

IAG need to understand the anger about BA job losses

Yesterday in the Commons some MPs were allowed to ask questions of a Transport Minister over the bad news of possible job losses and worse terms and conditions of employment for BA staff who keep a job. All felt the same, that IAG are treating BA employees badly after years of profiting from prime slots at Heathrow and from the successful UK based international travel business.

The Minister pointed to the deferral of VAT payments, the Covid commercial finance facility and the Job retention or furlough scheme as government help to the industry. She expressed regret about the job losses at BA, Virgin and Easyjet. She told us the Job retention scheme money being used by BA was not "designed for taxpayers to fund the wages of employees only for those companies to put these same staff on notice of redundancy within the furlough period." She said the government has "set up a restart, recovery and engagement unit to work with the aviation industry on the immediate issues affecting the restart of the sector and its longer term growth and recovery".

She said she did not have legal powers to remove landing slots from BA nor did she set out any legal means of using leverage from the Job Retention grants. When challenged about the proposed worsening of terms of employment, she said she expected companies to "treat their employees with the social responsibility that one would expect."

I am following up with a letter to the government asking them to show more urgency over the threats to BA jobs, and asking them to take a tougher stance over IAG's actions. IAG have large cash reserves, will want to run airlines as we recover and has profited a lot in the past from its U.K. investment. So why is it picking on U.K. staff for redundancies?