

WARNING INTELLIGENCE

Mapping Supplier Risk Across a Global Network

Supply Chain Warning Intelligence — Geopolitical Disruption & Supplier Concentration Risk

Role: Intelligence Program Manager **Audience:** Supply Chain, Procurement, Business Continuity Leadership

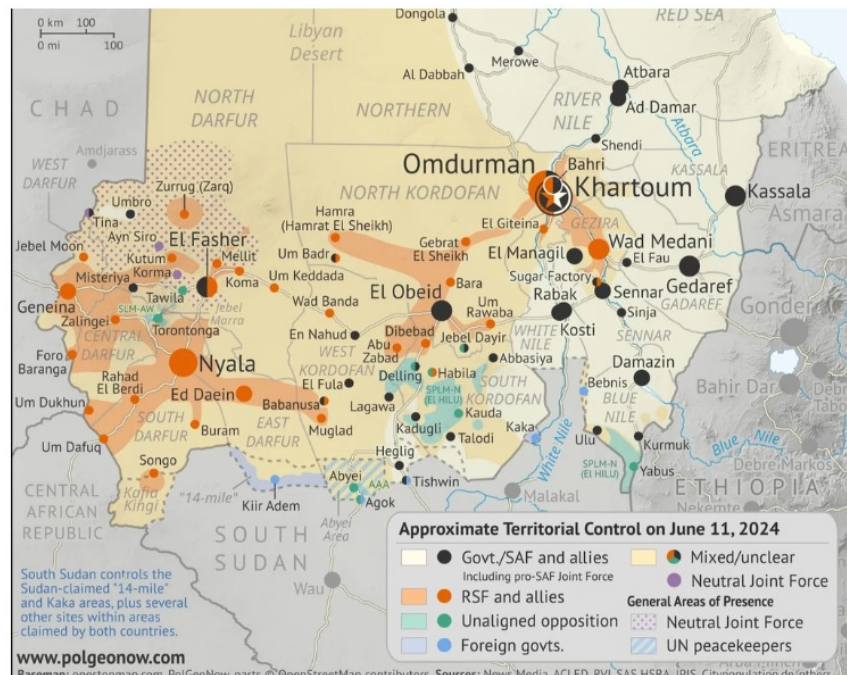
The Intelligence Question

How is your organization tracking threats to its suppliers? Which suppliers are most critical to operations — and if one were disrupted tomorrow, would the right people know in time to act? How is threat intelligence being shared with the risk owners who need it?

The Situation

Modern supply chains are interconnected across borders in ways that most organizations only partially understand. A disruption at a single port, in a single country, can ripple through procurement, production, and revenue for companies that have never had direct visibility into that country's risk environment. Mapping the full “universe” of an organization's suppliers — not just tier-one vendors, but the geopolitical terrain those vendors sit inside — is what makes it possible to identify single points of failure before they fail.

In 2023, armed conflict in Sudan escalated sharply, disrupting economic activity at the country's main ports of entry and halting exports of a range of goods — including gum arabic, a raw ingredient with no easy substitute in the production of soft drinks and a wide range of food and beverage products. Sudan is the world's largest exporter of gum arabic. For a client whose supply chain depended on it, this was not a peripheral news story — it was a direct line to production risk.



Illustrative example of the territorial-control tracking used to contextualize conflict-driven supply disruption.

The Approach

Recognizing the conflict's relevance to the client's supplier base, the team produced a custom intelligence product that outlined the situation in Sudan, its effect on gum arabic exports specifically, and the likely trajectory

of the disruption. The product was built to answer a practical question for a non-intelligence audience: does this event warrant activating contingency plans, and if so, on what timeline?

Underlying the report was a broader supplier-network mapping effort — plotting the client's supplier relationships geographically to surface concentration risk and cross-border dependencies that a standard vendor list would not reveal.



Illustrative global supplier network map, used to surface cross-border concentration risk.

Findings & Impact

The intelligence product gave supply chain managers a clear, focused basis for decision-making — enabling them to determine whether and when to activate contingency plans, rather than reacting after disruption had already reached their operations.

Just as significant was what the engagement established structurally: a direct threat-intelligence sharing channel between the intelligence function and stakeholders who had previously lacked visibility into this class of global event. The Sudan disruption became the occasion for building a capability the client could reuse — for the next port closure, the next export halt, the next single point of failure — rather than a one-time report.



Raw gum arabic, harvested from acacia trees in Sudan — the ingredient at the center of the disruption.