

The oracles of the foreign press

A few voices dominate media coverage of Mexico, but who's to blame?

By Cindy Anders

The New York Times' Mexico City correspondent Larry "Rohter tirelessly calls the same people, obtaining the same opinion and repeating it.... The academics are good and old friends of mine, and I sincerely respect them, but I know that they also have their interests.... Repeating supposedly objective opinions from supposedly independent observers who have a partial interest in the issues is ineptitude or laziness."

So ended one of Harvard historian John Womack's many letters to *The New York Times* last fall criticizing the paper's coverage of the Mexican elections. Womack was to repeat his attacks on Rohter's sources in a series of three letters – all published in the Mexican monthly *Nexos* in November – insisting that Rohter and correspondent Alan Riding were not competent. Though the letter was addressed to *The New York Times*, it is clear that his criticism could be extended to any number of print and broadcast media. For Womack wasn't just attacking *The Times*, he was criticizing the practice of using

...nuestro
...man
...bud
...suna
...nifestacio
...nos fue
...madecen
...enga

