

Macroeconomic Overview

U.S. Markets

Index	Weekly % Change	YTD % Change
S&P 500	+1.33%	+0.28%
Dow Jones Industrial	+2.21%	+1.02%
NASDAQ Composite	+0.98%	-4.23%
Russell 2000	+1.31%	-3.01%
VIX	-15.03%	-23.01%

U.S. equities extended their winning streak to a fifth week last week, helped by a surprisingly dovish announcement from the Fed on Wednesday that helped erase the losses from the start of the week. The S&P 500 and the

Dow Jones, the most broadly used benchmarks of the American stock market, both managed to climb back into positive year-to-date territory with weekly gains of 1.33% and 2.21% respectively. Stocks were initially lower on Tuesday after the publication of February retail sales, which fell for a second month in a row. The



S&P 500, DJIA, NASDAQ Composite, Russell 2000 5-day chart.

trend was reversed on Wednesday afternoon as soon as Fed chair Janet Yellen took the stage at two o'clock, and announced that the FOMC was revising its forecast down to 2 interest rate increases in 2016 from 4 initially. Small caps underperformed again, as did the NASDAQ which only gained 0.98% while the Russell 2000 rose 1.31%, and both indices are still down three to four percent

year-to-date. This fifth consecutive week of gains for U.S. stocks also caused a sharp decrease in volatility, as measured by the VIX which fell 15.03% and reached new lows for the year around 14%. The rally was also supported by the continuing rebound in oil prices, which also had the effect of sending energy stocks soaring. The price of WTI crude for delivery in April rose over \$40 for the first time since the start of the year to settle at \$40.22, up 4.77%, while Brent for May delivery rose 2.01% to \$41.2 a barrel. Precious metals followed equities last week, with a jump on Wednesday helping erase earlier losses. Gold rose 0.47% to \$1,255.37 an ounce, while silver gained 2.01% at \$15.80 after reaching \$16 for the first time in 2016. In corporate news, Canadian energy infrastructure leader TransCanada agreed to acquire Columbia Pipeline, a natural gas MLP, in a deal that would create one of the biggest natural gas companies in North America. Next week's economic calendar contains a couple of important releases, most notably February existing home sales on Monday, the March flash PMI on Tuesday, and February new home sales on Wednesday. On Thursday, durable goods orders figures for February should give investors additional insight into the state of factory activity, and initial jobless claims are expected to hold at record lows. The most important release of the week is due on Friday at 8:30 with the third estimate of fourth quarter GDP in the U.S, with the consensus of analysts calling for a 1% increase over Q4 2014.

International Markets

Index	Weekly % Change	YTD % Change
BE 500	+0.04%	-6.71%
Stoxx Europe 600	-0.15%	-6.59%
DAX	+1.22%	-7.37%
FTSE 100	+0.81%	-0.84%
CAC 40	-0.67%	-3.76%
Nikkei 225	-1.27%	-12.13%
Shanghai Composite	+3.35%	-16.5%
Shenzhen Composite	+5.27%	-20.43%

International stocks had a more contrasted week, as European stocks were mostly higher while Japan fell and China's stock market finally came back to life after weeks of declines. In Europe, Germany's DAX was the biggest outperformer with a weekly gain of 1.22%, while the FTSE 100 rose 0.81% in London. In France, markets had a rough week, with the CAC 40

logging four consecutive days of decline to finish the week down 0.67%. In Norway, the central bank cut its policy interest rate to a record low of 0.5%, giving a hint that it could become the next central bank to implement negative interest rates if need be. The broader Bloomberg European 500 Index finished the week almost unchanged at +0.04%, while the Stoxx Europe 600 fell 0.15%. Both benchmarks are still down over six percent year-to-date, reflecting growing concerns about a deteriorating macro environment in Europe. In Japan, the Nikkei plummeted on Thursday and Friday, in part because of an increasingly stronger yen which hurts companies' profits and thus the economy. The Japanese benchmark's weekly decline of 1.27% was limited by the gains logged earlier in the week. In China, stocks had their best week in over two months as expectations of increased government stimulus brought optimism back to a market that has been battered for several months. As a result, the Shanghai Composite rose 3.35% while the Shenzhen Composite Index rose 5.27%.