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## **US DEFENSE SECRETARY SAYS CHINA IS A THREAT TO PANAMA CANAL, SPURRING A FIERY RESPONSE FROM BEIJING**

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AP News (8 April 2025)

Juan Zamorano

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Tuesday the Panama Canal faces ongoing threats from China but that together the United States and Panama will keep it secure.

Hegseth's remarks triggered a fiery response from the Chinese government, which said: Who represents the real threat to the Canal? People will make their own judgement.

Speaking at a ribbon cutting for a new U.S.-financed dock at the Vasco Nuñez de Balboa Naval Base after a meeting with Panama President José Raúl Mulino, Hegseth said the U.S. will not allow China or any other country to threaten the canal's operation.

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