



Sold Down the Yangtze: Canada's lopsided investment deal with China

Gus Van Harten

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When legal experts finally saw the terms of the investment deal Canada had signed with China, they could hardly believe what their eyes. The deal was unprecedented -- Canada had never given so much away to a trading partner. But Ottawa did not allow a full public review, and ultimately ratified the deal in 2014 with no changes. And the government moved forward with other trade deals that contain many of the same flaws.

In this book, investment treaty expert Gus Van Harten offers the first-ever independent take on the details of the China-Canada investment deal and what it means for Canadians. Many of the deal's provisions are so extreme that readers may find it almost impossible to believe that the Canadian government agreed to them.

He explains how this agreement, and others like it, give multinational corporations and rich investors superpowers over governments. Secretive courts staffed by private lawyers, not judges, are able to order governments to pay these investors billions for policies and decisions they object to.

In simple language and easy to follow analysis, Van Harten offers a window into this secretive and obscure world. He documents the many ways Canadians lose out in the China-Canada deal, and how taxpayers may find themselves footing the bill for billions of dollars to Chinese investors who object to the actions of democratically-elected municipal, provincial and federal governments.

This deal -- in place for a minimum 15 years -- includes terms that may well turn up in other trade and investment agreements. Gus Van Harten offers practical steps for a better, more informed public debate on this vital topic.

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