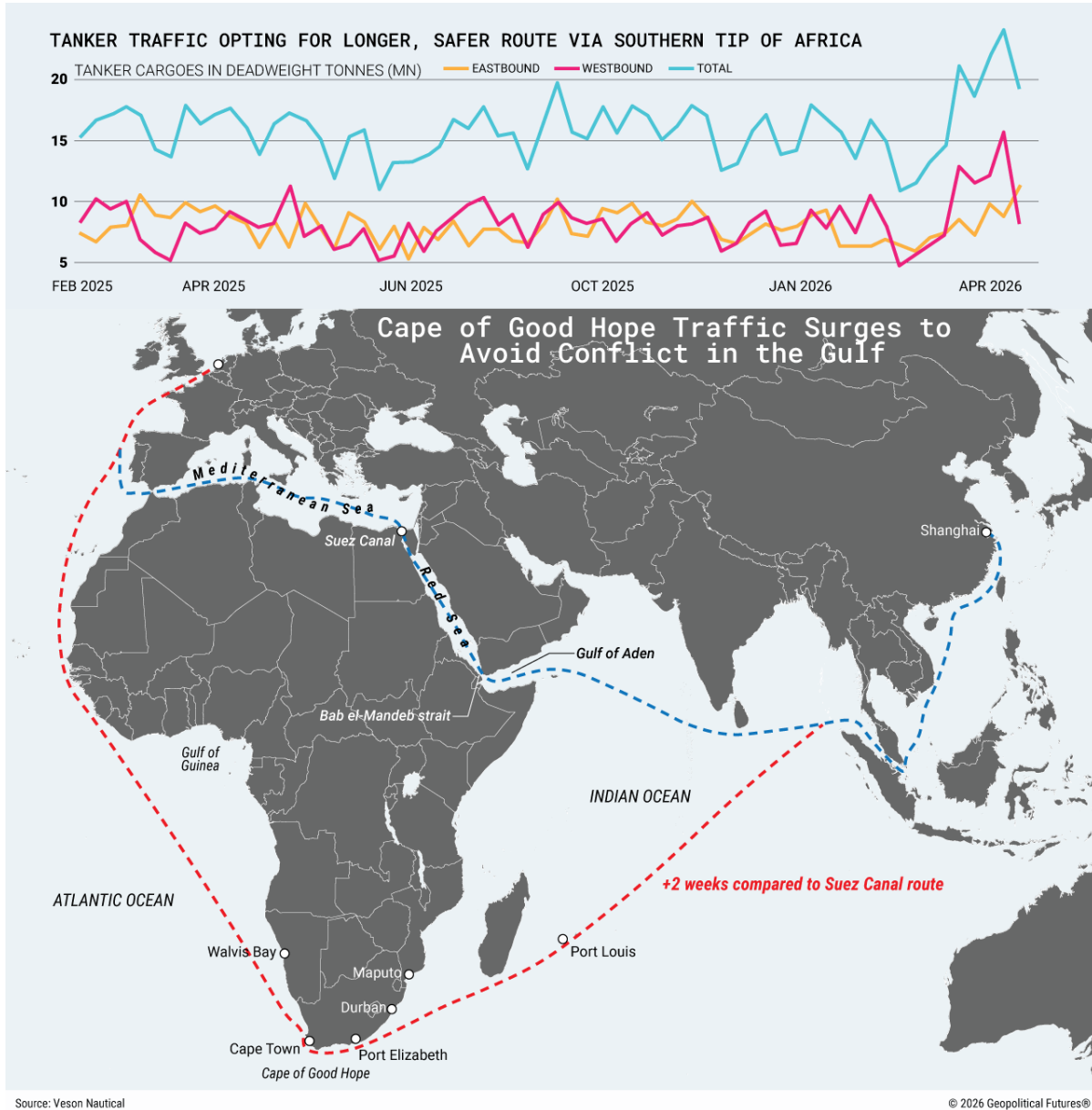


Ship Traffic Around Southern Africa Resurges

by Geopolitical Futures - May 8, 2026



[\(click to enlarge\)](#)

Tanker traffic around the Cape of Good Hope has surged to its highest levels since early 2025 as conflict in the Middle East disrupts traditional maritime corridors, particularly the Red Sea and Suez

Canal route. Traffic around the southern tip of Africa remained elevated but uneven through much of 2025 and early 2026 before sharply accelerating in April following the escalation of conflict involving Iran, the U.S. and Israel, as fighting spread across Gulf and Red Sea shipping corridors.

The rerouting reflects a broader loss of confidence in the Red Sea transit corridor through the Bab el-Mandeb and Suez Canal. Shippers had begun cautiously returning to the route after a period of relative calm, but the latest escalation appears to have halted and reversed that trend. The alternative route around Africa adds roughly two weeks to voyages between Asia and Europe, but the continued rise in tanker volumes indicates that operators are accepting higher but predictable costs in order to avoid volatile and potentially severe disruptions – as well as higher war risk insurance premiums – along the Red Sea route.

Author: Geopolitical Futures

[Read more from this author on geopoliticalfutures.com](https://geopoliticalfutures.com)