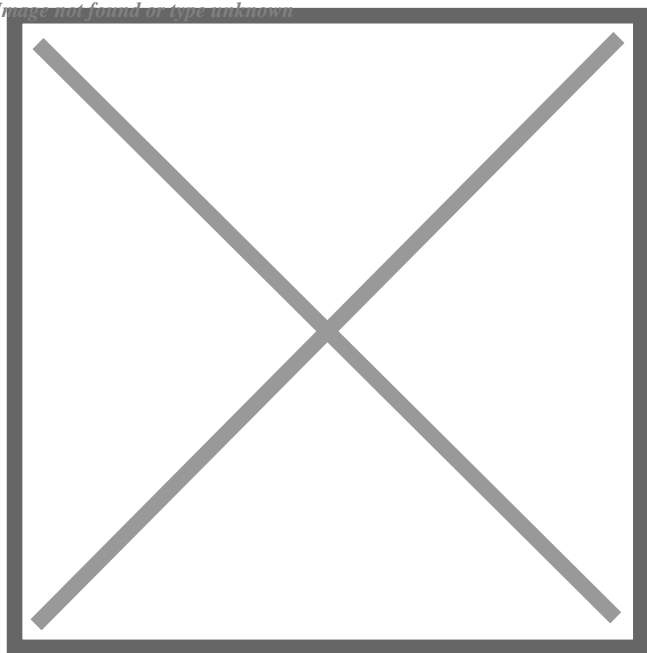


Panamanians protest against Trump's expansionist ambitions and the visit to Panama City by Marco Rubio

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Panama City, February 2 (RHC)-- Workers and students in Panama staged another day of protests this Saturday following threats by U.S. President Donald Trump to strip this nation of the interoceanic canal and on the eve of the arrival of U S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a representative of these expansionist ideas.

Images and videos spread through the networks by the National Union of Workers in the Construction and Similar Industries (Suntracs), show protesters on several avenues in the Panamanian capital.

They carried national flags and distributed leaflets in repudiation of Rubio's visit and against Trump's expansionist plans. They also burned an American flag.

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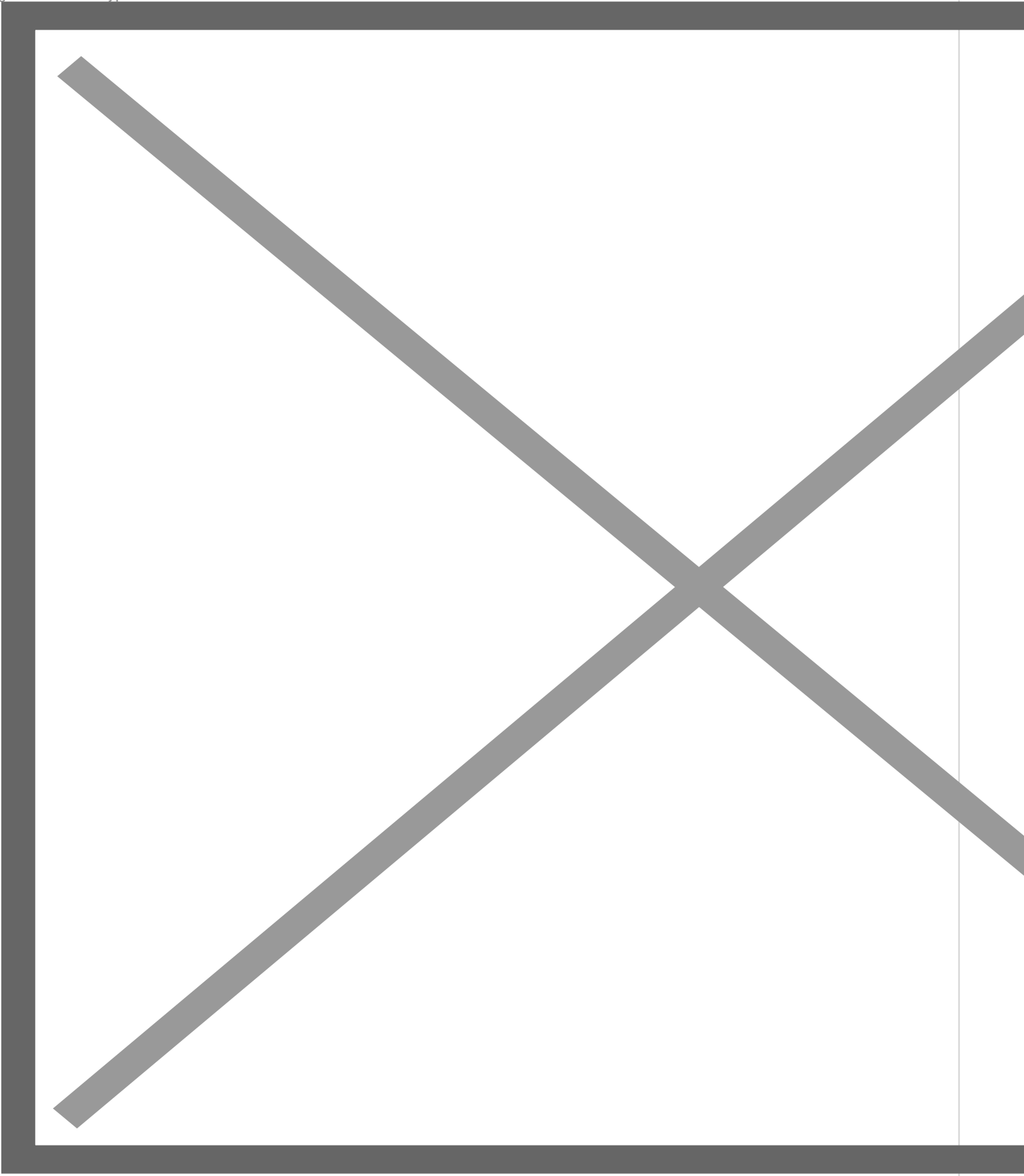
According to the union's general secretary, Saúl Méndez, the mobilization this Saturday is part of a patriotic day in repudiation of the U.S. President's attempts to seize the Panama Canal.

In this sense, he urged Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino to enforce sovereignty over the Canal during the meeting that is expected to take place this Sunday with Rubio.

On Friday, there were clashes between police and a group of students. The uniformed officers fired tear gas at the youth. Images of these clashes were spread through social networks, in which police officers beat several students.

The police fired tear gas at the protesters.

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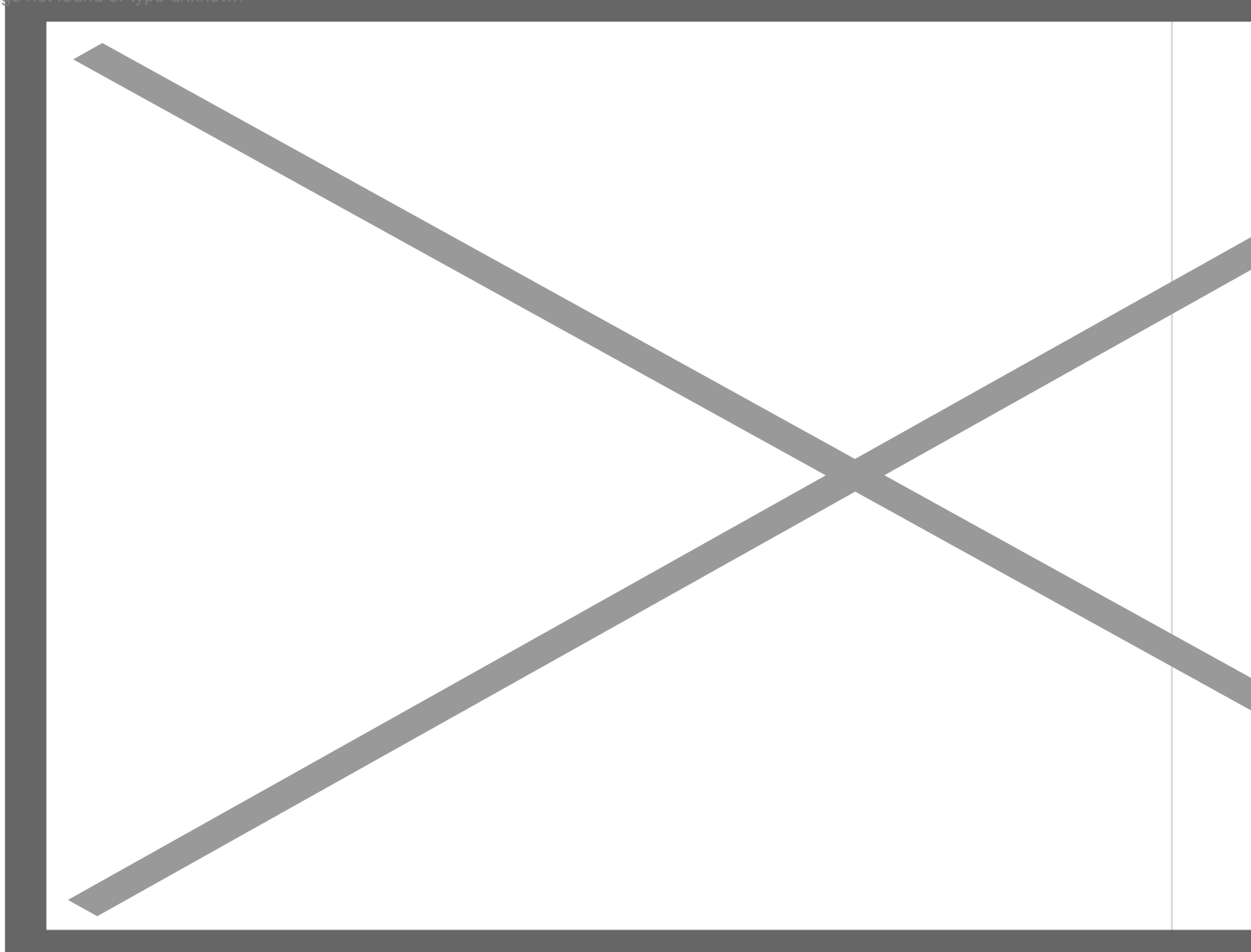


On Thursday, during the first day of protests against Trump's plans, the protesters planted national flags in the former areas controlled by the United States throughout the 20th century, in the area known as the former Canal Zone.

Also this Saturday, the University of Panama's Ombudsman's Office denounced acts of police repression on university grounds, following protests by university students and other social sectors against the reform of the Social Security Fund and Trump's statements. In addition, they demanded respect for the right to peaceful protest.

During a visit to Uruguay on Friday, Washington's special envoy for Latin America, Mauricio Claver-Carone, said that the U.S. could guarantee the maintenance of the Panama Canal on the condition that the isthmus nation does not charge tariffs.

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