

When only discombobulated will do

Published: January 14, 2026, 2:11 pm

I always wonder whether using the word discombobulated is fair. It does, after all, have little common usage. It is cumbersome. And it usually refers to being confused, which is a perfectly good word. And yet, there are moments when it seems right.

This is a moment to be discombobulated.

Keir Starmer [is praising Thatcher](#) and now warning that Labour is planning on yet more austerity - because balancing the books matters most in this country, apparently.

Meanwhile, [the leader of the UAE](#) and president of COP28 says there is 'no science' behind the demands for the phase-out of fossil fuels.

And, back in the UK, the Tories [are singing the praises of cuts](#) at the BBC as indication that there is realism in the corporation because less news coverage is clearly the foundation on which all democracy is built.

It is as if we are living in an alternative world where the truth must be denied and nonsense must be spoken in its place.

When our children were small, we had a game like this, played at mealtimes, which we called 'silly talk'. The whole purpose was to talk nonsense. It was fun at the time. It gave our boys the chance to be active participants in the conversation because they got to be good at it, very quickly. But we all knew it was exactly what we described: silly talk. That was the fun of it.

Starmer, the UAE and Sunak are not playing silly talk. They're playing dangerous talk. What they are saying is wrong, but they are pretending otherwise. They must know it is wrong, because they are sufficiently educated to appraise the evidence. Yet, they are saying it anyway.

This is deeply dangerous.

And when people talk dangerously deliberately to suggest that you might be confused

in response is to understate matters. Then, to claim to be discombobulated is appropriate.

I am just that. What are these idiots playing at?