



CIO OFFICE MORNING MARKET WRAP 16th June 2025

Markets took a defensive turn into the end of the week after Israel launched direct strikes on Iranian military and nuclear infrastructure, drawing swift retaliation from Tehran. What had begun as a relatively calm stretch anchored by soft US inflation data and broadly stable policy expectations gave way to a sharp repricing of geopolitical risk. Brent crude surged 7.0% on Friday, airlines slumped, defense names rallied, and gold broke higher in a rotation into haven assets. Gulf equities sold off, European and Asian risk appetite evaporated. Macro took a back seat as war headlines dictated flows. In the US, the S&P 500 slipped 0.4% on the week, giving back early gains. Headline CPI came in cooler than expected, rising just 0.1% in May, with core inflation also subdued at 0.2%. The 10-year yield fell early but reversed course by Friday, finishing at 4.39%. Europe fared worse. The MSCI Europe Index fell 1.6%, with travel and insurance stocks leading declines. France and Germany underperformed after softer PMI readings and cautious corporate guidance. Risk appetite faded steadily into Friday's session, with the Stoxx 600 reversing midweek gains. The FTSE 100 managed a 0.2% gain, supported by oil majors and commodity-linked defensives. Energy and defense names caught flows, but cyclicals saw selling across the board. The political backdrop also weighed, with fresh trade rhetoric out of Washington and weak UK GDP data reinforcing a cautious tone.

In Asia, Japan's TOPIX declined 0.5% as exporters came under pressure from both a stronger yen and renewed tariff risk. Automakers fell sharply following White House comments on auto trade and broader weakness in global demand proxies. Chinese equities posted modest gains, with the MSCI China Index up 0.7%, supported by further strength in biotech and industrials linked to national security themes. However, mainland benchmarks lagged, and the valuation premium of A-shares over Hong Kong narrowed to a five-year low. India slipped 1.1%, with equities hit by rising oil prices and outflows from cyclical sectors, though defense and energy stocks helped cushion losses. Gulf markets bore the brunt of the shift in sentiment. Dubai's DFM dropped 3.1%, Abu Dhabi's ADX fell 1.8%, and Saudi's Tadawul declined 1.5%. Kuwait's Premier Index tumbled more than 5% on Friday alone, its sharpest daily fall in months. Regional selling accelerated into the close, driven by local outflows and broad repricing of geopolitical risk. Aramco shares rose modestly, benefiting from the spike in oil, but most sectors ended the week lower.

Friday's price action underscored the week's turning point. Brent oil jumped to \$74.2 a barrel, up 7.0% on the day;

Gold rose 1.4% to \$3,432 an ounce, lifted by safe-haven demand and a dip in real yields. The US dollar gained 0.2% and Treasury yields climbed as duration demand faded. Shipping stocks in Asia rallied on bets of extended disruption to Red Sea routes. Autos, airlines, and other fuel-sensitive sectors reversed hard. The market message was clear as geopolitical risk had re-entered the price in a material way.

Markets this morning:

Today, markets opened on an uneasy note across Asia, with price action reflecting the lingering uncertainty from the weekend's Israel-Iran escalation. Japan's Nikkei 225 advanced 1.1%, lifted by a softer yen and renewed strength in defense and export-oriented stocks. Chinese equities wavered, with early gains on stronger-than-expected retail sales giving way to a muted close as caution resurfaced. Oil surged over 5% in early trade before easing slightly, as Brent priced in elevated geopolitical risk. US equity futures edged higher in a modest attempt to stabilize after Friday's selloff, while Euro Stoxx 50 futures dipped 0.2%, pointing to a soft open in Europe. The session is unfolding in the shadow of heightened military risk and ahead of a dense policy calendar, with markets weighing every move carefully amid a more fragile cross-asset tone.

Upcoming key events/data:

This week brings a full slate of economic and political signals. US retail sales, housing starts, and industrial production will test the strength of domestic demand. China's monthly data will shape expectations around stimulus momentum and underlying growth. Central banks in Japan, Switzerland, and the UK will set policy against a backdrop of fragile sentiment and tightening financial conditions. The G7 summit opens in Canada with warrisk and trade alignment expected to dominate the agenda. With volatility climbing and positioning increasingly cautious, the burden of proof has shifted back to policymakers. Markets will be watching for signs that macro resilience can hold in the face of rising geopolitical strain.

Have a good week ahead!

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