

CIO OFFICE MORNING MARKET WRAP 23 September 2024

Global equities ended the week higher, with the MSCI ACWI gaining 1.3% as optimism for the Fed's ability to engineer a soft-landing buoyed investor sentiment. The S&P 500 rose 1.4% for the week, closing at 5,702, driven by Thursday's rally following the Fed's 50bps rate cut. Volatility surged on Friday due to the expiration of \$5.1 trillion in options and futures contracts during the "triple witching" event, leading to the highest trading volumes of the year. The S&P 500 equal-weighted index reached a record high, signaling broad-based participation beyond tech megacaps. Nike (+9.3%) and Intel (+10.9%) were key contributors to the week's upward momentum. Nike rallied after Elliott Hill's return as CEO was announced, while Intel rose on reports of a potential takeover offer from Qualcomm. 10-year Treasury yield advanced 3bps to 3.74%. Brent crude oil closed higher for the week at \$74.5 per barrel as geopolitical risks escalate. Gold reached a new high at \$2,622 per ounce also amid geopolitical tensions, as well as the metal became more attractive as a diversification option. Gold is also the most popular hedge against inflation in case of an unexpected rebound. The yen fell to 143.9 per dollar, as BOJ Governor Kazuo Ueda signaled less urgency to hike rates, pushing Japanese stocks up higher.

On Friday, the S&P 500 wavered between gains and losses in the final minutes of trading, closing down 0.2% as investors rotated into defensive sectors. Utilities gained 2.7%, with Constellation Energy surging 22.3% after securing a deal with Microsoft to help revive the Three Mile Island nuclear plant. FedEx, a bellwether for global trade, dropped 15.2% after issuing a downbeat revenue forecast, signaling weaker demand ahead of the holiday season. European stocks ended the week lower, with the MSCI Europe Index down 0.4%. The luxury sector faced pressure due to weakening demand from Chinese consumers, a critical market for Europe's high-end brands. The rise of online Chinese discounters like Temu, which offer ultra-cheap "dupes" of luxury items, further weighed on the sector. However, energy stocks provided some relief, as oil prices rose, offsetting some of the broader market weakness.

In Asia, Japan's TOPIX Index gained 2.8%, driven by a rebound in tech stocks like Tokyo Electron, which recovered after early-week losses. Renewed optimism in the semiconductor sector supported the rally, as Japanese suppliers expanded into India to diversify away from China. In China, the MSCI China Index rebounded sharply by 4.4% as hopes of further stimulus rekindled risk appetite and reports that regulators are preparing to ease property restrictions in mega cities like Shanghai and Beijing, leading to a strong rebound in Chinese property stocks. Today morning, Asian stocks advanced, supported by expectations of further stimulus from China to revive its slowing economy. Chinese, Hong Kong, and South Korean stocks led the gains. The PBOC cut the 14-day reverse repurchase rate to 1.85%, and further rate cuts and liquidity measures are anticipated.

Key events this week include U. S. PMI, PCE inflation data, initial jobless claims, consumer confidence, and durable goods orders. A slew of Eurozone data will be released this week, shedding more light on the overall condition of the economy. The central banks of Sweden and Switzerland are scheduled to hold monetary decisions this week.

Have a great day.

Chief Investment Office Wealth Management, Emirates NBD.

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