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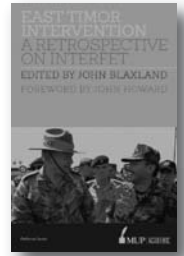
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BOOK REVIEWS

East Timor intervention: a retrospective on INTERFET

Dr John Blaxland (Editor)

*Melbourne University Press: Melbourne; 2015; 313 pp.; ISBN 9780522867763 (paperback);
RRP \$59.95*



Australia's involvement in the liberation of East Timor in 1999 was the most decisive demonstration of Australian influence in the region since World War II and the largest military contribution since the Vietnam War. Australian diplomacy and leadership shaped the events that led to the birth of Asia's newest nation.

This book is the product of a two-day international conference¹ held in September 2015 on the 15th anniversary of the intervention in East Timor and on the eve of the commissioning of the Australian government's official history.

The book brings together a collection of essays from participants and observers including: Indonesia's martial law commander, Kiki Syahnakri, defending his record; the country's first president, Xanana Gusmão, on the resolution and poise of Timor's resistance fighters; and the commander of the International Force, Peter Cosgrove, on the conduct of the operation itself. Other Australian contributors include Hugh White, Mike Smith, Michael Maley

and Martin Hess on aspects leading up to the intervention; Chris Barrie, Mark Evans, Neil Thompson, Michael Crane, Gary Hogan and Ash Power on different aspects of the operation; and David Connery, Bob Breen and Damien Kingsbury on the lessons and legacies of the intervention. Other international contributors include Kevin Burnett on the New Zealand contribution, Orlando Ambrocio for the Philippines, Surasit Thanadatang for Thailand, and Joanne Wallis for the East Timorese perspective of the intervention. John Blaxland as the editor has contributed tremendous introductory and concluding chapters.

Overall, this impressive collection provides a uniquely multi-dimensional perspective. It includes significant new outlooks on regional security; and on the role Australia can play in regional security and stability. The book is recommended to students of military history as well as international relations.

Marcus Fielding²

¹The conference was produced by Military History and Heritage Victoria in partnership with the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University.

²Colonel Marcus Fielding is the President of Military History and Heritage Victoria Inc.