

Earlier this week, the Labour Party released its guide to fringe events at its conference. One particular event caught our eye, a meeting entitled "Britain's defence capability: challenges of the 21st century", tucked away at 8am on the Monday morning.

Who exactly do they expect to attract to this meeting, then? More importantly, who exactly are they trying avoid? Could it be that the Party wants to steer clear of the anti-arms lobby? Are they hoping that the expected throng of arms protestors from the loony fringe will (like this correspondent, and no doubt a fair proportion of the rest of Britain) still be fresh out of bed, bleary-eyed, searching for coffee and toast, and not remotely ready to jump around in Manchester on an autumnal Monday morning with placards in hand?

Even more tellingly, whilst the five packed days of fringe events cover almost every topic under the sun from every conceivable angle, why is this meeting the only one which looks set to cover defence procurement issues?

Answers on a postcard please.....