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VISITS : STEWART OPENS TALKS (RELEADS CN 16)

BUCHAREST, SEPT. 9, REUTER - BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY MICHAEL STEWART OPENED TALKS HERE TODAY WITH RUMANIAN LEADERS ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS, MIDDLE EAST, VIETNAM AND OTHER WORLD ISSUES.

HE CALLED ON RUMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CORNELIU MANESCU TO BEGIN THEIR TWO-DAY GLOBAL DISCUSSIONS, AND LATER ARRANGED TO SEE RUMANIAN PRESIDENT NICOLAE CEAUSESCU.

EARLIER TODAY STEWART LAID A WREATH AT THE "MEMORIAL OF THE HEROES OF THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE AND HOMELAND FOR SOCIALISM."

STEWART FLEW HERE YESTERDAY ON A GOODWILL VISIT AND IS DUE TO RETURN TO LONDON ON WEDNESDAY EVENING.

STEWART IS THE FIRST SENIOR WESTERN MINISTER TO VISIT EASTERN EUROPE SINCE THE OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY SOVIET AND WARSAW PACT FORCES ON AUGUST 20.

BRITAIN HAS STRONGLY CONDEMNED THE OCCUPATION WHILE RUMANIA, WHICH TAKES AN INDEPENDENT LINE ON SEVERAL ASPECTS OF EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES POLICY, HAS EXPRESSED DISAPPROVAL.

MR. STEWART TOLD REPORTERS YESTERDAY HE WANTED TO GET AT FIRST HAND "THE RUMANIAN VIEW ON HOW THEY SEE EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE"

DJG/AJP 1040/68

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