
THOMAS HURD

Former Head of the UK's Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism, the Most Senior Official in the UK Government Responsible for Homeland Security

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Topics

- Cyber Security
- Future
- Leadership
- Technology

As Head of the UK's Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism for the last five years, Thomas Hurd was the most senior official in the UK government responsible for Homeland Security, leading cross-government work countering state threats, cyber crime and security, disinformation, money laundering, online harms, child sexual exploitation and terrorism. He also oversaw the domestic operations of the intelligence agencies, CT Police and the National Crime Agency and played a leading role internationally on domestic security issues, especially within the Five Eyes community.

Thomas Hurd believed that mastering data and technology was key to transforming the UK's approach to Homeland Security. He initiated new relationships within government but also with industry, academia and Big Tech to make this a reality. He was instrumental in helping create the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism which has led social media companies to remove automatically tens of millions of terrorist content from the internet. Building on his expertise on breaking down barriers and building transparency between and within organisations, he created, on behalf of the UK's Chief Scientific Advisor, a single approach to science and technology innovation across the UK's national security community to help pull through technology faster to the front line and help the UK harness its cyber and science power on the world stage.

As a result of his experience in mastering data to achieve better outcomes, Hurd was asked in mid-2020 to set up from scratch, and at pace, the UK's Joint Biosecurity Centre, a data-led organisation that brought data science and public health expertise together in one place to spot earlier and more accurately outbreaks of COVID-19 in the UK and then advise the UK government and local authorities how best to respond. Hurd also led the Joint Biosecurity Centre's work to define and set COVID-19 national alert levels for the UK. Hurd has remained involved in health security helping ensure the security of the UK's vaccine supply chain.

Hurd is an expert in crisis management and recovery. He coordinated the UK response to terrorist attacks including breaking the momentum behind the attacks in 2017 in Manchester and London. He chaired, in 2018, the first COBRA meeting in response to the Russian chemical weapon attack in Salisbury and then led elements of the domestic response. As Chief of Assessments Staff in the Cabinet Office from 2012-14, Hurd personally led briefings to the PM at COBRAs. He also compiled the PM's daily intelligence brief.

Hurd studied Arabic at Oxford University and spent much of his career in postings in the Middle East and in senior leadership positions in government focused on conflict resolution in the region, in particular in Iraq and on Israeli-Palestinian issues.

Thomas Hurd has attended the National Security Council and was a member of the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee. He was appointed OBE by Her Majesty in 2011 and CB in 2020 for his services to national security.

Topics:

■ **Pandemic / Covid-19**

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■ **Leadership / Crisis Management / Cyber Security**

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■ **Middle East Conflict Resolution**

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