in Abilene, Amsterdam, Cambridge, College Park, Detroit, Independence, Kew, Oxford, and Singapore, I continue to marvel at the lengths to which American officials went to advance U.S. interests in that comparatively small Southeast Asian island. The manner in which British officials and Singaporeans of all political persuasions interacted with the Americans to further their national or personal ends is no less intriguing. Foster rightly notes that Singapore saw no major crisis, at least on the scale witnessed in Indochina or even Indonesia. Singapore, however, was one among the many sites across the world where the Cold War and decolonization intersected. The retreat of the Europeans from their empires had opened up cultural, economic, ideological, political, and social spaces that the Cold War powers sought to occupy and shape, rousing the local actors' resistance to, cooperation with, and exploitation of the external actors' moves to their own ends in the late-colonial and postcolonial states. These interventions and the local reactions to them tended to produce disastrous and bloody outcomes.¹ But there were also cases where the results were not so destructive. The Singapore story is one of those and I thought it would be interesting to find out why.

I was especially drawn to the subject after reading Robert J. McMahon's seminal critique of the Eisenhower revisionists as an undergraduate history major.² I wondered where Singapore fit into that story. As Clymer notes, the picture that emerges from the study that I eventually undertook is “complex.” The complexity arises from the fact that the Eisenhower administration crafted and pursued a broad range of initiatives to advance its interests in

¹ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) swiftly springs to mind.

² Robert J. McMahon, “Eisenhower and Third World Nationalism: A Critique of the Revisionists,” *Political Science Quarterly* 101 (Fall 1986): 453-473.

Singapore. These initiatives, implemented directly in Singapore as well as at the regional level, spawned different outcomes. I made those preliminary findings at the early stage of the research and they eventually influenced the way I organized the study. As the reviewers note, the book is structured thematically. I did this to facilitate my ability to assess which American moves achieved U.S. objectives in Singapore, which did not, and why. I then concluded by bringing all the elements together, and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the various components of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's New Look as it was implemented in Singapore.

Indeed, one of the areas of research that I had hoped to contribute to when I embarked on the project is the scholarship on Eisenhower's foreign policy. While the revisionists laud his foreign policy record and the postrevisionists are critical of his administration's misguided forays into the developing world, I found both U.S. policy successes and failures in Singapore. The Eisenhower government's public diplomacy programs particularly enhanced U.S. standing on the island and dissipated the negative sentiments generated by its other ill-advised activities. Among the broad range of actions, in fact, the cultural operations went the furthest in cultivating long-term goodwill within Singapore for the United States.

Yet, as I point out in the book, local circumstances played a significant part in determining the outcomes of the American programs. It is true that American officials such as Consul-General Elbridge Durbrow, the information officer, James Elliot, and the unionist George Weaver, deftly chose and undertook pursuits that furthered U.S. aims. But they also had the assistance of Singaporean intermediaries such as politicians Lim Yew Hock, Chew Swee Kee, and Lee Kuan Yew who localized the content of American-designed initiatives, widened their appeal, and enhanced their impact on local audiences. Apart from the indigenous actors, local conditions such as the cosmopolitanism of Singaporean society, the cultural and political inclinations of Singaporeans, and the fact that competing ideas such as communism were heavily proscribed on the island further enhanced the efficacy of the Eisenhower administration's endeavors. The British presence had its impact too. British officials prevented U.S. covert operatives from going overboard, reining in CIA excesses that could have gravely destabilized developments in Singapore. On regional matters, the British made efforts to cooperate with the Americans on alliance and nuclear strategy. The British and Americans thought their collective endeavors would make Singapore (as well as Malaya) safe for decolonization. But their actions engendered outcomes that affected political developments in Singapore and Singaporean attitudes toward Anglo-American policy.

I lay out the broad outline of my argument and analytical approach in order to highlight what the work is about and also to respond to Foster's criticism that I did "little to assess the relative success of these methods, ...to consider whether any success depended on strengths inherent in the method, or whether success depended on more contingent factors such as the personal abilities of those carrying them out or the receptivity of Singaporeans." Perhaps I was not persuasive enough in the book, but this was certainly not for want of trying. The study, as I summarized above, was organized to undertake the task of assessing the propriety of the U.S. actions in Singapore. Each chapter ends with an

examination of the merits of each American initiative, and why it worked or did not. I also came out in the end to assess how the different elements of the New Look functioned together to advance U.S. objectives in Singapore, which initiative canceled out the shortcomings or merits of the other, and how the activities ultimately helped shape the cooperative nature of Singapore-United States relations over the medium and longer term. Again, it could be that I might have been too nuanced in my analyses, and I certainly appreciate Foster's point that I could have "push[ed] the analysis a little further" in some parts of the book. Still, I think I was careful to offer reasonable assessments of what the Americans undertook in Singapore and to assess the outcomes of those actions in their appropriate local cultural, economic, political, and social contexts.

As far as local context is concerned, Foster raises another important question that I had hoped to address in the book: the autonomy of the Singaporean actors caught up in the Cold War and the process of decolonization, and the games they played with the Cold War and colonial powers. Given the dearth of Singaporean sources, I went as far as I could with the American and British documents to determine whether Singaporean politicians attempted to exploit one against the other. The first Chief Minister, David Marshall, did not care for either, and chose to chart his own course with the backing of the local electorate. The second Chief Minister, Lim Yew Hock, stood out for being the most active player in his courtship of the Americans for political backing and funding, even as he pressed the British for more constitutional reforms. Finally, Lee Kuan Yew played so complex a game with the local leftists that when he appeared in the documents, he was preoccupied more with anticipating and protecting his flank against any U.S. attempts to undermine him than he was able to exploit the Americans against the British. When it came to consolidating his position as the first Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee would turn the British Special Branch against the CIA's attempt to subvert his People's Action Party administration.

I do not discount the likelihood that there is much more that can be said about the Singaporean politicians' maneuvers. But I hesitated to reach beyond the available evidence to make claims I could not back. The paucity of Singaporean sources is such that I can only do so much. The law in Singapore does not make it mandatory for any of the government agencies to make their records or the records of the 1950s publicly accessible. Historians continue to search for personal documents belonging to politicians like Lim Yew Hock while lamenting the silences that may never be filled as the activists of the 1950s and 1960s pass on, take their memories with them, and leave none of their papers behind.³ The problem of documentary access and availability, to be sure, is not confined to historians working on Singapore. It is one that extends across Southeast Asia. My understanding is that it will take time for archives in this subregion to become more open about matters

³ Regarding research on Singapore's history, and the difficulties and potentialities, see Loh Kah Seng and Liew Khai Khiun, ed., *The Makers and Keepers of Singapore History* (Singapore: Ethos Books and Singapore Heritage Society, 2010).

related to the Cold War, and its impact on domestic and interstate conflicts in Southeast Asia. Scholars and archivists are exchanging views, though much remains to be done.⁴

Despite the limitations, I am glad to note that Tarling, one of the doyens of Southeast Asian history, still thinks the book “offers some new perspectives on David Marshall and Lim Yew Hock,...and Lee Kuan Yew,” and the history of Singapore during the 1950s and 1960s. Raised on a diet of national history, I did set out to craft a narrative that would locate the island’s history in wider international and transnational perspectives, believing that approach would better reflect lived experiences in Singapore and its cosmopolitan heritage. Tarling is quite right to say that the book does not completely overturn the extant understanding of the part the British played in handling the island’s political developments. I do think – and I hope that Tarling would agree – that some gaps in the historiography remain, and in taking the international-transnational approach, the book illuminated how international events such as the Suez Crisis and, of course, the Cold War profoundly affected the pace of constitutional change in Singapore. The approach makes problematic the long-held understanding that the decolonization of Singapore was chiefly the product of anticolonial politics. It also brings into sharp focus the concerns of the British as they sought to maintain their influence in Singapore, deal with regional issues, and handle the rising global opposition to colonialism that further fed into local anticolonial politics. What was revealing for me was that politicians such as Lim Yew Hock were attuned to those British considerations and astutely knew which buttons to push to obtain political reform.

As for Tarling’s query regarding the British deployment of nuclear weapons to Singapore, I sought merely to underscore the point in the book that this was what the British did and to examine what the likely consequences to Singapore would be if nuclear war did break out between the two Cold War camps. More research is surely needed, especially research informed by an intimate knowledge of Soviet, and later Chinese, nuclear strike plans in Southeast Asia, concerning the dangers posed to Singapore. Insight into communist war plans could also address the more pertinent question of whether the construction of the installations in Singapore and the deployment of nuclear weapons were really necessary. In the event, the possible devastation to Singapore in a general war that I highlighted in the book came from British strategists who considered the possibility, but went ahead with the deployment anyway. I agree with Tarling that the British had to keep their plans close to their chests. Opinion in Singapore was perceivably opposed to the presence of nuclear weapons on Singaporean soil. Taking Singaporean politicians into British confidence might not result in locals assenting to the nuclear deployments. Instead, it could give Singaporean political leaders the ammunition to exploit the controversy in order to push their political agendas against the colonial authorities.

⁴ In May 2009, a conference involving scholars and Southeast Asian archivists on the issue took place in Singapore; see Pitt Kuan Wah, Julia Chee, Kwek-Chew Kim Gek, Stanley Tan, Lily Oon, Mary Lim, Elaine Seah, Yun Lim, and Joey Long, ed., *The Role of Archives in Documenting a Shared Memory of the Cold War: Asia-Pacific Perspective* (Singapore: National Archives of Singapore, 2010). We are endeavoring to continue the conversation.

While keeping their intentions under wraps, the British, in deciding on the nuclear deployments, had to spend significant sums to build installations and secure the arms. Expenditures on preserving the security of the bases were notably high, and they added to the overall British expenses in Southeast Asia. I highlight this in order to respond to Tarling's concerns about my discussion of SEATO, British military spending, and the British position in Southeast Asia. His call for a "larger discussion" of the issue is well taken. I accentuated the pressures that British defense expenditures in Southeast Asia were making on the Treasury in my two chapters on SEATO and the British nuclear deployments to the area. I also discussed, admittedly briefly, Britain's defense obligations to its Commonwealth partners (Australia and New Zealand) and to Malaya, and, of course, the British desire to influence U.S. policy in the region as well as the review undertaken by British thinkers concerning the place of Southeast Asia in British grand strategy. Taken together, they make the same point that Tarling makes: Southeast Asia had become a heavy burden on the British Treasury and something had to be done about it. I did not extend my analysis into the reasons for the final withdrawal of the British from the base in Singapore in 1971 as it was beyond the scope of the book. I stopped in 1963 when Singapore merged with Malaya, Sabah, and Sarawak to form independent Malaysia. The British endorsed the arrangement because Malaysia would relieve Whitehall of the financial responsibility for maintaining Singapore's internal security. Indonesia's opposition to Malaysia, however, caused Britain to become entangled in a low-intensity conflict that further strained its financial and military resources – a subject skilfully taken up by scholars such as Matthew Jones.⁵

Finally, I am in agreement with Foster's suggestion that I should have discussed in more detail the larger economic transformations that were occurring in Singapore during the 1950s. This would have offered more context and insight into economic developments in Singapore. While drafting the work, however, I thought I would not be able to have my gum and to chew it too – to localize and mangle the old saying. I was preoccupied with the task of assessing how the U.S. employment of trade as a strategic weapon against the communist powers had affected the Singapore economy and Singaporean perceptions of the United States. The chapter was thus structured to bring that concern to the fore. Another reason why I had focused on trade issues was that trade and the export of primary commodities remained a mainstay of the Singaporean economy throughout the 1950s. The trade war was breaking many Singaporeans' rice bowls, and was an important source of local disgruntlement against the United States.

Still, as Foster rightly notes, the Singaporean economy was also in a state of flux. Some of the changes that were taking place – the expansion of educational institutions, improvements in infrastructure and communications, and the establishment of industrial estates – notably laid the foundation for the rapid growth seen during the 1960s and 1970s when Singapore turned to export-led industrialization to develop economically. Though mired in the Vietnam War and perhaps because of it, the United States became the source of much of the capital that fuelled Singapore's growth. American multinational

⁵ Matthew Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961-1965: Britain, the United States, Indonesia and the Creation of Malaysia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

companies such as Texas Instruments and Mobil set up shop in the city or expanded their extant operations as opportunities in Asia expanded and demand in Vietnam for products processed in Singapore such as petroleum increased. Against the backdrop of the Indochina conflict, the period 1965-1975 would be another formative phase in Singapore-U.S. relations. But that is the subject of another book. Clymer is right about the impact of the war in Vietnam on scholarship.

I thank again Professors Clymer, Foster, and Tarling for their kind words and insightful criticisms of my study, and look forward to more discussions on the subject.

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