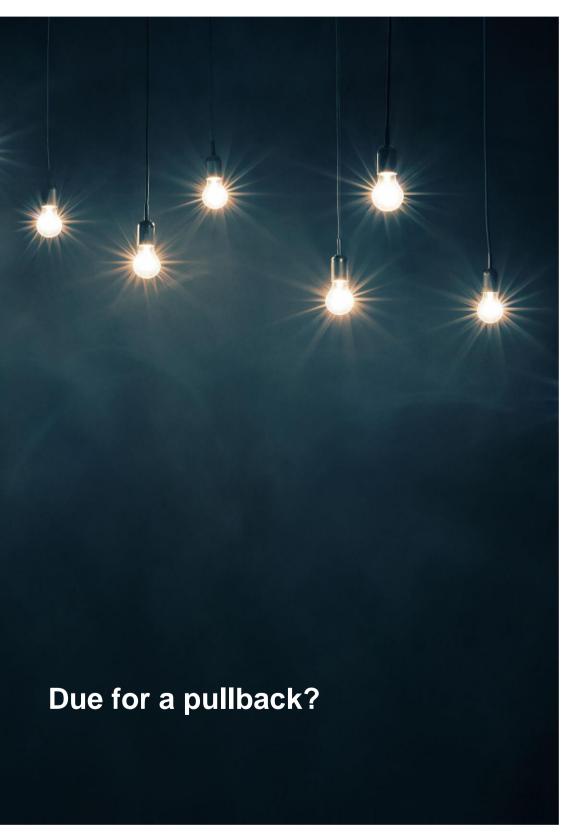


# **Weekly Market View**



Some technical indicators are suggesting a temporary pullback in risk assets, presenting an opportunity for long-term investors

**Equities:** Following six weeks of gains and successive highs, a period of consolidation would not be unusual

Bonds: Emerging Market bonds have been hit by rising risks in select countries; hence the importance of staying diversified in this space

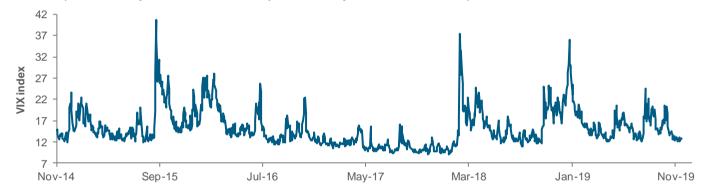
**FX:** Gold is likely to benefit from any pullback in equities

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# Chart of the week: Low volatility may indicate complacency

'VIX' index (CBOE Volatility index - a measure of expected volatility of the US stock market)



#### Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

## **Editorial**

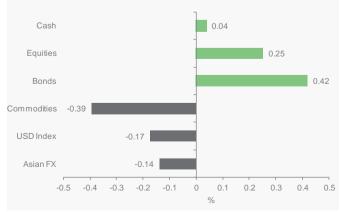
#### Due for a pullback?

Some technical indicators are flashing a warning sign for the record-setting equity market rally, in our view. After a 24% rally in the S&P500 index and a 19% rise in the MSCI All-Country World index YTD, both indices appear overbought and near key technical resistance levels (see page 5). With the latest leg of the rally since early October mainly driven by expectations of a partial US-China trade pact, any delay here may trigger a pullback. Trade-related sectors, such as industrials, materials and technology, could be vulnerable to a market consolidation. Gold would likely be a key beneficiary – we turn tactically bullish, targeting USD 1,540.

We believe any pullback in risk assets would be an opportunity to add exposure to equities, especially in the US and Euro area, as easing financial conditions and strong job markets remain supportive of global growth and a cyclical recovery in corporate profits. The next focus will likely be on how soon a US-China deal is signed and whether the US rolls back some of its existing tariffs. President Trump's impeachment proceedings and whether he signs the Hong Kong bill passed by the US Congress could also be important.

Global equities continued to consolidate gains made since early October, trading in a narrow range, while government bonds rose amid risk that a US-China partial trade deal could be delayed

Benchmark market performance w/w\*



Source: MSCI, JP Morgan, DJ-UBS, Citigroup, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered (Indices used are JP Morgan Cash, MSCI AC World TR, Citi World Big, DJ-UBS Commodity, DXY and ADXY)

\*Week of 14 November 2019 to 21 November 2019

### Is China's rate cut the start of more policy easing?

The PBoC's latest monetary policy report and a 5bps cut in both the one-year and five-year loan prime rates (LPR) are likely the first indications that China may be softening its cautious stance towards the crucial property sector. The PBoC's latest report dropped the phrase "housing is for living in, not for speculation". The subsequent cut in the one-year LPR was largely expected as it followed prior (albeit marginal) cuts to benchmark money market and medium-term lending rates. However, the adjustment to the five-year LPR was a positive surprise for investors, as this is the reference interest rate for mortgages.

The Chinese property sector impacts around 20% of China's onshore-listed company profits. A pickup in housing activity, as a result of a more relaxed policy stance towards the sector, could be constructive for earnings growth. China onshore equities remain one of our preferred equity markets in Asia.

The benchmark Shanghai Composite index has not participated in the latest global stock market rally since the start of October amid trade uncertainty and softer data. Any signs that China is gradually easing monetary policy could help the local market catch up with the rest of Asia. The index faces resistance at 3000 (3.3% above current levels).

### Recovery in US housing positive for economy, equities

The surge in US private housing building permits to the highest level since 2007, combined with the continued recovery in private housing starts and existing home sales, suggests the Fed's three rate cuts this year are starting to revive the housing market. The indicator had flatlined for a couple of years until the first half of 2019, as the earlier Fed rate hikes dampened demand for mortgages.

A pickup in housing sector business confidence, as the latest data suggests, is likely to have a broader economic impact, given the sector employs more than 5% of the US workforce and its linkages with material and construction industries. As shown in the chart, the recovery in US housing since the financial crisis has been measured (the indicators remain well below their previous peaks). This leaves upside potential, provided monetary policy remains accommodative and the US job market holds up (as we expect over the coming year).

Minutes from the Fed's latest meeting suggest policy is likely to remain on hold for a while, as members believe the current stance is "well calibrated to support the outlook" amid elevated global uncertainties. This stance should be positive for the housing market. Against this constructive medium-term backdrop, we would view any near-term pullback as an opportunity to add exposure to US equities.

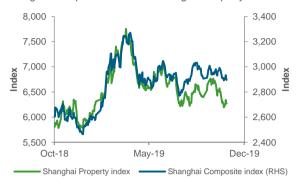
#### US politics on the radar

Although impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump in the US Congress have had little impact on markets so far, their implications for the President's foreign policy stance, especially around the ongoing trade talks with China, could be increasingly significant.

Trump's recent statements suggest he may be reluctant to roll back existing import tariffs against China unless Beijing makes further concessions. There is a risk that increased domestic political pressure may lead Trump to turn temporarily more hawkish on trade policies. A bill in support of democracy in Hong Kong, passed (almost) unanimously by the US Congress, adds another dimension to this risk. China has said it would retaliate if Trump signs the bill. These political risks have the potential to trigger a near-term equity market pullback.

Shanghai's property sector has lagged the broader equity market in recent months amid tightening policy stance; policies could be softening now

Shanghai Composite index and Shanghai Property index



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

US building permits and housing starts have started to rebound in recent months after this year's three Fed rate cuts lowered borrowing costs on mortgages

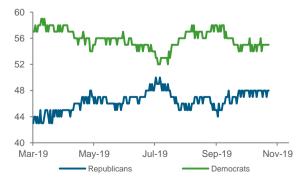
US private sector housing starts and building permits



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

President Trump trails behind the Democrats for the US November 2020 presidential election; against this backdrop, increased domestic political pressure could make him turn more hawkish on foreign policy

Implied probabilities of a Republican and a Democrat candidate winning the November 2020 presidential election



Source: Predictit, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

# What does this mean for investors?

#### **Equities**

Is the equity market running out of steam? Following six consecutive weeks of gains and successive record highs for the S&P500, a period of market consolidation would not be unusual, in our view. Any delay in a 'Phase 1' US-China trade deal could be a possible catalyst for a equity market consolidation and drive bond yields lower in the near-term. Lower bond yields have contributed to some rotation in the market towards interest rate-sensitive sectors, including real estate.

Given the 7.5% gain in the S&P500 since early October, tactical investors could consider locking in some profits in winning sectors, including technology and banks, and rotate to more defensive sectors such as consumer staples and rate-sensitive sectors such as real estate. For those with longer time horizons, though, we prefer staying fully invested. Short-term consolidation concerns notwithstanding, we still believe both China and the US have their own interests to sign a partial trade deal sooner rather than later. December also has historically been seasonally strong for equities.

Euro area equities are likely to disproportionately suffer short term on any delay in a US-China trade deal. However, the improved outlook for the region's banks following the ECB's easing policies and the positive impact of rate cuts in China are likely to limit the downside in equities.

#### **Bonds**

Why have EM USD bonds not joined the rally in Treasuries? US Treasury yields declined amid a resurgence of trade uncertainty and cautious tones in the Fed meeting minutes, which highlighted still-significant downside risks to the US economy. The recent moves bring yields within our 6-12 month expected range.

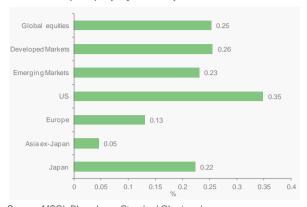
In contrast to US Treasury yields, EM USD government bond yield premiums rose over the past week, led by negative developments in Lebanon and Ecuador, where yields spiked to double digits. This follows recent yield increases in Argentina and Chile, which serve to highlight the idiosyncratic risks associated with high-yielding EM bond issuers. While we remain comfortable with EM USD government bonds, the recent events reiterate the importance of ensuring exposure to the asset class remains well-diversified, across both High Yield and Investment Grade.

#### FX

Can gold benefit from any near-term equity market pullback? Following the 22% gain between early May and early September, gold fell back to an important technical retracement low at USD 1,445. We expect the safe-haven metal to attempt another rally from current levels on a weakening USD, rising US political uncertainty and geopolitical risks. Recently reduced short-term speculative long positions provide scope for fresh buying, in our view. As the key USD 1,445 support holds, we look for gold to initially challenge the next resistance levels at USD 1,515 and USD 1,535, with a focus on an eventual test of the USD 1,557 September cycle-high.

We also turn bearish on USD/CNH. We expect the pair to weaken towards 6.83, reflecting our broader view of a weaker USD and amid fresh signs of policy stimulus in China. We believe 7.10 level could be a tough resistance to break. Any trade deal in the coming weeks would be a positive surprise for the CNH, driving this pair lower.

#### Benchmark (USD) equity market performance w/w\*



Source: MSCI, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered
\*Week of 14 November 2019 to 21 November 2019

# Emerging Market equity technicals have turned weaker

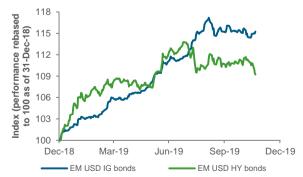
Technical levels of key markets as of 21 November 2019

Index	Spot	1st support	1st resistance	Short- term trend
S&P 500	3,104	3,050	3,140	<b>^</b>
STOXX 50	3,680	3,594	3,760	71
FTSE 100	7,239	7,190	7,405	<b>3</b>
Nikkei 225	23,058	22,700	23,635	7
Shanghai Comp	2,904	2,825	3,000	2
Hang Seng	26,467	25,540	27,340	•
MSCI Asia ex-Japan	646	637	669	->
MSCI EM	1,045	1,038	1,075	<b>→</b>
Brent (ICE)	64	60	67	71
Gold	1,465	1,445	1,495	<b>→</b>
UST 10Y Yield	1.77	1.68	2.00	7

Source: Trading Central, Standard Chartered Note: Arrows represent short-term trend opinions

# Within EM bonds, investment grade has significantly outperformed high-yield amid rising country-specific risks in the latter

Total returns on EM IG and EM HY bond indices (index: 100 = 31 December 2018)



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

# Top client question

# Do technical charts indicate US equities are poised for a retreat?

The pace and extent of the recent ascent in equities raise the question whether markets are headed for a pullback. Although a retreat is possible, we would wait for a confirmation on charts.

Let us consider the facts. The S&P500 index, up 7.5% since early October, is approaching tough resistance – the upper edge of a rising channel from 2018 and the upper edge of another rising channel from June 2019 (at about 3155; 1.7% from 21 November's close). Oscillators (14-day Relative Strength index) on the daily and weekly charts show that the index is overbought. Short VIX positioning (ie those positioned for lower volatility and higher index levels) is at the lowest on record, implying that bullish sentiment is at an extreme. The US equities (S&P500 index) put-call ratio is just off a near four-month low, indicating reduced fear in the market. Similarly, the MSCI All Country World index is approaching its 2018 peak of 551 (1.6% from Thursday's close).

However, despite this long list of potential short-term negatives, there is no confirmation on the charts that a deeper correction is imminent. The S&P500 index has not broken any significant support yet. One such immediate support is the July 2019 high of 3,028 (2.4% from 21 November's close). Unless it breaks below this support, the path of least resistance in the medium-term for the index remains up.

We also note that while the above negative factors increase the vulnerability in the event of any negative catalyst, they are not sufficient, on their own, to induce a retreat. On balance, we believe the strength of the recent move combined with the above indicators raises the odds of a short-lived retreat, though not an extended one.

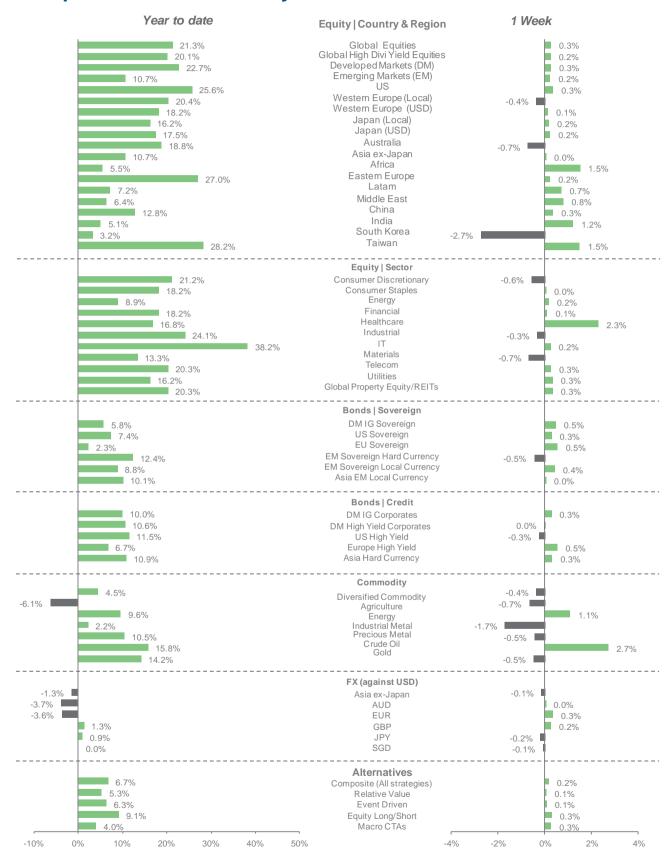
#### US equities are looking overbought

S&P 500 index, weekly chart; 14-day Relative Strength index (an indicator of momentum)



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

# Market performance summary \*



Sources: MSCI, JP Morgan, Barclays Capital, Citigroup, Dow Jones, HFRX, FTSE, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

<sup>\*</sup>Performance in USD terms unless otherwise stated, YTD period from 31 December 2018 to 21 November 2019, 1 week period: 14 November 2019 to 21 November 2019

# **Economic and market calendar**

	Event	Next Week	Date	Period	Expected	Prior
MOM	GE	IFO Expectations	25-Nov-19	Nov	-	91.5
TUE	US	Conf. Board Consumer Confidence	26-Nov-19	Nov	126.1	125.9
WED	US US US US US US US US	GDP Annualized q/q Personal Consumption Core PCE q/q Durable Goods Orders Cap Goods Orders Nondef Ex Air Personal Income Real Personal Spending	27-Nov-19 27-Nov-19 27-Nov-19 27-Nov-19 27-Nov-19 27-Nov-19	3Q S 3Q S 3Q S Oct P Oct P Oct Oct	1.9% - -0.7% - 0.3%	1.9% 2.9% 2.2% -1.2% -0.6% 0.3% 0.2%
THUR	JN EC EC GE	Retail Sales y/y M3 Money Supply y/y Economic Confidence CPI EU Harmonized y/y	28-Nov-19 28-Nov-19 28-Nov-19 28-Nov-19	Oct Oct Nov Nov P	- - -	9.2% 5.5% 100.8 0.9%
FRI/SAT	JN JN EC	Industrial Production y/y Consumer Confidence Index CPI Core y/y	29-Nov-19 29-Nov-19 29-Nov-19	Oct P Nov Nov P	- - -	1.3% 36.2 1.1%
MON	Event	This Week	Date	Period	Actual	Prior
TUE MON	Event US US	This Week  Housing Starts Building Permits	<b>Date</b> 19-Nov-19 19-Nov-19	Period Oct Oct	<b>Actual</b> 1314k 1461k	<b>Prior</b> 1266k 1391k
	US	Housing Starts	19-Nov-19	Oct	1314k	1266k
TUE	US US JN JN	Housing Starts Building Permits  Trade Balance Adjusted Exports y/y	19-Nov-19 19-Nov-19 20-Nov-19 20-Nov-19	Oct Oct Oct	1314k 1461k -¥34.7b -9.2%	1266k 1391k -¥64.3b -5.2%

Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered; key indicators highlighted in blue Previous data are for the preceding period unless otherwise indicated Data are % change on previous period unless otherwise indicated

P - preliminary data, F - final data, sa - seasonally adjusted

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