

'Layoff' sounds foreign to Japanese ears

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 or production demands slacken, Japanese businesses do several things to keep their employees working.
THEY INCLUDE transferring work-

Weaker yen curbs global competition

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 "Closer policy coordination could avoid moving too violently into inflation or depression. I don't think any country is benefited by a rollercoaster economy."

Sachs, who is a proponent "to a limited extent" of coordinating economic policies among the world's leading countries, said coordinating policies takes presidential leadership and should begin with the United States. The kinds of things that could be coordinated, he said, include agreement on limited swing in the exchange rate and an agreement not to present high interest rate policies and budget defi-

ers to different departments within the same company, moving them to an affiliated company or even another company altogether. They also use attrition, not filling jobs vacated by retirement or death.

Sachs has visited Japan once before. A special adviser to the Federal Reserve Board, he is now a member of a U.S. Japanese delegation of financial experts.
 "Strikes in Japan are a very different animal than here," Sachs said. Workers don't walk off their jobs to economically cripple an employer, but to express their hurt and embarrass their employer, he said. Japanese strikes are much shorter. "A one-hour

"When worse comes to worse, they do what we call 'feather-bedding,'" Sachs said, and limit worker output.

When a company does go out of business — and people are out of work because there is no employer — the workers receive pay through a government-imposed, wage-support mechanism.

Most Japanese unions are organized within particular companies, rather than by industry, making them much weaker than unions in the United

States.
 But the Japanese have much stronger labor laws, regulating everything from vacations to the number of hours in the work week.

American laws regulate the collective-bargaining process between employers and employees, assuring it's fair, Sachs said. Pay, vacations and working conditions are up to the companies and unions to negotiate.

Sachs, who toured a Nissan plant he described as spooky — "robots going wild, no person in sight" — said the Japanese also do some atrocious things.

"In the area of discrimination, the

Japanese have a long way to go," Sachs said. "Major corporations in Japan, given any choice, will not hire women. If competent men are available, they will be hired."

Sachs believes United States has the better labor system because it is free from governmental regulation. However, he faults the National Labor Relations Board, which has undergone a turnover under the Reagan Administration, for not enforcing labor agreements recently.
 "Ours is a better system," he said. "But we have a lot to learn from them. . . . Some of their values should be adopted."

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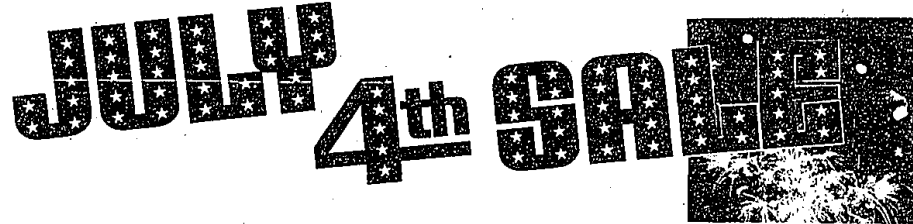
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JAPAN ISN'T facing as many economic problems as America, he said. Its inflation rate is low, its economic management is good, and the country has virtually no unemployment.

But the Japanese still have a lower cost of living than Americans, and they have an aging population.
 "The Social Security burden in Japan is going to be enormous in a couple of decades."



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