

## Two case studies in press 'terrorism'

More than one U.S. businessman may have had the feeling in recent months that information he is supplied by the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Journal of Commerce* is more designed to sever U.S. business opportunities with Mexico than foster such opportunities. His presentiment is absolutely correct and constitutes one of the great scandals of the financial press.

The sabotage efforts of the two papers, responding to leading factions of Anglo-American finance based in lower Manhattan, could not have been more obvious over the past two weeks. While the *Wall Street Journal* ran front-page articles designed to sink the Mexican peso and boost Church-state strife, the *Journal of Commerce* ridiculed López Portillo's efforts to protect America's fastest growing export market—the Mexican economy—from being ravaged by economic warfare. It is such attitudes that López Portillo recently characterized as "informational terrorism."

The *Journal of Commerce* has played a particularly marked role for the past six months. Among the daily's key behind-the-scenes string-pullers, our sources report, are Vrimmer de Vries of Morgan Guaranty, Robert Roosa, and the "Group of 30." The Group of 30 is an IMF think tank founded by former IMF Director Johannes Witteveen. Its current chairman is Geoffrey Bell of Schroeders Bank and its executive director is Robert Pringle, the former editor of *The London Banker*.

Highlights of the *Journal of Commerce's* Mexico coverage:

**Jan. 7, 1981:** In extended editorial commentary on the Jan. 5 López Portillo-Reagan summit, the *Journal* bitterly attacks Mexico's leading political institution, the PRI party, as a "cozy arrangement between the government and the privileged." The paper gives its full support to a *Foreign Policy* magazine article by a London-based couple, Michael and Nanneke Redclift. The Redclift article appeals for a reduction in Mexico-U.S. economic cooperation and the devolution of the Mexican economy back to labor-intensive forms of production. "Mexico should increase controls on foreign investment, limit oil sales further, and make a serious effort to diversify manufactured exports," quotes the *Journal* approvingly from the Redclift study.

**April 24, 1981:** *Journal of Commerce* Mexico cor-

respondent Alan Robinson, formerly of the *London Times*, promotes Wharton School propaganda that "growth must be slowed and the overheated engine cooled down." Robinson's forte is not subtlety: "The Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates, whose warnings that the Mexican economy was overheating have been largely borne out by events, now says that if something is not done soon to correct the nation's economic course, the 1976 recession and monetary crisis could be repeated."

**July 7, 1981:** "Is Mexico's Oil-Fueled Boom Over?" heralds a Robinson special. "A spiraling inflation that may exceed 30 percent this year, lost revenues from canceled or suspended contracts . . . and a sharply overvalued peso are sending shock waves through the foreign financial community."

**July 8, 1981:** Robinson devotes a major column to charges that Mexico's oil company had broken government policy by putting up Mexican oil for sale on the Rotterdam spot market. Robinson does not inform his readers that the information comes verbatim from a column by Mexico's noisiest and most discredited critic of oil development, Heberto Castillo, in the pages of the left-Jesuit scandal magazine *Proceso*—and were entirely baseless. Robinson gives the game away with his own editorial interpolation: "It remains a mystery how anyone could take the oil agency [Pemex] as the means to bring the nation out of economic crisis."

There are indications that there is more to this media story than meets the eye.

On June 16, Mexican journalist José Carreño Carlón wrote an article charging that in early 1973, the Rand Corporation asked a group of experts from MIT to develop a program for using the media to destabilize governments that are "potentially hostile" to the U.S. In February of that year, the MIT experts reportedly charged the well-known advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson, with implementing its set of recommendations and, according to Carreño, this was done in Allende's Chile through the newspaper *El Mercurio*.

The "success" of the psychological warfare campaign in that country was subsequently transplanted to Jamaica and its *Daily Gleaner* in the late 1970s. It is now reportedly slated for application against Mexico.