

To the Editor:

Re "[America Can't Even Produce the Things It Invented](#)" (Opinion, Jan. 4):

The authors argue that the US economy has been lulled into a dangerous offshoring slump and now produces none of its own essentials, leaving it too reliant on other countries, largely China. They challenge the Biden administration to return a quarter of production jobs from Asia.

This argument is fair but misses one nuance: no economy can make everything on its own, and each would collapse trying. To achieve the goals the authors espouse, the US should partner with complementary economies. Take Turkey for instance. Turkey supplies a significant portion of the US' rebar, critical for construction projects. It is also gearing up to be one of the largest LNG consumers in the world and a regional hub for the commodity, while the US greatly needs buyers. The strengths and limitations of our economies balance each other out in ways that benefit both of us.

"Building back better" will have improved results if the US establishes a core network of complementary economies working to strengthen the industries for which they are best suited.

The authors are right in noting consumers' long underestimated desire for "better, healthier and more ethically sourced" products. The emergence of Turkey's apparel industry as a potent competitor to China in recent years serves as evidence. This shift can be replicated, and scores of jobs can be created among a community of economies.

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