

Bedrock Friday 24 November 2017 Newsletter

Due to the Thanksgiving long weekend, this week has been quieter. Happy Thanksgiving for those who celebrate and enjoy the long week end!

Although it might sound boring, this week US stocks continued to grind higher and the 3 main indices closed at record highs! It is truly an incredible run and it does not seem to change for the time being, although investors question the rally and get more and more worried that it could end badly.

The US Fed even started talking about it in the released minutes of their October 31st meeting this Wednesday. Federal Reserve officials expressed largely optimistic views of economic growth but also started to worry that financial market prices are getting out of hand and posing a danger to the economy. Some members feared what would happen if the market suddenly took a hit.

"In light of elevated asset valuations and low financial market volatility, several participants expressed concerns about a potential build-up of financial imbalances," the minutes said. Concerns about the surge in stocks are not new at the Fed, but most officials have downplayed the idea that the market is in a bubble. Wall Street also has been at odds about the market, with Bank of America Merrill Lynch warning of a market top coming in 2018 though Goldman Sachs has predicted another big year.

Another worry has come from the fact that the yield curve flattened, as the spread between U.S. 10 and two-year Treasury yields has shrunk to less than 60 basis points, its lowest level since November 2007. Is this a precursor to a recession, as it usually is, or is this only a market recognition that whilst short term rates in the US will continue to rise gradually, inflation will remain tame, thus allowing the long term rates to stay low for a longer period of time? At this point in time at least, we will go with the second option as the US economy is firing on all cylinders and inflation remains subdued.

The US Fed is not the only Central Bank who wants to return to more "normal" policies. This week, the Bank of Japan is dropping subtle, yet intentional, hints that it could edge away from crisis-mode stimulus earlier than expected, through a future hike in its yield target, according to people familiar with the central bank's thinking. With inflation still way below its 2 percent target, the BOJ sees no immediate need to withdraw stimulus, and regards weak price growth as its most pressing policy challenge. But bank officials are now more vocal on the rising cost of prolonged easing, such as the hit to bank margins - a sign that their next move would be to roll back stimulus rather than expand it.

On Thursday, in China, Stocks experienced their worst drop in 17 months, with the Shanghai index closing down close to 3%, and with the 10 year Chinese rate going above 4%. Could this be the first signs of the long awaited debt crisis in China? Its debt to GDP ratio has soared from 162% in 2008 to 259% in 2016....

And there is about a Trillion USD of maturing debt arriving in 2018-2019, a real challenge for the Chinese authorities who will want to avoid a panic at all costs.

In Europe, although the individual countries manufacturing indices are at levels not seen in 17 years, things could also turn messy. We saw this week that in Germany, Merkel could not form a coalition and that new elections could be called very soon, and this time we could very well see Merkel not being reelected.

In Spain, we have the vote in Catalonia looming, and already slower growth has started to appear following the events of October.

And in the UK, oh dear..., the budget submitted clearly shows that the UK growth prospects are dire, and the costs of Brexit could be much higher than anticipated.

So, while we remain optimistic in general as we see good, synchronized growth in all major economies, and good and better earnings in US, European and Japanese companies, our senses remain on alert as we can also see signs of bubbles and exuberance. Let's discuss a few of them.

Last week, a painting was sold at a record 450 MM US\$! Bitcoin rose from 1'000\$ to more than 8'000\$ this year only, the Swiss National Bank has become the biggest hedge Fund in the world, propelling stock prices higher, The ECB and BOJ bought more than 2 Trillion USD worth of assets in the past few years. The European High Yield (junk!) current yield is lower than the safest asset in the world, the US 10 yr yield. Argentina was able to place a 100 year bond, just a few years having been in default for the 8th time! Volatility is at its lowest ever and the market cap rise of 5 US Stocks (FAANG) has been equal to the total German Market Cap (1.5 Trillion). And we could go on and on...

The truth is that Central banks around the world have flushed the global markets with liquidity for the past 8 years. As liquidity is withdrawn, and the question will be at what pace, asset prices will be affected.

In other news, UBS, the world's largest wealth manager, said it isn't prepared to make portfolio allocations to bitcoin because of a lack of government oversight, the bank's chief investment officer said.

Bitcoin has also not reached the critical mass to be considered a viable currency to invest in, UBS's Mark Haefele said in an interview. The total sum of all cryptocurrencies is "not even the size of some of the smaller currencies" that UBS would allocate to, he said. Events such as a bitcoin-funded terrorist attack are potential risks which are hard to evaluate.

While skeptics have called bitcoin's rapid advance a bubble, it has become too big an asset for many financial firms to ignore. UBS Chairman Axel Weber this month said Bitcoin was a speculative investment and not a store of value, while Credit Suisse Group AG CEO Tidjane Thiam described the speculation around bitcoin as the "very definition of a bubble." JPMorgan Chase & Co. CEO Jamie Dimon has called bitcoin "a fraud" that will eventually blow up.

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future. JFK.

Market Weekly Highlights:

- In this week of Thanksgiving, the dollar lost some ground against practically all currencies with DXY at 93.22 as we write. The EUR rose against the USD on the back of Fed's Inflation concerns and is currently at 1.1840. USDCHF is at 0.9820 . the USD is also lower against the Japanese Yen which hit almost 111 yesterday to trade marginally higher today to 111.45. The Pound followed a similar path and rallied over 1.33.
The Russian Ruble strengthened against the USD on Wednesday reaching 58.38, off two figures from mid-November lows of 60.61. The Brazilian Real also came off last week's lows of 3.3163 against the USD to trade currently at 3.22.
The weaker USD helped also the Crude oil rebound which gained some 3 USD since Monday to \$58.60, whilst Brent stands \$5 higher at just above \$63.60
- 10Y U.S. Treasuries are almost unchanged this week with yields at 2.34%. The Japanese 10 year JGB yield has moved from 0.46% early this week to 0.016% yesterday to only trading higher again at 0.029% continuing to offer POSITIVE yields.
In Europe, the German Bund yield which hit almost 0.43% on mid-November is now trading sideways around 0.36% for the week. The French 10Y Yield is back where it started the week showing 0.70% as we watch.
In Peripheral Europe Italian 10Y yields are now below 2.0% trading at almost 1.8%, higher then where they started the year 1.73%, whilst the Spanish 10Y yields trade some 50bps lower than Italy at 1.488% but higher then where they started the year at 1.30%.
- Markets are positive on this short Thanksgiving week in the USA with all three major indices trading higher reaching new all-time highs again this week. The DJIA is at 23'526 up 1.10% for the week, SP500 at just below 2'600, up for the week 1.27% and Nasdaq at 6'867, adding a strong 2.40%.
In Europe markets are also showing positive returns for the week with Eurostoxx50 up 0.64%, the DAX and CAC40 at respectively up 0.53% and 1.06% for the week while the peripheral Italian FTSE MIB +1.55% as we watch. The Swiss SMI is positive with a +1.48% for the week.
The Nikkei trades higher by 0.89% for the week showing strong positive returns for the year of almost +18%.

Highlighted items are interesting data points for the week

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All data is compiled from Bloomberg

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INDEX NAME	CCY	Last Price	PRICE CHANGE IN % (unless indicated)									
			1D	5D	MTD	1M	3M	6M	YTD	1Y	3Y	
LIBOR RATES AND YIELD ON US GOVERNMENT BONDS (Yield in %, Change in bps)												
US 3 MONTH	USD	1.28	-0.27	2.29	15.02	17.06	27.00	36.17	78.40	78.91	-	
US 2 YEAR	USD	1.74	1.34	1.88	14.04	15.91	41.04	45.83	55.18	61.73	-	
US 10 YEAR	USD	2.34	1.78	-0.70	-4.28	-8.24	14.26	8.63	-10.78	-1.33	-	
US LIBOR 3M	USD	1.46	0.83	4.04	8.11	9.76	14.51	27.03	46.44	53.75	-	
EUR LIBOR 3M	EUR	-0.38	0.00	-0.10	-0.07	-0.23	-0.61	-1.10	-4.31	-4.89	-	
GBP LIBOR 3M	GBP	0.52	0.00	-0.36	8.30	13.12	24.11	21.89	15.60	12.43	-	
CHF LIBOR 3M	CHF	-0.75	0.00	-0.60	-2.42	-2.46	-2.48	-2.18	-2.18	-0.56	-	
FIXED INCOME INDICES - BY TYPE OF ISSUER												
										Yield to Worst		
GLOBAL AGG TR HEDGED	USD	514.42	0.02	0.26	0.36	0.71	0.56	1.62	3.01	3.48	9.27	1.60
GLOBAL HY TR	USD	1,300.25	0.08	0.39	-0.24	-0.38	1.36	3.45	9.63	11.84	19.03	5.31
US GOVERNMENT TR	USD	2,168.86	0.21	0.22	0.32	0.39	-0.41	0.95	2.46	2.40	5.15	1.60
US CORPORATE TR	USD	2,887.00	0.28	0.59	0.25	0.37	0.79	2.91	5.88	6.73	12.59	3.21
US HIGH YIELD TR	USD	1,940.51	0.08	0.38	-0.44	-0.60	1.40	2.33	6.98	9.27	18.04	5.73
EU GOVERNMENT TR	EUR	252.81	-0.03	0.31	0.30	1.19	1.09	1.84	1.01	1.92	7.52	0.44
EU CORPORATE TR	USD	271.96	0.02	0.07	-0.04	0.73	1.22	3.04	4.43	5.24	11.55	0.68
EU HIGH YIELD TR	EUR	316.71	0.04	0.28	-0.39	0.01	1.46	3.13	6.92	9.13	17.98	2.87
BARCLAYS GLOBAL CONVERT.	USD	238.21	0.00	0.67	-0.23	0.21	1.97	2.20	7.03	8.53	10.89	-
GLOBAL EM TR (HEDGED)	USD	382.86	0.00	0.30	-0.10	0.01	0.95	2.73	7.64	8.97	16.99	4.19
S&P/LSTA U.S. LEV LOAN	USD	98.15	0.01	0.08	-0.38	-0.50	-0.18	-0.74	-0.47	0.60	0.97	4.97
COMMODITY INDICES - BY TYPE OF ISSUER												
GSCI INDEX TOTAL RETURN	USD	2,475.44	0.00	2.02	2.49	5.78	12.46	7.42	2.41	9.05	-39.29	
GSCI ENERGY TR	USD	441.14	0.00	2.50	4.44	9.01	19.52	12.35	1.46	13.65	-50.26	
GSCI INDUSTRIAL METALS TR	USD	1,378.67	0.00	1.62	-0.45	0.04	3.31	16.44	22.83	18.56	0.21	
GSCI PRECIOUS METALS TR	USD	1,562.15	0.00	1.14	1.89	0.97	0.42	1.81	10.93	5.37	5.20	
GSCI AGRICULTURE TR	USD	385.29	0.00	1.40	1.21	1.58	1.15	-8.16	-10.61	-13.99	-28.72	
GENERIC 1ST 'CL' FUTURE	USD	58.61	1.02	5.66	7.13	11.00	21.07	10.71	0.86	9.72	-42.44	
GOLD SPOT \$/OZ	USD	1,291.52	0.01	-0.21	1.61	1.15	0.41	2.60	12.08	9.04	7.89	
CURRENCIES												
DOLLAR INDEX SPOT	USD	93.22	-0.09	-0.56	-1.50	-0.68	-0.15	-4.22	-8.88	-8.42	5.66	
Euro Spot	EUR	1.19	0.02	0.53	1.78	0.78	0.46	5.65	12.70	12.31	-4.73	
Japanese Yen Spot	JPY	111.22	-0.12	0.67	2.06	2.29	-1.61	0.13	5.04	1.78	6.21	
British Pound Spot	GBP	1.33	0.13	0.84	0.32	1.46	4.10	2.73	7.99	7.03	-15.15	
Swiss Franc Spot	CHF	0.98	0.04	0.78	1.65	0.99	-1.62	-0.86	3.83	3.56	-1.52	
Brazilian Real Spot	BRL	3.22	0.07	1.71	1.51	0.40	-2.49	1.48	1.01	5.21	-21.93	
China Renminbi Spot	CNY	6.58	-0.31	0.35	0.47	0.49	0.88	4.34	5.17	4.82	-6.99	
Singapore Dollar Spot	SGD	1.35	-0.13	0.67	1.17	1.15	1.10	2.78	7.40	6.32	-3.29	
Russian Ruble Spot	RUB	58.46	0.10	1.07	-0.10	-1.29	1.31	-3.28	5.37	10.43	-23.23	
Norwegian Krone Spot	NOK	8.14	-0.08	1.19	0.32	-1.69	-3.68	2.31	6.11	5.59	-16.74	
VOLATILITY / LIQUIDITY INDICES												
CBOE SPX VOLATILITY INDX	USD	9.88	1.54	-16.41	-3.44	-11.20	-19.76	-8.30	-29.99	-20.92	-23.80	
USD SWAP SPREAD SEMI 2YR	USD	17.75	-	7.04	-19.84	-25.94	-26.47	-23.09	-30.69	-9.36	-22.52	
TED SPREAD	USD	19.33	-	4.60	-22.68	-28.91	-40.27	-33.96	-61.38	-55.85	-15.14	

MARKET INDICES PERFORMANCE

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			1D	5D	MTD	1M	3M	6M	YTD					
EQUITY MARKET INDICES - BY REGION														
S&P 500 INDEX	USD	2,597.08	-0.07	1.27	0.85	1.25	6.26	8.28	16.00	17.80	25.86	19.45	21.89	
DOW JONES INDUS. AVG	USD	23,526.18	-0.24	1.10	0.64	1.08	7.86	12.36	19.04	23.28	32.09	18.76	19.76	
NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX	USD	6,867.36	0.08	2.40	2.08	4.26	9.38	11.87	27.57	27.63	45.71	24.42	42.72	
RUSSELL 2000 INDEX	USD	1,516.76	-0.14	3.60	0.93	1.29	10.73	9.83	11.76	13.01	29.37	33.41	49.27	
EURO STOXX 50	EUR	3,572.07	0.26	0.77	-2.70	-0.99	3.78	-0.33	8.64	17.57	11.31	15.50	18.62	
EURO STOXX 600	EUR	387.12	0.04	0.92	-1.99	-0.51	3.43	-1.28	7.17	13.31	12.04	16.17	20.43	
CAC 40 INDEX	EUR	5,379.54	0.50	1.20	-2.19	-0.22	5.27	0.78	10.70	18.50	23.22	15.81	18.50	
DAX INDEX	EUR	13,008.55	-0.05	0.18	-1.61	0.03	6.87	2.96	13.38	21.78	33.02	14.72	19.10	
FTSE 100 INDEX	GBP	7,417.24	0.07	0.42	-1.09	-1.53	0.06	-1.38	3.76	8.53	10.13	15.02	21.02	
SWISS MARKET INDEX	CHF	9,315.56	0.26	1.47	0.83	1.35	4.20	3.14	13.37	19.49	2.87	19.00	24.54	
NIKKEI 225	JPY	22,523.15	0.48	0.89	2.45	3.94	16.03	14.98	24.16	29.92	19.14	19.34		
HANG SENG INDEX	HKD	29,707.94	-0.96	2.29	5.74	6.08	8.53	17.45	35.75	32.10	25.00	13.46	13.96	
SHANGHAI SE COMPOSITE	CNY	3,351.92	-2.29	-0.86	-1.16	-1.02	2.52	9.46	8.06	3.46	32.41	14.83	16.91	
S&P BSE SENSEX INDEX	INR	33,588.08	0.08	1.14	1.54	3.42	6.73	11.29	26.66	30.41	18.33	22.02	24.22	
RUSSIAN RTS INDEX \$	USD	1,158.62	-0.04	2.92	4.68	3.41	11.00	7.16	1.14	13.28	8.30	7.44	8.38	
BRAZIL IBOVESPA INDEX	BRL	74,486.58	-0.04	5.17	0.24	-2.44	4.71	17.75	23.68	21.32	34.44	14.30	18.68	
MSCI WORLD	USD	2,053.28	0.16	0.99	0.81	1.08	5.86	7.63	17.25	19.85	18.00	17.97	20.98	
MSCI WORLD HEDGED	USD	916.44	0.04	0.57	0.48	1.07	6.40	7.69	16.43	19.84	29.30	-	-	
MSCI WORLD LOCAL	-	1,553.49	0.04	0.69	0.31	0.74	5.96	6.28	13.87	16.82	20.75	17.97	20.98	
MSCI AC WORLD	USD	501.90	0.10	1.04	1.06	1.36	5.93	8.42	18.98	21.49	17.75	17.44	20.24	
MSCI EM	USD	1,152.40	-0.37	1.40	2.98	3.51	6.46	14.66	33.65	35.26	13.96	14.27	16.03	
MSCI AC ASIA x JAPAN	USD	716.15	-0.33	1.45	3.50	4.59	8.69	16.79	39.24	38.03	24.84	14.92	15.66	
MSCI EM LATIN AMERICA	USD	2,820.30	0.19	3.02	0.39	-2.16	-2.40	10.24	20.49	22.66	-8.81	15.70	18.46	
MSCI EM Eur, ME & Africa	USD	276.81	-0.79	1.18	3.17	2.69	1.34	3.34	13.09	21.35	-10.97	12.03	13.68	
EQUITY MARKET INDICES - BY SECTOR														
MSCI ENERGY	USD	211.19	0.21	1.11	-0.23	1.13	9.34	3.33	-3.56	1.18	-20.05	25.91	32.79	
MSCI MATERIALS	USD	271.02	0.41	1.40	0.84	0.96	7.11	13.70	22.15	23.65	16.53	17.13	19.38	
MSCI INDUSTRIALS	USD	252.02	0.26	1.25	-0.58	-0.82	6.17	7.76	18.61	19.62	24.23	18.34	20.47	
MSCI CONS DISCRETIONARY	USD	231.13	0.14	1.12	1.74	2.69	6.85	6.86	17.66	18.35	25.55	17.91	19.93	
MSCI CONS STAPLES	USD	230.82	0.29	0.79	2.25	1.98	1.40	-0.22	11.22	14.28	14.26	20.69	22.69	
MSCI HEALTH CARE	USD	224.61	0.14	0.91	0.65	-1.48	2.91	4.63	16.48	17.83	10.96	17.55	23.24	
MSCI FINANCIALS	USD	121.80	0.05	0.59	-0.59	-1.26	4.53	9.33	14.71	19.27	17.31	14.25	16.54	
MSCI INFO TECH	USD	223.46	0.07	1.30	2.23	5.48	12.80	16.56	38.60	39.52	57.64	20.16	26.10	
MSCI TELECOMS	USD	68.38	0.35	1.48	0.45	-0.85	-2.26	-2.30	-1.68	3.79	-3.98	14.43	16.60	
MSCI UTILITY	USD	131.55	0.10	0.24	-0.29	-0.22	-0.02	3.17	14.43	20.33	8.18	16.87	20.33	
MSCI WORLD REAL ESTATE	USD	211.46	0.23	0.41	2.64	2.81	2.92	4.98	11.24	14.15	8.37	25.24	18.18	
HEDGE FUND INDICES														
HFRX GLOBAL HEDGE FUND	USD	1,264.72	0.39	0.49	-0.06	0.08	2.19	2.87	5.09	6.35	3.37			
HFRX EQUAL WEIGHTED	USD	1,268.25	0.24	0.32	0.02	0.15	1.50	2.26	4.20	5.28	6.18			
HFRX GLOBAL EUR	EUR	1,114.56	0.38	0.47	-0.22	-0.11	1.59	1.62	2.94	3.94	-1.36			

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