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Rudy's Secret (Shh!) Bunker!

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a serious emergency, the facility could hold as many as 100 top city administrators. Plans also call for water and cots for messengers and other top emergency officials who would need to work through the night to deliver the city from floods, fires, terrorist attacks and other calamities. The center will have backup generators to be used during power failures and a place for workers to cook. As for food, the administration official said, there are a few cans of fruit and vegetables—but, he said dryly, the Mayor and his aides probably would prefer the fare at a public cafeteria on the building's third floor.

Ms. Collins told *The Observer* that the city spent \$4.9 million on general construction, \$4.6 million on electrical equipment and some \$2 million on mechanics, plumbing and sprinklers. Add that to the facility's annual rent, an average of \$1.5 million for 20 years, and the total price tag—minus operating costs—comes to more than \$40 million.

The center's first emergency took place during a four-inch snowstorm on the weekend of March 13-14, according to Mr. Hauer, the head of the city's Office of Emergency Management, the agency that runs the facility. Mr. Hauer said the center's facilities allowed his colleagues to get to their posts the night before the storm hit. Rather than have them drive in snow, some [could] stay over," he said.

Mr. Hauer added, however, that ac-

commodations were anything but swank. "They're very modest, like army bunks, double-decker bunks," he said, noting that they were based on bedding arrangements provided for Secret Service agents housed on the ninth floor of the same building.

TOP SECRET

Seven World Trade Center is a soaring office tower occupied by Salomon Smith Barney and the New York office of the Securities and Exchange Commission, among other tenants. No one—not even messengers—is allowed beyond the lobby without approval from somebody else in the building. A guard standing nearby told *The Observer* that the command center was impressively high-tech. But he said he had been instructed not to talk about the center.

Coupled with the harricades around City Hall, critics said the command center suggested a politician quick to see himself as under siege, an embattled leader surrounded by encroaching enemies. In a *Daily News* column last spring, Michael Daily pronounced the facility a "bar-gain"—compared, that is, with the luxurious, \$60 million, turquoise-tiled bunker inhabited by Saddam Hussein.

The *Daily News* also suggested that the project certainly didn't do the Mayor any good," observed City Council member Ken Fisher of Brooklyn, who nonetheless sees merit in the facility.

Despite the real dangers of worldwide conflicts spilling over to New York, many

have questioned the need for an expensive, high-tech facility. Los Angeles, hardly a stranger to calamities like mudslides and riots, managed to convert a 1960's bomb shelter into an emergency management center, updating the facility for several million dollars. And for years, the city's emergency management system has been run effectively out of Police Headquarters. Even with the new facility all but finished, the command center at 1 Police Plaza remains operational.

There are cans of fruits and vegetables in the command center, but the Mayor probably would prefer the fare at a third-floor cafeteria.

City Hall shrugged off the critics and, in an indication of the urgency the administration attached to the project, it was finished in less than a year. That's no small accomplishment in a city where the installation of a single public toilet or the repair of a single exit on the F.D.R. Highway takes years.

Despite the quasi-military look of the

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command center's décor, Mr. Hauer has strenuously rejected the suggestion that the facility is, in fact, a bunker. He has pointed out that the center is not a place for the Mayor and his allies and relatives to bunker down through disasters. Rather, he has said, the facility boasts a state-of-the-art communications system, connecting scores of people in government and law enforcement via computers to a mapping system that pinpoints the location of disasters and shows how near they are to sewer lines, water mains and subway tunnels.

"Given the things that have happened in this city," noted Bob Louden, an expert in emergency management at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, it makes sense "to upgrade what they are doing and create a new entity to make sure all agencies work together."

HEADING FOR COVER?

Of course, on a less dramatic note, the opening of the command center coincides with a dip in Mr. Giuliani's popularity and a perceived political vulnerability. The Rev. Al Sharpton has managed to reinvent himself yet again, this time at Mr. Giuliani's expense, with two weeks of well-publicized demonstrations at Police Headquarters. The tactics of his Police Department have come under national scrutiny. And just the other day, a coyote roamed loose in Central Park.

Officials may say the facility is not a bunker, but even so, Mr. Giuliani might be forgiven for taking cover in a quiet place with a foldout couch until his political storms blow over. "He may need it—his poll numbers are dropping," quipped

If there's an emergency, Giuliani on the 23rd command center the White House.

City Council member Queens. Then again, he's no matter how common may be. The con