SHADOW CHANCELLOR JOHN MCDONNELL HITS OUT AT 'LYING' AVIATION OFFICIALS OVER THIRD RUNWAY

News / Airports / Routes

Labour's shadow chancellor **John McDonnell** has lashed out at **'lying' aviation officials** at a rally against a **third runway** at Heathrow Airport, saying 'poisoned' air is killing residents in the area.

Addressing hundreds of people gathered in London's Parliament Square today, Mr McDonnell, 64, declared the aviation industry has 'consistently lied' about expanding the UK's largest airport.

He said it would be 'down to people power' to prevent the construction of a third runway at the airport if the expansion is backed by Parliament and court appeals against the decision fail.

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Hitting out: Labour's shadow chancellor John McDonnell (pictured) lashed out at 'lying' aviation officials at a rally against a third runway at Heathrow Airport today, saying 'poisoned' air is killing residents in the area

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Protesters: Addressing hundreds of people gathered in London's Parliament Square (above), Mr McDonnell, 64, declared the aviation industry has 'consistently lied' about expanding the UK's largest airport

The MP, whose constituency contains Heathrow, said: 'In my constituency at the moment, people are literally dying. They're dying because the air has already been poisoned by the aviation industry.'

He added: 'They've promised us after every inquiry, no further expansion. They are liars.

'They have consistently lied to us. They now tell us if they get a third runway, there'll be no increase in noise and no increase in pollution. They're liars. They lie every time to us.'

ory London mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith and his Labour rival Sadiq Khan were also among those to address the rally after the Airports Commission recommended building a third runway.

Heathrow was chosen by the commission as the best way to increase airport capacity for London and the South East because it was predicted it would add £147billion in economic growth.

It would also create 70,000 jobs by 2050, it was forecast.

Prime Minister David Cameron is due to announce a decision on expansion by the end of the year.

However, Mr McDonnell, the MP for Hayes and Harlington claimed 4,000 homes would be 'demolished or rendered unliveable' in his constituency if the third runway goes ahead.

'At one point they were going to drive a road through our cemetery and we were going to have to dig up our dead,' he said. 'I say this to any politician who might be thinking of voting for the third runway - vote for the third runway and don't expect any votes from Londoners because we'll vote

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you out.

He added: 'If politicians vote for it and we can't win in the courts, it will be down to people power to prevent this going ahead. So I will welcome back to my constituency, climate camp and all those demonstrators that will take action to prevent this runway being built.'

Mr Goldsmith, meanwhile, said a 'catastrophic price' will be paid if a third runway is built - and that expanding the major airport would make London's' air pollution problems 'unsolvable'.

The MP for Richmond Park said: 'We know a million homes, a million families, would be subjected to noise way beyond what is acceptable, according to the World Health Organisation.

'We know that our air pollution problems in London would be unsolvable if we expand Heathrow. And we know it requires the demolition of more than 1,000 homes.

'It is a catastrophic price to pay.'

Mr Goldsmith added that the Commission's report was 'discredited', 'bogus'' and 'hopeless'.

Demonstrators gathered outside the Palace of Westminster today chanted 'no ifs, no buts, no third runway', in reference to Mr Cameron's comments about a prospective third runway in 2009.

At the time, Mr Cameron said: 'The third runway at Heathrow is not going ahead, no ifs, no buts.'

Mr Khan, the MP for Tooting, told demonstrators: 'The UK Supreme Court two months ago held that our air was in breach of the EU air quality directive. Our air is a killer. It makes you sick and it's illegal. In those circumstances how can we say yes to a new runway at Heathrow airport.'

Organisers of the rally said London mayor Boris Johnson was due to speak at the event.

However, he could no longer attend, they said.

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John McDonnell, shadow chancellor

A spokesman for Mr Johnson said he had a personal commitment out of the country.

'He would be there otherwise,' the spokesman said. 'Boris's support remains undiminished.

'He wishes them well.'

Mr Johnson, who steps down as mayor next year, had previously proposed a new airport should be built in the Thames estuary.

However, the plan dubbed 'Boris Island' was dismissed by the Commission.

A Heathrow spokesman said: 'London's future success as a global city, and as a centre for finance and investment, will depend on the strength of links with existing and new markets.

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'The Airports Commission has confirmed that Heathrow expansion will keep the capital and the whole of the UK at the heart of the global economy, meet environmental targets and balance the needs of local communities.

'That's why the majority of those living around the airport support the plan along with unions, businesses and politicians across the whole of the UK.'

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