



Ex-defence minister Al Carns condemns “unbelievable” waste of war industry

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Al Carns

Ex-defence minister Al Carns has [condemned](#) the waste and inefficiency of the British war machine. The former commando wants more to be spent on war. He’s wrong, but his latest interview does expose certain grim truths about [the UK war machine](#)

Carns resigned his cabinet post as a junior defence minister on 11 June, citing Starmer’s failings on the so-called Defence Investment Plan (DIP):

We owe those who serve the UK the kit to do the job and the loyalty to stand by them when it’s done. We are failing on both.

I’ve spent my whole time in government making that case. Number 10 will not listen, so I am resigning as Minister for the Armed Forces.

Letter to the PM: pic.twitter.com/HDCIOcVsA5

Al Carns (@AlistairCarns) [June 11, 2026](#)

Al Carns resigned hours after his boss defence secretary John Healey threw in the towel. Both men were pro-war Starmer loyalists from the right-wing of the Labour Party.

Like many such people, Carns likes to externalise the UK’s problems onto, for example, Russia:

Moscow is probably rubbing its belly. I think it looks at the social division that weâ??re having in the UK and the amplification through social media as success for its propaganda campaign.

Carns, who has been [touted](#) to replace Starmer, is a militarist who wants more money for war. But hidden in his latest [Guardian interview](#) are some important truths about the racket we know as the military-industrial complex.

Carns [told](#) the *Guardian* how defence projects are deeply inefficient:

It is unbelievable. You turn a stone over and get another shock â?? how has that been allowed to go on?

[And](#)

you turn another stone over and find just layers of bureaucracy which now cost us more than the product youâ??re getting. It doesn't describe the level of inefficiency in the system that weâ??ve been left with and weâ??re going to unpeel. But itâ??s actually exceptionally difficult to do.

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AI Carns is half-right, we do need reform

This is a pretty typical rant about bureaucracy. These sentiments are hardly uncommon among conservative-minded ex-soldiers. And on waste in the war machine, Carns makes some [good points](#)

Take tanks for example â?? 100 to 200 tanks isnâ??t the most useful way of spending our money. They were ordered ages ago, and if you cancel them now, thatâ??s sunk cost â?? thatâ??s cost us Â£700m.

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Well, I think these are the difficult discussions we have to make â?? the cost of running them is in the hundreds of millions, and so I would rather take that chunk of money â?? and put it into those innovative systems that we need to buy.

AI Carns [called](#) for root and branch reform:

We have the fifth biggest defence budget in the world. Do you think we get a good bang for buck? We need to completely and utterly overhaul our procurement.

[Adding](#)

We need to make sure a large proportion of the resource and money is spent this side of 2030, to make sure that if we get caught in a geographical confrontation, weâ??re ready.

Carns is half-right. We *do* need a massive overhaul and reallocation of war spending. But Carns would allocate cash towards things like AI. In reality, we need to stop handing bags of cash to arms firms full stop, and build actual human security: jobs, healthcare, education, green technology and so on. Carns, a career military officer, might not be able to see that. But we can.

Featured image via the Canary

By [Joe Glenton](#)

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