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Guatemala: Opposition Congresspersons Block President's Trip To Japan

by Deborah Tyroler

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Opposition party leaders in the Guatemalan Congress have blocked President Vinicio Cerezo from traveling to Japan to attend the Feb. 24 funeral of Emperor Hirohito. Deputies opposed to the trip said that Cerezo has already made 33 trips abroad since he assumed power in January 1986 and that he should attend to domestic problems. On Feb. 21, Cerezo denounced the travel ban and said his absence at the funeral would be a "historic offense against a friendly country...It must be stressed that it was not the Congress that blocked my trip, but the capricious and foolish attitudes of the rightist leaders of the National Center Union and National Liberation Movement." The president had planned to travel to Tokyo on Feb. 24, and then go on to New York and Washington. His plans were dropped after opposition deputies failed to show up for a congressional session. Parliamentary president Jose Lobo called a special session on Feb. 20, but the governing Christian Democratic party did not have enough deputies present to approve the president's travel. (Basic data from AFP, 02/21/89)

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