

Funding the Future

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The [following open letter to David Cameron is in the Observer this morning](#). Its message - that the UK is undermining the freedom of the press which is the foundation of democracy - is sufficiently important that I think it should be shared more widely, a sentiment with which I think the Observer would agree:

We know that you will agree that one of the hallmarks of free and open democracies is a vivid public debate addressing all fundamental aspects of society, including the balance and possible conflict between the legitimate security concerns of governments and the protection of privacy and the free press. We all understand both the imperative to uphold domestic security and the equally important imperative to protect our open public debate about the limits to and legal implications of these efforts. The debate is not a sign of weakness of our democracies. It is the basis of our strength.

Against this backdrop, events in Great Britain over the past week give rise to deep concern. We may differ on where to draw the line and strike the right balance, but we should not differ in our determination to protect an open debate about these essential questions. Also, we should stand united to protect individuals engaging in such debates within the parameters of democracy and the rule of law.

The free press plays a crucial role in this regard, also in situations where information revealed by the press is most inconvenient to governments and the intelligence community. We are surprised by the recent acts by officials of your government against our colleagues at the Guardian and deeply concerned that a stout defender of democracy and free debate such as the United Kingdom uses anti-terror legislation in order to legalise what amounts to harassment of both the paper and individuals associated with it. Moreover, it is deeply disturbing that the police have now announced a criminal investigation. We hope this is not to be seen as a step against journalists doing journalism.

The implication of these acts may have ramifications far beyond the borders of the UK, undermining the position of the free press throughout the world.

Mr Prime Minister, we hope that you will soon act to rectify this and reinstall your government among the leading defenders of the free press and an open debate in

accordance with the proud tradition of your country.

Bo Lidegaard

Executive editor-in-chief

Politiken, Denmark

Peter Wolodarski

Executive editor-in-chief

Dagens Nyheter, Sweden

Hilde Haugsgjerd

Executive editor-in-chief

Aftenposten, Norway

Riikka Venäläinen

Editor-in-chief

Helsingin Sanomat, Finland

I hope the letter is not being sent in vain. I fear it is. I think that the government's actions are meant to ***harass both the paper and individuals associated with it*** and are ***a step against journalists doing journalism***. I fear that we now have a government that is not dedicated to free speech, on which I will write more today.

We should all be very worried.