

## GEOPOLITICAL INTELLIGENCE

# Two suppliers. One shared exposure?

A geopolitical intelligence sample on transport dependencies and the decisions behind supplier diversification.

Demonstration, not client work. Business context is hypothetical. Public facts are referenced; judgments and information gaps are stated. This is not a live alert.

## Executive assessment

Verify the transport path before treating a second supplier as diversification. For the hypothetical importer in this sample, two suppliers may still rely on the same shipping corridor, port, or onward carrier. A second commercial relationship only reduces the dependencies it actually changes.

The next decision is whether to fund a route-and-dependency review, rather than commit immediately to additional inventory or a new supplier. A global disruption signal alone does not establish a particular shipment's exposure.

## Scope and evidence

Decision scenario, assumed: a small U.S. importer buys a time-sensitive component from two overseas suppliers. Its managers have not verified the underlying transport routes. No actual company, cargo, supplier, or shipment was examined.

Public evidence: UNCTAD's September 2025 Review of Maritime Transport describes longer voyages associated with rerouting and continuing freight-rate volatility. It reports that maritime ton-miles rose 5.9% in 2024, compared with seaborne trade volume growth of 2.2% [1]. This historical difference illustrates how transport work can rise faster than cargo volume.

Assessment: route changes can affect delivery reliability even when demand for the product is unchanged. The size of any effect must be established from the business's own shipments and carrier information. The historical figures are not October 2026 route conditions, current freight quotes, or a forecast for this importer.

## Three scenarios to test

Analytical scenarios, not probability forecasts

| Scenario                             | Business implication                                                 | Evidence needed                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Different suppliers, shared corridor | A transport disruption could affect both orders.                     | Actual ports, transshipment points, carrier routes, and onward delivery arrangements.      |
| One route changes                    | A cheaper product could arrive too late for the production schedule. | Revised delivery window, landed-cost quote, contract terms, and critical stock coverage.   |
| Routes normalize                     | A permanent inventory increase could tie up cash unnecessarily.      | Reliable recent delivery performance and a comparison of inventory and interruption costs. |

These are competing planning cases. No numerical probabilities are assigned because the scenario lacks route-level evidence.

## Priorities for management

1. Map the dependency. Procurement should request the intended transport path for its most time-sensitive items and identify which suppliers share it.
2. Test the commercial consequence. Operations should compare the supplier's revised delivery range with the date the item is actually needed. Finance should assess cash tied up in any proposed buffer.
3. Validate the alternative. A substitute should be checked for product suitability, usable capacity, transport path, and contract terms before it is counted as a fallback.
4. Set an escalation trigger. Management should choose its own threshold for when a revised delivery date threatens an operating commitment. Recheck alternatives when that threshold is crossed.

These are proposed workstreams for the hypothetical business. They are not findings that any particular supplier is unreliable.

## Confidence and information gaps

High confidence: the cited historical comparison is reported by UNCTAD. Moderate confidence: mapping shared transport dependencies is a useful first step for this assumed decision. Insufficient evidence: the importer's actual risk level, the likelihood of delay, the right stock buffer, or the commercial merit of a supplier change.

No shipment records, live tracking, interviews, carrier quotes, contracts, or inventory model were included. Current advisories and supplier-specific information would be required before a real operating decision.

## Indicators for reassessment

Revisit the assessment when a carrier changes a route or delivery window, a supplier discloses a new dependency, a critical item's delivery approaches management's chosen deadline, or a validated alternative becomes available. A change in headlines without a change in the business's exposure may not justify the same response.

## Source register and method

1. UN Trade and Development, *Review of Maritime Transport 2025: Staying the course in turbulent waters*. Published September 24, 2025; public publication summary reviewed October 29, 2026. Used for the historical transport and rerouting context.

Rook Vantage's scenario, implications, and proposed decision process are original analysis. The source does not endorse Rook Vantage or this sample. This is a structural exposure demonstration, not a live maritime security advisory.

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