

45 Japanese Ships Are Kept Off U. S. Shores

SAN FRANCISCO, Friday, July 25. — (AP) — A black-out of radio shrouded forty-five Japanese ships at sea today, including the 17,600-ton N. Y. K. liner Tatuta Maru, as the huge Nippon merchant fleet sought safety from possible measures of retaliation.

The American-bound ships hove to or altered their courses Wednesday night when the Tokyo government was denounced in Washington for its move in Indo-China. Japanese vessels already in Pacific ports were rushing loading operations and the sailings of two cargo ships from Yokohama were canceled.

Meanwhile, the Tatuta Maru was providing a mystery out of which grew reports that she might be speeding toward the Mexican ports of Acapulco or Mazatlan, or awaiting refueling at sea from the Japanese tanker Daini Ogura Maru which left here for Japan last night.

The Tatuta Maru, with 242 passengers and a valuable cargo of silk, was due in here at 5 a. m. yesterday. It was known that she approached within a few miles of the Golden Gate, but no authoritative reports have traced her position after that point.

The liner would be violating American navigation laws if she landed at other than a United States port, unless such permission was specially relayed to her at sea, and would be subject to a heavy penalty. She answered no radio calls.

The ship was under command of Capt. T. Takahata and carried 103 first and second class passengers—most Americans—and 139 third class. Seventy were bound for San Francisco, and thirty-three for Los Angeles. It was understood food aboard was sufficient for a return to Japan but fuel was not.

The Tatuta Maru was laden with 5,588 bales of raw silk valued at \$2,500,000—the largest single cargo of silk ever transported across the Pacific.

The big Japanese tanker Daini Ogura Maru sailed from here direct for Japan late last night with 4,500,000 gallons of California crude oil. Her sailing permit had been canceled by the State Department but this order later was revoked when the ship's master explained his vessel was bound for Yokohama, not any Indo-China port.