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Ocean Updates

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In his inaugural address on Monday, President Donald Trump devoted more than a minute to his pledge to take the Panama Canal back from Panamanian control. In response, Panamanian president José Raúl Mulino, a conservative populist and American-trained maritime lawyer, reiterated that the Canal belongs to Panama.

"The Canal is and will continue to be Panama's and its administration will continue to be under Panamanian control with respect to its permanent neutrality," Mulino said. "For 25 years, without interruption, we have managed and expanded it responsibly to serve the world and its commerce, including the United States."

France and the U.S. built the original canal at the turn of the last century. It was administered by American forces until its final transfer to local control in 1999.

A Panamanian-financed and -built upgrade, the "New Panama Canal," was completed in 2016 and now accounts for the majority of Canal Zone revenue. In 2023, the older American-built section delivered about 45 percent of total Canal Zone earnings. Both are operated by the Autoridad del Canal de Panama (ACP), a division of the Panamanian government.

In his inaugural address, Trump claimed that "China is operating the Panama Canal."

Read more in an [article from The Maritime Executive](#).