

Pacific-Atlantic railroad will respect environment: Chinese premier

May 23 2015



China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang delivers a speech during a ceremony with Peruvian President Ollanta Humala (out of frame) at the presidential palace in Lima on May 22, 2015

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has said that the Beijing-funded project to build a vast railroad between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, across Peru, would respect the region's environment including the Amazon basin.

"The three countries agree on the fact that the viability of this project will not only be favorable to our common development but will also protect the environment," Li said upon arrival in Lima on Friday.

He is visiting Peru on a tour of South America that also includes trips to Brazil, Colombia and Chile.

"China respects Latin America's biodiversity," Li said.

"To create the infrastructure, it is necessary to protect the environment," he added in a joint declaration made with Peruvian President Ollanta Humala after they signed 10 cooperation accords.

Humala noted that China is Peru's principal trading partner.

Commerce between the two countries has more than doubled to \$16 billion since a free trade agreement went into effect in 2010.

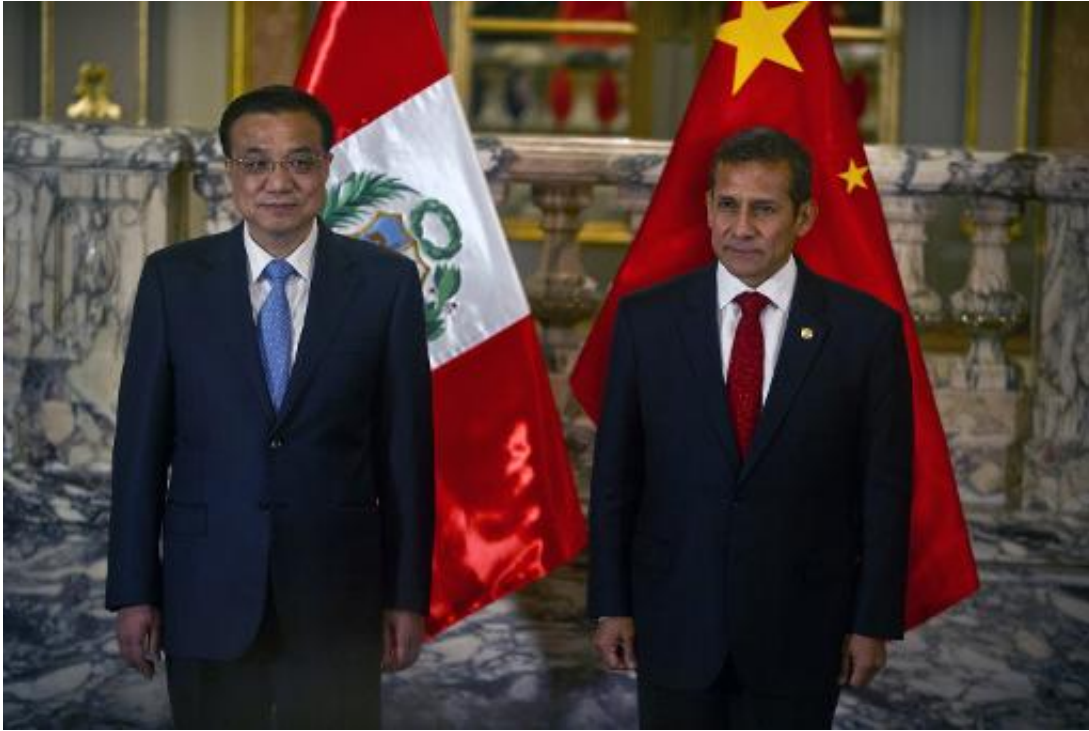
Peruvian exports to China mainly comprise mining products such as copper, zinc and iron.

The railroad could cost \$10 billion. Humala said it would "consolidate Peru's geopolitical position as the natural entry to South America." Peru wants to position itself as the regional hub for trade between Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region and already serves as an outlet port for several regional nations including Brazil.

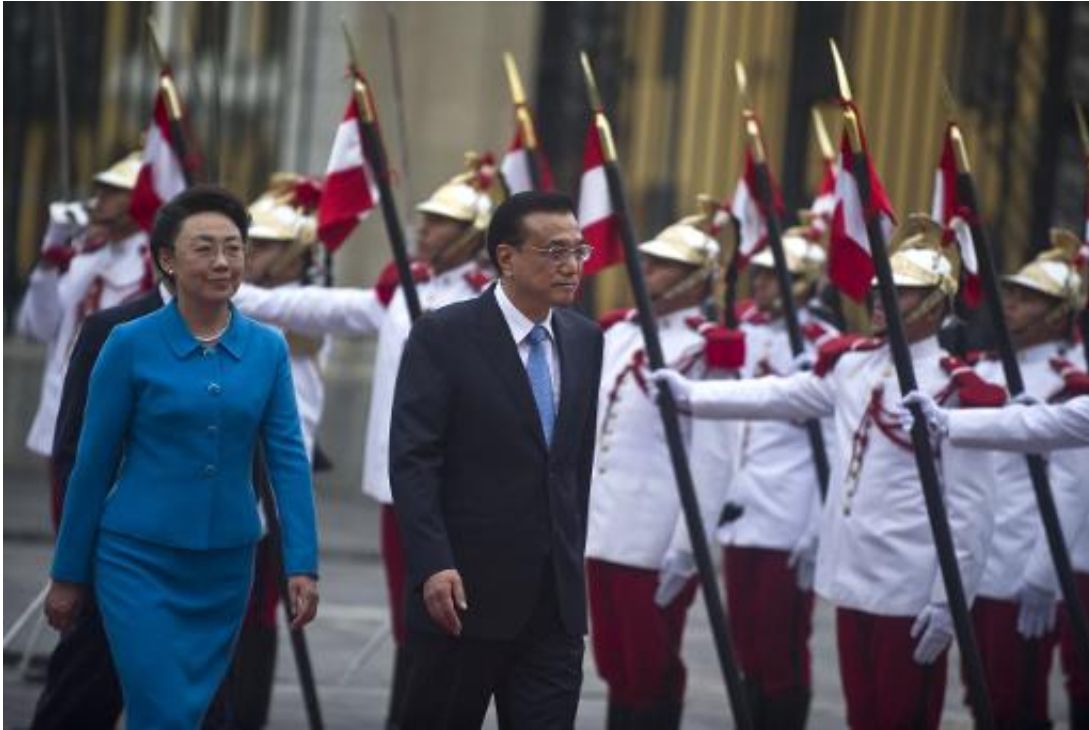
Peru and China have special historical ties due to the arrival in Peru between 1849 and 1874 of more than 100,000 laborers who helped build the Peruvian economy through sugar production, guano collection and the building of railways.

El Callao, not far from the capital Lima, is the number one Pacific port

in South America in terms of container traffic.



China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang (L) and Peruvian President Ollanta Humala pictured during a ceremony at the presidential palace in Lima on May 22, 2015. Li is on a two-day official visit to Peru, after visiting Brazil and Colombia.



China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang (R) arrives with his wife Cheng Hong at the presidential palace in Lima to hold a meeting with Peruvian President Ollanta Humala on May 22, 2015

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