

Bolivia Calls for Talks as Peru Re-routes Railroad



La Paz, November 25 (NNN-RHC)-- Bolivian President Evo Morales has called for face-to-face talks with his Peruvian counterpart after Peru changed the route of a \$10 billion transcontinental railroad, local media reported.

Peruvian President Ollanta announced on Wednesday the 2,175-mile project linking Atlantic and Pacific oceans would bypass Bolivia for “reasons of national interest.”

Seen as critical in easing the landlocked country’s dependence on Chilean ports, Bolivia had understood as recently as July’s BRICS summit that the railroad would pass through the northern city of Cobija, connecting the respective Brazilian and Peruvian ports of Santos and Ilo.

Bolivia’s President Evo Morales told state radio station Patria Nueva that discussions set to take place nine months ago on the train issue have yet to materialized. Bolivia could build the route “cheaper and shorter,” the socialist leader added.

Humala’s comments to members of the foreign press last week confirmed the re-routing, marking another hit to diplomatic relations after Peru vowed to remain neutral in a bitter dispute between Chile and Bolivia over its right to the sea.

China will provide financing in the construction of the continent's first inter-oceanic railroad, as it deepens economic ties with South America. A railroad would push aside other big infrastructure plans partly-financed by China including a \$275-million inter-oceanic canal in Nicaragua and other railways in Brazil.

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