In the current decade few areas of economic concern have received as wide-spread public attention and private analysis as that accorded to the international status of the U.S. economy. An often cited indicator of the alleged deterioration of this country's international economic viability is the declining share of U.S. exports in world markets and, conversely, the increasing volume of U.S. imports.

The desirability of a vigorous exporting economy cannot be questioned. However, the conventional outlook concerning the importance of imports, one must concede, is much less positive.

It seems, then appropriate at this time to reassess the impact of imports as economic goods, that is, as goods or services which are relatively scarce and, most importantly, satisfy wants.

The study briefly described herein represents a recent attempt to evaluate the economic impact of imports on the Greater Hartford, Connecticut region.

THE GREATER HARTFORD STUDY

The sources of data included slightly more than 150 randomly selected firms of which 70 percent were manufacturers—167 firms actually were manufacturers—the remainder being insurance, financial, retail, wholesale, et cetera. The firms studied accounted for approximately $3 billion in sales and 80 percent of all manufacturing employment in the region. The study, therefore, covered 66-some-odd thousand of 80,000 employees in manufacture and then $3 billion in sales.

Responding firms were placed in one or more of the following categories:

1. Users of imported goods/services. This would be users of primary metals, perhaps users of imported machinery, users of imported electronic equipment, et cetera.

The second category: providers of goods/services complementary to imports. These would be people who import an item for the purpose of distribution, import an item for the purpose of assembly or for some other complementary reason.

Three: competitors with imported goods or services, these being firms which would be directly competing with imports in national markets.

Firms not involved with imports in any of the above categories were classified as "import immune."

Of the 152 firms sampled 86 were involved with imports, 66 were immune. However, it should be noted that the involved firms were by far the most important, accounting for 87 percent of the sample's employment and 76.5 percent of the sample's sales volume.

REASONS FOR IMPORT IMMUNITY

The most frequently cited reasons for import immunity were:

Item	*Percent of the 66 immune firms*
1. Customized service/product	49
2. Production of unique product	27
3. Technological advantage	18
4. Government/military product	14