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STAFF NOTES:

Latin American Trends

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LATIN AMERICAN TRENDS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Hemisphere Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Argentina: Calabro Speaks Out

1
Buenos Aires Province governor Victorio Calabro has in effect announced his bid for the presidency in 1977 by issuing a stinging criticism of the administration. In the process, he sharpened the dispute with labor leader Lorenzo Miguel and others who cling to the defense of President Peron's authority.

1, 2
Calabro, also an important labor leader who has for some time been identified with the opponents of Peron's rule, lashed out at virtually every aspect of the government's performance in recent months. The President, he declared, has lost all power because of her successive political defeats. The crisis in the economy continues, he went on, because "no proper measures have been introduced." He found fault with Acting President Luder as well, saying that the political stability the country needs cannot be supplied by "interim presidents." "Unless rapid solutions are found," he said, "the government will fall."

1, 3
Calabro, probably the most prominent of the so-called "anti-verticalistas"--opponents of Peron's authority--seeks to gauge the extent of support for his position while the vacationing President is still on the sidelines. Moreover, he is hoping to steer the growing debate over her future to the disadvantage of the President and her supporters. Her return to Buenos Aires is scheduled for October 17.

3
By going public with his criticism, Calabro went a long way toward confirming the widely held belief that he covets the presidency. Moreover, his action represents an open break with top labor leader Lorenzo Miguel, chief among the "verticalistas," who favor the retention of the President in office.

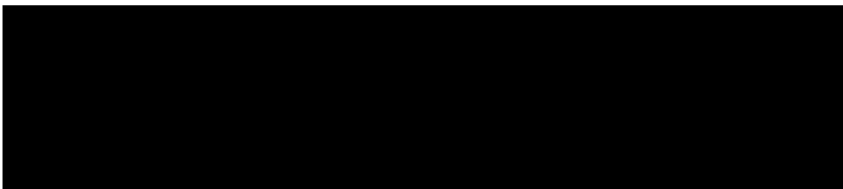
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Presidential aspirations aside, Miguel and his supporters have probably interpreted Calabro's open break as signalling his intention to wrest from them control of the labor movement. They have good reason to be concerned. The Buenos Aires governor's influence is growing, at a time when Miguel's prestige among labor has been slipping as discontent over economic conditions is encouraging dissatisfaction with his leadership.
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Costa Rica: Communist School for Labor Leaders

Central American communist parties are taking steps to train future leaders in the labor field. Communist labor bosses gathered in Costa Rica last month under the sponsorship of that country's communist labor grouping, the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), and agreed to a three-tiered training regimen.

The delegates decided that basic training will continue to be done by local unions in each country. The best prospects will be sent to the Central American trade union school in San Jose, Costa Rica, for middle-level training and future indoctrination in communist labor strategy. Graduates of this school will be permitted to attend the soon-to-open trade union school in Havana.

The Central American trade union school is run jointly by the CGT and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). Senior CGT officials teach the students and the WFTU finances the school with money from the Soviets. The school operates only one month a year, but puts 30 or so students through the course each session. Originally, the school was run clandestinely and the training was heavy in conspiratorial doctrine. Since its start eight years ago, it has come above ground and become better known in Latin labor circles. This year it succeeded in getting classroom space at Costa Rica's National University. Several important non-communist leaders have been trained in the school and most reportedly have returned home either as convinced communists or active sympathizers.

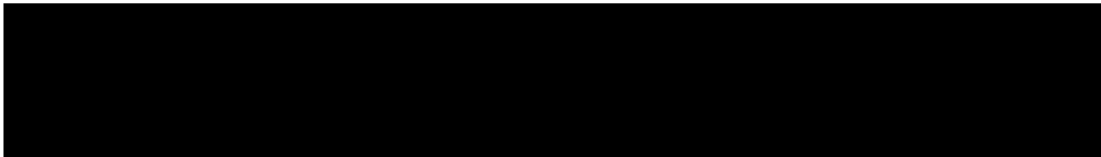
2 The Costa Rican CGT is particularly qualified to run the school. It is probably the strongest communist labor union in Central America. Estimated to have about 12,000

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members, it has built its greatest strength in the banana regions of Costa Rica. A number of its leaders have studied in the Soviet Union and East Europe. It is usually the first union in Costa Rica to speak out on national issues affecting the workers. (CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN)



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Panama: Tightening Media Control

Panama's media, long a hotbed of sensationalistic and sometimes lurid reportage, have had to readjust under Torrijos and it appears that the regime is tightening its already substantial control.

The administration exercised control for a year or so after it came to power in 1968 by assigning censors to newspaper and radio offices. It then relaxed restraints and relied on decrees regulating certain types of information, and on self-censorship by media representatives who had learned the rules of the game. The government also acquired the country's principal radio network and a publishing house that directly controls four of Panama's six dailies. Although the 1972 Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, this has been the exception rather than the rule.

Radio Libertad and its relay stations make up the domestic service network controlled by the government and it praises and propagandizes government achievements. On occasion, it also uses unattributed commentary taken directly from Havana's domestic service. Other stations generally steer clear of political commentary.

Only a single radio station remains in political opposition to the government--Radio Impacto, owned by Alberto Quiros Guardia, a well known political malcontent and unstinting government critic who is also the chief commentator. The government has closed the station several times when his rantings became too shrill; earlier this year apparently students were inspired to riot and ransack the station as a further warning. These actions have generally had only a short-term dampening effect.

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1 The government, although frequently vexed by Impacto's commentaries, apparently believes closing it would cause too much of an uproar. By allowing it to operate a useful facade of freedom is preserved that generally can be held within acceptable bounds while providing a safety valve for radical student diatribes.

1 One other station, the Radio Mia network, on isolated occasions cautiously opposes the government on freedom of the press issues, but it toes the line on national issues. The country's two TV stations practice self-censorship and cause no problems.

1, 2 Newspapers are probably the most important public medium in the major cities of Panama and Colon and as such are the objects of the closest government scrutiny. With direct control over four of the six dailies and all the major columnists, the government has had few difficulties. Only LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA, probably the city's leading daily, and its sister English-language daily THE STAR AND HERALD preserve some degree of independence. Owned by a wealthy family from the displaced political elite of the pro-Torrijos period, the papers have practiced considerable restraint and generally refrain from criticizing the government.

1 The government apparently ended the informal system of self-censorship in September, however. The acting foreign minister--who is also assistant director of LA ESTRELLA--informed the editorial staff that material on foreign affairs and the treaty negotiations must now have prior written approval from a new review board. The board would provide a headline and instructions on treatment and placement in the paper for any approved article. No reason was given for the change.

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The government has recently been pushing two lines in the media: that the people must stand solidly behind Torrijos in the negotiations and not fall prey to provocations to violence; and that the violence-prone ultraradical students, however pure their nationalistic motives, are a minority deceived by the oligarchy and used by the imperialists against the revolution's goals. By controlling the media, Torrijos is better able to mold public opinion in support of these stands. (SECRET/NOFORN)

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Bolivia: Soviets Trying to Make Headway

5 The Soviet Union is attempting to exploit Bolivia's quest for an outlet to the Pacific.

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1 [REDACTED] the Soviets believe President Banzer's negotiations with Chile will fail and have encouraged him to buy Soviet weapons to increase pressure on Santiago. They have offered to sell military equipment at low prices.

4 The Soviets have tried before to take advantage of Bolivia's problems with Chile. In 1974, for example, the USSR reportedly offered to sell tanks at low prices.

2, 3, 4 To date, President Banzer has rejected all Soviet military offers in fear of becoming indebted to the USSR. The Soviets, however, have had more success in the economic arena. They provided the University of San Andres with laser equipment in June 1975 and in late September they signed an agreement to purchase Bolivian tin.
(SECRET/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON)

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Bolivia: "I must go down to the sea again"

2 President Hugo Banzer, who has staked his historical reputation on securing Bolivia's long-sought goal of recovering access to the Pacific Ocean, is pulling out all stops to accomplish this mission. This week, he is making a special trip to New York to plead his case before the UN General Assembly.

1, 2 Although Bolivians currently have the use of the Chilean port facility of Arica on excellent financial terms, their desire for a seacoast of their own ranges beyond the purely practical benefits to a highly emotional and even mystical point. During an interview published two weeks ago in the Chilean news magazine Ercilla, Banzer conveyed this perspective in his response to the question "Why do the Bolivians want the sea?" He responded by suggesting, "Why don't you take a Bolivian to the sea shore. You will see that he will stop in that moment and leave you alone. And he will gaze at the sea with a look of nostalgia, mixed with sadness and happiness." "It has happened to me many times," he continued, "the last time I was in Rio de Janeiro for two days, I spent the evenings sitting on the balcony of my hotel. My wife would call me at one, two, three, and four o'clock in the morning and I kept sitting there, looking at the sea. I believe that the sea is part of nature for man. It is like the air."

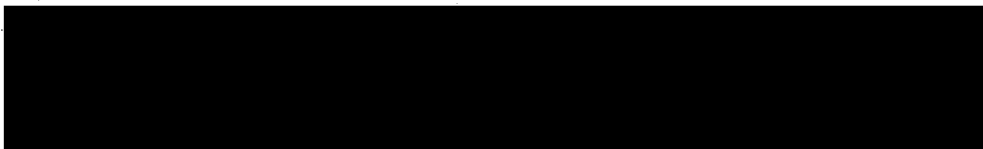
2 Behind these romantic remarks is the aim of nationalistic Bolivians to regain the coast lost to Chile in 1884 in the War of the Pacific. Every year Bolivia holds a national celebration on March 23, known as Abaroa Day, in memory of Eduardo Abaroa--who died refusing to surrender the port of Antofagasta. In his honor, Bolivian students stage a symbolic annual march to the sea.

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Since Bolivia reestablished diplomatic relations with Chile early this year, Banzer has been pressing junta President Pinochet for a territorial settlement. So far the Chileans have indicated that they are willing to consider some sort of leasing arrangement, but it would appear that Bolivian irredentists will be satisfied only with an outright grant of territory. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Terrorists Active in El Salvador

1 Recent terrorist violence, some of it possibly the work of the government, has left already jittery Salvadorans even more uneasy.

5 On September 24, a rightist counterterror organization called the Falange claimed credit for its first victim, a 22-year-old youth. On September 25, LA CRONICA, an antigovernment newspaper in the capital, was sprayed with machinegun fire, presumably by rightists. More serious violence erupted the following day when about a dozen terrorists, possibly members of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), attacked a small national guard outpost and killed four defenders. Two of the terrorists were later killed. Less than four hours later, a prominent leftist deputy was machinegunned to death in San Salvador. The leftist Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL) reportedly took credit for that slaying, alleging the deputy was killed because of his "revisionist" stance.

3 The attack on the national guard outpost was a genuine leftist terrorist operation and the two slain guerrillas have been identified as members of a group that received training from Guatemalan terrorists in early September. The other actions, however, could be the work of the government, despite the FPL and Falange communiques. The killing of the deputy immediately after the attack on the guard outpost certainly suggests retribution. The guard reportedly prepared assassination lists this summer for instantaneous retaliation in the event any of its members were killed.

1+2 There is little hard evidence concerning the EPL or Falange and it is possible they are simply being used as government cover. (SECRET/NOFORN/NO CONTRACT/ORCON)

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Kidnaping in Havana

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Relations between Havana and Caracas were badly strained by a recent episode involving the abduction of a Cuban couple who had sought asylum in the Venezuelan embassy in Havana.

1, 4
In the middle of the night of September 26 a 35-year-old Cuban, sentenced to a rehabilitation farm for trying to flee the country through the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, and his pregnant wife disappeared from the embassy, where they had taken refuge the previous week.

6
The apparent kidnaping of the asylees was probably the scheme of field-level operatives, perhaps from the Ministry of Interior, and almost certainly was not sanctioned by the upper echelons of the Castro government.

1
The action provoked a strong response in Caracas, where President Carlos Andres Perez reportedly even threatened to break relations unless the situation was promptly resolved.

5
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Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro responded quickly, however, to terminate the imbroglio with the least possible damage to bilateral relations. He met with Venezuelan Ambassador Taylhardat, expressed embarrassment over the incident, and agreed to allow the ambassador to meet privately with the asylees. Later members of the international media were called to a press conference, obviously under Cuban control, during which the asylees explained their decision to remain in Cuba. In a further effort apparently aimed at placating the Venezuelans, Castro praised the Perez government in a major speech on September 28.

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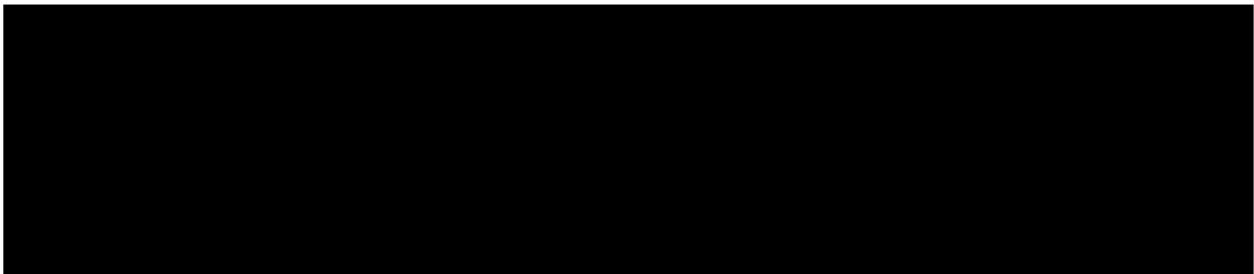
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5 The Perez government was displeased with Taylhardat's timorous performance in defending Venezuela's interests. The Ambassador has since been summoned home for consultation and his tenure has been called into question.

6 Castro concern at making the best of a bad situation should keep the incident from being blown out of proportion. Nevertheless, when added to other problems the official Venezuelan community has encountered in Havana (see Latin American Trends, August 6, 1975), it probably will add to the Perez government's wariness in its relations with Havana.
(SECRET/NOFORN/NO CONTRACT)

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Cuba: Top Military Officers Replaced

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Two key Cuban military officers--the number two man in the armed forces ministry and the commander of one of the ground forces' three armies--were replaced recently. Both are "comandantes de brigada," a rank held by only thirteen officers. Despite the obvious importance of the high-level changes, neither was publicly explained nor has there been any announcement of the new duties of the officers replaced. While it is possible that the changes--surrounded as they were by secrecy--were politically motivated, it is more likely that the normal reshuffling of commands has been moved up from December to September to avoid interfering with the First Party Congress at year's end.



Senen Casas Regueiro

tary commands as well as in intelligence, counterintelligence, and subversion.

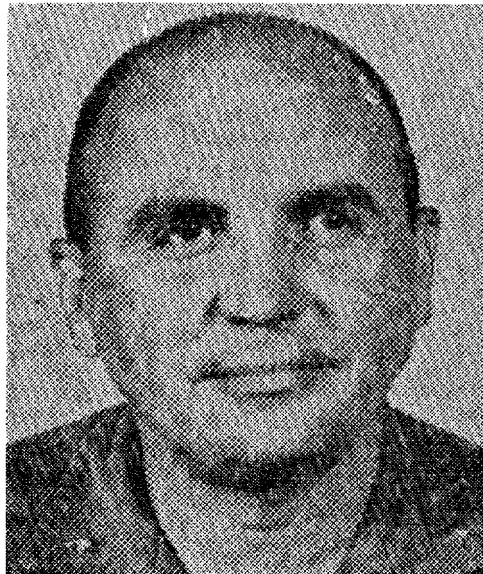
Brigade Commander Senen Casas Regueiro, who had served as first deputy armed forces minister and chief of the general staff since July 1971, has been replaced by Brigade Commander Abelardo Colome Ibarra, according to the September 6 issue of the party newspaper. Senen and his brother Julio, who apparently is still deputy armed forces minister for services, are both closely linked to Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro; both had served as department chiefs on his general staff during the revolution in 1958. Senen's replacement, Colome Ibarra, is a Central Committee member who has a background of service in top mili-

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1
Brigade Commander Raul Menendez Tomassevich, chief of the Eastern (First) Army since 1968, has been replaced by First Commander Eleuterio (Elio) Avila Trujillo. Like the Casas brothers, Menendez Tomassevich has had a long association with Raul Castro; he was chief of one of Raul's six guerrilla columns during the revolution and is currently a member of the Central Committee. Forty-two-year-old Avila Trujillo, on the other hand, is a relative unknown; he was chief of services of the Eastern Army immediately before his recent promotion, and before that a division commander, but no information is available on his early military service or his revolutionary bona fides.



Raul Menendez Tomassevich

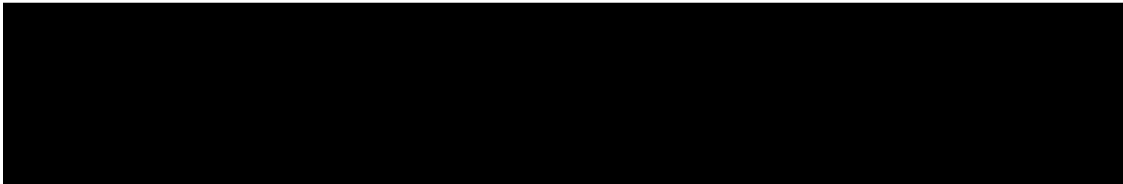
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Rather than being cashiered, Casas Regueiro and Menendez Tomassevich may be in line for important new responsibilities growing out of the First Party Congress. Cuba's present six provinces, for example, are to be broken up into 14 at the congress, and the two military men may be earmarked for appointment as provincial chiefs. For almost a decade, the Castro regime has used Raul's armed forces ministry as a source of reliable, trained, and disciplined candidates for both administrative and political positions. Moreover, the shifting of other officers supports the theory that reassignments have been

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1, 2, 3
advanced; First Commander William Galvez, former chief of an armored division in the Western Army, is now chief of the armed forces' Military Patriotic Work Group, and First Commander Cesar Lara Rosello, former chief of the Camaguey Army Corps, has been named to head the Holguin Army Corps, according to the weekly Cuban military journal. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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Cuba: One Less Revolutionary



Roque Dalton

Havana has belatedly acknowledged the death of Salvadoran poet and pro-Castro revolutionary Roque Dalton, murdered by his own compatriots apparently for following Havana's shift away from advocacy of violent revolution. This helps to explain why the Cuban government believes it is necessary to be constantly reinforcing its revolutionary credentials.

The Casa de las Americas, Cuba's international cultural organization, indicated in a press release in August that Dalton and a companion were killed on May 10 by members of a "minuscule faction" within the People's Revolutionary Army of El Salvador, a rebel movement to which Dalton belonged. The Cuban announcement alleged that the leadership of that revolutionary movement had previously criticized the dissident faction for "militarist deviationism and petty bourgeois extremism," terminology usually reserved for those who continue to promote violent revolution in the face of Havana's adoption of Moscow's "via pacifica." Havana further denounced the faction for "the most grave errors of anti-Soviet, anti-Cuban, and anti-revolutionary

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pseudoleftism," more ideological jargon to describe advocates of armed struggle who have accused Moscow and Havana of betraying revolutionary ideals.

Born in 1935, Dalton had in recent years lived in Cuba. He was a member of El Salvador's delegation to the First Latin American Solidarity Conference in Havana in 1967, and his works appeared frequently in Cuban cultural publications. His most outstanding political work, "Revolution Within the Revolution?" and the Criticism of the Right, was published by the Casa de las Americas in 1970. Written in 1968, it was an attempt to analyze the faults of Regis Debray's Revolution Within the Revolution--a theoretical justification of violent revolution--in the wake of Che Guevara's disastrous Bolivian guerrilla escapade that left Debray, Guevara, and, by implication, Castro and the Cuban leadership, open to criticism on ideological grounds. That Dalton's critique was published by Havana is a tribute to the prestige he enjoyed in the Cuban capital at a very sensitive time for the Castro government.

As the Cubans shifted from criticizing to cooperating with the Latin American communist parties, Dalton shifted with them, and this apparently planted the seeds of his undoing in an internal ideological dispute in the People's Revolutionary Army of El Salvador.

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Cuban Chronology for September 1975

- September 2 - A delegation representing INRA (National Institute for Agrarian Reform) visits the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Soviet Ministry of Agriculture.
- September 4 - Dr. Pelegrin Torras, Deputy Foreign Minister, arrives in New York, heading the Cuban delegation to the 7th UN General Assembly.
- September 4 - Cuban observes "Week of Solidarity with the Chilean People."
- September 5 - Puerto Rican Solidarity Conference under the sponsorship of the World Peace Council held in Havana.
- September 8 - A Cuban Communist Party delegation arrives in Belgrade for an 8-day stay.
- September 8 - A delegation representing the Political Department of the PLO is received by Osmany Cienfuegos in Havana.
- September 10 - Cambodian Foreign Minister Ieng Sary arrives in Havana for official talks.
- September 10 - Chemical Industry Minister Antonio Esquivel is in Mexico City for OLADE meeting.
- September 11 - Cuban Party/Government delegation leaves North Vietnam after attending the 30th national day festivities. Raul Garcia Pelaez, member of the PCC secretariat, headed the delegation.

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- September 13 - Congolese President Marien Ngouabi arrives in Cuba on state visit. (joint communique issued September 19, 1975)
- September 13 - Deputy Prime Minister Carlos Rafael Rodriguez arrives in Moscow for economic consultations.
- September 14 - Hurricane Eloise damages eastern Cuba.
- September 14 - Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces -18 Raul Castro attends Mexican Independence Celebration.
- September 15 - Guyanese Minister for Education and Culture Shirley Field-Ridley arrives in Havana.
- September 16 - A five-year scientific and cultural exchange agreement is signed between the University of Havana and the State University of Guayaquil.
- September 17 - The Soviet-Cuban Trade Protocol covering 1976 through 1980 is signed in Moscow. Total Soviet-Cuban bilateral trade is expected to double during this period.
- September 18 - Two Cuban citizens seek political exile in the Venezuelan Embassy in Havana. Their unauthorized removal by Cuban authorities causes a temporary strain in Cuban-Venezuelan relations. At a press conference on September 30 the asylees said they voluntarily left the embassy.
- September 20 - Cuban Ambassador to Lebanon Miguel Brugeran meets with Yasir Arafat to confirm Cuban solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

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September 20 - A delegation from the Czechoslovakian National Assembly arrives in Havana.

Cuba and Italy conclude first meeting of the Italian-Cuban Commission for Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Co-operation.

September 22 - Cuban economic mission arrives in San Jose, Costa Rica to begin preliminary talks on reestablishment of commercial relations.

Seminar on Women's Rights to Education and Work begins in Havana. Representatives from 21 countries attend.

September 23 - A group of Ecuadorean newsmen arrive in Havana at the invitation of the Cuban Journalists Union.

Talks begin in Budapest on Cuban-Hungarian Economic and Technical cooperation.

September 24 - Vice Prime Minister Carlos Rafael Rodriguez arrives in Ottawa for meeting of Cuban-Canadian Commission on Inter-Governmental Trade.

September 27 - A Cuban delegation representing the tourism industry arrives in Mexico for a two-week visit.

Foreign Trade Vice Minister Ricardo Cabrizas heads Cuban delegation to the third meeting of Latin American and Caribbean Sugar Exporting Countries group.

September 28 - Castro speaks on the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

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