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THE FED HAS NOW AIMED ALL ITS GUNS AT INFLATION

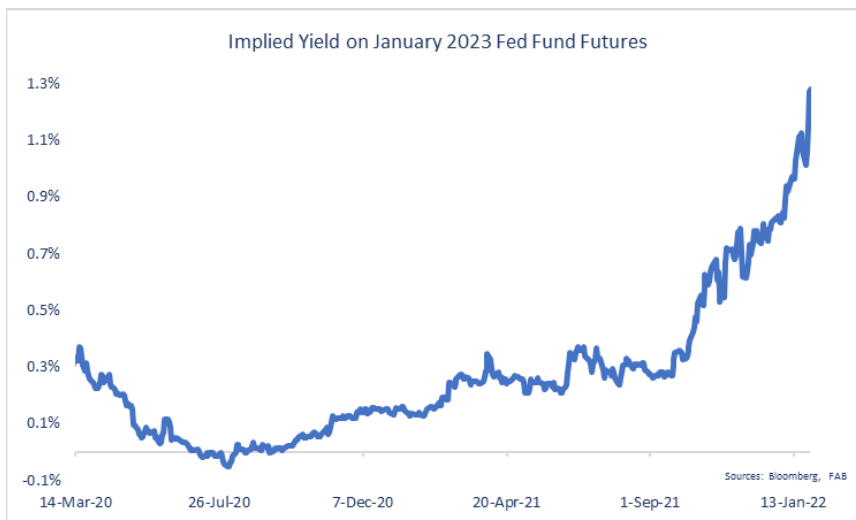
January 31st 2022

- The VIX touched 38.94 early in the week but closed lower, at 27.66
- The two-year US Treasury yield rose 16 basis points, its biggest jump since October 2019
- The US dollar index increased 1.7% to 97.27, its biggest spike since September 2020
- Brent crude closed above US\$90/barrel for the first time since October 2014

Jerome Powell had a clear message in the latest Fed meeting: he is serious about fighting inflation. The Chairman indicated that the first rate hike may happen in March and he allowed the possibility of more than four rises this year. He also did not rule out successive moves. Finally, he suggested that within the next three meetings the Fed could start reducing its balance sheet.

The labour market is strong, Powell said, and financial conditions remain loose. So, he suggested, the recent market volatility is not a concern. Investors, though, seem worried about who will buy the US\$4.7 trillion in assets the Fed added to its balance sheet since the pandemic began. It may take some weeks before the markets have priced in such a big liquidity drawdown.

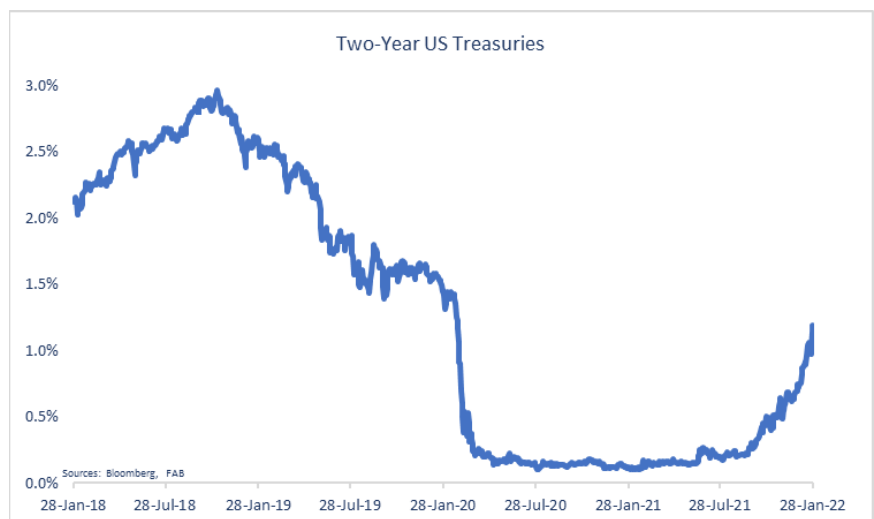
THE MARKET HAS NOW PRICED IN FIVE FED RATE HIKES BEFORE JANUARY 2023



- Fed fund futures maturing in January 2023 are yielding 1.29%, suggesting the market sees five rate hikes as a done deal this year.
- Fed fund futures, however, are used to hedge rate hikes and usually are an inaccurate forecaster.
- Jerome Powell, however, did leave the door open for more than four hikes this year.
- Any rise in the Fed funds rate would have an impact on Libor and loan funding costs, which track the US benchmark rate closely.

THE YIELD ON TWO-YEAR US TREASURIES ROSE TO 1.19% BEFORE SETTLING AT 1.16%

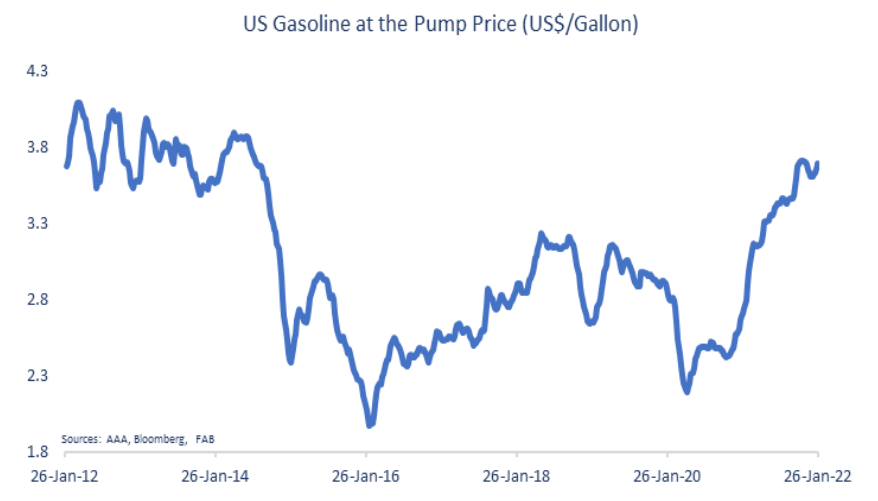
- Shorter maturity bonds moved by the most in a week since October, 2019, as the Treasury market began to price an impending rate hike.
- The long-end of the Treasury curve, however, saw yields rise by a single basis point, as markets reflected fears of excessive tightening by the Fed.
- The spread between two- and 10-year Treasuries, a gauge of future growth expectations, dropped by 15 basis points.
- In the last hiking cycle, however, two-year Treasury yields hit nearly 3%.



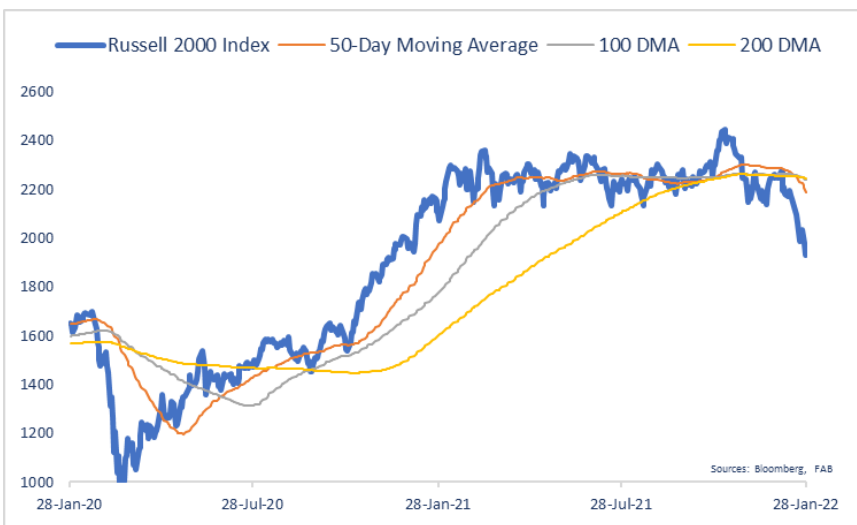


HIGHER ENERGY PRICES COULD KEEP INFLATION STICKIER, AND THE FED HAWKISH

- Brent crude prices were trading at US\$91.23/barrel this morning, the highest level since October, 2014.
- Oil prices are up 32.47% since the first day of December as it became clear that the Omicron variant would have a smaller impact than expected on global energy demand.
- The rise is feeding into fuel prices in the US, with gasoline prices hitting US\$3.69/gallon last week.
- Aside from keeping inflation higher, the issue is sensitive for the Joe Biden government in an election year.



ECONOMICALLY SENSITIVE STOCKS ARE FLAGGING WORRIES ABOUT FUTURE GROWTH



- The Russell 2000 US stock index of small and mid-cap companies is down 19.4% from its peak in November.
- These stocks are often seen as a proxy for future US economic growth.
- Growth has underperformed value so far this year even among smaller companies: the Russell Growth index is down 11.28% year-to-date, while the Value index has fallen 3.57%.
- The price of the index compared to the average expected earnings of its components has dropped to 21 times, near the lowest in a decade.

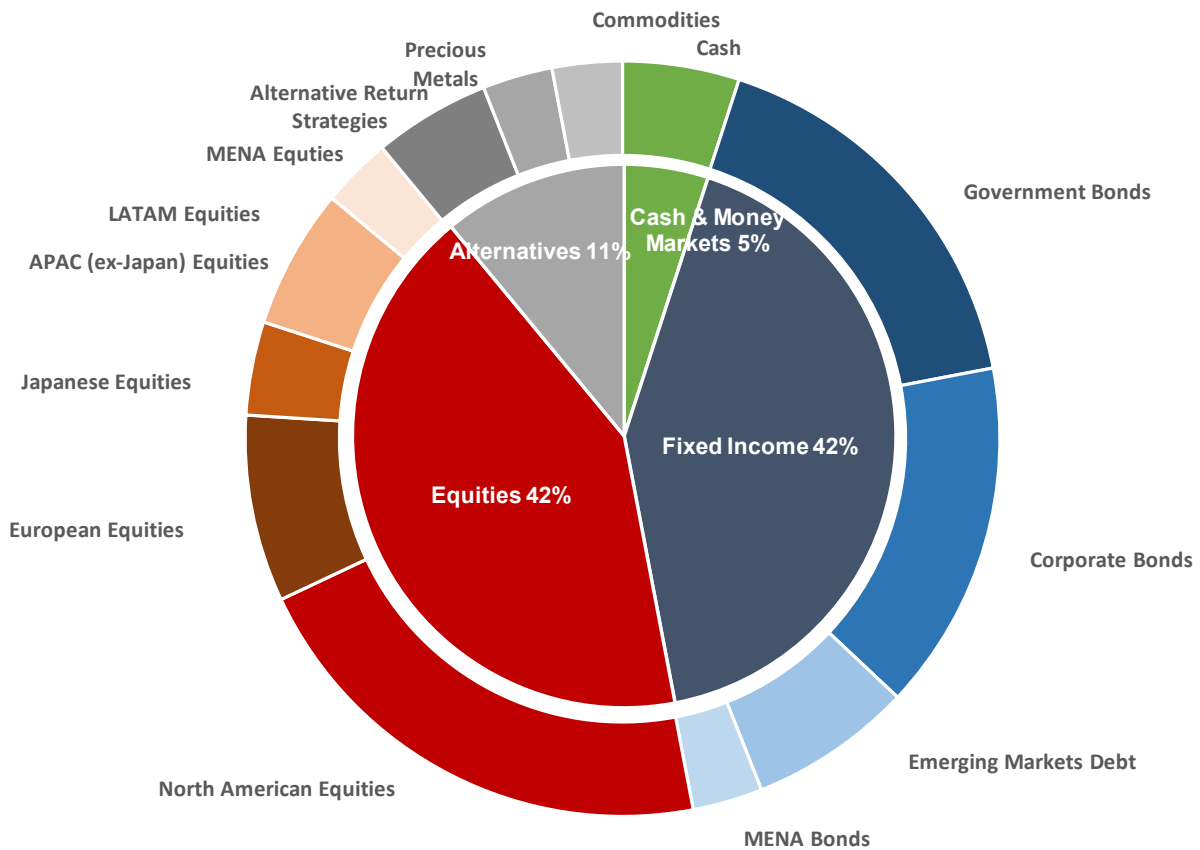
CHINESE GROWTH CONTINUES TO SLOW, SUGGESTING EVEN MORE STIMULUS AHEAD

- The latest purchasing manager surveys have shown a further deceleration in the growth of the world's second largest economy.
- The PBOC, has already cut interest rates twice this year and analysts now expect more to come.
- China may have to stimulate its economy further as the developed countries remove stimulus.
- Private property developers continue to struggle with funding, too, which could add pressure on economic growth and employment this year.





Asset Class	Positioning	Detail
Cash	Underweight	Putting cash to work in risk assets.
Fixed Income	Overweight	Keeping a slight overweight focused on EM dollar debt.
Equities	Overweight	Slightly overweight in Asia ex-Japan and US markets.
Alternatives	Underweight	However, reducing the underweight in hedge funds.





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