NEW ARCHITECTURE SECRET SERVICES AND LAW AND ORDER INSTITUTIONS – A PROFILE AND SYSTEMATICS ATTEMPT

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Abstract:
Headquarters of secret services and public security institutions are typically build as suburban office parks, surrounded with parking lots, or as downtown citadels, situated close to government districts. They are huge, inaccessible and strongly secured structures. Formerly their images used to be classified, but now, very often, their contemporary architecture, which resembles university campuses or corporation headquarters, is being used as a marketing tool to create a desirable public image, suggesting that they are open, transparent and democratic institutions.
Keywords: *Architecture, secret services, public security institutions, architecture as a public image creating tool*

Introduction

Special services and law & order institutions value some discretion. Abbreviation of the US - National Security Agency - NSA (known from the infamous Edward Snowden's affair) was usually decrypted as "No Such Agency" (i.e. "There is no such agency"). But in an era of democracy and the Internet one can hide neither the existence of the secret services, nor the buildings they occupy. Some of them, such as the CIA headquarters in Langley in Washington or MI6 headquarters in London have already been shown in cinemas, and their images became a part of popular culture.

These famous objects are now treated almost like monuments. There are websites devoted to them, which were created for PR purposes by the institutions that use them. Other, less democratic services continue to refuse providing information on their premises. For example, no outsider knows where the Mossad's headquarters should be located and how the building should look like.

In most cases, however, addresses and images of the secret service headquarters are publicly available. They are usually large and well-guarded buildings with an unremarkable decor. But, as it will be demonstrated below, an architectural analysis of the buildings constructed lately for the needs of secret services and law & order institutions changes this concept: the modern architecture is increasingly used as a tool for creating the desired image.

Suburban office parks

Headquarters of the National Security Agency, built in 1957 and subsequently expanded in 1963 and in 1986, were erected in the military base in Fort Meade, located between Washington and Baltimore.

The location was chosen as a compromise: the NSA headquarters are located so far away that it is outside of the explosion range of an atomic bomb aimed at the capital of the USA, but also close enough, so that its employees, researchers, officers and their families could benefit from the capital's attractions and amenities of civilization which are offered by the neighborhood of a big city (NSA, 2012). It resembles a plain, suburban office park surrounded by a large parking area. The only feature that distinguishes it is its size.

Over 20 000 people work in the complex of buildings with an area of 280 000 square meters. The two main buildings of the NSA HQ resemble huge mirror Rubik's Cubes in its form (Bamford, 2002). Their facades are made of dark, reflective glass, which reflects the surroundings, effectively masking the interior. Glass panes are additionally coated with copper, which should prevent any possible electronic eavesdropping. It is difficult to notice anything from the outside, even how many stories these buildings have.

Fig. 1. Suburban National Security Agency headquarters in Fort Meade, Maryland, USA. Source: NSA, http://www.nsa.gov/about/photo_gallery/gallery.shtml.

Public opinion is hardly informed on the NSA, the information is mainly related to the cost of building the next giant computer centers, like the one opened in 2013. *Utah Data Center*, built for over one and a half billion dollars, or built on the territory of the Fort Meade *High Performance Computing Center*, which cost American taxpayers about a billion dollar. Computer databases, often underground, are among the most guarded and most secure facilities that are currently being built. The cost of technical and electronic security *High Performance Computing Center* is estimated at more than $ 46 million.

Fig. 2. The computer database NSA Utah Data Center.
Source: NSA: http://nsa.gov1.info/utah-data-center/utah-data-center.html.

The system will consist of security fences, guardhouses, entry control points and entrances for vehicles, electronic access control, burglary alarm systems, motion detectors and detectors of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear contamination, CCTV and fencing circles and technical security.

The center should consume 60 megawatts of electricity. In spite of this, the facility was designed with a view to energy efficiency and environmental protection. It is planned to obtain for it the *Silver LEED certification* (Hoover, 2011).

CIA headquarters in Langley, located in the woodland near Washington, also has the nature of a suburban office park. One of its bosses, Admiral Allen W. Dulles, wanted the CIA HQ to resemble a university campus. An isolated location and modern architecture should build prestige and

promote the institutions' effectiveness and safety. The campus' designer was the famous company from New York – Harrison & Abramovitz, who designed among others famous New York buildings: Rockefeller Center, Lincoln Center and the UN HQ. The modernistic, six-storey building with a usable area of 140 000 square meters was completed in 1961. President John Kennedy personally celebrated its completion.

Fig. 3. The entrance gate to the new CIA headquarters in Langley near Washington, proj. Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, 1984. Source: CIA for: Wikimedia Commons.

In 1984 the construction of another part of the campus was initiated, this time it was based on the design of the Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Company from Detroit. As opposed to the first part of the building made of reinforced concrete, prefabricated elevations, the second vault was built of steel and glass. The architecture of the new building is of a simple, utilitarian character. The most striking element is a vaulted entrance gate, which resembles a postmodernist, triumphal arch. The development area is of approximately 100 000 m^2.

Both inside and outside of the buildings there are numerous art works and the wall in the main hall is inscribed with a biblical quote: *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (John 8:32) Also in the capital city of the District of Columbia, a suburb of Washington, DC, the headquarters of the military intelligence agency - Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) are

placed. In a sense, it is a university campus, because at the *air- base Anacostia-Bolling*, in addition to office buildings occupied by the DIA, there are also the National Intelligence University run by the Agency and the John T. Hughes academic library.

Fig. 4. The building of a new wing headquarters DIA, Anacostia-Bolling, SmithGroup JJR design, 2005. Source: Wikipedia Commons.

The architecture of the first complex of agency buildings erected in 1987 based on the architectural design of the Smith Group JJR Company also can arise associations with the massive, office citadel. Modern and highly glazed architecture of its southern wing with an area of nearly 45 000 square meters was erected in 2005. On the basis of the design of the same company, it does not resemble a secret, military intelligence base at all – it may be associated more with a scientific laboratory or a rich corporation's seat.

The building designers claim on their website that its "architectural expression" in investor's intention was supposed to be a magnet that should attract "the best and the brightest" and technical solutions should ensure the highest degree of safety and best comfort, which would affect the efficiency and the effectiveness of the institution (SMITHGROUPJRR, projects).

Downtown citadels

The intelligence headquarters are usually located in suburban areas, while internal security institutions are mostly located in the centers of capital

cities. Headquarters of the police and other public safety institutions are characterized by a compact building block, sometimes even the whole district usually located directly in – or near – the government district. For example, the FBI headquarters are located on Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington's main avenue running between the Capitol and the White House. Originally, in the years 1908-1975 the FBI offices were located in the buildings of the Department of Justice.

In 1962 the decision was made, to build FBI own headquarters. Designing a new FBI building was entrusted to the architectural firm Charles F. Murphy and Associates from Chicago. According to the investor's wishes FBI office complex took the form of a "box in a box": the central part of the building, in which there are archives, is surrounded by office wings.

Fig. 5. FBI Headquarters in Washington, Charles F. Murphy and Associates design, 1977. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

In accordance to the planning requirements on the need to preserve a representative character of the Pennsylvania Avenue, along which annual parades are hosted, the building has a courtyard and a two-storey arcades. For safety reasons, however, they are inaccessible to the public. In the FBI complex with an area of about 280 000 square meters over 7 000 are employed. From the Pennsylvania Avenue direction the building height is limited to about 30 meters (seven stories). In the middle of the quarter the building with a height of 11 stories was allowed to be build. Brutalist in its architectural style building has prefabricated, concrete facades, and therefore

strongly contrasts with the tradition of downtown Washington, whose architecture of public buildings consists of historic forms and facades made of natural stone. The construction started in 1967 and lasted about ten years.

Its cost repeatedly exceeded the original budget and came to more than $ 120 million. The building was inhabited gradually in the years 1974-1977. In 1972 it was given the official name - "J. Edgar Hoover F.B.I. Building" (*History of FBI Building*). After a series of terrorist bombings on American targets at the turn of the century, the building was fortified with massive, concrete pots, called *bunker pots* that were positioned densely along the curbs surrounding streets and in the front of the main entrances.

Fig. 6. Headquarters of the Russian military intelligence - GRU, Moscow, 2006.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

The buildings occupied by the Russian security services are also situated in the center of Moscow. The seat of the military intelligence - GRU – was located in the nine storey, glazed building (known as the famous "Aquarium" described in the novel by Victor Suvorov) in a complex of aviation factories, near to the old Moscow airport *Kubinka*. In 2006, GRU headquarters were moved to a new office complex, built at Grizodubova Street. The modernist architecture of the new headquarters of the service resembles a typical corporate office building, which rises to thousands around the world.

The seat of the State Security Committee - the KGB - for many years was located in a pompous, neo-baroque building on Lubyanka Square, built in the late nineteenth century as the seat of the insurance company and thoroughly modernized in the early 90s.

In the era of "glasnost" (i.e. transparency), a small part of the building which hosted a KGB museum was made available to the public. The design of the new headquarters of the German intelligence service – BND, currently being built in the central district of Berlin - Mitte, in close proximity to the buildings of the parliament and the office of Chancellor of Germany is very interesting.

The idea behind the chosen location was to revitalize a neglected area of the German capital, once belonging to East Berlin. The large building complex (with an area of 260 000 square meters) was located on the site of the former sports stadium (*Stadion der Weltjugend*). Its core is a nine storey office building, which is surrounded by lower, free-standing pavilions: entrance, didactic and logistics. All buildings, with metal, standardized and rhythmic facades, were joined with a massive, obverse plinth.

This monument is supposed to split the main body division, breaking it into a sequence of lateral wings and courtyards formed between them. The building to which the first group of workers moved in March 2014, was based on competition project of the famous, German architectural design studio of Jan Kleihues. The construction which has been carried out since 2006, has already absorbed about one billion *euro*.

The building is supposed to host over 4 000 BND employees (Project presentation on the official web site). Opinions on its architecture are divided: on one hand we are dealing with anonymous, yet elegant and maintained in good proportions, enterprise architecture, on the other hand it is a great, remote and fortified building overwhelming the environment with its scale.

Fig. 7. The new headquarters of the German intelligence service BND in Berlin, Kleihues + Kleihues design, 2014. Source: http://www.bz-berlin.de/multimedia/archive/00431/BND-Baustelle_43119218.jpg.

Fig. 8. The new Europol building in The Hague, Quist Wintermans Architekten BV design, 2011. Source: Europol, https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/page/about-us.

New Europol headquarters look impressive: they were erected in The Hague on the border of the exclusive residential and administrative district, hosting the seats of international institutions.

The designers of the *Quist Wintermans Architekten* BV architectural studio also struggled with the problem of diverse neighborhood and large-scale project, in this case the body of the building was also dissected into the wings (four ones, parallel to each other) that were linked to massive plinth with a height of three stories.

The building – encased in gray bricks- looks like a silver sculpture; its architectural "box" form is neo-modernistic, but the detail was kept to a minimum. Courtyards formed between successive wings of the building were covered with glass roofs, and under them decorated reception halls, recreational and conference facilities were located.

The facility with an area of 32 000 m^2 was handed over for use in 2011. It is inhabited by about 700 employees. As the new Europol headquarters are in the nearest vicinity of a residential area, its security solutions had be designed discreetly and cleverly built into the building. For this purpose, water reservoirs, level differences, patios and other landscaping elements were used for the construction of the safety zones (Europol design presentation).

Exceptionally original buildings are occupied by the British intelligence services. The above-mentioned MI6 headquarters are located in the heart of London, on the Thames, near London's famous tourist attractions: Tate, the Westminster Palace and the *London Eye* observation carousel.

Fig. 9. British intelligence MI6 Headquarters, London, Terry Farrell's design, 1994.
Source: Jim Bowen, Wikimedia Commons.

The more exposed location for the seat of intelligence agency enhanced by the extravagant architecture of the building, designed by an icon of the British postmodernism, architect Terry Farrell, is hard to be thought of.

Initially, in the years 1926–1964, the headquarters of MI6 were located in an old, unremarkable building at 54 Broadway, close to the downtown park St. James. Then, for the next 30 years, they were placed in a highly modernist, but equally anonymous, building called the Century House, located in Lambeth on the south bank of the Thames.

In 1988 Margaret Thatcher decided to purchase a lot for building a seat for more and more dynamically developing its activities MI6, located nearby, on the banks of the River Thames. The lot's owner was a real estate developer Regalian Properties Plc.

For the previous several years the company had been designing an office building, based on the Farrell's project which won the competition in 1983. The massive seven-storey building was adapted to the needs of MI6. However, its original, post-modernist architectural form, remained largely unchanged.

Some compare it with the Incas pyramids, others see it as "Legoland" or "Babylon on the Thames". Rowin Moore from the "The Independent", describing the new headquarters of MI6 commissioned in 1994, claimed that the George Smiley's discreet spirit had given up to the brute force of Arnold Schwarzenegger, and described it as an "aggressive, mono-functional fortress".

A completely different character is presented by the new headquarters of the British radio intelligence (GCHQ - Government Communications Headquarters), resembling a flying saucer, which settled on the outskirts of Cheltenham, close to Birmingham.

Fig. 10. British intelligence center GCHQ in Cheltenham electronic, design of Gensler, 2004.
Source: UK Ministry of Defence, Wikimedia Commons.

The opening of this remarkable object with futuristic architecture in high-tech style was celebrated by Queen Elizabeth in March 2004. It was built for 337 million pounds, within the framework of public-private partnership (Private Finance Initiative - PFI), on the American (!) Gensler's architectural design studio.

Its aluminum roof and exterior walls were shaped in the form of a circular, providing safety mantle. Beneath it, four parts of the four-storey building open to the common interior – a round courtyard, which is intended to provide users a sense of community.

The glazed walkway around a courtyard connects- within a 5-minute walking range- all parts of the building, which has a diameter of 200 meters and a height of about 23 meters. In its interior there are also a restaurant, cafes, bars, gymnasium and kindergarten.

The modular, easy to change the arrangements office space and clear communication within the organization structures intend to promote the efficiency and operational swiftness - enough to say that before moving to its new headquarters GCHQ dealt with several scattered buildings.

The new facility is designed using the principles of "green" sustainable construction: it consumes 40% less energy than a regular office building, its double elevations act as thermal chimneys to provide it with the natural air conditioning, rooms are lit by daylight, and are built of natural materials: glass, aluminum, wood, granite and limestone from local Cotswold and they can be easily recycled.

In the building the newest IT and safety technologies were deployed. The reflecting, anti-explosion reinforced, glass facade effectively masks the inside of the building, allowing the personnel to see what is outside.

Mail and all the other goods entering the building are x-rayed and inspected at the main switchboard, and from there they are transported to recipients using an electric cable line operating safely in underground corridors. The building has more than one hundred separate computer networks and a large data center. The construction of the facility and the relocation of 4000 staff and computer equipment were among the largest logistics projects that were completed in Europe (Headquarters (GCHQ), United Kingdom).

Concluding this review of the architecture of the security services and law & order institutions buildings, it is worth noting the new NATO headquarters, which were erected in Brussels.

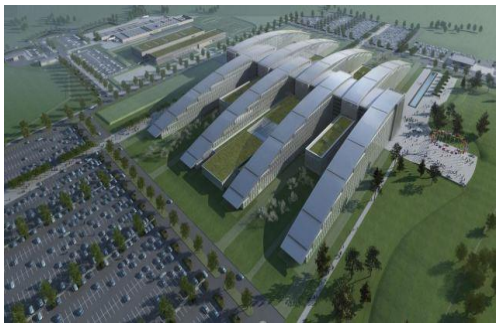

Fig. 11. The new NATO headquarters in Brussels, aerial view, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill design, 2014. Source: Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

Its designer is a global architectural studio – Skidmore, Owing and Merrill (based in New York) specializing in commercial and corporate architecture. SOM's achievements are, among others, the world's tallest

building - the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, the US Embassy in Beijing and the famous building Altitude One World Center in Manhattan Built on the site of the WTC complex which was destroyed during the terrorist attack on 11th September 2001.

The NATO headquarters should have a style and a scale characterizing the architecture of the largest global corporate headquarters: its heart will be monumental, glassed, seven-storey patio. The facility has an area of 245 000 square meters, will be the seat of 28 embassies of NATO countries, and 4,000 people will work there.

Fig. 12. The new NATO headquarters in Brussels, view the hall, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill design, 2014. Source: Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

On SOM's website there is some information on the building pointing out that is to resemble laced fingers of two hands, and thus it is intended to symbolize the unity and interdependence of the NATO countries (Skidmore, Owings and Merill). The cost of this mega-building is expected to be over one billion euro (New NATO Headquarters, official web site).

In relation to the above-described designs, the buildings occupied by the Polish special services present themselves rather bland and anonymous: the Internal Security Agency (ABW) headquarters are located in the building of socialist realism character at Rakowiecka Street in Warsaw, and the Intelligence Agency (AW) has its headquarters in a modern office building, near the Guard stadium. Against this background, the headquarters of the National Security Office erected a few years ago at Karowa Street in Warsaw stand out in terms of the quality of architecture.

It is a low, two-storey building, with a robust shape and well proportioned, with a helicopter landing pad on the roof. This building cleverly combines traditional and modernist classical architecture – with its modernist, classical colonnade horizontal stripes of windows and massive walls clad with gray-green stone facades.

Architecture as an image-building tool

In democratic countries, a characteristic tendency can be observed: in an effort to gain the public understanding and relevant sums of money from the state budget, secret services gradually "come out of the darkness".

An example would be the story of the mentioned above US National Security Agency, an institution established in 1952. (i.e. During the Cold War), which was so secretive that for many years it was not even acknowledged to exist.

The breakthrough came in the 90-s of the XXth century, when on the motorway leading to the NSA HQ a signpost was set, upon which its name appeared.

In 2012, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the institution, a film crew was allowed to enter NSA gates for the first time and soon on the National Geographic TV channel a documentary about the mission and history of the Agency was presented. A commemorative publication was also published (NSA, 60 Years of Defending the Nation), which described the history of the NSA and showed photos of its subsequent locations. These HQ buildings looked like ordinary suburban office parks surrounded by parking lots. The apparent openness in this case is an obvious camouflage, and modern architecture is used as a tool for creating the proper image.

Like many other institutions' premises - government and public administration buildings, central banks or offices of global corporations – their modern and transparent architecture should suggest the public that it deals with open, transparent and democratic institutions, although it is not always true.

Modern HQ buildings of secret services and law & order institutions resemble rather ordinary civilian office buildings, research laboratories or university campuses than the seats of secret organizations.

The analysis of their seats architecture can be carried out in several categories. Typologically these buildings belong to the most popular and widespread group of administrative offices, where most of the work is performed at identical workstations, and therefore these buildings become similar to each other.

In a bank, project studio, an insurance company, or a seat of intelligence agency – everywhere the work is done at unified and standardized workplaces, equipped with computer terminals, and therefore architectural and functional and spatial solutions of these objects are similar to each other. New secret services and security institutions HQ distinguish themselves by their size. Investment budgets of these mega-projects often reach billions of dollars; they are designed by the biggest architectural studios specializing in commercial and corporate architecture.

The buildings that were referred to, belong to the most important elements of the state critical infrastructure, therefore they are carefully protected against attempts to disrupt their operations, the penetration or interception, as well as against any terrorist attack. The most popular (and effective) weapon, which nowadays are used by terrorists, are "car bombs", i.e. the vehicles filled with explosives (*VBIED – Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices*).

Their detonation near the building resembles an aerial bombardment effect. The best protection against an attack by a "car bomb" ensures the security zone - a massive barriers around the building, which are positioned in such a way as to prevent it from ramming by a speeding car. It is assumed that a safety zone around the protected buildings should be at least 30 m (the more, the better), because, as security experts say, distance equals safety.

Of course, it is easier, to protect suburban objects, located in the open field. You can set around them several rings of fences and circles of defense zones, freestanding lodges, which will hold control of vehicles, as well as access roads and parking lots away from the buildings.

It is much more difficult to protect buildings downtown, located on small plots of dense development and surrounded by a network of public streets.

Protection zones around the buildings downtown are built of massive walls and fences directly in the lot area, facades are hardened, the number of windows is reduced and sometimes the ground floors are completely closed.

This results in their massive appearance and literal fortification of the foreground: the buildings begin resembling downtown fortresses, citadels and prisons.

To prevent this, the design of modern security facilities increasingly uses the concept of "invisible security": massive walls and bars are replaced with armored glass, the barrier zones are cleverly incorporated into the street landscape (with the use of small architectural elements and so called *street furniture* – benches, finials, bulletin boards, bollards and lampposts

which, when their construction is properly strengthened, can carry out defensive function).

Thanks to such measures, security facilities are hidden from the inexpert eye, and even well-protected objects can present themselves as open and transparent (Jasiński, 2013, pp. 226–230).

In terms of typology of urban structures, headquarters of the secret services and security institutions qualify as either suburban office-parks or edge-cities, or as so-called downtown business citadels. Their architecture is - in terms of style – of quite diverse, mostly utilitarian, modernist or neo-modernist character, although in some cases it can also discern influences of socialist realism, brutalism, post-modernism and high-tech.

Analyzing the symbolic layer of the secret services and law & order institutions' headquarters architecture, one should look for references to the famous *Panoptikon* – a prison building of a cylindrical shape designed so that the guards gathered in the central tower could exercise constant control over prisoners located throughout the radially arranged wings of the building, at the same time being invisible.

In an era of information, an eye contact is no longer necessary – it is effectively replaced with electronic surveillance. The French philosopher Michel Foucault claims that *Panopticon* became a metaphor for relations between the authorities and society, as well as a symbol of the permanent surveillance characterizing it (Foucault, 1998).

There is an unanswered question, whether glassed, transparent architectural features characterizing modern headquarters of the secret services hide only ordinary, filled with computer stations, interiors, where the routine office work is carried out, or they are just a skillful camouflage masking unavailable offices, archives and databases, which are full of the deepest secrets?

Architecture, however, does not give us answers to these questions – the answer is known only to the people working in them.

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