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III. THE WEST

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Britain-CENTO: (London has renewed its efforts to persuade the United States to accept full membership in the Central Treaty Organization. The British are anxious to boost the Shah's morale. London apparently fears that he will be subjected to increasing pressure to reach an accommodation with the USSR.)

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Argentina: The joint Peronista-Communist call for a general strike on 23 and 24 September in support of both political and economic demands has been denounced by Economy Minister Alsogaray as an effort to sabotage economic recovery. He warned of stern countermeasures, (and the government is reported prepared to arrest a number of key labor leaders prior to the strike in order to discourage widespread support.)

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III. THE WEST

Britain Again Asks United States to Join CENTO

(Britain has renewed its efforts to persuade the United States to accept full membership in the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Speaking to Secretary Herter in New York on 18 September, Foreign Secretary Lloyd expressed concern that CENTO--formerly the Baghdad Pact--would collapse. He cited Pakistani and Turkish worries and asserted that full US membership would give the pact an important psychological boost.)

(London's worries center on the problem of Iran as the only CENTO member not also belonging to another Western security organization. Foreign Office Deputy Under Secretary Sir Roger Stevens, a former ambassador to Tehran, recently said he feared that Iran might go neutralist if the Shah does not receive the material and moral support he deems necessary.)

(In connection with the 7-9 October CENTO ministerial council meetings in Washington, London may press some of its other recent ideas for giving CENTO an appearance of greater vitality. These include setting up a CENTO air command, initiating CENTO contingency planning against USSR-incited aggression from Afghanistan or Iraq, and establishing a NATO-like annual review procedure to emphasize balance in economic and military capabilities.)

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Peronistas and Communists Call General Strike in Argentina

(Argentine Economy Minister Alsogaray has denounced the joint Peronista-Communist call for a general strike on 23 and 24 September as an effort to sabotage economic recovery. He said he would take stern countermeasures to safeguard the public interest and security. The government is reported prepared to arrest a number of key labor leaders prior to the strike in order to discourage widespread support. Such action is legally possible under state-of-siege regulations, and the army commander in chief reportedly favors firm measures against subversive strikes.)

(The collaboration of the Peronistas and Communists is in accordance with their 24 August pact for united action against austerity measures under the US-backed stabilization program. The two groups had already cooperated in earlier strikes and in June had publicly announced their intention to coordinate strike action.)

(The government, also concerned over possible Peronista-Communist cooperation in the congressional elections next March, is preparing a case to be used as a basis for suspending the legal status of the Communist party. Although Frondizi in April issued a decree banning Communist political activity, implementing legislation is lacking, and the Communists participated in several subsequent provincial elections.)

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