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Television, technology, and competition : HDTV and digital TV in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan

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Abstrak

High definition television (HDTV) became a contentious issue in American politics after the European Community rejected a bid in 1986 by the Japanese national broadcasting company, Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK), to have its HDTV production method adopted as an international standard. The US government supported the Japanese effort initially, but after the European rejection many people in the United States began to question that support. For some, the Japanese HDTV initiative raised concerns about the relative decline in US competitiveness, even in high technology industries, and the need to respond more effectively to the increased competition from Japan andWestern Europe. For others, HDTV was important because it might affect a wide range of industries ? broadcasting, film, video, consumer electronics, computers, and telecommunications ? and therefore needed to be considered more carefully before buying into the Japanese approach. As a result, the United States began a process to choose a standard for advanced TV that tookuntil April 1997 to reach its conclusion. The US choice of a digital television (DTV) standard forced both Japan and Europe to reexamine their earlier decisions on HDTV. This bookis about the forces behind these events.