

Competitiveness imperiled

I was suprised and delighted to see your editor's Viewpoint column, "Time to set a national industrial agenda," in the Nov. 27, 1989, issue.

I hope you will continue to write about this vital topic. American competitiveness is in peril. We face well organized, well funded, purposeful, national industrial agendas in virtually every country around the world. And we do nothing effective because of the Bush administration's position on industrial policy. They fail to realize that no industrial policy is an industrial policy. Just a damn poor one.

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Who speaks for us?

I read with interest your editorial "Who tends to our interest in Washington," in your Jan. 22 edition, where you point out the Japanese influence through American lobbyists. The comments are so compelling that I am taking the liberty of forwarding a copy of it to all of our senators and congressmen in hope that it will have an impact on them.

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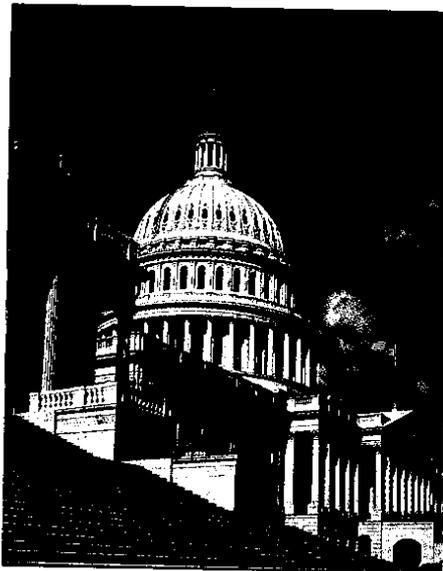
No longer patient on Japan

You should have seen me shouting "Right-On," while reading your editor's Jan. 22 editorial. The Japan lobby situation in the United States is an outrage, considering what we are legally allowed to do inside Japan.

Well, I've been a patient man for maybe 10 years now. And the United States is now in much worse shape than ever before. And the actual trade deficit with Japan is only the tip of the iceberg. It is the lead Japan has built up in sophisticated chips, all areas of computers, biotechnology, superconductivity, you name it. It all adds up to a dismal future for the United States. Then factor in the inflow of Japanese buyout money.

The one-sided trade picture with Japan becomes much clearer after reading the book, *The Enigma of*

Japanese Power, by Karel Van Wolferen. I've suggested to Carla Hills, President Bush's Trade Representative, that it should be a must-read for every United States negotiator. The book describes the interrelations between all the segments of Japanese society: the ministries and bureaucrats, the politicians, the prime minister and cabinet, the uni-



Who's minding the store?

versities, the justice system, the unions, the industrial complex, the housewives, the press, the farmers, everything.

The message is that no one or no group is truly in charge. The prime minister has no power. He can sign any agreement and the bureaucrats would simply not carry it out. The Agriculture Ministry will look you straight in the eye and tell you that American beef is not allowed into its distribution system because "Japanese stomachs are not suited for its digestion."

Our swell Washington bureaucrats never have to meet a payroll or worry about exporting jobs. Their hidden agenda for "free" trade is to keep imports priced low and thus keep the Republicans in a low inflation period. But the future is disastrous. After reading the book, you'll be as infuriated with our administration as with the Japan system.

Understanding the Japanese culture after reading the book leads to my solution which I have been suggesting for about 10 years. The United States picks a number for the

Japan trade deficit we can live with, say \$25 billion. We start keeping track in January, and as soon as the deficit goes over \$25 billion, we simply stop imports from Japan, until the Japanese figure how to increase United States exports into their country. With those rules, guess how long it will take for their various groups to get together and figure the steps it will take to increase imports?

Rep. Tom Campbell, (R-Calif.) has proposed a "reciprocity" bill that would try to correct some of the outrageous financial rules that Japan puts on United States companies trying to buy into stockbrokers and banks and other financial institutions in Japan. Let's back it.

JOHN L. MINCK
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Japan not the enemy

Your editor's Jan. 22 editorial was rather naive and old-fashioned. America loves the Japanese. They are not our enemy. Our former president accepted an invitation to make a short visit to Japan and picked up \$2 million for his efforts. Some of our leading semiconductor companies including Intel, and Texas Instruments have recently joined forces with the Japanese to use their expertise to make more money. This obviously was in the "best interests" of America.

Why get excited when private citizens and ex-government employees want to get their piece of the rice cake by representing Japan's interests? If it's good enough for an ex-president and some of our most progressive electronics companies, then why not the little guy?

Welcome to America.

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Letters to the editor

ELECTRONIC BUSINESS welcomes letters to the editor on any topic of interest to our readers.

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Right on!

I'm just now
finishing this book

also - these guys
only understand

power!

BT



HEWLETT
PACKARD