

Hirohito Cancels U.S. Trip

Tokyo

The Japanese government abandoned plans yesterday for Emperor Hirohito to visit the U.S. this year.

Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira made the official announcement after informing U.S. Ambassador Robert Ingersoll, citing "circumstances, including" tight imperial schedule.

But Japanese officials privately said there was little doubt that the decisive factor was the stiff opposition of the Socialist and Communist parties, who claimed the emperor was being used for political purposes in direct contravention of the postwar constitution.

They claimed the government was using the emperor, regarded as the "symbol of state," to try to patch up strained relations with the U.S., caused mainly by continuing economic differences.

But observers said it seemed likely the cancellation would exacerbate the differences, as President Nixon had been particularly keen for an imperial visit

and had repeatedly issued an invitation since meeting the emperor at Anchorage, Alaska, in late 1971. In return he hoped to be the first U.S. president in this century to visit Japan.

Reuters