

THE CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT IN THE FACE OF ENEMY ATTACK- THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE

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Public works required for national defence have, since the beginning of the present century and the advent of air power, included suitable protection for the machinery of government. While New Zealand was spared much of the immediacy of the threat of general, and particularly nuclear war, its effects on official thinking in the United Kingdom, and wider afield, are illuminating.

Pre-war plans- evacuation to the West Country

The Committee of Imperial Defence sub-committee on Air Raid Precautions was set up 1924 under Sir John Anderson, Permanent Under Secretary of the Home Office. In 1925 it recommended that the Office of Works prepare plans for the total or partial evacuation of the machinery of Government from London in the event of war, due to the anticipated serious disruption caused by air power in any future conflict. In the event no plans were prepared, as it was thought that it would be harmful to morale to not keep the Government in London.

1936-1938 plans- provision of protected facilities in London and its suburbs

Fears of the devastating consequences of aerial bombardment led, in the 1930s to a reconsideration of the decision to keep the organs of Government in central London in the event of a war. In 1936 a Committee of Imperial Defence sub-committee on the location of Government staff on the outbreak of war was set up under Sir Warren Fisher, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, to consider this question.

This sub-committee, like the Anderson committee, recommended the adoption of plans for the dispersal of essential Government staff, to ensure the continuity of Government functions in the face of the expected heavy bombardment. Provision was also to be made for interim dispersal of government staff to the north-west suburbs of the capital, where they would be located in Government offices, schools and other public buildings. A working committee, set up in February 1937 under Sir John Rae, an Under Secretary at the Treasury, proposed that twelve thousand essential civil servants (group "A") would move out to the suburbs as necessary, and hence to the West Country if conditions made this necessary.

The Committee of Imperial Defence decided on 4 May 1938 to provide protected accommodation for Government departments in central London. A Central War Room was provided in the basement of the New Public Offices, Great George Street. The decision was also taken to provide suburban citadels, and a number were built from 1938 onwards. Following a decision taken in February 1939, War Rooms were also provided, in London, for the individual Services, and for the Ministry of Home Security. By December 1941 central London citadels housed three thousand staff, with a further six hundred in the suburban citadels.

However, a scheme for a system of underground chambers in Whitehall for the core of Government was reconsidered by Ministers in October 1939 and effectively abandoned. Besides the quantities of concrete and steel required, the project would have taken at least two years to complete. If the Government survived in London that long, then the bunkers would not have been needed. However, Lord Beaverbrook was appointed to supervise the execution of plans for the construction of a number of bomb-proof strongholds in London.

War-time developments- the abandonment of the suburbs

Plans for the large scale dispersal of civil servants to the provinces provided for the initial removal of less essential personnel at the beginning of the war. The Admiralty moved a number of its departments to Bath, the War Office moved to Cheltenham, and the Air Ministry went to Harrogate. Accommodation was requisitioned in a wide circle around these towns for the anticipated large-scale evacuation.

With the Germans occupying the French coast, by the middle of 1940 the West Country was no longer immune from the dangers of enemy air attack. If the machinery of Government were to leave the heart of London, it would now remain, at least temporarily, in the shelter of the defended area of London.

In 1940 it was decided that plans to evacuate the 44,000 less essential "yellow" civil servants would not be fully implemented, a decision taken largely as a consequence of the disruption which would be caused by such a move¹. The "black move", the evacuation of the more essential elements of the civil service, was also abandoned in May 1940. Ministers were impressed by the highly unfortunate consequences of the moves of the French Government from Paris to Tours and thence to Bordeaux, both on national morale and on the conduct of official business. While this decision was reviewed on 11 September 1943 due to the V-bomb threat, it was never put into effect.

In September 1940 it was decided that the cabinet would remain in Whitehall until it was bombed out or communications broke down. The "high control" could still move to the suburbs as needed, though the priority on works at these citadels was reduced in 1939, as it was then intended to evacuate straight to the West Country, should any move be necessary. The central staffs, and their sixteen thousand "black" civil servants, would only move out of London, to Worcester, in the event of actual German invasion.

The central staffs would move to a zone around Worcester and Stratford upon Avon. The Prime Minister and key staff would go to Spetchley Park, five kilometres east of Worcester. The War Cabinet would move to Hindlip Hall, five kilometres north of the same city. The Air Ministry would move to "Longfellow", located in the vicinity of Worcester itself. The War Office established their communications centre at Droitwich, eight kilometres north-east of Worcester, where it was known as "Chaucer". The Admiralty were to be at "Duke", based at Malvern, thirteen kilometres south-west of Worcester. By 1941 it was provided that London would pass control to "Central", near Dunstable, and later Cheltenham, in the event of conditions in London making this necessary.

His Majesty King George VI and the Royal Family would move to Madresfield Court, three kilometres east of Great Malvern, the home of Earl Beauchamp. This house had been designated at the time of the first Napoleonic invasion scare as a refuge for King George III. Pitchford Hall, fourteen kilometres south of Shrewsbury, Shropshire, and Newby Hall, six kilometres south-east of Ripon, North Yorkshire, were earmarked for similar purposes in the 1940s.

The building of the Cabinet War Rooms

In January 1939 the Committee of Imperial Defence reaffirmed the assumption that the seat of Government would be in Whitehall at the outbreak of war, and remain there as long as physically possible. As the focus changed to a policy of "staying put" in London, so the protected accommodation had to be extended far beyond its original purpose.

The most important structure was the Cabinet War Rooms, Storey's Gate (called the Central War Room till 29 December 1939), located under the Treasury Chambers, Broad Sanctuary, Parliament Street. Access was also available from Clive Steps, King Charles Street. The converted basement of the New Public Offices (newness was a relative term, the building dating from 1898-1915), now known as Government Offices, Great George Street, was bounded by King Charles Street, Parliament Street, Whitehall, Great George Street, Storey's Gate, and Horse Guards Road. It covered an area of ninety metres by two hundred metres.

Before the war the basement of the New Public Offices was largely used by the Office of Works to store archives, although an eighty person bunker was built there 1936-38. The conversion of the basement to form the Central War Rooms was only intended as a temporary measure, as the intention was to use suburban bunkers. However, the rooms were three metres below ground, in the strongest basement in Whitehall, and beneath a steel-framed building. A one metre thick concrete slab was placed over the basement room from October 1939, although even at that time two metres had been thought the minimum required to ensure safety for the occupants of the shelter.

Activated 27 August 1939, the Cabinet War Rooms eventually housed over five hundred people, including the War Cabinet and its Secretariat, Home Forces General Headquarters, and the Chiefs of Staff Committee. The building gradually took over more space, until it covered an area of one and a quarter hectares. Whereas in 1938 there were only three rooms, in spring 1940 there were sixteen rooms and sixty beds. Eventually it included two hundred rooms.

From these rooms most of the strategic decisions of the war were taken or considered, the rooms remaining in use until after the defeat of Japan. The Cabinet War Rooms were preserved in 1948 by the Cabinet Office. In 1975 they passed to the Department of the Environment. In 1981 the Imperial War Museum took over responsibility, and they were opened to the public in 1984.

Development of the London bunkers

The other bunkers in central London are less well known, and, in most cases, are still in use today. The Citadel, Horseguards Parade, The Mall, was built 1940-41 as an operations centre for the Admiralty. The foundations are nine metres deep, and a six metre thick concrete roof protects the principal rooms. Due to the impossibility of removing such a robust structure without also levelling much of central London, it has remained as a gaunt reminder of the Second World War. In an attempt to disguise the original function of the building, it is now covered with Russian vine. The roof is grassed over, and is cut twice a year. It is still used by the Ministry of Defence, and is now part of the Whitehall communications centre.

The Montague House bunker was built 1938 to house five hundred people. It was used during the War by the War Office, and is now part of the Defence Communications Centre beneath the Ministry of Defence. It also houses part of the Government Telephone Exchange.

North Rotunda, Horseferry Road, was built from a disused gas-holder, with the other Horseferry Road citadels, for the Air Ministry in 1937. It was intended that the Prime Minister, personal staff, and the nucleus of the War Cabinet staff should use it, but this was not to be when it was completed in late 1943. The structure now supports one tower block of the Government Office, Marsham Street, which houses the Department of the Environment and the Ministry of Transport. The bunker itself houses the "Federal" telephone exchange, Horseferry Tandem, and other government exchanges.

South Rotunda, Horseferry Road, was the Home Security War Room, responsible for co-ordinating the civil defence organisation. It is now a civil service sports centre as well as forming part of the foundations of a block of the new government offices, Marsham Street.

Steel Frame Section, Horseferry Road, housed the London District Army Council. It now houses a government telephone exchange, and is also part of the foundations of a block of the Marsham Street offices.

No 4 Central Buildings, Matthew Parker Street, Broad Sanctuary, was built for an unknown use, possibly for the overseas intelligence agency, MI6. It now forms part of the foundations of the new Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, and houses the telephone exchange for the House of Commons, and general government departments.

Faraday Citadel Building, Faraday House, Carter Lane, housed the Faraday Telephone exchange, a Post Office trunk exchange, and some Ministers' residences. It is still used as the Faraday trunk exchange, called "citadel".

Curzon Street House, Curzon Street, Mayfair, had a protected basement and ground floor. It was intended for the use of Home Forces General Headquarters. It was also made available for the use of the Royal Family after Buckingham Palace was bombed. It is now part of the headquarters of the domestic Security Intelligence Service (MI5).

The London Underground train network included a series of deep tunnel shelters, each one capable of housing 9,000 people, as public shelters. These were also used as extra "citadel" accommodation later in the war, including the Goadge Street Station shelter which was used by General Eisenhower.

The suburban bunkers

The suburban bunkers, whose role was largely superseded by 1939, are now largely abandoned, in contrast to those in central London, where accommodation space has always been at a premium.

These bunkers include "Paddock", built in the grounds of the General Post Office Research Station at Dollis Hill House, Dollis Hill, near Hampstead. The house, built in 1823 and now used for receptions, stands in the forty hectare Gladstone Park. The bunker was constructed in 1938 as part of the GPO's own emergency preparations for war. It was later intended that it be used as a War Room for the War Cabinet. However, it was never used by the Cabinet except on several trial occasions, and was given up to the War Office later in the war². It is now derelict. It was designed to be proof against two hundred and twenty five kilogram bombs.

Admiralty Citadel, Cricklewood, under the Admiralty Charts Depot, 403-405 Edgware Road, was built 1938 for Admiralty use, under the 1937 plans. It also was intended to be proof against two hundred and twenty five kilogram bombs. A Health and Safety Executive laboratory is located on top of the bunker, which is now disused.

Station Z, Harrow, was built in 1938 for the Air Ministry. It was the only bunker provided with really adequate protection, and is the only suburban bunker still in use. It now houses the Home Office Central Communications Establishment, which maintains and supervises government radio facilities in the London area.

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Noel Cox continues his essay on protecting the seats of power in Britain, America and the Dominions

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Position at the end of the War

By the end of the Second World War central Government had evacuated all its non-essential departments to the West Country, where indeed, many remain today. The planned extensive evacuation was thought unnecessary, and never carried out. More significantly, the intention to move essential staffs to the suburbs of London was also abandoned, due to the administrative inconvenience that this would bring being marginally greater than the disruption brought by enemy action.

The end of hostilities in 1945 saw a considerable network of bunkers in central London. Many of the central London bunkers had been linked by tunnels from the summer of 1939, and by 1945 some tunnels were as much as thirty metres deep. The system was not deliberately preserved, but demands for space being heavy in central London, the bunkers were taken over by the occupiers of the building of which they formed the foundations.

Revival of continuity of Government planning in the Cold War

From 1948 the entire civil defence organisation was revived, due to the development of the Cold War with the Soviet block. This included a revival of Government plans for maintaining the continuity of Government. In the 1950s plans were made to make use of the existing citadels, and some new tunnels, supported by much new Post Office communications work in London. This new system would house several thousand essential personnel. However, no special provision was made for the changed nature of warfare brought by the advent of the atomic bomb.

The acquisition of atomic and later thermonuclear weapons by the Soviet Union forced a reconsideration of the question of providing protection for the central government. By 1959 a decision had been made to move out of London altogether in the event of war. While the policy of staying put had been the right one for the Second World War- though the V-bomb campaign caused a brief revival of interest in dispersal- any future conflict would not allow the option of staying in a capital certain to be subject to nuclear bombardment in the event of an all-out war. Nor would the existing suburban bunkers be sufficiently safe.

As a consequence, by the early 1950s plans were under way for the development of a central Government War Room in the West Country. The 1925 and 1936-37 proposals were back with a vengeance. This time, there could not be any doubts of the devastation which would be caused by enemy attack, and the option of immediate dispersal to the West Country was the only sensible one.

The Central Government War Headquarters

The location of this new Central Government War Headquarters (CGWHQ) was identified in 1964 as being at a site called "Hawthorn". This has been identified by Duncan Campbell as being Spring Quarry, Copenacre, Hawthorn, Corsham, in the county of Wiltshire, a site which is officially a Property Services Agency Supplies Division (now the Crown Suppliers) Stores Depot³.

Since plans to preserve central as opposed to regional government are made by the Cabinet Office rather than the Home Office, secrecy has more successful, and its location, or even its existence, cannot be confirmed. Since Regional Government Headquarters and Zonal Headquarters established under the civil defence plans house civil servants of no higher than under secretary rank, more senior ones would logically be at a CGWHQ. However, whether this is at a dedicated site is uncertain.

Although the decision was apparently taken in the early 1950s to establish a CGWHQ in the west of England, it is not certain that this was ever actually developed, or whether, due to the cost and practicality of developing a really safe site, the wartime conduct of Government would be from existing facilities in London. In the event of the destruction of the central Government in London, the regional civil defence commissioners would assume control⁴.

The survival of central government in the face of nuclear attack is however pre-supposed in official literature. In the event of a nuclear attack the powers of central government, if it could not operate, would devolve on a regional commissioner within each of eleven home defence regions covering the United Kingdom. The Commissioner would have full authority to govern internally, his authority being derived from emergency powers approved by Parliament during a war emergency⁵. This form of government would continue only as long as central government could not function. As communications in the country were restored, central government could begin to take back control, with the commissioner losing his devolved powers, perhaps progressively⁶.

Evidence in fact suggests that a Government headquarters of some kind was established in the Bathstone quarries of Wiltshire. Corsham Area Works Office, 1 Old Shaft Road, Hawthorn, called by Duncan Campbell "HQ Controlled Special Site", ran the whole complex at Corsham.

Formerly reporting to Home Regional Headquarters Special Sites, under the Director Home Regional Services, Croydon, since October 1982 it has been under South West Regional Office, Bristol. This change in control coincided with the publication of reports on "Hawthorn", and may have been calculated to draw attention away from the site.

The "HQ Controlled Special Site" was also responsible for Post Office/British Telecom works at Corsham and at Limpley Stoke and Bradford on the Avon. It was also apparently responsible for an second special site at Rhydymwyn, and possibly a third, which however may never have been fitted out- or was kept secret more successfully. There was no sign of such a site in 1974.

The Corsham Complex

The Corsham Area Complex is one hundred and fifty kilometres west of London. Tunnel Quarry, to the east of Spring Quarry, covers six hectares, or sixty thousand square metres. With Huddswell Quarry, it was a War Office underground depot from 1936, later as No 1 Ammunition Sub-depot, until the ammunition was removed in the early 1950s. Refurbished in 1978-80, it was still in military use in the early 1980s. Along with Huddswell, it may house the Headquarters United Kingdom Commanders-in-Chief Committee (Home) or Commander-in-Chief Land Command, but more likely it houses the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which is the principal source of military advice to the Cabinet.

Huddswell Quarry, to the east of Spring Quarry, was also used as an ammunition depot from 1914. With Tunnel Quarry it was part of No 1 Ammunition Sub-depot until the early 1950s.

Monkton Farleigh Quarry is a few kilometres from the main site and eleven kilometres east of Eastlays Quarry. With Eastlays it covers one hundred and eighty-five thousand square metres, or nineteen hectares. It formed No 2 Ammunition sub-depot from 1938. The site was sold 1975 to a building firm, and is now more or less disused. Eastlays Quarry was No 3 Ammunition Sub-depot from 1938. Sold with Monkton Farleigh, it is now abandoned.

Seven Shaft Quarry was an ammunition depot from 1914. The Ridge Quarry was an ammunition depot from 1936. Still belonging to the Ministry of Defence, it is now abandoned.

Monk Park Quarry, to the south of Spring Quarry, was also an ammunition depot from 1914. It later formed part of the Royal Navy Stores Depot Copenacre, which housed a Polaris/Trident logistics support site. The Royal Navy Stores Depot Copenacre was closed in 1996 with the loss of over five hundred civilian posts.

Royal Air Force Station Rudloe Manor, Copenacre, Hawthorn, Wiltshire, formerly styled RAF Box, is the base for the Controller Defence Communications Network, Headquarters RAF Provost and Security Services, and Headquarters RAF Provost and Security Services Southern Region. No 16 Signals Unit, RAF is also based there. Rudloe Manor was also formerly the location of Southern Area Headquarters Royal Observer Corps, responsible for monitoring radiation hazards from nuclear attack, and for operating the public warning network. Reportedly a secret UFO study centre was, and maybe still is, based at Rudloe Manor.

Spring Quarry, Copenacre, Hawthorn, Corsham, Wiltshire, was an ammunition depot from 1914. In the Second World War it was an underground aircraft factory, built at a cost of nineteen million pounds. Of the three hundred and seventy thousand square metres (or forty hectares) taken over, the factory covered two hundred thousand square metres or some twenty-two hectares. There are a total of forty-two entrances, some with lifts and escalators. The tunnels are twenty-four to thirty-six metres deep. The site housed workshops and facilities for eight thousand workers, who were housed above ground.

The southern part of Spring Quarry until recently housed the Royal Navy Specialist Stores Depot Copenacre, which also covered Copenacre and Monks Park Quarry. The Ministry of Defence Police Western Area Headquarters, under an Assistant Chief Constable, is located

there. Property Services Agency and RAF surface fuel depots, and army depots were also at the site.

The Property Services Agency Supplies Division Stores Depot is in the centre of the Quarry, and covers the area of the old aircraft factory. There are two entrances on Westwells Road, one being the former main entrance to the factory, situated next to the ninety metre deep and two thousand eight hundred metres long Box Railway Tunnel, built by Brunel. An internal security alert state notice, normally reading "black", can be seen outside the Supply Depot. Campbell has speculated that this could be the CGWHQ, perhaps with new, deeper tunnelling work carried out. There is certainly a very significant degree of concentration of communications, security and intelligence facilities in the Corsham area.

Rhydymwyn, Alyn Valley, near Mold, Clwyd, Wales, is now empty. Poison gas stocks were held here during the Second World War. Though described as a depot to Corsham, it was apparently never fitted up. Three tunnels, each nine metres wide, run into the hillside.

Central Government War Headquarters in the United States of America

The provision of protected wartime facilities for central government is not confined to the United Kingdom. The best known sites are in the United States of America, where elaborate and expensive provision is made for continuity of government. For the President alone there are nine emergency facilities within a twenty-five minute helicopter flight of the White House, and more than seventy-five throughout the country.

In 1961 plans were made for the a command post, nine hundred to three thousand metres deep. Because of doubts about the survivability of any bunker, no matter how deep, this was never built, and the National Emergency Airborne Command Post was instituted that year. Now a fleet of Boeing 747, these are intended to enable the President to take to the air in the event of an enemy attack being launched, so as to survive long enough to order the proper response. There were also two modified cruisers as the National Emergency Command Post Afloat, from 1961-70. New back-up facilities, in the form of mobile command posts, intended to replace any of the airborne posts, are based on trucks.

The National Military Command Centre is based in the Pentagon, Washington, District of Columbia. It is a Permanent Wartime Headquarters, in that the same facilities are intended for use in peacetime and wartime. However, because of the limited survivability of a site in the capital, an Alternate National Military Command Centre is located at Fort Ritchie, near Camp David, Maryland, one hundred kilometres north-west of Washington, DC. It is a small, thirty metre deep shelter. Related facilities are located at Raven Rock Mountain, near Gettysburg, southern Pennsylvania, in a bunker one hundred and eighty metres below the summit of the mountain.

A Back-up Alternate National Military Command Centre is available at the Mount Weather Special Facility, Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia, eighty kilometres west of Washington. This is the alternate national capital, built in 1958. Category A (essential) agencies at federal level have three emergency management teams. Emergency Team Alpha, led by the agency chiefs, remain at the normal head office in Washington, though usually in a basement operations room. This team is to carry out departmental functions for as long as possible. When an attack

is underway the departmental head is evacuated, and the remaining officials continue to operate until unable to function (through destruction or loss of communications links), at which time team B would assume responsibility.

The Emergency Teams Beta are located at Mount Weather. The alternate national capital also has room for the President, the Senate and House of Representatives, and the Supreme Court. The President himself of course might be at any one of seventy-five sites, or airborne. Unpredictability and redundancy are the twin keys to the system. In this respect, the order of presidential succession is carefully determined, and the whereabouts of the President and his heirs constantly monitored.

The Emergency Teams Charlie are dispersed to sites in the Federal Relocation Arc, a few hours drive north, west and south of Washington. Most agencies have pre-located sites, and store certain essential records there. These teams would not assume operational command until a clear indication were received that communications were no longer possible with the Special Facility, or damage assessment reports indicated that it had been destroyed.

This division of responsibilities between three teams mirrors the British practice, with Whitehall (team A), Hawthorn (team B) and the Regions. However, Category A agencies also have emergency teams at regional level, with one team staying at regional headquarters, and the other going to a Federal Regional Centre.

Central Government War Headquarters in Canada

Canada also provides a Central Emergency Government Headquarters. This is intended to ensure the continued provision of government leadership and essential services to all Canadians should there be a nuclear attack on North America. Facilities are provided at central, regional, zonal, and municipal levels. The Central Emergency Government Headquarters is primarily Federal, the Regional Emergency Government Headquarters are primarily provincial, and the Zonal Emergency Government Headquarters are provincial-municipal. The Municipal Emergency Government Headquarters are staffed by municipal personnel.

There is only one Central Emergency Government Headquarters. This is located at Carp, Ontario, twenty-five kilometres west of Ottawa, and accommodates key officials and professional, technical and support people who will be required to perform essential functions in surviving and recovering from attack. Several Central Relocation Units are located within a one hundred and sixty kilometre radius of the Central Emergency Government Headquarters. They would accommodate people who support the activities being carried out in the Central Emergency Government Headquarters and who can, if necessary, take them over⁷.

Second World War Combined Headquarters in New Zealand

In the Second World War limited provision was made in New Zealand for the protection of government in the face of the threat of air raids. A protected room was provided for the Cabinet. It was the military however who embarked upon the most elaborate projects. Combined Headquarters were planned for the three regions into which New Zealand was

divided for defence purposes. Building work commenced on the headquarters for the Auckland region at the Teachers Training College, 74 Epsom Avenue, Epsom, Auckland, now Auckland College of Education.

The Combined Headquarters for the Wellington region was beneath the Dominion Museum, in Buckle Street, Wellington. The Cracroft-Wilson House, Cracroft-Wilson Estate, Hackhorne Road, Cashmere, Christchurch, was the Combined Headquarters for the Christchurch region. This latter structure involved the excavation of three caverns, forty metres long by ten metres wide, and having a roof seven metres high. None of the Combined Headquarters were ever completed, as work ceased as the prospects of Japanese attack or invasion receded.

National Civil Defence Headquarters in New Zealand

New Zealand does not possess an equivalent to Hawthorn, Mount Weather, or Carp. The National Civil Defence Headquarters, in the sub-basement of Parliament Buildings, Wellington, is the nearest equivalent. Built in 1972, it has room for one hundred staff, and is used by the Civil Defence organisation. It is activated monthly, but it is more than merely the operations room for the Ministry of Civil Defence, as provision is made for Ministers and representatives of fifteen government departments. An Alternate National Civil Defence Headquarters was located at Land Forces Headquarters, Takapuna, Auckland.

Conclusions

The range of structures built to protect the personnel of central Government against the worst effects of war have varied as much as the nature of war has changed. Prior to the First World War little if any provision was necessary. But from the First World War the advent of aerial warfare meant that no longer could the Government assume itself safe from disruptive, or destructive, attack. Although the pessimistic predictions of the 1930s were to be proven wrong, the provision of shelters meant a continuing public works programme, something as disruptive as the actual enemy attacks.

The lessons of the Second World War were that the movement of government departments from a central location caused more problems than it solved. The provision of communications facilities was central to the avoidance of disruption, but most work had to be conducted on the spot.

After the advent of nuclear warfare dispersal again became the best option, if only because any capital city would be liable to be subjected to intolerable bombardment. Only those countries with large budgets and faced with a significant threat could justify any provision of such facilities. In New Zealand, the policy of dispersal is especially sensible, as the possibility of earthquake putting the capital out of action cannot be discounted. It is a pity though that the surviving wartime military command centres are not better known.

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¹The evacuation had begun a few days after the outbreak of war, along with the evacuation of four million mothers, children, and invalids; individuals who had made their own plans to evacuate London; and business firms, schools, and other private institutions.

²The War Cabinet met on 3 October 1940, though operation *Paddock* was never put into effect.

³Campbell, Duncan, *War Plan UK* (Paladin, London, 1983).

⁴These officers, appointed by royal warrant, would have a co-ordinating role in the period prior to an attack. They were to ensure that the civil defence plans of the various departments and of the local authorities were properly co-ordinated. The system of commissioners was largely a survival from the Second World War, when Commissioners operated from Regional War Rooms, under the direction of the Ministry of Home Security War Room. In case of the more or less complete disruption of their communications with the Home Security War Room, they would add to the co-ordination function that of executive control and exercise "full powers of civil government". Even in the post-Second World War nuclear environment this assumption of powers was to be only for so long as necessary, and not all the full range of governmental powers would necessarily be executed by all commissioners.

⁵The warrants of appointment for commissioners in the Second World War stated that they were charged with "securing the proper co-ordination of all such measures [of civil defence] and the exercise of such authority and control as may be necessary for their due and efficient execution".

⁶Home Office, *Emergency Planning Guidance to Local Authorities* (Home Office, London, 1985) para 4.12.

⁷Emergency Preparedness Canada, *Continuity of Government Program: Emergency Government Facilities* (1988) Fact Sheet.