

17 November 2018

Re: Professor Anne-Marie Brady

To Whom It May Concern,

Professor Anne-Marie Brady is a noted specialist in China's domestic and foreign politics at the University of Canterbury. Her work on contemporary China, and its increasingly controversial global engagement, contributes directly to the national interest of New Zealand. It is also having a considerable impact internationally, not only in academic circles but also in political debates and policy formulation among the major allies and trading partners of this country.

As teachers and mentors of Professor Brady — John Minford was one of her undergraduate teachers at the University of Auckland; Geremie Barmé was a supervisor of her doctoral work at the Australian National University — we are proud of her achievements and we strongly support her ongoing academic research work and engagement with issues of public, national and international significance.

In February this year, we were profoundly disturbed to read media reports about break-ins at Professor Brady's workplace and of her home office, resulting in the theft of electronic equipment and research materials. The details of the break-ins, still a subject of police investigation, suggested that Professor Brady was being subjected to intimidation for her internationally recognized work on official Chinese strategies to influence the politics and societies of foreign countries, in particular New Zealand. (See: <https://www.pressreader.com/new-zealand/the-dominion-post/20180219/282355450217707>) We were shocked by the latest media reports — on 16 November — that, during routine Warrant of Fitness maintenance, it was discovered that her vehicle may well have been purposely tampered with. There are indications that this was done to endanger the occupants of the vehicle: Professor Brady, her husband and their three teenage children. (See: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/108649435/professor-annemarie-brady-who-warned-about-china-interference-says-car-was-sabotaged>)

The freedom from fear was long ago recognized as a basic human right; academics should be able to pursue their work, and their daily lives, without being subjected to intimidation. In any modern democracy worthy of the name, academic freedom and independent research are crucial "public goods". They are also germane to university life.

As residents of New Zealand and as independent scholars — our main institutional affiliation is with The Australian National University as emeritus professors — we hereby express our deep concern about the on-going threats to Professor Anne-Marie Brady's research and private life.

We hope that others whose research and teaching involves contemporary China will offer her and her important work collegial encouragement, as well as public support.

Furthermore, we also hope that the New Zealand authorities take the threats against Professor Brady seriously. We appeal to the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Jacinda Ardern, and her coalition partner the Foreign Minister, the Rt. Hon. Winston Peters, to address directly the issues raised by her work which she has further articulated in practicable, and succinct, formal advice to the government.

Since September 2017, Professor Anne-Marie Brady's work has attracted overwhelmingly positive global attention. It has also been subjected to vilification by Chinese officialdom. Regardless, her work continues to influence the debate about China's "sharp power" on the international stage, and it contributes to practical policy discussions in Europe, North America and in Australia. This work remains ever more pressingly relevant to the public life, and the future, of her homeland.

Yours,

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