

## **INSPIRING WHAT'S NEXT**

### CIO OFFICE MORNING MARKET WRAP

# 19 June 2024

The S&P 500 started off climbing to new highs on Monday to inch even higher the following day, as Nvidia vaulted past Microsoft as the most valuable company in the world. And Europe and Hong Kong rebounded, despite weak reports from the major economies. US retail sales barely rose in May and prior months were revised lower, in a sign of strain amongst consumers. The ZEW investor survey flagged jitters about growth in Germany. And in China the housing slump deepened in May and the industrial expansion lost momentum. Treasury yields dropped further as investors waded through weaker macroeconomic data, the dollar pulled back and gold was little-changed. Meanwhile, Brent crude continued its rebound from oversold levels to clear the \$85/bbl mark. Ing said a deficit in the next quarter is likely.

The past week was marked by one more spate of US exceptionalism, that saw US large caps dominate all other major markets and long-duration assets outperform amidst tumbling yields. A benign inflation reading and a Fed meeting that kept the outlook for rate cuts intact propped up animal spirits amidst a goldilocks scenario. Political turmoil in France and a tougher G7 stance towards China failed to dent sentiment, as investors focused on positive new flow in the IT sector from Apple, Broadcom, and Adobe. The S&P 500 gained 1.6%, the Nasdaq (+3.5%) topped all other indices, while more cyclical pockets of the market like the Dow Industrials (-0.5%), and small caps (-1%) actually closed in negative territory, pointing to an investors' low vote of confidence in the economic cycle. US Treasury yields slumped across the curve on favourable Fed stance and inflation readings, with the 2yr and the 10yr yield ending 18bps and 22bps lower respectively. The US dollar (+0.6%) gained on fewer cuts projected by the Fed's dot-plot for 2024, but so did gold (+1.7%), supported by lower yields, and crude oil (+3.8%) on a lower forecast deficit in 3Q by Goldman Sachs.

On Wednesday the much awaited CPI release saw broad-based disinflation across goods and services. Both the headline and the core index grew slightly less than expected on a yearly basis, as the former printed 3.3%, and the latter recorded the lowest level since 1Q21 at 3.4%. On the same day the FOMC meeting followed, that was seemingly hawkish, though very market friendly in the substance. Fed officials showed an asymmetric response, debating whether to hold for longer and then cut, versus easing sooner, so hikes were decidedly kept off the table. And chair Powell reinforced the message saying that the Fed is ready to respond if inflation falls quickly. Markets discounted the dot-plot showing only one cut for 2024 from the previous three, while 2025 saw a shift from three projected cuts to four. Unemployment and growth projections were left unchanged, and the forecast for core inflation was revised higher to 2.8% for the current year. Overall, the stage was cleverly set was a rally in bonds and equities. Yields fell across the curve and the S&P 500 gapped higher the following day. Treasuries rallied hard for the week also boosted by favourable 10yr and 30yr auctions.

Big tech led the S&P 500 to another record high for the week. Investors welcomed Apple's announcement that it had partnered with OpenAI to integrate the ChatGPT chatbot in its devices. The stock gained 7.9% in the five days through Friday. Chipmaker Broadcom (+23.4%) was a standout, following its better than expected earnings, outlook, and the announcement of a 10-for-1 stock split. And software producer Adobe (+12.9%) delivered earnings and guidance above expectations.

Chinese data was much more of a sideshow, pointing to ongoing deflationary pressures amidst a yet unresolved real estate crisis. Consumer prices rose less than expected, and factory prices dropped for the 20th month in a row. The game changer would be a mammoth package worth at least one trillion of yuan aimed at refinancing the real estate sector, that would be breaking the negative loop between housing and consumer confidence. Stock prices have continued to drift lower since the mid-May highs.

The BOJ meeting was one more non-event. A rate change was not in the cards, but the BOJ took a step towards the tapering of its huge Quantitative Easing program. Governor Ueda said that the central bank would "significantly" scale back its bond buying program. Yet, the very gradual approach taken by the Governor both in terms of balance sheet reduction and future rate hikes for now is not going to impact the yen, that has continued to trade at the lows of the year against the dollar.

### Rest of week ahead:

Thursday: Philadelphia Fed survey, euro area industrial production. Friday: PMIs in India and the main developed countries, Japan CPI.

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