

Weekly Update

CO | EXTERNAL PUBLICATION

Emerging markets and the dollar – Love & Hate



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The fates of emerging market (EM) economies and the US dollar have long been intertwined. Since the dollar replaced sterling as the world's dominant reserve currency, most pricing of raw materials and much invoicing of traded goods has been in US dollars. With many emerging economies largely dependent on exploiting their mineral wealth, it became common to link their currencies, more or less closely, to the dollar. This in turn encouraged governments to finance themselves in USD – interest rates were lower than in domestic markets – creating a structural mismatch between their tax take and liabilities.

It is no surprise therefore that fluctuations in the dollar against local currencies and variations in the cost of borrowing in USD have disproportionate influence on EM sovereign and corporate finances. The countries most at risk tend to be those which are most dependent on external funding, that is with the largest current account deficits. Crises in the EM complex have thus often been triggered by strength in the dollar or spiraling Fed Funds rates. Or both.

In recent years, many EM economies have made great strides in correcting macro imbalances and in reducing their dependence on dollar financing. And a growing asset class has developed in EM local-currency bonds. However, the dollar still holds sway. While economic development has reduced the relative importance of raw material exports, many companies have become increasingly integrated in global supply chains where the dollar dominates.

So, it should come as no surprise that the combination of this year's dollar rally (the Dollar Index against advanced world currencies is up 6.7% from its February low while the JPM index of EM currencies is very close to all-time lows) and the quickening pace of policy normalization by the US Federal Reserve has triggered a sell-off in EM. In addition, rising trade tensions between the US and the rest of the world have raised fears that the international trading system will be undermined – if so, EM have much to lose.

According to IIF data, the recent Fed hike and the announcement by President Trump that an additional \$200bn of imports from China would face 10% tariffs triggered a bout of portfolio outflows from EM. Since the June Fed meeting, redemptions have reached some \$5.5bn, with the bulk coming out of EM equities, reversing recent inflows.

Will the dollar's "exorbitant privilege" continue? At present, there are no obvious replacements. The euro zone is still building its institutional framework (although this week's Meseberg agreement between Germany and France does mark a real breakthrough) and full internationalization of the Renminbi is still some way off. However, the US's increasingly isolationist and protectionist stance will hasten the search for alternatives.

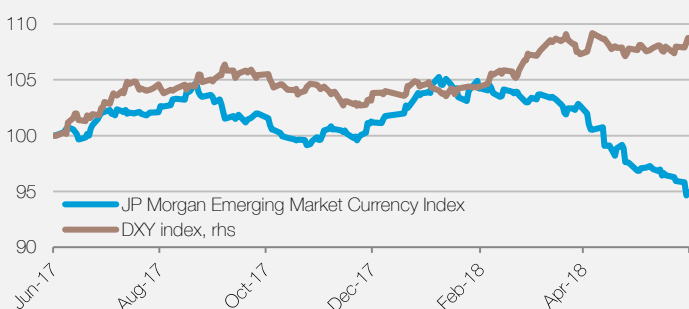
Bottom line. Macro fundamentals have improved across EM economies – those with sharp current account deficits, such as Argentina and Turkey, look like the exception rather than the rule. EM currencies look cheap, down 7.2% year-to-date. Growth remains robust – our economists expect real GDP to rise 5% this year after 4.8% in 2017. Yields are relatively attractive, at 6.9% for the EM Investment Grade index, and while earnings growth has slowed, the consensus expects +15.9% for 2018. However, as long as US rates ratchet upwards, trade concerns swirl and outflows continue, EM's love/hate relationship with the strengthening dollar looks rocky. Stay cautious near term.

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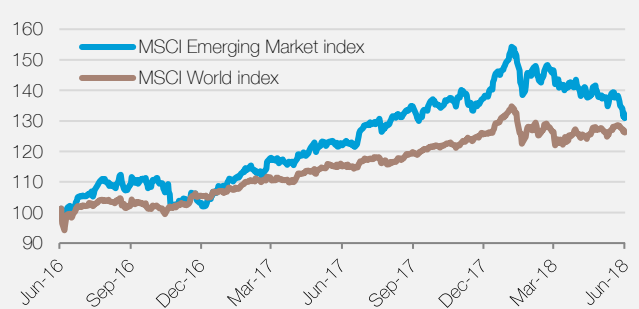
All data taken from Bloomberg.

A stronger dollar sends emerging currencies plummeting
100 = 21/06/2017



Source: Bloomberg, 21/06/2018

Trump policy triggers outflows from EM equity funds
MSCI EM vs MSCI World, in USD (21/06/2016=100)



Source: Datastream, 21/06/2018

This week and next

EUROZONE

- Consumer confidence in June reached an 8-month low -0.5, still well above the 10-year average of -13.
- In its first estimate, manufacturing confidence fell from 55.5 to 55 in June, while the index for services increased from 53.8 to 55 sending the PMI composite index up from 54.1 to 54.8.
- The current account surplus narrowed from €32.8bn to €28.4bn in April but remains close to decade highs.



Next week's key events		Per.	Prev.	Cons.
28 Jun	Business climate	Jun	1.45	--
28 Jun	Economic sentiment	Jun	112.5	--

UNITED KINGDOM

- In the CBI Industrial Trends survey, total orders surprised on the upside rising from -3 to +13 in June after 5 months of decline. However, the recovery has more to do with domestic demand than exports.
- The Bank of England stayed put in light of recent weak economic data, although one of the nine members switched his vote from no-change to hike. However, the BoE said it expected growth to recover soon, which could lead to a rate hike before year-end.



Next week's key events		Per.	Prev.	Cons.
28 Jun	Nationwide house price index, YoY	Jun	2.4%	--
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UNITED STATES

- Industrial production slipped 0.1% in May after +0.9% the previous month. Capacity utilization was worse than expected at 77.9% after 78.1% in April.
- Housing starts increased from 1.29m to 1.35m units in May, or 5% MoM. Existing home sales fell -0.4% MoM from 5.45m to 5.43m in May.
- Although slightly above expectations, the Q1 current account balance fell to \$-124.1bn, the most negative since the crisis.
- Jobless claims were stable at 218k last week vs 221k the week before, showing the job market remains very strong.



Next week's key events		Per.	Prev.	Cons.
26 Jun	Consumer confidence	Jun	128	128
27 Jun	Durable goods	May	-1.6%	0.2%

ASIA & EMERGING COUNTRIES

- In Japan, exports climbed 8.1% YoY in May while imports rose 14%, widening the trade deficit to ¥-578.3bn. The Bank of Japan left rates unchanged at -0.1%.
- In its first estimate, Japanese manufacturing confidence edged up from 52.8 to 53.1 in June. Headline consumer prices rose 0.7% YoY in May versus 0.6% in April.
- Contrary to most central banks in the region, the Bank of Thailand kept rates unchanged at 1.5% but raised its GDP growth forecast for this year to 4.4%.



Next week's key events		Per.	Prev.	Cons.
28 Jun	Japan: Retail sales, YoY	May	1.5%	--

Sources: Datastream, Bloomberg, 25 June 2018, Note: YoY = year-on-year; QoQ = quarter-on-quarter; MoM = month-on-month, P = preliminary figure, A = advanced figure, F = final figure, seasonally adjusted, ECB = European Central Bank

Our 6-month targets for currencies and commodities

	Thursday close	6mth target
EUR/USD	1.16	1.23
GBP/USD	1.33	1.40
EUR/CHF	1.15	1.18
USD/JPY	110	110
Brent	\$73.7	\$65
Gold	\$1268	\$1275

No change to our 6-month targets this week.

Forecast figures are not a reliable indicator of future performance

Question time

Past performance should not be seen as a guarantee of future returns.



CURRENCIES

What are your views on the Canadian dollar?

Persistent uncertainty regarding the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will revive speculation on USD/CAD given its high sensitivity to market volatility and relative financial conditions in the US and Canada.

The Bank of Canada is likely to stay cautious until the sky clears out. Rising commodity prices will lead to higher inflation but this is already well factored in. Although recent rate hikes may slow activity, the gap with the US is limited.

Steady improvement in export competitiveness and the terms of trade could support the Canadian dollar, especially if we are right to believe that broad dollar index is peaking. Positioning and technical signals are neutral. Our valuation model suggests 1.8% downside potential for USD/CAD.



CURRENCIES

What are your views on the Mexican peso?

In the short term, the peso will remain weakened by NAFTA negotiations, the implementation of tariffs on aluminium and steel, the July 1st election and a more fragile economy. But once the dust is settled, investors will be attracted by its cheapness.

We still believe NAFTA members will eventually come to an agreement but hard to say when. Tariff on aluminium and steel will likely be implemented when exemptions expire on June 1st. A more definitive agreement might not happen before next year as Congress missed the deadline for a deal. Until then, frequent phases of risk aversion are likely.

Populist Andrés Manuel López Obrador is leading polls and could take over ruling PRI party. The conservatives PAN party is facing divisions. Economic policies will be tilted to the left, with uncertain consequences. However, Obrador suggested he supports NAFTA and does not intend to go for a profound reshuffle of economic policies. Also, polls suggest he will not get a majority in the Lower House, leaving limited leeway for deep policy changes – except maybe in the energy sector.

Growth momentum will continue weakening. Uncertainty is likely to weigh on business confidence and limits spending by corporates and households. Furthermore, the countries' budget balances are deteriorating gradually.

Although pre-electoral concerns will limit the peso's upside, speculators are still strong buyers. Use any cheapness after the vote to purchase the peso in a less volatile market.

Market performance

Past performance should not be seen as a guarantee of future returns.

Interest rates

	Last	1wk	3mth	YTD	12mth
EONIA (EUR)	-37 bp	0 bp →	0 bp	-2 bp	0 bp
3mth Euribor (EUR)	-32 bp	0 bp →	1 bp	1 bp	1 bp
3mth Libor (USD)	234 bp	0 bp →	6 bp	64 bp	105 bp
3mth Libor (GBP)	64 bp	1 bp →	0 bp	11 bp	35 bp
10-year US Treasury bond	290 bp	-5 bp ↓	-1 bp	48 bp	74 bp
10-year German bond	33 bp	-10 bp ↓	-26 bp	-9 bp	6 bp
10-year French bond	63 bp	-8 bp ↓	-9 bp	-4 bp	2 bp
10-year UK bond	133 bp	-6 bp ↓	-24 bp	10 bp	37 bp

Credit

	1wk	3mth	YTD	12mth
BAML EURO Corp. IG	0.4% ↑	0.3%	-0.2%	0.8%
BAML EURO Corp HY	-0.1% ↓	-0.5%	-0.8%	1.6%
BAML GBP Corp IG	0.1% ↑	1.0%	-1.2%	-0.5%
BAML US IG	-0.2% ↓	-0.4%	-3.4%	-1.5%
BAML US HY	0.0% →	1.4%	0.6%	3.4%
BAML Emerging External Sovereign	-0.4% ↓	-4.2%	-6.3%	-2.1%

Exchange rates

	Last	1wk	3mth	YTD	12mth
EUR/USD	1.16	0.3% ↑	-6.0%	-3.4%	3.9%
EUR/CHF	1.15	-0.2% ↓	-1.8%	-1.7%	6.0%
GBP/USD	1.33	-0.1% →	-6.3%	-1.9%	4.6%
USD/JPY	110	-0.6% ↓	3.7%	-2.4%	-1.2%
USD/BRL	3.77	-1.0% ↓	15.2%	13.8%	13.0%
USD/CNY	6.49	1.4% ↑	2.7%	-0.2%	-4.9%
USD/RUB	63.6	1.7% ↑	11.9%	10.4%	5.6%

Government bonds

	1wk	3mth	YTD	12mth
United States (3-7yr)	0.3% ↑	0.4%	-1.2%	-1.7%
United Kingdom (3-7yr)	0.1% ↑	1.2%	-0.3%	-1.0%
Germany (3-7yr)	0.4% ↑	1.2%	0.8%	0.2%
Japan (3-7yr)	0.0% →	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%

Equities*

	Last	1wk	3mth	YTD	12mth
MSCI AC World	509	-1.9% ↓	-0.6%	0.6%	12.1%
Eurostoxx 50	3 404	-3.5% ↓	2.6%	0.0%	-0.8%
DAX	12 512	-4.5% ↓	1.7%	-3.1%	-2.1%
CAC 40	5 316	-3.8% ↓	4.1%	2.8%	4.1%
S&P 500	2 750	-1.2% ↓	1.9%	3.8%	15.1%
FTSE 100	7 556	-2.7% ↓	8.8%	0.5%	5.6%
SMI	8 460	-2.7% ↓	-1.8%	-6.8%	-2.6%
Topix	1 751	-1.9% ↓	3.0%	-2.7%	10.9%
IBOV Brazil	70 075	-1.9% ↓	-17.5%	-8.3%	15.3%
MICEX Russia *	2 246	-0.3% ↓	-2.8%	6.5%	21.4%
MSCI EM	1 080	-4.0% ↓	-10.1%	-5.8%	10.2%
SENSEX 30 India	35 432	-0.5% ↓	7.4%	5.4%	14.7%
Hang Seng (H-K)	29 296	-3.7% ↓	-5.6%	-0.6%	18.6%
Shanghai Composite	2 876	-5.5% ↓	-12.3%	-13.0%	-8.9%

Commodities

	Last	1wk	3mth	YTD	12mth
Brent	\$74	-3.1% ↓	6.3%	10.6%	60.7%
Gold	\$1 268	-2.9% ↓	-4.3%	-2.7%	1.8%
Silver	\$16.3	-5.3% ↓	-1.0%	-4.1%	-0.5%

Source: Datastream, on 21/06/2018. 1wk = 1-week change, 3mth = 3-month change, 12mth = 12-month change, YTD = year-to-date change, YoY = year-on-year change, BAML = Bank of America Merrill Lynch, JPM = JP Morgan, IG = Investment Grade, EM = emerging markets. * Price return for MICEX equity index. Equities; total return in local currency. Government bonds = 3-7 year returns. Figures are rounded.

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