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PAN/US*~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Weekly PreviewPanama - Internal Political Battle over Treaty Negotiations and Joint Statement of September 24.

The opposition Panamenista Party of defected Presidential candidate Arnulfo Arias has issued an inflammatory manifesto attacking the Panamanian Government's conduct of the negotiations with the U.S. and characterizing the Joint Statement of September 24 as an insult to the Panamanian people.

Although violently condemning the Government of President Robles, the Panamenista manifesto carefully avoids any criticism of the U.S. The confrontation is therefore an internal political struggle not involving directly the U.S.

Foreign Minister Eleta is concerned about the effect that the Arias manifesto might have on the Panamanian public and he has obtained the approval of President Robles to launch an all-out radio and television campaign aimed at publicly discrediting Arias and his followers. He has recalled two members of Panama's negotiating team to assist in the attack on Arias. Eleta reportedly realizes that this strategy could lead to street demonstrations and public unrest but believes it is the only way to deal with Arias.

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The Panamanian National Assembly convenes on October 1 and both the Government and Panamenista forces will use this public forum to press their attacks. President Robles will address the opening session of the Assembly and is expected to point to the Joint Statement of September 24 as a positive step in the fulfillment of his pledge to obtain a new Panama Canal treaty from the U.S.

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