

# CIO OFFICE MORNING MARKET WRAP 11 September 2024

As of the time of writing US presidential candidates Donald Trump and Kamala Harris just faced off in their first debate hosted by ABC in Philadelphia. It was held with no studio audience and no interruptions, rules that the Democratic side tried to change without success. The debate started with a handshake and soon saw each candidate on the offensive from issues that ranged from the economy to abortion rights. Trump reiterated the accusation that the Democratic rhetoric may have fostered the assassination attempt against him two months ago. On abortion, Republicans' soft spot and topical in the current election, Trump failed to say whether he would sign an abortion ban, while Harris accused him to have selected three Supreme Court Justices that eliminated the right to abortion. On the economy Trump placed emphasis on rising inflation that put Americans in dire straits, while Harris touted the "opportunity economy" she wants to build. Voters will eventually gauge whether Trump and Harris will have been convincing on what they plan to do for the country, rather than focusing on the flamboyant accusations they have been exchanging repeatedly. According to the latest polls no candidate has a distinctive lead on the other.

Asian stocks are slipping ahead of today's inflation report and as traders evaluate the impact of the presidential debate. A benchmark of the region's equities fell for a third session, while Hong Kong and Japan led declines, and US futures were weaker. The ongoing decline in crude oil and Treasury yields stoked global growth concerns that may be allayed next week when Fed officials reconvene for a policy decision. The dollar edged lower, while the yen rose to its strongest level since January as a Bank of Japan policy member made hawkish remarks. In China onshore stocks edged closer to a five-year low set in February, as Beijing's failure to implement sizeable stimulus measures cast doubt on the country's ability to achieve its 5% growth target this year. On Monday, the US market ended a volatile session in positive territory, as IT megacaps lifted stocks despite a cautious outlook issued by some of Wall Street's biggest banks. Oracle hit all-time highs on solid results. Tesla led a gauge of the so-called Magnificent 7 higher, that gained 1.5%, although Apple and Google lost their court cases against the EU. The KBW Bank Index lost 2%, and JPMorgan tumbled 5% after his president said consensus is too optimistic on next year's expenses and net interest income. Bank of America said investment banking results will come in lower than expected. Discretionaries and real estate topped other sectors, with energy the only one showing negative returns. Treasury yields fell to new lows alongside Brent crude, signaling pessimism about current economic conditions. Gold inched higher, while the US dollar were little changed.

While IT megacaps continue to hold sway both on markets and in terms of balance sheet prowess, the more business-cycle sensitive smaller companies are sending quite different signals. The takeaway from the National Federation of Independent Business report is that small businesses are likely to postpone hiring and to delay investments, impacted at the same time by slower activity and presidential-election-related uncertainty. The August smaller companies survey pointed to deteriorating sentiment and rising uncertainty, while the sales outlook worsened to levels in keeping with previous recessionary conditions.

Yesterday's Chinese trade balance data provided cold comfort for investors. Strong exports pointed to solid external demand, while the import miss underscored domestic weakness. And the outlook for exports does not look solid either, with the US slowing down and more negative measures being piled on by the Washington administration.

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