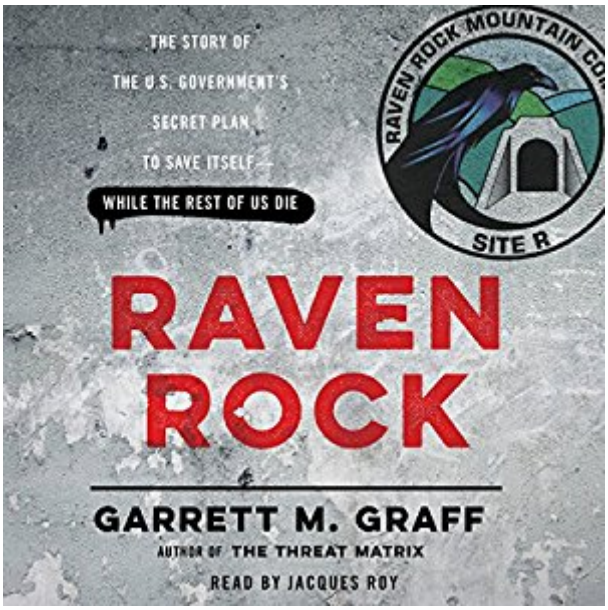
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Raven Rock: The Story Of The U.S. Government's Secret Plan To Save Itself - While The Rest Of Us Die



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Synopsis

A fresh window on American history: the eye-opening truth about the government's secret plans to survive a catastrophic attack on US soil, even if the rest of us die - a road map that spans from the dawn of the nuclear age to today. Every day in Washington, DC, the blue-and-gold 1st Helicopter Squadron, codenamed MUSSEL, flies over the Potomac River. As obvious as the presidential motorcade, most people assume the squadron is a travel perk for VIPs. They're only half right: While the helicopters do provide transport, the unit exists to evacuate high-ranking officials in the event of a terrorist or nuclear attack on the capital. In the event of an attack, select officials would be whisked by helicopters to a ring of secret bunkers around Washington, even as ordinary citizens were left to fend for themselves. For 60 years the US government has been developing secret doomsday plans to protect itself, and the multibillion-dollar Continuity of Government (COG) program takes numerous forms - from its plans to evacuate the Liberty Bell from Philadelphia to the plans to launch nuclear missiles from a Boeing-747 jet flying high over Nebraska. In Raven Rock, Garrett M. Graff sheds light on the inner workings of the 650-acre compound (called Raven Rock) just miles from Camp David as well as dozens of other bunkers the government built for its top leaders during the Cold War, from the White House lawn to Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado to Palm Beach, Florida, and the secret plans that would have kicked in after a Cold War nuclear attack to round up foreigners and dissidents and nationalize industries. Equal parts presidential, military, and cultural history, Raven Rock tracks the evolution of the government plan and the threats of global war from the dawn of the nuclear era through the War on Terror.

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Customer Reviews

The unthinkable has happened; time has run out, the missiles have been launched and the United States as we know it is doomed. But never fear! The government has planned extensively to assure their safety and that their reign will continue without interruption - even if there's nothing left to govern after it's all over!Raven Rock explores the history of the people and events that brought about these plans, spanning the span of time since the end of World War II, from Truman to Obama (who signed a bill in 2009 giving the US Postal Service the sole responsibility of delivering "biological counter-measures" in the event of a biological weapons attack. Which is better than FedEx (who always seems to deliver my packages late, but that's another story.)After I watched a Travel Channel show that talked about The Greenbriar, I picked up Raven Rock to read more about the history behind that Cold War bunker mentality and found much, much more. The easy flow of the book drew me in quickly, the anecdotes and trivia kept things light and interesting and the very linear layout stayed on topic without extraneous detail to confuse the reader.Raven Rock is an engrossing history illuminating a shadowy aspect of the government not well known or understood and I definitely recommend it to history buffs and trivia fans alike.

Thoroughly readable and enjoyable account across decades and generations that allows the reader the comfort of diving into details while also being more open to skimming by others. I appreciated that absolutely non-partisan viewpoint that doesn't seem to favor one administration or party over another; strengths and weaknesses of each fairly reported. It's also nice to learn what each successive administration absorbed and reimagined - or not - from the administration it succeeded.

Thoroughly captivating. Certainly a lot of 'I didn't know that' items. I do think the author missed one significant piece of history and technology which was the whole Nike Missile defense system which was built by teh Army Corps of Engineers without many people realizing it, right under their noses, often in their own neighborhoods.

This book is the single-best account of the development of the US Government's continuity of government plans that I've ever read. It is comprehensively-researched and energetically written. It presents the material in a compelling fashion, without becoming dull or overly-academic in tone.

I am from Frederick County, Maryland. All the secret bunkers and hidden tunnels are the stuff of folklore where I'm from. Here is the straight dope. Mount Saint Mary's was for foreign diplomats.

The golf balls at Detrick are for the Hot Line. Western Maryland College (now called something else) does have a secret basement. The water tower I ran by on the JFK is not a water tower at all. I feel vindicated.Most of the book is what you would call 'popular history.' But the final chapter might just be one of the best accounts of the September 11th attacks I have read. Dick Cheney as the right man at the right time. Imagine that!The book could have used one more pass by the editor as in places it repeats the same information.

Garrett M. GraffÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Raven Rock is fascinating, insightful, compelling, and powerful. This history of the governmentÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Doomsday plans from the Cold War is a true page-turner for those who have any interest in the politics of the past, present, and future. Deeply researched and intelligently written, Raven Rock is nothing short of revelatory. Illuminating, addictive, and eye-opening! I highly recommend it.

Continuity of Government (COG)The advent of nuclear weapons also brought concerns of how to maintain a government during and after a nuclear attack. For a lack of a better term, this is called ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“continuity of governmentÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• or COG. Before nuclear weapons, it was virtually impossible to destroy a complete government in one attack. After nuclear weapons, this is an all to possible scenario!Ravenrock is an account of how the US Government planned for COG from President Truman to near present times. Much of the near term planning is classified and unavailable to the authors. But still there are clues of what exists.The sad fact is this: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Americans and their politicians believe hiding from a threat is cowardice.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• The was seen during 9/11 when President Bush was at school in Florida, whisked away to Air Force One, forced to fly in holding patterns over the Caribbean, landing at Barksdale AFB, and the directed to Offutt AFB, despite his objects and his desire to return to the White House, while people in Washington tried to understand what had happened to the United States. Afterwards, a number of people accused him of cowardice. This greatly impairs the ability of planners for COG.In Ravenrock, of the 1950ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s we see plans to ferret key people in government away to various underground bunkers while leaving their families. This proved infeasible for politicians and their families alike. So plans were changed to provide for families. But even these did not provide satisfaction, to the point where key politicians would not evacuate. Rather, the would send subordinates during the exercises and in certain real situations to the bunkers.Then, there was the issue of transportation. At first, the plan depended on traveling the roads about Washington, DC. But have you ever tried to get somewhere quickly in Washington, DC,

particularly at 4:30 PM? In a nuclear attack, the thought initially was that you had 15 minutes!After trying to move President Eisenhower to Camp David, it was quickly found a better solution was necessary. At first a ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“bubble domeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• helicopter from the Army was used. But after the first flight, when the President suffer severe heat exhaustion and dehydration from the heat in the helicopter, this had to be changed. After some deliberation, a Marine helicopter proved satisfactory. This was how the Marines got the helicopter services for the President which they retain to the present day.Clearly, the transportation difficulties still persist to this day for various other personages. Washington, DC, is not an easy place to escape from.We see the development of Air Force One in its various forms and the alternate command posts, both aerial and bunker based. Communications posed special problems requiring the coalition of various communications corporations in the planning for COG. We see the development of NORAD in Cheyenne Mountain and the advent of NORAD tracking Santa Claus on Christmas Eve.And so, Ravenrock traces the billions of dollars spent on COG operations, the attempts to find feasible governmental operations, the exercise and failures of the plans, and what actually happened during several crises where the COG plans were potentially in effect.So where does Ravenrock leave us?Since there is security classification tied to most of the COG plans and operations, we can only surmise an answer from real events where COG operations were exercised, the most recent being 9/11. What we found was a reluctance of American Leaders to exercise their duties under the current plan. For example, the Secretary of Defense was assisting in immediate evacuations from the Pentagon and was incommunicado for a lengthy period of time rather than performing assigned duties! Despite movement orders for the principals, they sent subordinates. Most of the people did not know of the plans and those that did apparently with some exceptions did not follow their instructions!Thus, we are left to conclude that in a real emergency, much of the COG planning would be for naught: ad hoc decisions would be made. If a real nuclear attack hit Washington, DC, regardless of warning times, be they short or be they long, the US Government would be effectively decapitated, mainly because plans have been insufficiently exercised and plans would not be executed in full.No one knows what the future will bring but we are left with President EisenhowerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s words:ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The President said that, of course, his imagination as to the horrors of a third world war might be overdeveloped, but he believed that every single nation, including the United States, which entered into this war as a free nation would come out of it as a dictatorship,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• wrote Deputy Executive Secretary Everett Gleason in the meeting minutes. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“This would be the price of survival.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•

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