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ILLUMINATING THE CELLTOWER AGENDA

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cell phones are just cover for prison technologies of electronic mind control and super surveillance....

Editor, Montague Reporter

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NETRAD IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

ILLUMINATING THE CELLTOWER AGENDA

keith harmon snow

Perhaps the most intriguing aspects of the cell tower siting debate in Wendell have been the absence of discussion about some of the most disturbing details. The U.S. government in 1996 passed the Telecommunications Act (recall that a democrat occupied the White House at the time), limiting state and local zoning authorities' jurisdiction over the construction, modification and placement of wireless communications towers. And while some people have made valiant efforts to illuminate the very real health risks of cell technologies (e.g. resident Robbie Lepzer), the extent of the suppression of legitimate studies showing health concerns remains obscured. Still more ominous on the cell tower landscape however might be the coming "Homeland Security" cell towers agenda to be implemented in the not-so-distant future.

Expropriating the Science

To begin with, AT&T has consistently shown up at cell tower hearings—in other Mass towns, at least—wielding "irrefutable" science. At a public hearing in Conway (2002) on the proposed cell tower abutting the Conway Elementary School, AT&T sent in a team of experts to "set the record straight." The meeting was poorly advertised, and it happened very quickly (and the rushed hearing tactic is used quite successfully to bulldoze public interests in favor of corporations; the nuclear industry providing the best example).

One of the "experts" who presented in favor of AT&T's wireless technologies was Joshua Cohen, a Ph.D. from the Harvard Center of Risk Analysis (HCRA). However, AT&T never disclosed their business relationships with this Harvard affiliated institution. The Conway select board allowed AT&T to deceive the public without guaranteeing a

balanced discussion by also providing independent or public presenters.

The Harvard Center for Risk Analysis (HCRA) is an industry front funded by over 100 of the world's largest corporations (including American Tower?). Mr. Cohen -- in his PhD capacity -- failed to disclose that AT&T and the Wireless Technology Research Foundation (and others) fund HCRA. (Local newspapers never disclose such conflicts of interest, because they deny that any conflict exists -- since that might affect advertising revenues.)

Mr. Cohen forgot to tell Conway residents that the HCRA advisers and executives have numerous interlocking business relationships with major cell tower interests like Radian Corporation, a subsidiary of ONEX Corporation "a leading manufacturer of communication towers and the only independent manufacturer of tall broadcast towers in North America."

Mr. Cohen failed to disclose the fees he has received from AT&T -- and other telecoms interests -- to join their executive entourage and -- through his credentials and the power of the association with Harvard University -- to deceive the public about the objectivity and honesty of the science he speaks for.

Indeed, in a letter to Harvard President Dr. Barry Bloom expressing professional and ethical objections to the substantial commercial ties of the HCRA, Michael Jacobson, Ph.D, executive director of the Washington D.C. Center for Science in the Public Interest, wrote that "the Center's ties to industry are so substantial as to undermine its credibility as a bonafide educational institution committed to the search for unbiased truth." Dr. Jacobson urged Harvard to sever its ties to the HCRA.

David Ropeik, HCRA's Director of Communications -- and a leading member of the Society of Environmental Journalists -- is a regular contributor to National Public Radio. An entire chapter in his book discounts the problems of wireless technologies and cell towers without introducing or discussing the huge volume of evidence indicating the negative health effects. It is a ruse, and it is funded and advertised by the media, and carried by NPR, precisely because it serves corporate interests.

Unlike others concerned about the potential health risks of wireless technology -- but cowed by the science -- I am unwilling to tow the corporate line by taking the position that the "science is uncertain." Take asbestos, DDT and PCBs -- and ignore the most blatant examples of tobacco and radioactivity -- and you will find that the use of these substances continues in some parts of the world on the basis that "there is no scientific consensus" on the health effects. Is it surprising, given that objective studies are not funded? Or that researchers are predominantly funded by military and corporate entities?

GE continues to fund studies that set out a priori to prove that PCBs are not carcinogenic. Ditto for the companies and consequences of wireless technologies. But cell phones cause brain tumors. Electromagnetic radiation disrupts living tissues at the most basic level: the cell. Children (and the fetus) are highest risk. Microwave technologies and electromagnetic energy are used by the military as integral components of weapons systems precisely because they are detrimental to life.

Evidence of the health risks abounds. It is buried, suppressed, hidden, unreported. It is more insidious, in fact, in that these corporations already know the answers, but need to recoup huge capital and R&D investments, and the profits of a burgeoning, new, exiting, technology. Isn't the industry resistance to research alone reason for serious concern?

NETRAD Coming to a Tower Near You

Cell towers, cell phones, and the 1996 Telecoms Act are just the beginning. At least 15 universities in teaming partnerships with government agencies and private corporations are currently battling for highly competitive National Science Foundation research dollars (\$17 million NSF dollars over 5 years, with \$17 million matching funds from industry partners) focused on "climate and weather sensors" to be mounted on the lowest rungs of cell towers. The program is called NETRAD (Network? Electronic? Telecommunications? Radiation?).

The Office of Homeland Security is helping to peddle the NETRAD program, with the objective of implementing a national "weather and atmospheric surveillance" grid that enables detection, for example, of biological agents. (There are all kinds of other imaginative uses however, like monitoring radiation releases from nuclear plants, for various insidious possible purposes.) Advanced miniaturized sensors will be coupled to rapid signal processing and computing

technologies, and to some centralized national control and monitoring center. Further, cell towers will most likely be outfitted with miniature video monitors for high-resolution area (earth & sky) surveillance and monitoring. (What kinds of surveillance are we really talking about? And against who? Or what? Ask U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft...)

One of leading teams is comprised of the universities of Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico and Colorado State, with industry partners Raytheon, M/A-Com and Vaisala. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) and the National Severe Storms Laboratories are two of the leading federal agencies involved. Indeed, the UMASS Microwave Infrared Remote Sensing Labs (MIRSL) are involved in all kinds of military programs dealing with surveillance, sensors, and weather-as-a-weapon technologies, but these are euphemistically described as “weather monitoring and characterization” technologies in reportage by local newspapers; when a grant is awarded to MIRSL it is always and unquestioningly billed as “good for the local economy.”

The cell tower industry, more broadly, is seeking any and all viable “tenants” to occupy the real estate they now control, consisting of over 100,000 cell towers installed in the US already, with thousands more planned. Cell phone technologies infrastructure currently occupies the apex -- illuminating people and earth below with long wavelength/ tissues penetrating radiation -- and the NETRAD sensors will occupy the base – illuminating the sky – leaving (typically) hundreds of vertical feet of cell tower infrastructure for other military or “civilian” technologies: all kinds of communications, surveillance, RADAR and tracking technologies are being considered for national “surveillance and security” deployment.

Who is American Tower? American Tower claims they are “the largest independent owner, operator and developer of broadcast and wireless communications sites in North America.” American Tower’s Chairman, Steve Dodge, is also on the board of Directors of companies called Nextel – a major digital communications technologies provider – and Sensitech – a corporation that produces state-of-the-art sensors and monitors. Mr. Dodge is also on the board of directors of the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, another of the sponsors of the Harvard Center for Risk Analyses.

In their 2002 Annual Report, Mr. Dodge noted rather matter-of-factly: “we do not believe that the landscape of wireless will be limited to today’s companies. We would not rule out potential government sponsored applications for wireless technology related to homeland security...” In October 2001, American Tower paid \$150,000 in civil penalties related to certain alleged environmental permitting and filing violations in the County of Santa Clara in California. In 2002, American Tower collected \$ 548,923,000 in rental and management revenues.

The bottom line is that cell tower technologies are lethal to living systems, especially children, and that research into the negative health and environmental effects has been suppressed or intentionally sidelined. The cell technology irradiates everything below it and the energy is fairly high power. That means that energy transmitted on waves at the cell phone transmit frequencies is bouncing around being deflected and/or absorbed, but dissipated in any case, but whatever is on the ground, or in its path, below it. For that reason alone, cell technologies should be prohibited. And too there are the millions of birds dying annually due to flying into cell tower structures. On top of these concerns, considering issues of health, democracy and civil liberties, the implications of the plans described above are staggering.

Cell phones users and non-users might also be interested to know that the raw material that enables cell phones to operate comes primarily out of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some 80% of world supply of Columbo-tantalite – essential for cell phones, computers and interactive technologies like Sony Playstations – comes out of the Congo, where U.S. special forces have operated with impunity, sowing terror, and where over 4 million people have died in the past 4 years. From start to finish, the cellular technologies are hostile to democracy, the environment and public health and safety.

End.

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