

Jobs that are bought with lives

IT IS odd to think that, following two years of savage war in Bosnia, a single mortar attack on a market square in Sarajevo, which killed 70 people and wounded many others, forced the UN Security Council and Nato into action. In the case of East Timor, however, the brutal murder and suppression of tens of thousands of Timorese over the last 15 years seems to have passed without any major concern being expressed by Western governments.

Even worse, while preventing the supply of arms to Bosnian forces against Serb aggression for fear of escalating the war and causing more fatalities, the British government seems only too willing to supply arms to the Indonesian government, using the justification of jobs

for UK arms manufacturers. It is crucial to detach the issue of human rights, self-determination and economic activity. In the case of East Timor, however, the British government seems to have placed the jobs of UK nationals before the principles of self-determination and human rights.

The Government is using the British public as a shield to justify its arms policy to Indonesia. One wonders whether the British public approve of this. Do we really want to support brutal regimes for the sake of saving thousands of jobs in the UK? Surely the answer cannot be yes. If it is, then we have to take some of the responsibility for having blood on our hands.

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