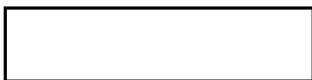


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1 September 1966



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3. Rhodesia-UK: Rhodesia's success in withstanding sanctions will complicate problems at Commonwealth meeting. (Page 5)

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5. Notes: Syria; [Redacted] Colombia. (Page 7)

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Rhodesia-UK: Rhodesia's success in withstanding sanctions will complicate Britain's problems at next week's Commonwealth meeting.

Despite the sanctions imposed by Britain and other nations, Rhodesia maintained a favorable trade balance during the first half of 1966, in part by cutting back imports and increasing exports to South Africa and Zambia. At least 25 percent of the current crop of tobacco, Rhodesia's main export item, has already been sold and the Smith regime apparently is confident that the rest can be also. So much petroleum is being delivered through Mozambique and South Africa that new storage tanks are being built.

Although some commercial firms have been hurt, white unemployment remains relatively low. Attempts are being made to ease African unemployment by substituting Rhodesians for workers from Malawi and Zambia. Government aid has enabled all but marginal farmers to get credit until next year's sales.

In spite of the disappointing effects of sanctions so far, London seems determined to continue them and to press its allies to stop their purchases of various commodities from Rhodesia. Britain apparently is prepared to resist demands of the African members of the Commonwealth for mandatory sanctions through the UN and for the use of force.

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NOTES

Syria: Former prime minister Bitar and several other ranking Baath Party members who were arrested during last February's coup have escaped detention, [redacted]

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[redacted] Some comparatively moderate army and internal security elements still support the ousted faction, and the present radically oriented Baathist regime may have permitted the "escape" as a gesture of appeasement. In the present fragile political situation, however, the incident could trigger a countermove against the moderates by one of the several military factions within the regime.

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Colombia: The Communist-dominated National Students' Federation has called for nationwide demonstrations on 8 September and has given the government until 12 September to repeal recent university reform decrees. Although sporadic violence continues in Bogota and Medellin, the US Embassy believes that if the government remains firm it could win an important victory over the students. This would give President Lleras a period of peace from student disturbances, whereas a defeat this early in his term of office would weaken his prestige and the public's confidence in him.

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