

Rubio tells Panama that China threatens canal, changes needed

Trump made a preliminary determination that ‘control of the Chinese Communist Party’ over canal is a threat, the US state department said

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has warned Panama’s President Jose Raul Mulino that Washington will “take measures necessary” if Panama does not immediately take steps to end what President Donald Trump sees as China’s influence and control over the Panama Canal.

Mulino, after the talks with the top US diplomat in Panama City, signalled he would review agreements involving China and Chinese businesses, and announced further cooperation with the US on migration, but reiterated that his country’s sovereignty over the world’s second busiest waterway is not up for discussion.

Rubio delivered a message from Trump that China’s presence – through a Hong Kong-based company operating two ports near the canal’s entrances – was a threat to the waterway and a violation of the US-Panama treaty, US State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said in a statement.

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