

Back to MRO < SUPPLY CHAIN

View Edit Delete Revisions



Opinion: Navigating Tariff Turbulence in the Aviation Supply Chain

Airr Ruangtap May 07, 2025



Credit: Wavebreakmedia Ltd IFE-250227_5 / Alamy Stock Photo

In today's rapidly evolving global trade environment, shifting tariffs are disrupting the aviation industry's supply chains. From airlines and MROs to OEMs and parts suppliers, organizations face mounting operational and financial challenges as cross-border movement of materials becomes increasingly complicated and costly.

Many in the aviation sector rely on international trade to reduce operational costs—importing raw materials, exporting finished components or outsourcing specialized repairs. Yet fluctuating import duties and stricter compliance requirements are delaying shipments, increasing costs, and in some cases, halting activity altogether.

In the U.S., trade enforcement is governed by agencies such as the International Trade Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. These bodies enforce the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) of the United States, which categorizes all imported goods and assigns corresponding duty rates. For the aviation sector—where parts are highly specialized and frequently move between countries—staying compliant with HTS codes is essential.



Airr Ruangtap, project manager at Aero Engine Solutions

Recently, the unpredictability of tariffs has taken a toll. In some cases, consignors have asked to indefinitely hold full containers of engine components due to rising import duties. At the same time, repair organizations cannot afford to store parts long-term. One airline repair

Related Content



Podcast: Airlines And Aftermarket React To Tariffs



MRO Industry Ponders Aftermarket Tariff Impacts



USM Experts Predict Prolonged Tariff Confusion



Daily Memo: More Tariff Concerns, Few Answers



HAECO Looks To Long-Term Amidst Tariff Uncertainties

management company even suspended sending parts abroad for servicing unless no domestic alternative existed, despite foreign shops offering cost-effective, high-quality work with faster turnaround times.

This growing complexity underscores the need for aviation supply chain professionals to adopt proactive strategies for trade compliance and duty management.

MASTER THE HTS SYSTEM

Accurate classification under the HTS is foundational to compliant and cost-effective trade. With 99 chapters and thousands of subheadings, the HTS is a sophisticated system that requires detailed attention. Most airframe and engine parts have previously been shipped, and historical customs documents often contain the correct HTS codes. Still, codes and rates can change, so it is important to verify current classifications through official sources such as hts.usitc.gov.

The U.S. International Trade Commission also offers a free [HTS e-learning course](#) to help professionals stay informed.

ORGANIZE SHIPMENTS STRATEGICALLY

When shipping large quantities of parts, grouping components by tariff classification helps calculate expected duties and streamlines customs processing. This level of planning ensures that companies are not surprised by unanticipated fees and that they can manage total cost exposure effectively.

It is also critical to review invoices and customs values before shipping. Inconsistent or inaccurate documentation can delay clearance or result in fines. Collaborating with a reliable customs broker ensures all paperwork—commercial invoices, declarations and shipping forms—is accurate and aligned with current regulations.

LEVERAGE DUTY-RELIEF PROVISIONS

Certain HTS classifications offer opportunities to reduce or eliminate duties. For example, HTS code 9801.00.3000 applies to U.S. goods returning to the U.S. after export. If properly documented, parts that were previously imported and exported for repair can re-enter the country without incurring additional duties.

To qualify, importers must provide:

- U.S. export documents (e.g., bill of lading or air waybill)
- A statement confirming eligibility under 9801.00.3000
- A Foreign Shipper Declaration Form
- An owner/importer declaration
- Original import records

Properly using codes like this can lead to substantial cost savings—particularly for businesses involved in high-volume international repair cycles.

BUILD FLEXIBILITY INTO SUPPLY CHAIN PLANNING

With trade policies continuing to evolve—especially under reciprocal tariff regimes—aviation companies must remain agile. This includes regularly assessing exposure to new tariffs, evaluating the cost impact of routing decisions and creating contingency plans for repair or procurement strategies.

Organizations should also explore long-term mitigation strategies. This might involve pursuing duty exclusions, using trade agreements or working with logistics partners to structure imports through more favorable countries of origin.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

In a globally interconnected industry like aviation, collaboration across supply chain stakeholders is more critical than ever. Airlines, MROs, OEMs, brokers and logistics providers must work together to stay informed, share insights and adapt quickly to policy changes.

By proactively managing classification, documentation and strategic shipment planning, aviation companies can navigate tariff volatility, protect margins and maintain the efficiency required to operate in a highly regulated and competitive global market.

Airr Ruangtap is a project manager at [Aero Engine Solutions](#). She is an experienced aviation professional with 12 years in the industry. She obtained her MBA with specialization in Supply Chain Management from [Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Daytona Beach Campus](#).

TARIFFS



FOLLOW US ON



MARKETS

- Aerospace
- Air Transport
- MRO
- Defense
- Space
- Business Aviation

DATA TOOLS

- MRO Prospector
- Fleet Discovery
- Fleet & MRO Forecasts
- Fleet Data Services
- Airportdata.com
- Aircraft Bluebook

EVENTS

- Aerospace and Defense
- Air Transport
- MRO and Commercial
- Business Aviation
- Awards

ABOUT

- Our Story
- Content and Data Team



Copyright © 2025. All rights reserved. Informa Markets, a trading division of Informa PLC.