

Missile System 'Defensive'

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BUCHAREST, Romania — Romania's foreign minister defended a U.S. missile defense system to be placed in Eastern Europe on Friday, days after the country signed a deal in Washington to host a crucial part of it.

"The whole system is purely defensive," Teodor Baconschi said. "It increases our strategic position."

Baconschi visited the United States earlier in the week with President Traian Basescu and was to return on Monday for the UN General Assembly.

Russia opposes the planned missile defense system, which it worries could threaten its own nuclear missiles or undermine their deterrence capability. Baconschi insisted that Russia, with which Romania has a sometimes strained relationship, should not be concerned.

"We are honestly working on a good political dialogue" with Russia, he said.

(AP)

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