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Press release

Appointment of the new Director of GCHQ

Robert Hannigan is appointed as new Director of GCHQ.

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The Rt Hon William Hague (<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/william-hague>)

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Robert Hannigan

Robert Hannigan has been appointed as successor to Sir Iain Lobban, Foreign Secretary William Hague announced today, with the agreement of the Prime Minister and in consultation with the Deputy Prime Minister.

Robert Hannigan has been the Director General, Defence and Intelligence at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office since 2010. He will take over from Sir Iain Lobban when he moves on from the role in the autumn. The appointment was made following a recruitment process chaired by Sir Kim Darroch, National Security Adviser, that was open to crown and civil servants.

Foreign Secretary, William Hague said:

I am delighted that Robert Hannigan has been appointed as the next Director of GCHQ. GCHQ's world-class work is vital to the safety and security of the United Kingdom. As well as his impressive personal qualities, Robert brings to the job a wealth of relevant experience in the fields of national security, counter-terrorism and international relations. I'd also like to thank Sir Iain Lobban for his consistently strong and professional leadership as Director of GCHQ since 2008.

Robert Hannigan, commenting on his appointment, said:

It is a privilege to be asked to lead GCHQ, an organisation which is so central to keeping the people of this country safe. I have great respect for the integrity and professionalism of the staff of GCHQ and for what they have achieved under the outstanding leadership of Iain Lobban. I am excited about meeting the challenges of the coming years with them.

The National Security Adviser, Sir Kim Darroch, said:

I am delighted Robert Hannigan has been appointed Director, GCHQ. He will bring energy, flair, deep knowledge and extensive experience to the role, and I look forward to working closely with him. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Sir Iain Lobban. Iain has been a close friend and colleague over my time as National Security Adviser and has done an absolutely outstanding job at an exceptionally testing time for the organisation.

Further information

Robert Hannigan joined the FCO as Director General, Defence and Intelligence on 29 March 2010.

For a number of years he has advised the Prime Minister on counter terrorism, intelligence and security policy. Robert joined the Civil Service from the private sector, becoming Director of Communications for the Northern Ireland Office.

He was then appointed to be:

- principal adviser to then Prime Minister Tony Blair and various Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland on the peace process, with responsibility for negotiations with the political parties and other groups, and liaison with the Irish Government and US Administration;
- the Prime Minister's Security Adviser and Head of Intelligence, Security, and Resilience in the Cabinet Office from 2007, with responsibility for the UK National Security Strategy.

Robert has been a member of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) for many years and was responsible in the Cabinet Office for the funding of the three UK intelligence agencies. He has regularly chaired 'COBR' meetings on terrorist incidents.

Robert was also responsible for the UK's first Cyber Security Strategy and oversaw the first National Security Strategy.

Robert was born in Gloucestershire, not far from GCHQ, grew up in Yorkshire and studied classics at Wadham College, Oxford. He is married with a son and a daughter and follows hurling and Gaelic football along with rugby, tennis and golf.

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