

DOCUMENT RESUME

05429 - [B0835819]

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U.S. Statistics on International Technology Transfer: Need for Additional Measures. ID-78-24; B-191298. March 27, 1978. Released March 30, 1978. 4 pp. + 4 appendices (9 pp.).

Report to Rep. Clement J. Zablocki, Chairman, House Committee on International Relations: International Security and Scientific Affairs Subcommittee; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: International Economic and Military Programs: U.S. Comparative Advantage in Trade and Technology (508).

Contact: International Div.

Budget Function: International Affairs: Foreign Economic and Financial Assistance (151).

Organization Concerned: Department of Commerce.

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on International Relations: International Security and Scientific Affairs Subcommittee. Rep. Clement J. Zablocki.

The United States measures technology transfers through annual statistics on payments and receipts from royalty and licensing fees. Because payments arising from a single licensing agreement typically continue for a number of years, the payments and receipts in any one year reflect not only agreements initiated in that year but compensation paid on technology transferred in earlier years. Payments currently received are based on early years in which the United States had a large technology lead, and their magnitude may obscure current trends. Findings/Conclusions: Statistics of technology transfer on a year-of-origin basis are an essential tool for policy analysis of such factors as employment consequences and international competitive position. Statistics by year of origin would also help in understanding to what extent U.S. firms are taking advantage of technology developed by others. The Department of Commerce objected to previous GAO proposals that it collect data on licensing and royalty fees in a manner which identifies yearly transfers, stating that it involved too much paperwork. The additional paperwork appears to be minor and should be weighed against benefits. Even if year-of-origin data were attained, knowledge of technology transfer would be limited because of the inadequacy of money payments as a measure. Japan not only represents technology payments in cumulative and year-of-origin forms but has published quarterly and annual listings of all transfer agreements. The U.S. treatment of such agreements as "business confidential" information may be open to question. Recommendations: The Secretary of Commerce should compile statistics of international transfer of technology on a year-of-origin basis in addition to the current cumulative form. (HTW)

REPORT BY THE

Comptroller General

OF THE UNITED STATES

U.S. Statistics On International Technology Transfer--Need For Additional Measures

Present U.S. statistics show cumulative payments and receipts, but statistics showing year-of-origin payments and receipts, additional to the cumulative, are necessary for policy analysis.

This report was requested by the Chairman of the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives.





COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-191298

The Honorable Clement J. Zablocki
Chairman, Subcommittee on International
Security and Scientific Affairs
Committee on International Relations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in reply to your letter of December 29, 1977, requesting a report on work the General Accounting Office has done which describes the way the United States, Japan, and Germany measure international technology transfers.

Currently, the United States measures technology transfers through annual statistics on payments and receipts from royalty and licensing fees. Because payments arising from a single licensing agreement typically continue for a number of years (on average, 10 years) the payments and receipts for royalty and licensing fees in any one year reflect not only agreements newly initiated in that year but also compensation paid on technology transferred in earlier years. In effect, the annual figures become 10-year moving totals. Inasmuch as the United States in earlier years had a tremendous technology lead over other nations, payments it currently receives from earlier transfer are exceptionally large. They are so large, in fact, as to lead one to believe they may obscure current trends.

Indicative of the scale of the difference that can arise between cumulative statistics and year-of-origin statistics is the record in Japan. On the basis of cumulative statistics, Japan is nearly the opposite of the United States. In 1971, Japan was an 8-fold net importer of technology, whereas the United States was a 10-fold net exporter. However, in 1972 Japan began compiling its technology transfer statistics on a year-of-origin basis as well as the cumulative basis. The year-of-origin statistics showed that Japan became a net exporter in 1973.

Statistics of technology transfer on a year-of-origin basis are an essential tool for policy analysis. With the Congress considering additional controls over the export of

technology, we believe policy considerations make it essential to know whether actual inflow and outflow presently approximate the cumulative statistics or whether the statistics on a current basis are sharply in contrast. If current inflow approximates outflow, one might broadly presume that the employment consequences of outflow might be approximately balanced by the employment gains from inflows and, further, that the disadvantages and advantages in international competitiveness might be roughly balanced.

Statistics of technology transfer by year of origin would also help policymakers understand the extent to which U.S. firms are taking advantage of the technology developed by others. When a nation such as the United States has been far ahead for many years, it is easy to develop a "not invented here" syndrome and cease to be as alert to what others are doing as they are of U.S. developments. Such an attitude becomes increasingly troublesome in view of strong indicators of sharply rising foreign technological breakthroughs. The increasing number of U.S. patents awarded to Japan constitutes the major element in the rising proportion of U.S. patents awarded to foreigners. (See app. I.)

In 1976 and again in 1977 GAO proposed that the Department of Commerce collect data on licensing and royalty fees in a manner which identifies yearly transfers while continuing, of course, to present the cumulative information. (See app. II.) The Department in both instances informally advised us that it objected on the basis that additional paperwork would be required. Nevertheless, we continue to believe that the additional paperwork should be measured against the benefits. We recommend that the Secretary of Commerce compile statistics of international transfer of technology on a year-of-origin basis in addition to the cumulative form in which such statistics are currently published.

It would appear to us that the additional paperwork would be minor considering that the Department gets its data for cumulative statistics from corporations and individuals with investments in foreign affiliates or receipts and payments from foreign sources above a given dollar amount. Data on current transfers would be obtained from the same corporations, which would seem to involve only an additional entry on forms currently in use.

The Department goes to great length to distinguish transfers of technology between affiliated and unaffiliated corporations. However, for economic analysis, it is far more important in our judgment to distinguish between year-of-origin changes and what is, in effect, a 10-year "moving total."

It must be pointed out that, even if year-of-origin data were to be attained, our knowledge as to what is happening in technology transfer would still be limited. This is because money payments, although the best overall measure, are not an adequate measure. Pricing of technology is difficult for a number of reasons. Normally, technology is produced for a firm's own use rather than for sale. Since the sale is something of a by-product, how to charge for it is a question. (It is now thought that much of U.S. licensing to Japan in the 1950s and early 1960s was underpriced.) Further, technology is likely to be a unique product, and unique products are more difficult to price than substitutable ones.

Additionally, payments do not fully reflect technology transferred because when transfers occur between affiliated corporations there is opportunity to adjust prices to enhance after-tax returns of whichever is to be the favored corporation, usually the parent company. Cross-licensing arrangements, which typically do not involve licensing fees, are not included in such figures. However, when the concern is balance between outflow and inflow, crosslicensing is not a difficulty, for ordinarily it is entered into only when two firms believe they have comparable amounts to gain from sharing with one another.

Japan not only represents technology payments in cumulative and year-of-origin forms, but also until recently has published, on a quarterly and annual basis, listings of all transfer agreements giving the name of the licensor, licensee, and country and brief description of the technology transferred. The United States treats specific technology agreements as "business confidential" information, under no circumstances to be revealed to the public. If American corporations have been able to live with supplying such information to the Japanese Government for publication, one cannot help wondering if the consequences of revealing such information to the American Government for publication would be as dire as typically believed.

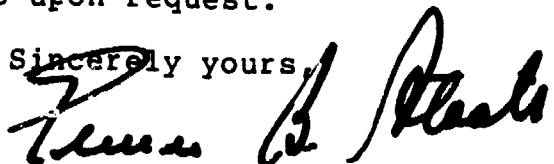
The Japanese Government summarizes such individual corporate data annually, showing the number of agreements entered into by country and by product lines. (See app. III for information for 1950-67.) As is apparent, the unit of information for such material is the individual contracts. The United States presents its data more broadly, especially with respect to payments. Receipts are shown by dollar value for "petroleum," "trade," and three broad classes of manufacturing. Payments are shown by dollar value for only two categories, "manufacturing" and "other." (For the U.S. style of presentation of these statistics, see app. IV.)

Awareness of individual agreements and aggregations of them by product lines enhances understanding of transfer movements. To know what is really happening in this field, however, requires persons with such intimate knowledge of the particular industry as to be able to assess the significance of individual agreements. Such contracts cover items not only of immediate importance but also ongoing importance, such as, for example, the transistor. Others cover technology that has only temporary significance. Assessment of technology transferred can be done only by highly trained industrial engineers, economists, and marketing experts. It is necessarily judgmental, and to date such assessments have been attempted only occasionally and for particular products. They have not been prepared on a regular, ongoing basis.

You also requested any information we might have already developed on German statistical measures of technology transfer. Unfortunately, we have not developed any such information in our work and can, therefore, not be responsive in this area.

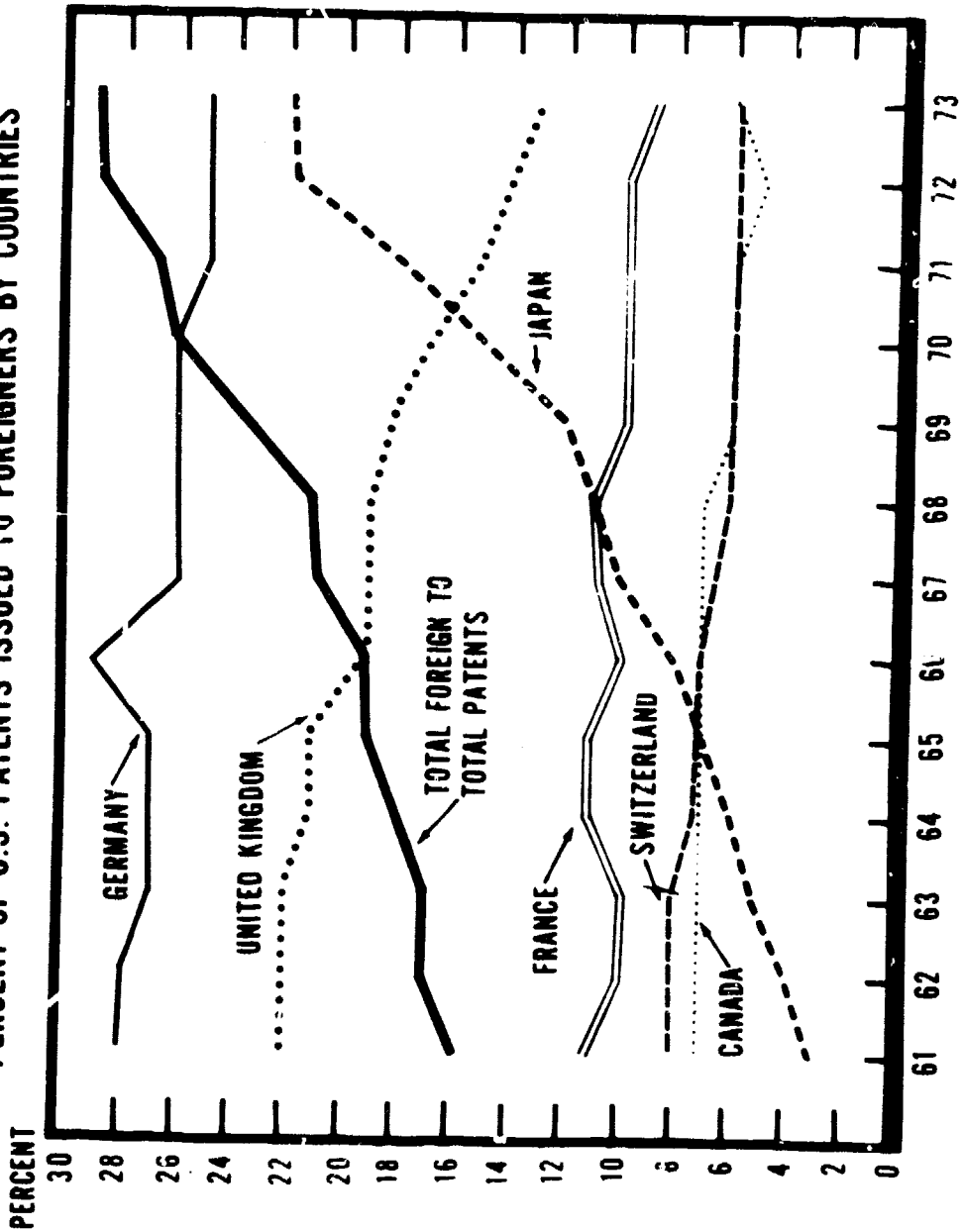
As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 3 days from the date of the report. At that time we will send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States

PERCENT OF TOTAL U.S. PATENTS ISSUED TO FOREIGNERS,
PERCENT OF U.S. PATENTS ISSUED TO FOREIGNERS BY COUNTRIES



SOURCE: ANNUAL REPORT OF COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS 1971&1974

"COPY"

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548



INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

JUL 16 1976

The Honorable
The Secretary of Commerce

Attention: Dr. John W. Kendrick
Chief Economist

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing you with respect to the way the U.S. Government compiles its statistics on technology transfer. Currently, such statistics appear only in balance-of-payment form which means that we do not distinguish between payments for technology currently transferred and technology transferred in earlier years but on which payments are continuing to be made. The cumulative figures appear to make the United States a major net exporter. Statistics for recent years show payment for export of technology some 10 times payment for import of technology.

We believe for public policy purposes, both in the Congress as well as in the Executive Branch, there would be advantage in knowing the current U.S. situation as well as the cumulative. Possible policy formulations could be quite different depending upon whether the United States is currently a net exporter or net importer of technology.

Although no one has yet developed a precise measure of the impact of technological developments on the economy, we know enough to be confident that technology makes a major contribution to economic performance. Certainly observers are unanimous in the case of postwar Japan that technological advances--in major part through transfer--represent a basic factor in Japan's brilliant postwar economic performance.

Beginning in 1972, Japan has published its statistics of technology transfer on a current basis as well as cumulatively and the results are strikingly different. On the usual balance-of-payment basis, Japan is an 8-fold net importer. On a current basis, Japan in 1973 became a net exporter. Receipts were 1.26 payments.

We hope you share these views on the importance of knowing current as well as cumulative trends, and that U.S. statistics on technology transfer which the Bureau of Economic Analysis compiles can be expanded to show such information. We would be pleased to discuss the matter with you or your staff if you should so desire. Should you have any questions, please contact Eleanor M. Hadley, Assistant Director, on 275-5889.

Sincerely yours,

Charles D. Hylander
J. K. Fasick
for Director



"COPY"

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

JUN 27 1977

The Honorable
The Secretary of Commerce

Attention: Dr. Courtenay M. Slater
Chief Economist

Dear Madame Secretary:

I am writing you with respect to the way the U.S. Government compiles its statistics on technology transfer. Currently, such statistics appear only in balance-of-payment form which means that we do not distinguish between payments for technology currently transferred and technology transferred in earlier years but on which payments are continuing to be made. The cumulative figures appear to make the United States a major net exporter. Statistics for recent years show payment for export of technology some 10 times payment for import of technology.

We believe for public policy purposes, both in the Congress as well as in the Executive Branch, there would be advantage in knowing the current U.S. situation as well as the cumulative. Possible policy formulations could be quite different depending upon whether the United States is currently a net exporter or net importer of technology.

Although no one has yet developed a precise measure of the impact of technological developments on the economy, we know enough to be confident that technology makes a major contribution to economic performance. Certainly observers are unanimous in the case of postwar Japan that technological advances--in major part through transfer--represent a basic factor in Japan's brilliant postwar economic performance.


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We hope you share these views on the importance of knowing current as well as cumulative trends, and that U.S. statistics on technology transfer which the Bureau of Economic Analysis compiles can be expanded to show such information.

We submitted this proposal to your predecessor without success. However, as growing interest on the Hill and current items in the news indicates, it becomes of increasing importance that we know what the facts are. The paperwork argument does not seem convincing. What we are suggesting could be accomplished by one extra space on the forms firms are currently obliged to submit.

We would be pleased to discuss the matter with you or your staff if you should so desire. Should you have any questions, please contact Eleanor Hadley, Assistant Director, on 377-5550.

Sincerely yours,



J. K. Fasick
Director

JAPAN'S TECHNOLOGICAL-IMPORT CONTRACTS, BY PRODUCT LINES, 1950-67

Product line	(Number)													Total	
	1950-54	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966		1967
Electrical machinery-----	105	17	20	29	26	39	99	59	82	122	81	80	64	101	924
Transmission and industrial machinery-----	10	1	5	1	1	3	7	8	2	-	-	-	2	2	42
Electrical wire and cable-----	11	1	1	1	7	4	2	1	-	2	4	2	4	3	43
Communication equipment-----	69	7	6	26	13	10	60	25	50	41	36	42	17	31	433
Other electrical equipment-----	15	8	8	1	5	22	30	25	30	79	41	36	41	65	406
Transportation machinery-----	28	8	12	2	6	6	17	24	17	4	5	10	19	10	168
Other machinery-----	113	16	20	25	23	31	71	101	95	272	202	190	207	226	1,592
Prime mover machinery-----	28	2	4	3	2	2	3	5	4	5	10	3	8	2	81
Metalworking machinery-----	4	2	-	2	2	2	4	5	3	22	9	6	20	14	95
Textile machinery-----	6	2	1	4	-	1	3	2	4	-	10	15	9	12	69
Other-----	75	10	15	16	19	26	61	89	84	245	173	166	170	198	1,345
Metal and metalworking fabrication-----	38	7	18	11	12	25	19	27	22	16	40	34	70	39	378
Chemicals-----	83	17	46	30	11	33	77	59	82	83	95	81	126	147	980
Chemical fibers-----	7	-	6	2	-	3	2	-	14	2	3	1	3	4	-
Pharmaceutical and agricultural chemicals-----	34	4	5	8	2	6	14	10	7	4	9	17	18	5	143
Organic and inorganic-----	32	9	33	18	7	21	51	40	56	77	32	41	35	54	506
Other-----	10	4	2	2	2	3	10	9	5	10	51	22	70	84	284
Textiles-----	24	1	12	7	3	7	8	23	3	16	17	15	14	26	176
Petroleum products-----	15	3	5	2	5	4	7	5	5	16	9	2	10	15	103
Rubber and leather materials-----	12	1	5	7	2	3	12	8	2	1	4	5	6	8	76
Construction-----	7	1	2	3	-	1	-	1	1	9	7	13	12	9	66
Glass, stone, and clay products-----	10	-	2	-	1	3	7	7	12	4	10	7	20	10	93
Paper and pulp-----	6	1	1	1	1	-	4	5	6	7	8	4	6	4	52
Electricity and gas-----	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Entertainment-----	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Printing and publication-----	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Food products-----	-	-	-	1	-	1	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other-----	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	165
Total-----	446	72	144	118	90	153	327	230	328	564	500	472	601	638	4,773

Source: Taken from "Gaishi Donyu Nenkan," 1968-69 ("Yearbook on Foreign Capital Entry"), p. 3; and reproduced in "Competitiveness of Japan in the U.S. Market" (Investigation No. 332-65), Aug. 1973, U.S. Tariff Commission.

JAPAN'S TECHNOLOGICAL-IMPORT CONTRACTS, BY SOURCES, 1950-67

Source	1950-54	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	Total
United States	313	44	85	61	63	92	200	187	203	355	274	265	330	388	2,859
West Germany	23	9	11	7	6	16	45	40	46	64	60	55	66	59	517
Switzerland	46	2	6	10	8	9	18	22	25	29	61	31	37	27	341
United Kingdom	8	3	11	3	2	7	10	16	12	36	47	39	43	57	294
France	12	4	6	4	1	7	5	10	8	25	15	21	33	29	180
Italy	16	-	10	3	1	1	8	1	5	6	4	8	4	11	72
Canada	13	2	3	2	2	2	2	7	2	4	6	8	39	10	102
Netherlands	1	1	2	18	-	9	7	7	13	15	9	22	16	8	129
Sweden	12	1	1	2	2	3	8	8	6	6	5	3	5	2	64
Panama	4	4	4	2	1	1	7	8	3	6	1	2	4	11	58
Denmark	3	-	-	-	2	1	-	2	2	2	2	4	7	2	24
Norway	-	-	1	3	-	1	1	3	-	1	-	1	-	1	12
Venezuela	-	-	-	3	1	1	5	5	-	5	1	-	-	2	23
Austria	-	1	2	-	-	-	2	2	-	2	-	2	7	2	18
Lichtenstein	-	1	1	-	1	1	3	1	-	2	4	3	2	2	21
Australia	-	1	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	1	-	3	-	9
Morocco	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	3	4	1	4	2	3	22
Bahamas	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	1	3	-	8
U.S.S.R.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	2	-	2	7
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	1	-	5
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Finland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Czechoslovakia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	2	5
Total	446	72	144	118	90	153	327	320	328	564	500	472	601	638	4,773

Source: Taken from "Gaishi Donyu Nenkan," 1968-69 ("Yearbook on Foreign Capital Entry"), p. 3; and reproduced in "Competitiveness of Japan in the U.S. Market" Investigation No. 332-65), Aug. 1973, U.S. Tariff Commission.

DIRECT INVESTMENT RECEIPTS OF FEES AND ROYALTIES, 1975-76 1/

	1975				1976													
	Total Petro- leum	Manufacturing		Trade	Total	Petro- leum	Manufacturing		Trade	Other								
		Chemicals and allied products	Ma- chin- ery equipment				Chemicals and allied products	Ma- chin- ery equipment										
All areas	3,543	343	2,038	439	837	194	627	186	3,522	368	2,100	448	866	222	564	182	872	
Royalties & license fees	1,086	76	1,573	317	837	34	385	142	1,549	13	1,619	326	897	37	359	134	184	
Other	1,657	327	525	122	160	160	242	44	1,973	356	481	122	-31	185	205	49	687	
Developed countries	2,770	167	1,867	382	798	175	533	146	2,793	159	1,918	405	828	201	483	143	573	
Royalties & license fees	1,707	11	1,450	276	806	25	344	122	1,786	8	1,504	288	863	31	322	115	160	
Other	1,063	156	437	106	-6	149	190	25	1,007	151	414	117	-35	170	161	28	414	
Canada	566	39	400	60	114	120	106	23	105	633	27	451	63	121	116	31	124	
Royalties & license fees	198	2	182	37	95	5	55	9	5	228	(*)	211	36	98	(D)	12	5	
Other	368	37	218	23	29	115	51	13	100	405	27	241	25	23	(D)	18	119	
Europe	1,765	109	1,199	271	556	41	332	85	362	1,700	115	1,145	285	543	36	281	81	360
Royalties & license fees	1,240	9	1,045	202	608	14	220	86	100	1,251	7	1,037	208	624	12	194	74	133
Other	525	100	155	69	-53	27	112	9	262	449	108	107	77	-81	87	7	227	
European Communities (9)	1,532	95	1,086	250	513	35	288	75	276	1,471	99	1,043	264	499	34	246	57	272
Royalties & license fees	1,090	9	978	185	507	(D)	(D)	69	34	1,090	7	972	191	599	12	171	56	54
Other	443	87	107	65	-74	(D)	(D)	6	242	381	92	71	73	-100	22	76	(*)	218
Belgium & Luxembourg--Royalties & license fees	126	(D)	105	35	65	(*)	5	8	(D)	116	(D)	105	30	68	1	6	4	(D)
Royalties & license fees	89	(D)	75	23	45	(*)	7	12	(D)	85	1	74	20	45	1	8	9	2
Other	37	3	30	13	20	(*)	-2	-4	8	31	(D)	31	10	23	(*)	-2	-5	(D)
France	266	17	201	33	87	7	77	11	37	223	(D)	166	32	78	6	52	5	(D)
Royalties & license fees	253	(*)	237	29	143	6	59	14	1	225	(*)	211	28	140	5	39	12	2
Other	13	17	-36	4	-55	(*)	15	-4	36	-2	(D)	-45	4	-82	(*)	13	-7	(D)
Germany	307	(D)	238	40	144	11	44	14	(D)	296	(D)	240	56	135	9	41	12	(D)
Royalties & license fees	223	(*)	236	29	183	(*)	23	10	6	270	1	253	37	(D)	(D)	24	9	7
Other	54	(D)	2	10	-39	11	20	3	(D)	26	(D)	-13	19	(D)	(D)	17	3	(D)
Italy	157	0	118	28	67	2	22	8	21	152	8	115	25	73	1	15	8	21
Royalties & license fees	109	(*)	102	20	69	1	13	6	1	108	(D)	102	17	75	1	8	5	(D)
Other	45	10	16	8	-2	1	9	2	20	44	(D)	13	8	-2	(*)	7	3	(D)
Netherlands	161	12	70	28	11	1	29	7	72	170	5	81	31	17	(*)	33	6	78
Royalties & license fees	83	(D)	74	24	31	(*)	19	6	(D)	102	0	83	26	36	1	21	5	44
Other	77	(D)	-4	4	-19	1	10	1	(D)	68	5	-2	5	-20	17	12	1	64

(*) Less than \$500,000 (+). (D) Suppressed to avoid disclosure of data of individual companies. 1/ Royalties and license fees consist of payments for the sale of intangible property such as patents, processes, trademarks and copyrights; other fees consist of management fees, service charges, film and television tape rentals, and rentals for tangible property.

Source: "Survey of Current Business," Aug. 1977. Full chart not shown.

DIRECT INVESTMENT PAYMENTS OF
FEEES AND ROYALTIES, 1974-76

(Millions of dollars)

	1974	1975	1976
All areas-----	160	287	274
Manufacturing-----	200	217	209
Other-----	-40	70	65
Canada-----	46	139	135
Manufacturing-----	1	40	36
Other-----	45	99	99
Europe-----	174	159	150
Manufacturing-----	198	166	167
Other-----	-24	-7	-17
United Kingdom-----	17	26	3
Manufacturing-----	17	13	8
Other-----	(*)	14	-5
Switzerland-----	154	115	129
Manufacturing-----	158	116	130
Other-----	-4	-1	-1
Other Europe-----	3	18	18
Manufacturing-----	23	38	30
Other-----	-20	-20	-12
Japan-----	-47	-26	-36
Manufacturing-----	(*)	8	4
Other-----	-47	-33	-40
Other-----	-13	14	25
Manufacturing-----	1	3	2
Other-----	-14	11	23

*Less than \$500,000 (+).

Source: "Survey of Current Business," Oct. 1977.

(990516)