Opinion

Column: Erik A. Devereux

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The United States is undergoing a process of deindustrialization. Steel and textiles, industries once at the core of the American economic success story, are now dominated by South Korea, Japan, and Malaysia. Saudi Arabia and other Middle East oil producers have embarked on ambitious projects to develop chemical factories in their countries.

The automobile industry's problems, constantly documented by the press and given national attention by the controversial billion-dollar bail-out of the Chrysler Corporation, are a direct result of fierce market competition from foreign automobile manufacturers. These industries are leaving the United States because of the presence of a massive, unorganized foreign labor force that is willing to work for a fraction of the wages paid American workers. Labor-intensive businesses are also in trouble, such as those making a decision to stay in the United States, trying to maximize profits through continual modernization, and going abroad, where old production processes are sufficient when paying steel workers four dollars an hour.

If the United States is to reverse this trend and keep American workers at a level consistent with our standard of living, we must find an industry that cannot be done elsewhere. We must find an industry that is uniquely American.

Some suggest the electronics industry is the one on which to build our economic future. These industries are leaving the United States because of the presence of a massive, unorganized foreign labor force that is willing to work for a fraction of the wages paid American workers. Labor-intensive businesses such as those made a decision to stay in the United States, trying to maximize profits through continual modernization, and going abroad, where old production processes are sufficient when paying steel workers four dollars an hour.

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