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LP Signing away our land, livelihood and heritage

US President Barack Obama is not the only one surprised that the Darwin port is being privatised to the Chinese. I share the President's disappointment. But this appears to be symptomatic of our governments, past and present, who seem to be quite prepared to sign away the rights and possessions of their citizens. For instance, our farmers who look after our agricultural wants are besieged with hungry overseas mining and gas organisations all too happy to relieve us of our natural resources, leaving us with empty quarries, to the detriment of our farmland, all in the name of progress. I admire the advances China has made but at the same time, I respect our heritage. I have always regarded the Port of Darwin as the gateway to Australia and certainly not run by a foreign country. Shame on the Coalition for allowing this to happen. And by the way, our much-vaunted recent trade deal should be thoroughly vetted for any possible further surprises.

TD Jim Banks, Pottsville Beach, NSW

Long-term interests must come first

Light finally dawns in Canberra. Scott Morrison's announcement of the Foreign Investment Board's refusal to allow a Chinese company to take ownership of vast tracts of Australian pastoral land suggests the warders may finally be starting to win back control of the asylum ("Coalition rift over blocked sale of Kidman land", 21/11). In recent decades, the amount of sovereign soil handed on a platter to overseas interests has escalated to a dangerous level. The recent sale of operating rights of the strategic Darwin harbour to the Chinese has not gone unnoticed by our allies. Up to now the inmates of the Canberra institution have been allowed to run amok. Time to put Australia's long-term interests first, before it's too late.

Daryl Binning, Winthrop, WA

What will this blunder cost?

Given its strategic importance, it beggars belief that the Commonwealth has not stepped in to prevent the Port of Darwin being leased to a company that is essentially an arm of the Chinese government. We know from the Kidman affair that it has the power. One cannot help wondering whether the advice to allow this to happen was from the same "defence experts" that recommended proceeding with the purchase of the dubious Joint Strike Fighters, and other expensive mistakes. Malcolm Turnbull, all the alarm bells are ringing. This is shaping up to be your first big stuff-up since gaining office. Even Tony Abbott would not have fallen for this one, nope, nope, nope. James Ogilvie, Kew

A bit of that old-fashioned love of country

Patriotism - that's a word we rarely hear these days. It was certainly the catchcry when hundreds of thousands of young Australians were recruited for the two world wars. Our leaders apparently disregard patriotism in favour of foreign interests: agricultural land and residential property sold off, the Port of Darwin to China, multinational corporations easily exporting huge profits earned locally, and now Scott Morrison is off to Indonesia to talk up easier access to Australian jobs. Politicians are well aware of unemployment numbers in entry-level candidates.

Why don't they just come clean, and say they think Australians are lazy, and won't work for \$10 to \$15 an hour with no benefits? John Marks, Werribee

Keeping the peace

Criticisms of our government's brilliant infrastructure deal with the Chinese in Darwin must be dismissed as provocative negativity. Let us all rejoice at this happy outcome of negotiations in the manner of an earlier British prime minister and declare: "Trade in our time." Roger Green, Ferntree Gully

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