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## **RUSSIA OPPOSED TO DIVIDING SOUTHEAST ASIA INTO BLOCS**

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Russian News Agency (30 July 2019)

Moscow is opposed to dividing Southeast Asia into blocs, which is envisaged by the Indo-Pacific Strategy promoted by the US, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters on Tuesday.

"The Indo-Pacific strategies undermine the core role played by ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Of course, they are not inclusive and imply the regions division into blocs," he noted.

Lavrov earlier told reporters at a news conference following meeting with Thailand's Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai that the erosion of the ASEAN agencies was underway.

The Indo-Pacific regional concept was proposed by US President Donald Trump at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit held in Vietnam in 2017. Washington insists that this initiative is not directed against any countries. However, Russian experts interviewed by TASS noted that its objective could be to contain China.

<https://tass.com/politics/1071019>

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