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VISITS -- 1230 INTRO: STEWART MEETS CEAUSESCU

BUCHAREST, SEPT 9 (CNR/UPI) -- BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY MICHAEL STEWART MET RUMANIAN HEAD OF STATE AND PARTY CHIEF NICOLAE CEAUSESCU TODAY AS HE OPENED TWO-DAY TALKS WITH RUMANIAN LEADERS.

CEAUSESCU AND HIS BRITISH GUEST, TALKED FOR ABOUT HALF AN HOUR IN THE PRESENCE OF RUMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CORNELIU MANESCU.

STEWART, THE FIRST SENIOR WESTERN MINISTER TO VISIT EASTERN EUROPE SINCE THE OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY SOVIET AND WARSAW PACT FORCES ON AUGUST 20, WERE DUE TO OPEN THEIR OFFICIAL TALKS LATER TODAY.

THE BRITISH MINISTER IS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO LONDON ON WEDNESDAY EVENING AFTER DISCUSSING EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS, THE MIDDLE EAST, VIETNAM AND OTHER WORLD ISSUES.

STEWART, WHO ARRIVED HERE YESTERDAY, WILL MEET RUMANIAN PREMIER ION GHEORGHE MAURER TOMORROW AND HAS SCHEDULED A PRESS CONFERENCE BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE.

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" IN BUCHAREST.

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

DJG/AK 1230/68 SEPT 9 / 1968