

# Cambodia

## Issue

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Chinese military

bases in Cambodia; s22

## Talking Points

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Pages 2-4 irrelevant under section 22

What is Australia's position on Chinese military basing in Cambodia?

- We aware of media reports [1 July 2019} regarding construction of military facilities in Cambodia by China  
s33(a)(iii)
- Cambodia's Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Ministry of Defence have publicly denied the reports.
- The Australian Government would be concerned at any developments that could upset the strategic balance in the region.
- Australia has a strong interest in regional stability, security and prosperity, and engages closely with our partners in the region in support of this goal.

Pages 6-12 irrelevant under section 22

### Chinese Military bases in Cambodia

In early July, international media again reported that Cambodia is planning to host Chinese military assets at one of its naval bases after Cambodia rejected a US offer to fund repairs at Ream Naval Base. s33(a)(iii) and s33(b)

Cambodian officials continue to deny the claims, saying that they would like to spend the US funding “elsewhere” <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-07-02/us-concerns-over-cambodian-rejection-of-funding/11269862> and <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/US-questions-Cambodia-over-possible-Chinese-military-presence> ).

At the Shangri La Dialogue (2 June 2019), Chinese General Wei Fenghe denied China was seeking to establish a military presence in Cambodia. s33(b)

Since the initial story broke (Asia Times 15 November 2018), there has been extensive open source reporting about Chinese construction firms developing military and critical transportation infrastructure in Cambodia (see for example 9 May 2019: <https://warontherocks.com/2019/05/hiding-in-plain-sight-chinese-expansion-in-southeast-asia/>).

Cambodia's Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn issued a statement on 17 November 2018 that the Cambodian Government will not infringe its constitutional prohibition on foreign military bases on Cambodian soil. Cambodia's Defence Ministry issued a statement on 17 November calling the Asia Times article "fake news". Front page articles in the Khmer Times and The Phnom Penh Post on 19 November 2018 also denied the Asia Times reporting.

Cambodian media reported Prime Minister Hun Sen saying in a speech to Cabinet on 19 November 2018 that he did not need foreign military to be stationed there, Cambodia's Constitution would not allow foreign armed forces to be stationed in the country, and that Cambodia wanted to be friends with all countries.

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**Reports of future Chinese naval base**

**Attachments**

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## AUSTRALIA - CAMBODIA

### Key Points

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### Talking Points

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**AUSTRALIA - CAMBODIA***If raised: Chinese basing in Cambodia*

- The Australian Government would be concerned at any developments that could upset the strategic balance and stability in the region.

**Overview of recent or significant events, and media interest timeline**

Date	Event
6 June 2019	<i>Asia Times</i> : "US, China tensions put Cambodia in potential peril."
3 June 2019	Shangri-La Dialogue "Chinese Defence Minister denies military presence in Cambodia" <i>Voice of America Cambodia</i>

**Background**

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**AUSTRALIA - CAMBODIA**

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