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Bridges to Bucharest

President Johnson's program for building bridges to Eastern Europe, which had recently appeared moribund, showed signs of new life with announcement of the United States-Rumanian agreement for expanded cooperation in science, technology, industry and commerce. This new agreement may yet be a spur to Rumania's neighbors to follow Bucharest's example.

A successful breakthrough with Rumania will go far toward unlocking many doors now closed in Eastern Europe. It would be a major coup for both sides if, for example, the Rumanian atomic power industry were to get its start with American reactors and other needed equipment.

Politically, the new agreement is a new demonstration of Rumanian independence. Moscow has been proclaiming that improvement of its bilateral relations with this country depends to an important degree on settlement of the Vietnam war. The Rumanians have sensibly desisted from any such needless linkage of their own affairs with Vietnam. Instead, they have moved ahead with the task of trying concretely to serve their own national interests by bettering relations with Washington. It is a useful example for the other Communist states.