

July trade deficit climbs to highest amount ever

United Press International
 WASHINGTON — The U.S. trade deficit deepened to a record \$14.1 billion in July as American importers took advantage of the dollar's strength abroad, the Commerce Department said this week.

Several records were set. Import purchases, at \$33.5 billion, were the largest ever, as was a setback in the trade of manufactured goods and the deficit with Japan.

Export sales in July were worth only \$19.4 billion, leaving a deficit of \$14.1 billion, which was \$1.9 billion above the last record set in April. It was the fifth month this year that a record has been established.

June's trade shortfall, at \$8.9 billion, looks small in comparison but still was worse than any month last year.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes said the deficit "reflects the strength of our recovery." He predicted other countries will buy more U.S. goods when their economic recoveries are in full swing.

But some private economists had a less rosy view.

"The trade deficit continues to be

an economic disaster that could be as large as \$140 billion this year," said Jerry Jasinowski, chief economist for the National Association of Manufacturers. "What is particularly serious about the trade deficit is that an increasing share of it is made up of greater imports of capital machinery and high technology manufactured goods."

National trade in manufactured goods produced a record deficit of \$10.5 billion in July.

In addition, farmers saw their traditional surplus in food exports shrink to the smallest ever, \$909 million.

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige said the economic slowdown that seems to be under way could shrink the trade deficits later this year by curbing the American appetite for cars, clothing and electronic equipment.

But his department still sees this year's deficit reaching \$130 billion and he noted, "The \$73.8 billion deficit for the first seven months of this year already exceeds the \$69.4 billion shortfall for all of 1983."

Most analysts say the deficit feeds

on high interest rates that make American goods less competitive by inflating the dollar unreasonably, a boon to importers at the expense of exporters.

So far this year Japan sold \$21.1 billion more to the United States than it bought in American goods, nearly as much as the \$21.7 billion deficit for all of last year. Japan had a record \$4.7 billion advantage in July.

The trade disadvantage with Western Europe was \$2.04 billion; Canada, \$1.85 billion; Taiwan, \$1.3 billion; Mexico, \$770 million, and with members of the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries, \$1.5 billion, all substantially worse than June.

David Lund, the Commerce Department's senior trade economist, blamed the surge in imports on a summer increase in the purchasing power of the dollar overseas, amounting to about 5 percent.

"A 5 percent change over a matter of weeks is a very strong incentive to buy," he said, especially since it occurred when importers are stocking up in advance for the Christmas season.

Book that helped thousands made into TV movie by ABC

United Press International
 NEW YORK — Martha Weinman Lear is quick to admit that she was not thinking of others when she wrote "Heartsounds," her book about what she and her late husband went through when he suffered a series of heart attacks.

"It would be nice to say I wrote it to help people coping with such terrible traumas in their own lives, but it wouldn't be true," she said.

"I wrote it for both of us while we were going through a terrible time. Writing was sort of a way of ordering the experience. Getting a handle on it. Taking a detached, objective, editorial stance.

"It was cathartic for both of us. It helped us cope."

Yet when the book was published after Dr. Harold Lear's death, thousands of people who had been through or were going through similar experiences wrote Mrs. Lear,

who wrote for The New York Times Magazine before her marriage.

"It stunned me," she said. "The letters said in many different ways the same basic thing: 'Thanks for helping.'"

"The book was comforting them, but I couldn't understand how. Because if I was going through that experience and someone gave me 'Heartsounds,' I'd want to get as far away from it as possible."

Then a letter came from a woman in New Orleans whose husband was dying and it explained everything to Lear.

"They all felt the same rage that I felt. Not just at the gods, at doctors, at the medical establishment, but at the person who was dying — abandoning them.

"It makes you feel like a monster. But when those people read my book, it gave them a sense of validation — it's normal."

It is no chance happening that Lear's book has been made into a made-for-TV movie, which will air Sept. 30 on ABC.

Lear's first cousin is producer Norman Lear ("All in the Family") and he is executive producer of the film that stars James Garner and Mary Tyler Moore.

Besides the Lears' struggle to cope, the story also illuminates the problems doctors have dealing with dying patients beyond dispensing textbook platitudes.

Lear was a doctor. Suddenly he found himself on the other side of the fence and what he was facing were condescending doctors and hospital bureaucracy.

"The book was never meant as a blanket indictment against doctors," Mrs. Lear said. "Some are far more sensitive to the human side of their profession; some are shockingly insensitive."

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