

Robert Hannigan

Former Director of GCHQ

Robert Hannigan is a leading authority on cyber security, cyber conflict and the application of technology in national security. He is an international speaker and contributing author on cyber security topics. Currently, Robert serves as Chairman of BlueVoyant International, a global cybersecurity services firm. He is a Senior Adviser to McKinsey & Co and advises a number of international companies on cyber security. Prior to moving into the private sector, Robert served as Director of GCHQ, the UK's largest intelligence and security agency.

Robert has a long history of involvement in cyber security and technology, having drawn up the UK's first Cyber Security Strategy and outlined the government's ambition of making the UK 'the safest place to live and do business online'. He set up the UK's National Cyber Security Centre as part of GCHQ and launched the active cyber defense program for the UK in 2016. He was responsible with military colleagues for the UK's national offensive cyber programme.

Hannigan strongly promoted technical skills in his leadership team and his term as Director saw the biggest internal transformation of GCHQ since the end of the Cold War. Hannigan served as Security Adviser to the UK Prime Minister from 2007-10, giving advice on counter terrorism and intelligence matters. As Head of Intelligence, Security and Resilience in the UK Government's Cabinet Office, he was responsible for the funding and oversight of the three UK intelligence agencies; he was a long standing member of the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee, which he chaired in 2011-12.

For nearly ten years Hannigan lived in Belfast and worked on the Northern Ireland Peace Process as Tony Blair's principal civil service adviser. He was responsible for negotiations with the political parties and paramilitaries, as well as liaison with the US, Irish and other Governments.

Robert is credited with bringing greater openness to the work of GCHQ, as part of an effort to advocate new legislation and to promote cyber skills across the UK; Boris Johnson praised his internal transformation of the organisation to make it fit for the digital era. He has a particular interest in Bletchley Park, where he is a Trustee, and the history of technology, computing and cryptology. He was a member of the UK Government's Defence Innovation Advisory Panel and Chairs the Industry Advisory Board for LORCA, the Government-backed cyber accelerator.

He is an Honorary Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, a Fellow of the Institution of Engineering and Technology, Senior Fellow at Harvard's Belfer Center and Distinguished Fellow of RUSI. He is one of the few non-US nationals to be awarded the US Intelligence Distinguished Public Service Medal. He was awarded the CMG by Queen Elizabeth for services to national security in 2013.