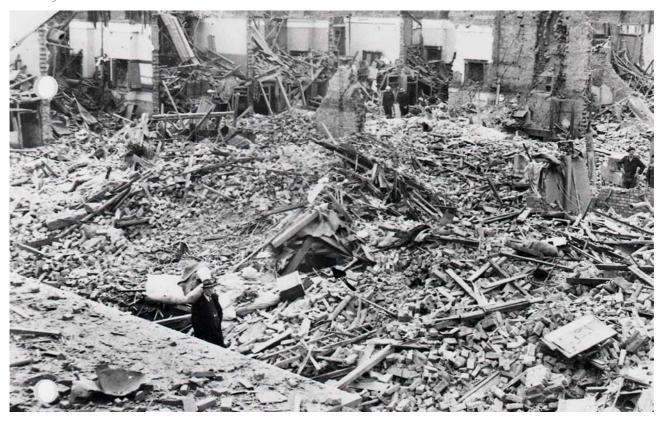
WESTERN EUROPE 1939-1945: END OF THE WAR

How might Churchill have replied to this telegram?

Bomb damage in North London, June 1944

Catalogue ref: AIR 14/3701



What is this source?

This photograph shows bomb damage to Shillingford Street, Islington in North London.

A V2 rocket that landed late in June 1944 caused the damage.

What's the background to this source?

Throughout the war there was a National Government that included politicians from all of the main political parties. One of the top priorities for this National Government was defence against air raids. When Germany was unable to invade Britain in 1940 Hitler then attacked British cities from the air in what became known as the Blitz. This lasted until the autumn of 1941. The Blitz did huge damage to British towns and cities. Over 40,000 civilians were killed and over a million buildings destroyed. In 1944 there was a second

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blitz as the Germans had developed rocket-powered weapons called V1s and V2s. These weapons killed about 8000 civilians.

Air Raid Precautions (ARP) had been a fact of life for British people throughout the war. It was another aspect of government control that would have to be phased out at the end of the war.

It's worth knowing that...

The photograph represents one of the biggest challenges that would face a new government in Britain. Thousands of British people were homeless by the end of the war. The British people were expecting a new and better Britain as a reward for their war efforts. They wanted new housing, and not the poor quality housing which many had suffered from before the war. They also wanted other improvements such as health care and education. Probably the greatest challenge facing Britain after the war was to build this New Britain.

As the war was coming to an end there was a General Election held in Britain in July 1945. Winston Churchill thought that the British people would trust his leadership in the post war age. In fact, he was decisively beaten and a new Labour government won a landslide victory under Clement Attlee. It was a sign that British people trusted Churchill as a war leader but did not see him as the man to build a new, better Britain.

How will you use this source?

- 1. Describe this image in as much detail as you can.
- 2. What challenge does this image represent to a government facing the post war period?
- 3. Study the notes as well as the photograph. What wider challenges does the photograph represent?
- 4. Churchill faced an election in July 1945 and was worried he would be defeated. Can you explain why?
- 5. What have you learned from this source that would go into Churchill's reply to the telegram?