

Japanese Have No Plans To Invite Nixon for Visit

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TOKYO, April 25 — Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira of Japan made it clear today, after his Government canceled a visit by Emperor Hirohito to the United States, that Japan had no plans to invite President Nixon to come here any time soon.

Mr. Nixon, in a recent public comment on his forthcoming travels, expressed a desire to visit Japan, where no incumbent American President has ever been. The President's invitation to the Emperor was intended as a first step toward a Presidential visit to Japan.

Mr. Ohira indicated that it was up to Mr. Nixon, rather than Premier Kakuei Tanaka's Government, to take the initiative for a Presidential visit here. "If the President of the United States expresses his specific wish to visit Japan and notifies us accordingly," Mr. Ohira said, "we will be most happy to welcome him."

The Foreign Minister also indicated that no thought had been given to inviting Mr. Nixon while the Japanese Government

was deciding to reject his invitation to the Emperor. Mr. Ohira said, "We concentrated on the question of the Emperor's visit alone."

Mr. Ohira met with foreign newsmen here to answer questions about the cancellation of the Emperor's visit, which was announced yesterday. Foreign correspondents were excluded from yesterday's news conference, but vigorous protests from several American correspondents last night resulted in the meeting with Mr. Ohira today.

The Foreign Minister was reminded that Premier Tanaka had asked Premier Chou En-lai of China to visit Japan and then was asked why Mr. Nixon had not been invited. Mr. Ohira said in reply that there was a "constant dialogue" between Tokyo and Washington and that these matters need not be handled with "excessive formality."

Mr. Ohira was more specific today than he was with the Japanese press yesterday in

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giving reasons the Imperial Household schedule did not permit the Emperor and Empress Nagako to make the journey to America, despite their express wish to do so.

The Foreign Minister, who chose his words carefully in answer to all questions, said that the Emperor must take part in the dedication of the new imperial shrine at Ise in October, the month that had been tentatively chosen for the visit. He is also scheduled to attend a national athletic meet and to preside over the ceremony of dedication of the year's crops to the imperial ancestors.

The imperial shrine to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu-Omikami is Japan's most sacred shrine and the Emperor's presence is required every 20 years when it is rededicated.

But why attending the athletic meet and the harvest ceremony was considered more important than accepting Mr. Nixon's repeated invitation was left unexplained.

Mr. Ohira, who spoke in Japanese translated to English, denied speculation here that the Emperor's visit had been canceled because of the Watergate scandal. He also said the timing of the announcement had no connection with the speech in New York on Monday by Henry A. Kissinger, the President's assistant for national security.

Government's Decision

Mr. Kissinger, while addressing himself primarily to United States relations with Western Europe, said: "The Atlantic community cannot be an exclusive club. Japan must be a principal partner in our common enterprise."

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said today that the Government "positively appreciated" Mr. Kissinger's point and did not feel that Japan's importance had been downgraded by the emphasis on Europe. "We don't think we are being neglected," he said.

On who made the decision to cancel the Emperor's trip, Mr. Ohira said, "The decision rests with the Government." Premier Tanaka had earlier appeared to wash his hands of the affair and to suggest that the decision had been made by the Imperial Household Agency, which controls the Emperor's activities.

The decision itself was controversial here. Prof. Kei Wakaizumi of Kyoto Sangyo University, one of Japan's leading technicians of foreign policy, said: "I profoundly regret the



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way our Government has handled this whole matter and I want to express my grave concern over the unfavorable effect it will have on the entire United States-Japan relationship."

Several Japanese businessmen were critical of the decision for the pall it might cast over continuing relations between Washington and Tokyo to resolve outstanding trade monetary issues. Politicians in Mr. Tanaka's Liberal-Democratic party were disgruntled because, they said, the Premier had not consulted party members before making his decision.

But spokesmen for the Socialist and Communist parties, which had led the opposition to the imperial visit to America, expressed pleasure over the cancellation. They had charged that Mr. Tanaka was trying to use the Emperor to enhance his own political position.

Masamichi Horigome of the Socialist party's policy committee, said that "Tanaka tried to dodge his recent unpopularity by sending the Emperor, and Nixon, on the other hand, intended to change the present stiff relations with Japan and create a mood for the better."