

Presentation for the meeting of Members of Parliament, House of Commons Committee Room 9, 24 May 2004. John O'Brien, Sussex

I am here to talk about Tetra, known to the police as Airwave. This is a very different animal from mobile phones and I will concentrate my attention on Tetra. This is an untested system which has as its origins the development of non-lethal anti-personnel weapons in the 1950s. Tetra itself developed as a communications option in the 1990s. So it is hardly new nor state-of-the-art. I will explain why Tetra is of particular concern.

We are as concerned as anyone that the police should take advantage of the opportunity to re-equip with the very best communications system on offer. Tetra is not the best and it lacks functionality, is poor value and the critical features one should expect to see are still described by O2 as potential or developable. Tetra is said to be capable of transmitting data. This is not data as we know it – e-mail attachments, downloads from the Internet, international banking *etc.* – it is text messages.

While the police will be spending our council tax money to acquire Tetra on instruction from the Government, it must be recognised that the 15 year contract with Airwave will net O2 at least £2.9bn from Council Tax and provide the police with a system inferior to Tetrapol and Opensky to name but two. This system is not government funded beyond the £500M set-up grant.

O2 and the Government say that there is no credible evidence of a link between the heating properties of Tetra and the health problems being reported around the country. This may be true, but there is overwhelming evidence of the biological impact of ELF EMR worldwide. Hospitals use radiation for the accelerated growth of soft tissue when repairing broken limbs. Over-exposure can lead to accelerated cancerous growth. This is the same radiation as we will be exposed to from Tetra.

The campaign against Tetra is continuing for 5 main reasons:

1. There is genuine concern for the health implications which have been reported throughout the world as a result of the increased exposure to low-level EMR. Guideline figures relate only to microwave heating, which is not at issue, and anyway the figures from the NRPB and ICNIRP are wildly out of line with other countries. Let me quote Canada's acceptable level of 6 units against UK's acceptance on our behalf of 3,300 units.
2. The known problems associated with Tetra, which become more widespread daily as the masts are turned on, is causing hardship for many thousands of people.
3. The democratic process is being brought into serious disrepute by the behaviour of O2 Airwave, and its sponsoring body, the Home Office and the Government.

4. We want the police to have the very best communications equipment. But the people who are faced with funding the use of Tetra through their Council Tax agree with the Public Accounts Committee, who, in November 2002, concluded that Tetra does not represent value for money, does not offer the best option and functionality nor the safest solution.
5. The country is being despoiled by 55,000 masts for 3G, 3,500 for Tetra and any number of others for 2G and other mobile phones. Look at every hill as you drive around the country. Wonder at the inadequacy of Tetra that needs a mast every 5 miles and every 1.5 miles in towns for a system designed for 56km radius. Look at Tetrapol which covers France with 150 masts for an area 2.5 times the size of the UK, for 1/7th of the cost of Tetra.

So what has led us to this position?

You may hear me as one voice. I am here to be the voice of the many thousands of people who, despite claims by O2's MD Peter Richardson on You and Yours that there are only 'isolated pockets of opposition' to Tetra, are incensed about what is being imposed upon them and the methods being employed. If there were case to answer, would we all be here today? Would the Health Protection agencies and Environment Health Representatives be meeting tomorrow in the BMA to discuss 'The Trouble with Tetra' if there were no resistance to it around the country?

Local media have responded well to the local requests for assistance and every local event has been covered. National media have been reluctant, citing 'rural issues', 'another mobile phone scare' and 'we checked with the NRPB and they say that there is no problem.'

The Government responds with anodyne statements, variously from the NRPB, Colin Blakemore, Hazel Blears, Melanie Johnson and Mireille Levy who put forward the arguments of the mobile phone industry and dismiss the will of the people to be listened to.

The scientists reject any claims we make and stories we pass on as 'anecdotal'. They hide behind the NRPB and the spurious guidelines of ICNIRP. Hazel Blears claims in letters addressed to every MP that Tetra masts do not pulse and that there is no evidence of health concerns associated with Tetra. She also refers you to a programme of research, which, on examination and based on statements from the Universities quoted, does not include any current research on Tetra nor any research into Tetra base stations. She also refers to the NRPB who continue to say that there is no evidence that there is a problem.

Where evidence is not officially collected, there will be no evidence. We collect data and it is very disturbing. We hear of the people in the vicinity of masts who experience Headaches, Nausea, nosebleeds, migraines, epilepsy, skin irritation, rashes, local burning, sleeplessness, deafness, disorientation, behaviour changes, mood alterations etc

We ask NRPB and others to conduct research, but they claim that it is unethical to conduct research in the community unless all residents give express permission. But the research on the police does not single them out from the community and exposes us all to an untested system without our permission and despite our disapproval, voiced in ways which includes this forum.

And all these august bodies, the NRPB, ICL, KCL, Home Office *etc.* deliberately refuse to collect evidence. Blakemore, Challis, Clark, Camilla Gabriel and the NRPB are believed, by the bulk of the people, to be unreliable scientists. Who can trust a scientist, who, in the face of people crying out for relief from symptoms, denies that there is a growing and demonstrable problem?

When, in the 1600s, there were only 2 anecdotal stories of plague, how many people had to suffer and die before it moved on from being anecdotal to plague? When did foot and mouth move from isolated instances to an epidemic?

We turn to our MPs and MEPs to take the issue seriously and they receive the same assurances I have just mentioned. The piecemeal approach from people with busy lives, results in many questions being asked but few satisfactory answers being given. It leads to further frustration and disaffection with the democratic system.

O2 is approached and they hide behind a veil of Guidelines, which they do not admit covers only the heating effects of radiation and not the pulsing nor the longterm, low-level radiation at the frequencies used by Tetra. They lie their way through their manipulation of the planning process and they use words to mean what they want them to mean and not what they do mean. In Rogate and East Marden they thought they had triumphed when they said they were 'willing to remove the masts.' I am willing to talk for 3 days continuously, but I won't.

They accuse people who have seen workmen putting up or modifying installations of 'imagining it', despite witnesses. They tell us masts are switched off when they are on and have been disconnected when they have not and they put up masts at dead of night without planning permission having been applied for or granted and then claim imaginary 'emergency powers' and ignore the planning process and enforcement and the will of the people.

Hazel Blears has said that 'consultation is the key to the success of the rollout of Tetra'. She has said, on 10th July 2003, that after an incident in Lewisham she would 'ensure that the matter is raised and will emphasise the company's responsibility to consult local people.' She has said that there is a need to arrange more public meetings so that the public may understand better. O2 refuse most invitations to attend public meetings because they do not believe the public behave responsibly when they do. When they do attend we hear half-truths, lies, obfuscation and arrogant dismissal of the public in the style of 'we forgive you because you are simple peasants who do not understand that we have the weight of the Government behind us and we will prevail.'

They claim to have consulted and we have mountains of letters from Schools and their heads and Governors to demonstrate that they have not. But then, why should they? O2 is not signed up to the 10 Commitments, we are told by Jim Dowd in Parliament. When they follow the Traffic Light Model in the ODPM's Guide to Best Practice, there is no real obligation on them to do anything much. The 10 commitments, drawn up, like the TLM by the Mobile Phone Operators, to minimise any obligations on them, commits them to nothing and uses such phrases as: 'are implementing commitments to:

develop, participate, establish, assess, begin financially supporting the Government's independent scientific research programme, develop standard supporting documentation, provide specific staff resources to respond to complaints.' We know Airwave. 'Implementing to provide' does not impose a duty and no duty will be discharged.

O2 tells you about the 35 police forces fully equipped when they mean 14. They quote Dolphin, which is a different manifestation of the Tetra standard. They make claims for the use of Tetra in Madrid, where it is not even installed for the police who use Tetrapol, a different, alternative and much preferred system. Hazel Blears supports them in their contention, saying to Parliament in July 2003: 'Tetra systems are deployed for emergency services in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway.' **Only in Finland and Denmark is this true.** Handing out a handset for evaluation is not 'deployment'. They do all this to safeguard their ability to make shed loads of money in the rest of the world when contracts are exchanged because the experience in the UK is seen to be the test case for Tetra worldwide. They tell us about the fully installed networks all over the world when the truth is a fraction of their claim. The PAC was told by Airwave that experience of Tetra in use was not available because 'there is no user base they can call on.' So much for it being installed in the countries they claim.

O2 claim in their planning applications that their equipment will not interfere with any broadcast or electronic installation. The first indication we often get of the overnight and normally unlawful installation of a Tetra mast is TV interference. And it is not mild interference. TV pictures are unwatchable. Remember this when choosing which channel to broadcast a Political Speech in your area.

Ofcom take no action and O2 claim that it is the inadequacy of the TVs we use and their aerials which are at fault. The public is being told that it has a responsibility to match its receiving equipment to the needs of O2! The interference disappears when masts are switched off. But Tetra also interferes with pacemakers and signs on base stations warn of this. It interferes with hospital equipment and sensitive electronics. It activates car immobilisers. It is thought to stimulate epileptic fits.

So we necessarily have to confront the situation through the Planning System. Councillors with moral fibre resist Tetra on behalf of their concerned electorate. Planning Officers shy away from supporting the public when confronted by O2's bullying threats of huge costs against them for appeals, which may impact their careers. Planning Inspectors review the evidence and decide that the Government

line is more important than the fears of the people. And O2 rides roughshod over the people and the process, with a corporate smirk. And all the while the guidance from government is unfathomable.

But what are **our** fears based upon?

The EU Precautionary Principle, adopted into UK law, boils down to 'if it is not safe, don't do it.' The onus is on the supplier of the service, application or product to prove that it is safe, hence the current discussion about the withdrawal of health supplements which have not been proved to be safe. Everybody admits that Tetra has never been tested. Again I would refer you to the PAC, to whom this was admitted. But nobody in authority, Councils, Health Authorities, Government, NRPB etc, admits to taking this vital Principle into account. The WHO does and had a recent Conference entitled, 'EMF and the Precautionary Principle.'

The frequency of Tetra is in the range 380-400MHz. This is microwave radiation and it is transmitted, unlike mobile phone masts, 24 hours a day, whether in use or not. By the nature of the need to transmit multiple conversations on the same Carrier frequency, the radiation is aggressively pulsed. Tetra masts and handsets pulse at around 17.64Hz, the same range as is used by the brain to control ALL bodily functions down to the cellular level. This pulsing we can prove. As a plank of Hazel Blears' argument to support Tetra, she continues to deny it. The effect of being subjected to the pulsed transmissions from masts which is several magnitudes more powerful than the brain's weak signals round the body is that the brain's instructions are swamped, misinterpreted, lost or not received. The functions we are talking about can be likened to a person in a quiet room receiving whispered instructions which are well understood. The door is flung open and a very loud series of instructions in a language is shouted, which is not understood and which is not anyway coherent. All the attention is diverted away from the important instructions and chaos ensues.

On top of this, the 76cm wavelength of Tetra is equivalent to the height of a small child, who can resonate at the Tetra frequency. Behaving like a jelly set in motion, this resonance disturbs normal functions and leads to the symptoms of Headaches, Nausea, nosebleeds, migraines, epilepsy, skin irritation, rashes, local burning, sleeplessness, deafness, disorientation etc which are being reported in growing numbers from people living around masts. The same symptoms are experienced by adults. But children are the future and need special protection. No research is being done on effects on children. The collected reports are dismissed as 'anecdotal' and no attempt is made by authorities to investigate nor authenticate. O2 will devote time to persuading our guardians that the emissions are within guidelines and therefore safe. Only last week they went through this cynical exercise with Tim Laughton in Worthing, trying to divert his attention away from the real problem of people feeling the effects of masts. The measurements of the potential for heating, following ICNIRP guidelines, has nothing to do with the biological effects, as ICNIRP themselves admit. People are suffering and do not know why and the official response is to deny that there is a problem.

So we are like children coming to you for help. Imagine, if you will, that you are all parents at a party in a house in house with a cellar in which your children are playing and where they have their TVs, games and toys. A new security system has been installed but never tested. One by one the children come up, tug at your sleeve and try to tell you about the smoke in the cellar. You tell them they must be wrong. You consult with the other adults who are experts in their field. They tell you that the guidelines protect you from smoke so there cannot be any. They tell you that it is important to have the security system installed, even if it has never been tested, because it will improve security and you should not worry about the smoke. They tell you that it is government policy to allow a certain amount of smoke. They tell you that the discomfort and the symptoms caused by the smoke are irrational and anecdotal so should be dismissed. So you brush aside your child. And every other child. Your job as a guardian is overtaken by your wish to ensure that your fellow adults are supported in their views, and their ambitions are not thwarted by criticising other expert scientists who say that adverse events could not happen.

The child suffers long term exposure to smoke, feels let down and frustrated and feels that you have let him down as a parent and he loses respect for you. He might die or desert you because you let him down.

You are only entitled to call yourself a parent if you have children. You are their guardians and you derive your authority as a parent from that relationship. If your children die or desert you, you are no longer a parent. Would you prefer to be parents enjoying the love and respect of your children because they came to you for help and you went down the cellar stairs to see how you could help? Or will you ignore the children because you prefer the misplaced wisdom of the adults around you? If there are no children to whom you can be a guardian, you cease to be one.

We are those children. You are our guardians. We are approaching you with a voice that is prevented from being an overwhelming chorus. But please listen to us before it is too late to stop this vile polluting and ever-encroaching menace to our lives and the lives of generations to follow.

It is not safe. Don't let them do it. Do what you can to help us. Either stop Tetra or insist on research to see quickly what is causing the problems reported to us. Consider giving your support to Richard Spring's non-partisan initiative.

Current Government safety limits (ICNIRP or NRPB) only take into account the heating effects of electromagnetic radiation on people. There are enormous disagreements over these safety levels. The safety levels for one type of microwave transmitter are:

Toronto Health Board, Canada	6 units
Russia, Italy	10 units
US Research Base	100 units
NRPB (National Radiological Protection Board) for Britain	3,300 units
Salzburg Agreement (19 scientists, 9 countries)	00.1 unit

What are the Ten Commitments?

The operators are implementing ten best siting practice commitments to:

1. develop, with other stakeholders, clear standards and procedures to deliver significantly improved consultation with local communities
2. participate in obligatory pre-rollout and pre-application consultation with local planning authorities
3. publish clear, transparent and accountable criteria and cross-industry agreement on site sharing, against which progress will be published regularly
4. establish professional development workshops on technological developments within telecommunications for local authority officers and elected members
5. deliver, with the Government, a database of information available to the public on radio base stations
6. assess all radio base stations for international (ICNIRP) compliance for public exposure, and produce a programme for ICNIRP compliance for all radio base stations as recommended by the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones
7. provide, as part of planning applications for radio base stations, a certification of compliance with ICNIRP public exposure guidelines
8. provide specific staff resources to respond to complaints and enquiries about radio base stations, within ten working days
9. begin financially supporting the Government's independent scientific research programme on mobile communications health issues
10. develop standard supporting documentation for all planning submissions whether full planning or prior approval