

APERTURE & FOCUS

WEEK 7 | 13 FEBRUARY 2025



KWE
Global Logistics Partner

GLOBAL APERTURE

New tariffs on Chinese goods that took effect last week, along with the threat of additional trade restrictions, have prompted retailers [to accelerate shipments to major U.S. container ports](#) to mitigate potential cost increases. This preemptive stockpiling reflects ongoing supply chain adjustments amid geopolitical uncertainty and shifting trade policies.

Despite these disruptions, demand for dedicated cargo aircraft [is expected to remain strong](#), as seen during the 2018-2019 trade tensions. While the overall air cargo market declined at that time, freighter utilization increased, highlighting air freight's role as a flexible alternative for time-sensitive shipments.

Meanwhile, container shipping lines are [increasing the number of blanked sailings](#)—intentional cancellations of scheduled voyages—to manage capacity amid shifting market conditions. On the Far East-North Europe route, blanked sailings are expected to remove approximately 75,700 TEU of capacity by late February, significantly reducing available space.

REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

United States: On February 10th, the White House issued an executive order directing the Department of Justice to [suspend prosecutions under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act \(FCPA\)](#), aiming to enhance U.S. economic competitiveness. Critics argue that this move could lead to increased global corruption and damage the U.S.'s international standing.

In January, U.S. containerized imports [reached a record 2.49 million TEU](#), surpassing the previous high set in January 2022. This surge reflects importers expediting shipments ahead of trade policy changes, particularly new tariffs on Chinese goods that took effect on February 4.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has [temporarily reinstated](#) the de minimis exemption, allowing packages valued under \$800 to enter duty-free while systems are developed to manage and collect duties on the high volume of low-value imports. This follows its recent suspension as part of broader tariff measures on Chinese goods.

However, proposed reductions in the de minimis threshold [continue to raise concerns](#) within the air cargo industry. While consumer demand for Chinese e-commerce products may remain strong, the air freight sector could face challenges due to increased customs requirements and potential shifts in shipping strategies.

Mexico: On February 6, the Patrick J. Ottensmeyer International Railway Bridge [was inaugurated in Nuevo Laredo](#) to enhance trade between Mexico and the United States. The new bridge doubles freight capacity across the Rio Grande, improving cross-border rail connectivity at a key trade corridor.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

Bangladesh: From February 4th to 7th, a [transport strike](#) at Chattogram Port disrupted export and import activities, adding to existing congestion and shipment delays. With thousands of containers affected, backlogs persist even as operations resume.

Meanwhile, Chattogram Port is also addressing congestion caused by [approximately 9,644 unclaimed containers](#), which occupy 18% of its capacity. To alleviate this, customs authorities are expediting the auction process by amending rules, conducting inventories, and issuing tender notices to clear the backlog and improve port efficiency.

India: Dholera International Airport in Gujarat is set to enhance the country's air cargo infrastructure with [a new 10,700 sq ft terminal](#), aiming to commence international operations by June or July 2025. Projections indicate that export and import cargo volumes through Dholera could reach approximately 20,000 tons in the 2025-26 period, with expectations to rise to 273,000 tons over the next two decades. This development is part of broader efforts to support the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and alleviate congestion at Ahmedabad's main international airport.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Belgium: On February 13, a national strike [will halt all flights to and from Belgium](#) between 06:45 and 22:15, as air traffic controllers from Skeyes join the action. This includes major cargo hubs like Liège Airport, one of Europe's busiest freight airports, which has confirmed that no take-offs or landings will occur during the strike. In response, some cargo flights [are being redirected](#) to nearby Maastricht Aachen Airport in the Netherlands to maintain supply chain continuity.

Egypt: The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) is urging shipping lines [to resume transits through the canal](#) following a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas on January 19, 2025. However, carriers, prioritizing safety, are cautious and may delay Red Sea crossings until at least May, awaiting sustained regional stability and favorable insurance assessments.

Netherlands: Labor disputes at Rotterdam's Hutchison Delta II Terminal [have led to significant slowdowns and delays](#), affecting up to 25% of the port's container volume. Unions FNV Havens and CNV have withdrawn from negotiations over severance packages linked to future automation plans, resulting in work stoppages and ongoing disruptions.
