

Forgive me General Nick Carter, but I am suggesting you...

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Trust me, I try not to be cynical. I know that annoys some readers on occasion. But this one could bring out the cynic in anyone. The [FT has reported](#) that:

The British armed forces face a funding crisis that threatens to ground aircraft and restrict deployments of support vessels, amid increasing concerns about operational commitments as spending constraints bite.

Gen Nick Carter, chief of the defence staff, summoned the heads of the army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy to an urgent meeting this week to discuss a critical shortfall in next year's defence budget. The gap, which one military official said was equivalent to £1bn in the next financial year, is exacerbated by financial commitments such as the F35 fighter jets, the world's most expensive warplanes, and the new fleet of Astute-class submarines.

What is the chance this was only noticed and leaked to the press a week after the Tories won an election campaign?

I'd say it's precisely zero. I would go lower if I could.

To suggest that this is the armed forces playing game to prevent a Labour government would seem to me to be entirely fair. After all, it is more than nine years of Tory governments that have created this situation. But that's who they would still prefer even though it is the Tories who clearly have really threatened them. So yes, I am deeply cynical. And I would call it gross misconduct to behave in this way.