

Capital Market Outlook

February 18, 2025

All data, projections and opinions are as of the date of this report and subject to change.

IN THIS ISSUE

Macro Strategy—*Shock and Awe: Taking Stock of “Made in China 2025”*: It’s 10 years on from China issuing its “Made in China 2025” initiative, an ambitious state-led/subsidized strategy for China to become a global leader in industries such as semiconductors, robotics, aerospace and electric vehicles (EV), among other cutting-edge technologies. After dishing out billions of dollars over the past decade, and while mobilizing its massive and highly productive labor force, China’s firms are now among the most competitive in the world.

Much work still needs to be done before China achieves self-sufficiency and market dominance in the industries of the future. However, the accomplishments of the last decade have been highly consequential. China’s export tsunami, and staggering \$1 trillion trade surplus, has undercut the earnings of Europe’s leading multinationals and overwhelmed many emerging markets. This is one key reason we remain neutral on Emerging Market (EM) Equities and slightly underweight International Developed Equities.

Market View—*Before Investing Abroad (or at Home), Know What You Own*: Major European indexes and emerging markets like Brazil and Mexico have handily outperformed the S&P 500 Index so far this year, reigniting investor interest in markets overseas. While we continue to monitor the absolute and relative attractiveness of foreign securities, we are also mindful that “owning” countries or regions means much more than meets the eye.

This week, we highlight a few key nuances investors should keep in mind when investing abroad or at home. First, country or regional indexes tend to be less domestic, more global. The Euro Stoxx 600 Index, for example, derives some 22% of its revenues from the U.S.—more than from the U.K., Germany and France combined. Second, while the S&P 500 remains top-heavy with the top 10 names accounting for 37% of the index, concentration is hardly a U.S.-specific phenomenon. Finally, markets aren’t absolved from rising global protectionism. Retaliation can take many forms, as evidenced by China’s targeting of America’s technology darlings. Whether investing overseas or at home, we urge investors: Know what you own.

Thought of the Week—*The (Bull)ion Market—Where Could it Go from Here?*: Through 2024 and the start of 2025, the price of the yellow metal continues to climb to new all-time highs, even outperforming major U.S. indexes and other commodities. It’s been buoyed by a number of factors as investors have turned to gold in light of the flurry of recent tariff announcements, possible reacceleration of price levels, and ongoing geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East and Russia/Ukraine. Central banks, especially in emerging markets, have been the major purchasers of the metal as they seek to protect their currencies from volatile value swings. Given the ongoing themes of geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty, the price of gold is likely to remain elevated, and demand strong, as investors search for safety and potential hedges.

MACRO STRATEGY ▶

Joseph P. Quinlan
Managing Director and Head of CIO Market Strategy

MARKET VIEW ▶

Ariana Chiu
Wealth Management Analyst

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK ▶

Theadora Lamprecht
Assistant Vice President and Investment Strategist

MARKETS IN REVIEW ▶

Data as of 2/18/2025,
and subject to change

Portfolio Considerations

We continue to expect Equities to outperform Fixed Income throughout 2025. We maintain an overweight to Equities, with a preference for U.S. Equities, both Large- and Small-caps, relative to the rest of the world, and still favor a significant allocation to bonds in a well-diversified portfolio.

We focus on potential opportunities in Equities for total return, Fixed Income for stable cash flow, and for qualified investors, private markets for long-term growth and attractive yield.

We would use weakness in the equity markets as buying opportunities and major volatility (up or down) as rebalancing events over the course of the year.

Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (also referred to as “MLPF&S” or “Merrill”) makes available certain investment products sponsored, managed, distributed or provided by companies that are affiliates of Bank of America Corporation (“BofA Corp.”). MLPF&S is a registered broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, Member SIPC and a wholly owned subsidiary of BofA Corp. Investment products:

Are Not FDIC Insured	Are Not Bank Guaranteed	May Lose Value
----------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Please see last page for important disclosure information.

7637842 2/2025

Shock and Awe: Taking Stock of “Made in China 2025”

Joseph P. Quinlan, Managing Director and Head of CIO Market Strategy

Ten years ago, China issued its “Made in China 2025” (MIC2025) strategy that left much of the world in shock given the naked ambition of China to become a self-sufficient manufacturing superpower in semiconductors, robotics, aerospace and electric vehicles, among other cutting-edge technologies. Not surprisingly, China’s state-led/subsidized industrial ambitions didn’t go down well with the rest of the world. Indeed, the backlash from the U.S. and other Western nations was so intense that by 2019, China stopped publicly mentioning MIC2025. But the masterplan continued to be implemented.

Fast forward to today, and it’s hard not to be in awe of China’s success in developing the 10 main industries targeted under MIC2025. The plan, as *The Economist* recently noted, “has, for the most part, been a resounding success.”¹ Indeed, when future historians dissect Q1 of the 21st century, China’s rapid technological advances—and its impact on the rest of the world—will be among the most defining points when it comes to economics and geopolitics.

What just happened: The industrial makeover of China. After dishing out billions of dollars in state subsidies over the past decade while mobilizing its massive and highly productive labor force, China firms are now among the most competitive in the world in such sectors/technologies as electrical vehicles, wind turbines, batteries, robotics, and drones (Exhibit 1). The industrial makeover also includes steady advances in nuclear fusion, quantum computing, hydrogen, biomanufacturing and, of course, artificial intelligence (AI), with the emergence of DeepSeek a stunning and rude reminder to many investors that U.S. technology firms do not have a lock on the future of AI.

Notable achievements of the plan also include the following: While the goal was to sell 3 million electric vehicles by 2025, last year, China sold over 10 million, roughly two-thirds of the global total. China’s share of the global consumer drone market is over 90%. Last year, the nation installed more industrial robots than the rest of the world combined. Its shipbuilding capacity is over 230 times larger than the U.S.’ In 2015, China produced 65% of the world’s solar panels, although today the figure is roughly 90%. Similarly, while the country accounted for 47% of world battery production in 2015, the figure is now 70%. Chinese telecom leaders are dominant players in the buildout of the 5G infrastructure. And finally, as the “refinery to the world,” China now has a chokehold on various strategic metals and minerals, ranging from rare earth minerals to graphite.

In rails, China now has the world’s largest high-speed rail network. In space, China has landed a rover on Mars. And in the skies, China’s COMAC 919 passenger jet has taken flight in direct competition to the duopoly of Boeing and Airbus. The aircraft, however, still relies on Western parts and components. China also remains dependent on the West for advanced semiconductors and is still reliant on foreign suppliers for advanced medical equipment, software for precision manufacturing, and other high-end inputs. In other words, much work needs to be done before China achieves self-sufficiency and market dominance in the industries of the future. However, the accomplishments of the last decade have been highly consequential.

The Market Effects. The knock-on effects of MIC2025 have been substantial for both China and the world. China’s fiscal burden remains challenging, while the hyper-push to manufacture has aggravated the imbalance between production and consumption in China. The latter remains the weak link of the economy, with China’s personal consumption/gross domestic product (GDP) ratio (roughly 40% of GDP) one of the lowest in the world.

Investment Implications

China’s push for self-sufficiency and high-end manufacturing dominance is reflective of a global economy that’s more fragmented than integrated. In light of protectionism gone global, we remain tactically overweight in the U.S., neutral in Emerging Markets and underweight in non-U.S. developed Equities.

¹ *The Economist*, “An initiative so feared that China has stopped saying its name,” January 16, 2025.

Meanwhile, because China produces far more than it consumes while discouraging imports in the name of greater self-sufficiency, the nation's trade balance with the rest of the world has soared, approaching a staggering \$1 trillion surplus in 2024. In turn, this outsized surplus, combined with China's unabashed mercantilist mindset, has turbo-charged global protectionism, with the world launching nearly 200 anti-dumping cases against China in 2024, according to the World Trade Organization. The pushback has not only come from the U.S., Europe and Japan, but also key emerging market players like Brazil, Indonesia and India. And the pushback has come in various guises, ranging from tariffs, tech export restrictions, subsidies for domestic constituents, trade investigations, "blacklists" on certain companies, and investment restrictions.

All of the above is reshaping and redefining the global economy. The latter is becoming more closed than open and more fragmented than integrated. China's export tsunami has undercut the earnings of Europe's leading multinationals (think German auto manufacturers) and overwhelmed many emerging market firms who are not even remotely positioned to compete against China. This is one key reason we remain neutral on Emerging Market Equities and remain slightly underweight International Developed Equities. Our bias remains toward U.S. Equities, but we fully recognize and continue to monitor the multidimensional aftershocks from MIC2025 on the future of the U.S. economy and corporate earnings. The great power rivalry between the U.S. and China is on—MIC2025 has upped the ante for both parties.

Exhibit 1: China's Great Industrial Leap Forward.

Sector	Strategic Focus	Outcome/Market Ramifications
New Information Technology	Semiconductors, 5G, AI, quantum computing, cloud computing	Produced 47% of the world's top AI researchers in 2022. China AI models narrowed the gap with foreign rivals (e.g., DeepSeek). Largest 5G mobile network in the world. World's fastest super computers.
High-Tech Machines & Manufacturing	Industrial automation, precision manufacturing, smart factories	Installed more industrial robots last year than the rest of the world combined. 90% share of global consumer drone market. Still dependent on foreign imports for high-end inputs.
Aerospace & Aviation Equipment	Commercial aircraft, satellites, space exploration	COMAC 919 passenger jet is being flown by major China airlines, competing with Boeing and Airbus. Landed a rover on Mars. Developed its own space station.
Maritime Engineering & Shipbuilding	Smart ships, deep-sea exploration, naval modernization	World's largest shipbuilding industry by output. Naval shipbuilding capacity over 230 times larger than the U.S. Nuclear-powered icebreakers and autonomous ships under construction.
Advanced Rail Equipment	High-speed rail, smart rail systems, maglev trains	World's largest high-speed rail network. Domestic producers dominate local rail equipment market and many export markets. Has developed world's fastest next generation high-speed trains.
New Energy Vehicles & Smart Cars	EVs, battery technology, autonomous driving	World's largest EV market accounting for 60% of global total. Two largest EV battery producers in China account for over half of global EV battery production. Global leader in autonomous driving innovation.
Power Generation Equipment	Solar panels, wind turbines, nuclear energy, smart grids	Top producer of solar panels and wind turbines. 150 new nuclear reactors expected to come online by 2035, surpassing U.S. nuclear generator capacity by 2030. Investing in smart grid technologies.
Agricultural Machinery & High-tech Farming	Smart farming, autonomous tractors, precision agriculture	AI-driven technology improving yields. Produces over 50% of global agricultural drones. Dependent on imports of advanced equipment. Agricultural production reached record high in 2024.
Strategic Minerals & New Materials	Graphene, rare earth minerals, carbon fiber, high-tech alloys	Controls 85%+ of global rare earths supply. Responsible for 80% of global graphite production. U.S. import dependent on China for graphite, gallium, germanium, antimony, and rare earth minerals.
Biopharmaceuticals & Medical Devices	Biotechnology, genetic engineering, advanced medical equipment	Chinese biotech firms leading in genetic research. Key global supplier of pharmaceutical inputs. Clinical trial activity in China more than doubled between 2017 and 2021.

Sources: Chief Investment Office; Nikkei Asia Research. Data as of February 13, 2025.

Before Investing Abroad (or at Home), Know What You Own

Ariana Chiu, Wealth Management Analyst

In a break from the past, non-U.S. indexes are outperforming major U.S. averages thus far in 2025, reigniting investor interest in markets overseas. The interest is not unwarranted—while the year is young, Exhibit 2A highlights that major European indexes and emerging markets like Brazil and Mexico have handily outperformed the S&P 500 this year. Cheaper valuations, crowded U.S. positioning, and the prospect of lower interest rates in select economies have been supportive of the move higher.

While we remain neutral on Emerging Markets and underweight International Developed, we continue to monitor the absolute and relative attractiveness of foreign securities. We are also mindful of the nuances of investing overseas (and at home) because “owning” countries or regions means much more than meets the eye. Below we explain.

Country indexes tend to be less domestic, more global. One would expect that country indexes reflect their domestic economies. Reality is more complicated, as the following examples illustrate. Despite its name, the Euro Stoxx 600 Index derives some 22% of its revenues from the U.S.—more than from the U.K., Germany, and France combined. The story is strikingly consistent across country indexes: Germany’s DAX and France’s CAC 40 Indexes count on the U.S. for 20-25% of its revenues, similar to the U.K. (27%), Belgium (29%), the Netherlands (22%) and Switzerland (33%).² Less levered to the U.S. are Spain (11%) and Italy (9%).²

Outside of Europe, international developed markets like Japan and Australia play to their strengths (think autos for Japan and financials and mining in Australia, for example) but still source 55% and 50% from international markets, respectively. Emerging market heavyweights like China and India remain predominantly domestic plays, whereas multinationals in South Korea (think electronics and autos) and Taiwan (semis) depend on sales from the world’s two largest economies.

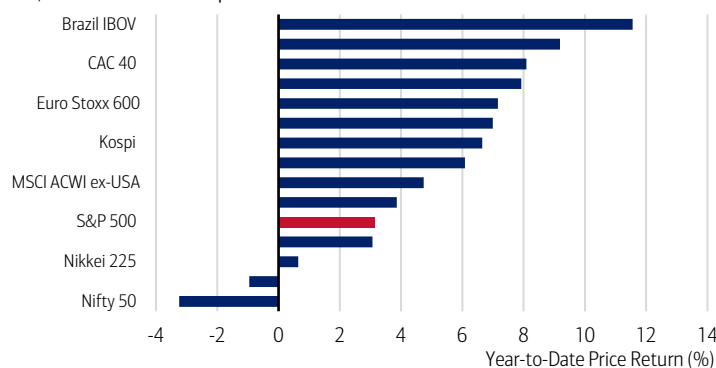
What does this mean? Indexes err on the side of global rather than domestic. As a result, struggling economies may not always translate to struggling equities. Take Germany, whose post-pandemic economy has floundered, with the country’s real GDP shrinking for a second consecutive year in 2024. All the while, as Exhibit 2B shows, exposure to global growth and a strong U.S. consumer has assisted the DAX nearly 85% higher since its September 2022 lows.

Portfolio Considerations

Major economies across Europe, Asia and the emerging markets remain far more trade-exposed than the U.S., reinforcing our preference for U.S. equities over the rest of the world. Meanwhile, we are watchful of the impact of greater protectionism on multinationals, as index composition suggests investing in countries is more globally interconnected than often appreciated. As tariff tensions rise, highly exposed industries include autos, semis, electrical equipment and mining, to name a few.

Exhibit 2: Attention Shifts to Markets Overseas.

2A) S&P 500 Underperforms to Start 2025.



2B) Germany: A Case Study of Indexes vs. the Economy.

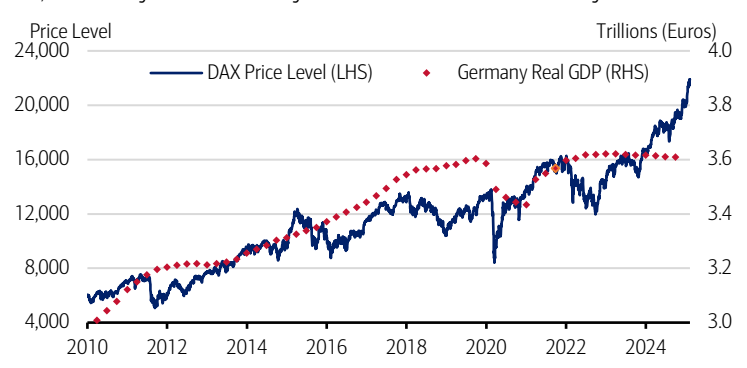


Exhibit 2A) Source: Bloomberg. Price returns in USD. Data as of February 10, 2025. Exhibit 2B) Sources: Bloomberg, Haver Analytics, Piper Sandler. DAX price level in local currency. Data as of February 10, 2025. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Please refer to index definitions at the end of this report. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

Concentration is hardly a U.S.-specific phenomenon. For now, concentration remains a reality of the U.S. equity market. Technology, while a lagging sector this year and

² Refers to the UK MSCI Index, Belgium’s BEL 20, the Netherlands AEX Index, Swiss Market Index, MSCI Italy Index and Spain’s IBEX 35 Index. All revenue exposure data from FactSet as of February 12, 2025.

effectively flat since October, still makes up more than 30% of the S&P 500 and nearly 55% of the Russell 1000 Growth Index.³ The top 10 names in the S&P 500 continue to account for 37% of the index³—notwithstanding plenty of recent headline risk including the realization of DeepSeek, whipsawing tariff announcements, and Big Technology scrutiny from China.

Yet concentration is not specific to the U.S. In fact, per Exhibit 3A, the S&P 500 is technically among the least concentrated of many major Equity indexes abroad. The top 10 names account for just over 60% of the DAX and CAC 40, for example, followed by Taiwan (54%) and Brazil (52%). The MSCI EM Index, though more diversified on the surface, has nearly 11% of its eggs in one basket, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company. Thus, while U.S. concentration in the Magnificent 7⁴ certainly deserves watching (see below for why), so does top-heavy index composition abroad. Know what you own, in other words.

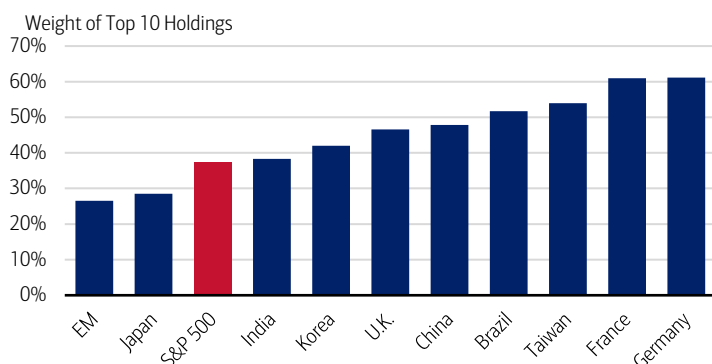
Finally, markets aren't absolved from rising global protectionism. As tariffs take center stage in the U.S. and abroad, multinationals across sectors stand in the crosshairs, with semis, electronic equipment, autos and mining among highly exposed industries. Upward pressure on an already-strong U.S. dollar could further hurt profit margins as over 40% of S&P 500 revenues come from overseas. Most exposed sectors include Technology, Materials, and Communication Services. Already, 44% of S&P 500 companies have discussed tariffs on Q4 2024 earnings calls—above the 2018 peak.⁵

Tariffs from the U.S. are only one part of the equation, however, with retaliation taking multiple forms. For U.S. equity investors, China's targeting of NVIDIA, Google, Apple and others should not go underappreciated. Nor should talk of the European Union leveraging its anti-coercion instrument, dubbed the region's "bazooka," which can restrict trade in services and limit intellectual property rights.⁶ Why? As Exhibit 3B highlights, America's technology darlings are disproportionately dependent on economies overseas like China and Germany. Retaliatory measures from some of Big Technology's largest revenue sources could drag on company earnings as well as overall market performance.

The bottom line: Whether investing overseas or at home, we urge investors to take stock of what they own, particularly as tariff tensions rise. While we remain overweight U.S. Equities in light of the risks faced by more trade-exposed nations, we believe that multinationals stand to suffer as tensions escalate. Owning countries or regions (or companies or sectors, for that matter) is more nuanced than most appreciate.

Exhibit 3: Key Exposures to Watch.

3A) Index Concentration Beyond the S&P 500.



3B) The Global Magnificent 7.

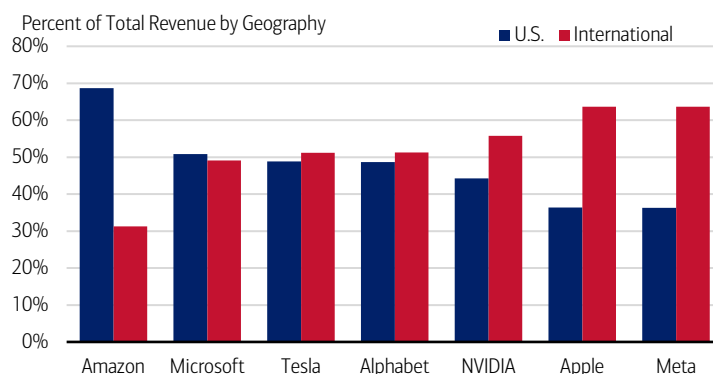


Exhibit 3A) Refers to MSCI EM Index, MSCI Japan Index, MSCI India Index, Kospi Index, FTSE 100, MSCI China Index, IBOV Index, TAIEX, CAC 40 Index, DAX Index. Sources: Bloomberg, MSCI. Bloomberg data as of February 12, 2025. MSCI data as of January 31, 2025. Exhibit 3B) Revenue refers to last 12 months. Source: FactSet. Data as of February 12, 2025. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Please refer to index definitions at the end of this report. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

³ Bloomberg as of February 11, 2025.

⁴ Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta, Microsoft, NVIDIA, Tesla.

⁵ Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research as of February 5, 2025.

⁶ "EU prepares to hit Big Tech in retaliation for Donald Trump's tariffs." Financial Times, February 5, 2025.

The (Bull)ion Market—Where Could it Go from Here?

Theadora Lamprecht, Assistant Vice President and Investment Strategist

In 2024, the price of gold grew by 27.2%, the largest single-year increase since 2010.⁷ This is notable considering we saw strong performance among risk assets, a stronger U.S. dollar and elevated bond yields—conditions that typically put a damper on gold.

What’s caused this bullishness towards bullion? Ongoing geopolitical worries, such as conflicts in the Middle East and Russia/Ukraine, alongside the U.S. election, sent central banks into a buying frenzy as they searched for “safe-haven” assets. They expanded their purchases of gold by 71% (quarter-over-quarter) to 333 tons (t) in Q4 (Exhibit 4A). 2024 marked the third year in a row of net purchasing exceeding 1,000t, higher than the annual average of 473t from 2010-2021.⁸ Many of the top purchasers came from emerging markets as they sought to protect their currencies from volatile value swings.

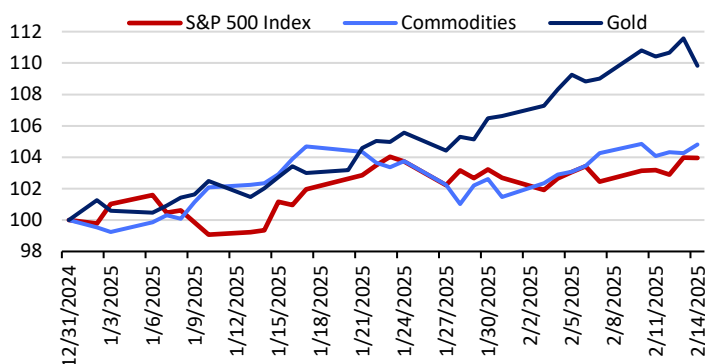
As we move through 2025, the yellow metal has already seen seven all-time-highs and crossed the \$2,900/oz threshold last week. Year-to-date (YTD), gold has risen around 10%, outperforming both the major U.S. indexes and other commodities (Exhibit 4A).⁹ Investors are turning to gold in light of the flurry of recent tariff announcements. This has ignited concerns that taxes may be inflicted on imports of gold. Additionally, although inflation has cooled from its peak, January’s hotter-than-expected consumer price index print highlights the concern of a possible reacceleration in price levels. This could have investors seeking hedges, similar to the purchase increases seen in Q3 2022 (Exhibit 4B), which would be supportive of higher prices for gold. Moreover, the uncertainty in the U.S.-China relationship may fuel gold demand. The People’s Bank of China reported that gold holdings in its foreign exchange reserves are currently at an all-time high and domestic insurance companies have been given approval to buy gold.¹⁰

Naturally, there’s the possibility for gold’s run to break down. When Equity markets suffer a pullback, similar to what happened with DeepSeek-related events, investors may sell the metal to rebalance portfolios and mitigate losses. Furthermore, if emerging market currencies decline due to a potentially strengthening U.S. dollar, this could risk a reduction in central bank buying.

Given the ongoing themes of geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainty, the price of gold is likely to remain elevated, and demand strong, as investors search for safety and potential hedges.

Exhibit 4: Interpreting Gold’s Recent Activity.

4A) Gold Outperforms the S&P 500 Index and Other Commodities YTD.



4B) Quarterly Net Central Bank Gold Purchases.

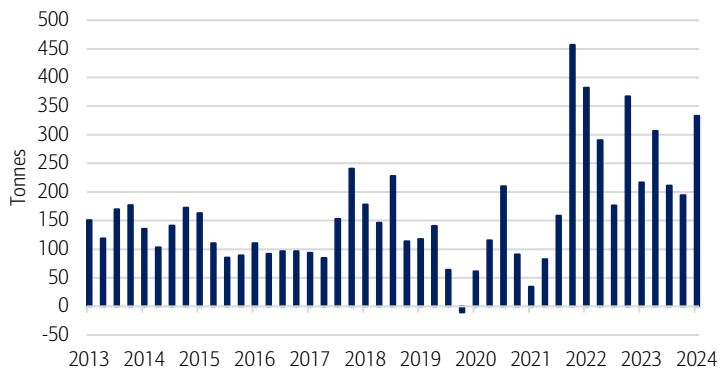


Exhibit 4A) Source: Bloomberg. Note: Gold measured using the spot price per troy ounce. Commodities measured using the S&P GSCI Industrial Metals Index. Commodities include copper, aluminum, nickel, zinc, lead. Data as of February 14, 2025. Exhibit 4B) Source: Bloomberg; World Gold Council. Data as of December 31, 2024. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Please refer to index definitions at the end of this report. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

⁷ Bloomberg. Data as of January 31, 2025.

⁸ World Gold Council, “Gold Demand Trends: Full Year 2024,” February 5, 2025.

⁹ Bloomberg. Commodities measured using the S&P GSCI Industrial Metals Index. Commodities include copper, aluminum, nickel, zinc, lead. Data as of February 4, 2025.

¹⁰ Gavekal Research, “Gold’s Strong Start to 2025,” February 11, 2025.

Portfolio Considerations

In times of uncertainty, it’s important to remain diversified amongst and within asset classes to weather any near-term volatility and maintain a longer-term investment approach. Our asset allocation guidance calling for a strategic target of 1-3% real assets in investor portfolios (depending on the type of portfolio), we see gold as an effective diversifier. Untethered U.S. government debt and geopolitical tensions should continue to support its price.

Equities

	Total Return in USD (%)			
	Current	WTD	MTD	YTD
DJIA	44,546.08	0.6	0.1	4.9
NASDAQ	20,026.77	2.6	2.1	3.8
S&P 500	6,114.63	1.5	1.3	4.1
S&P 400 Mid Cap	3,198.61	-0.2	-1.2	2.6
Russell 2000	2,279.98	0.0	-0.3	2.3
MSCI World	3,898.87	1.8	1.7	5.3
MSCI EAFE	2,447.68	2.7	2.9	8.3
MSCI Emerging Markets	1,125.23	1.5	3.0	4.8

Fixed Income†

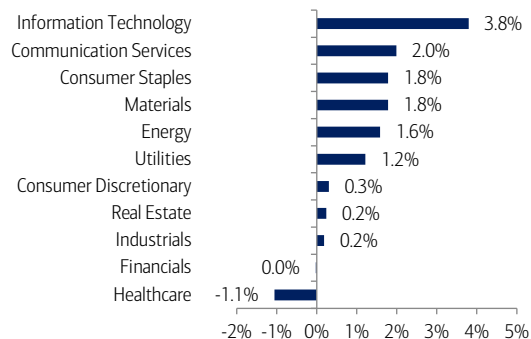
	Total Return in USD (%)			
	Current	WTD	MTD	YTD
Corporate & Government	4.72	0.18	0.56	1.09
Agencies	4.59	0.12	0.25	0.80
Municipals	3.66	-0.22	0.21	0.71
U.S. Investment Grade Credit	4.83	0.19	0.58	1.12
International	5.26	0.35	0.72	1.27
High Yield	7.19	0.26	0.26	1.63
90 Day Yield	4.31	4.33	4.28	4.31
2 Year Yield	4.26	4.29	4.20	4.24
10 Year Yield	4.48	4.49	4.54	4.57
30 Year Yield	4.70	4.69	4.79	4.78

Commodities & Currencies

	Total Return in USD (%)			
	Current	WTD	MTD	YTD
Commodities	257.18	1.7	3.7	7.8
Bloomberg Commodity	70.74	-0.4	-2.5	-1.4
WTI Crude \$/Barrel††	2882.53	0.7	3.0	9.8
Gold Spot \$/Ounce††				

	Total Return in USD (%)			
	Current	Prior Week End	Prior Month End	2022 Year End
Currencies	1.05	1.03	1.04	1.04
EUR/USD	152.31	151.41	155.19	157.20
USD/JPY	7.26	7.30	7.32	7.34
USD/CNH				

S&P Sector Returns



Sources: Bloomberg, Factset. Total Returns from the period of 02/10/2025 to 02/14/2025. †Bloomberg Barclays Indices. ††Spot price returns. All data as of the 02/14/2025 close. Data would differ if a different time period was displayed. Short-term performance shown to illustrate more recent trend. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

Economic Forecasts (as of 2/14/2025)

	Q4 2024A	2024A	Q1 2025E	Q2 2025E	Q3 2025E	Q4 2025E	2025E
Real global GDP (% y/y annualized)	-	3.1*	-	-	-	-	3.2
Real U.S. GDP (% q/q annualized)	2.3	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.5
CPI inflation (% y/y)	2.7	3.0	2.8	2.8	3.1	2.9	2.9
Core CPI inflation (% y/y)	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.2
Unemployment rate (%)	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2
Fed funds rate, end period (%)	4.33	4.33	4.38	4.38	4.38	4.38	4.38

The forecasts in the table above are the base line view from BofA Global Research. The Global Wealth & Investment Management (GWIM) Investment Strategy Committee (ISC) may make adjustments to this view over the course of the year and can express upside/downside to these forecasts. Historical data is sourced from Bloomberg, FactSet, and Haver Analytics. **There can be no assurance that the forecasts will be achieved. Economic or financial forecasts are inherently limited and should not be relied on as indicators of future investment performance.**

A = Actual. E/* = Estimate.

Sources: BofA Global Research; GWIM ISC as of February 14, 2025.

Asset Class Weightings (as of 2/4/2025)

Asset Class	CIO View				
	Underweight	Neutral	Overweight		
Global Equities	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Large Cap Growth	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Large Cap Value	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Small Cap Growth	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Small Cap Value	•	•	•	•	•
International Developed	•	•	•	•	•
Emerging Markets	•	•	•	•	•
Global Fixed Income	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Governments	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Mortgages	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Corporates	•	•	•	•	•
International Fixed Income	•	•	•	•	•
High Yield	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. Investment-grade Tax Exempt	•	•	•	•	•
U.S. High Yield Tax Exempt	•	•	•	•	•
Alternative Investments*					
Hedge Strategies					
Private Equity & Credit					
Real Assets					
Cash					

CIO Equity Sector Views

Sector	CIO View				
	Underweight	Neutral	Overweight		
Financials	•	•	•	•	•
Consumer Discretionary	•	•	•	•	•
Utilities	•	•	•	•	•
Information Technology	•	•	•	•	•
Communication Services	•	•	•	•	•
Healthcare	•	•	•	•	•
Industrials	•	•	•	•	•
Real Estate	•	•	•	•	•
Energy	•	•	•	•	•
Materials	•	•	•	•	•
Consumer Staples	•	•	•	•	•

*Many products that pursue Alternative Investment strategies, specifically Private Equity and Hedge Funds, are available only to qualified investors. CIO asset class views are relative to the CIO Strategic Asset Allocation (SAA) of a multi-asset portfolio. Source: Chief Investment Office as of February 4, 2025. All sector and asset allocation recommendations must be considered in the context of an individual investor's goals, time horizon, liquidity needs and risk tolerance. Not all recommendations will be in the best interest of all investors.

Index Definitions

Securities indexes assume reinvestment of all distributions and interest payments. Indexes are unmanaged and do not take into account fees or expenses. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Indexes are all based in U.S. dollars.

S&P 500 Index is a market-capitalization-weighted index that is widely regarded as the best single gauge of large-cap U.S. equities. The index includes 500 leading companies and covers approximately 80% of available market capitalization.

Consumer Price Index measures the average change in prices paid by consumers over time for a basket of goods and services.

Euro Stoxx 600 Index is a broad measure of the European equity market. With a fixed number of 600 components, the index provides extensive and diversified coverage across 17 countries and 11 industries within Europe's developed economies, representing nearly 90% of the underlying investable market.

Belgium's BEL 20 Index is a stock market index that tracks the performance of the 20 most traded and capitalized stocks on the Brussels Stock Exchange.

Netherlands AEX Index is a stock market index that tracks the performance of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange (AEX).

Swiss Market Index is Switzerland's blue-chip stock market index, which makes it the most followed in the country.

Russell 1000 Growth Index measures the performance of the large-cap growth segment of the US equity universe.

MSCI Emerging Market (EM) Index is a stock market index that measures the performance of large and mid-cap companies in emerging market countries.

MSCI Japan Index is designed to measure the performance of the large and mid cap segments of the Japanese market.

MSCI India Index is a stock market index that tracks the performance of the Indian stock market's large and mid-cap companies.

MSCI UK Index is designed to measure the performance of the large and mid cap segments of the UK market.

Kospi Index is the index of all common stocks traded on the Stock Market Division—previously, Korea Stock Exchange—of the Korea Exchange.

FTSE 100 Index is the United Kingdom's best-known stock market index of the 100 most highly capitalised blue chips listed on the London Stock Exchange.

MSCI China Index captures large and mid cap representation across China A shares, H shares, B shares, Red chips, P chips and foreign listings. With 598 constituents, the index covers about 85% of this China equity universe.

MSCI Italy Index is designed to measure the performance of the large and mid cap segments of the Italian market.

Spain IBEX 35 Index is a stock market index that tracks the performance of the 35 most liquid Spanish stocks. It's the main benchmark for the Spanish stock exchange, the Bolsa de Madrid.

Brazil IBOV Index is a stock market index that tracks the average performance of Brazilian stocks. It's a weighted index that includes major companies traded on the Sao Paulo Stock Exchange.

TAIEX Index is a stock market index for companies traded on the Taiwan Stock Exchange.

CAC 40 Index is a benchmark French stock market index. The index represents a capitalization-weighted measure of the 40 most significant stocks among the 100 largest market caps on the Euronext Paris.

DAX Index is a stock market index consisting of the 40 major German blue chip companies trading on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange.

S&P GSCI Industrial Metals Index provides investors with a reliable and publicly available benchmark for investment performance in the industrial metals market.

Mexico IPC Index is a stock market index that tracks the performance of the largest and most liquid companies on the Mexican Stock Exchange (BMV).

Hang Seng Index is a market-capitalisation-weighted stock market index in Hong Kong, adjusted for free float.

MSCI All Country World Index ex-USA is a stock market index that tracks the performance of companies outside the United States. It includes both developed and emerging markets.

MSCI All Country World Index is a global equity index that tracks the performance of large and mid-cap stocks in developed and emerging markets.

Nikkei 225 Index is a stock market index for the Tokyo Stock Exchange. It is a price-weighted index, operating in the Japanese Yen, and its components are reviewed twice a year.

Shanghai Composite Index is a stock market index of all stocks that are traded at the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

Nifty 50 Index is an Indian stock market index that represents the float-weighted average of 50 of the largest Indian companies listed on the National Stock Exchange.

Important Disclosures

Investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

This material does not take into account a client's particular investment objectives, financial situations, or needs and is not intended as a recommendation, offer, or solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security or investment strategy. Merrill offers a broad range of brokerage, investment advisory (including financial planning) and other services. There are important differences between brokerage and investment advisory services, including the type of advice and assistance provided, the fees charged, and the rights and obligations of the parties. It is important to understand the differences, particularly when determining which service or services to select. For more information about these services and their differences, speak with your Merrill financial advisor.

Bank of America, Merrill, their affiliates and advisors do not provide legal, tax or accounting advice. Clients should consult their legal and/or tax advisors before making any financial decisions.

This information should not be construed as investment advice and is subject to change. It is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to be either a specific offer by Bank of America, Merrill or any affiliate to sell or provide, or a specific invitation for a consumer to apply for, any particular retail financial product or service that may be available.

The Chief Investment Office ("CIO") provides thought leadership on wealth management, investment strategy and global markets; portfolio management solutions; due diligence; and solutions oversight and data analytics. CIO viewpoints are developed for Bank of America Private Bank, a division of Bank of America, N.A., ("Bank of America") and Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated ("MLPF&S" or "Merrill"), a registered broker-dealer, registered investment adviser and a wholly owned subsidiary of Bank of America Corporation ("BofA Corp.").

The Global Wealth & Investment Management Investment Strategy Committee ("GWIM ISC") is responsible for developing and coordinating recommendations for short-term and long-term investment strategy and market views encompassing markets, economic indicators, asset classes and other market-related projections affecting GWIM.

BofA Global Research is research produced by BofA Securities, Inc. ("BofAS") and/or one or more of its affiliates. BofAS is a registered broker-dealer, Member SIPC and wholly owned subsidiary of Bank of America Corporation.

All recommendations must be considered in the context of an individual investor's goals, time horizon, liquidity needs and risk tolerance. Not all recommendations will be in the best interest of all investors.

Asset allocation, diversification and rebalancing do not ensure a profit or protect against loss in declining markets.

Investments have varying degrees of risk. Some of the risks involved with equity securities include the possibility that the value of the stocks may fluctuate in response to events specific to the companies or markets, as well as economic, political or social events in the U.S. or abroad. Small cap and mid cap companies pose special risks, including possible illiquidity and greater price volatility than funds consisting of larger, more established companies. Investing in fixed-income securities may involve certain risks, including the credit quality of individual issuers, possible prepayments, market or economic developments and yields and share price fluctuations due to changes in interest rates. When interest rates go up, bond prices typically drop, and vice versa. Investments in high-yield bonds (sometimes referred to as "junk bonds") offer the potential for high current income and attractive total return, but involves certain risks. Changes in economic conditions or other circumstances may adversely affect a junk bond issuer's ability to make principal and interest payments. Treasury bills are less volatile than longer-term fixed income securities and are guaranteed as to timely payment of principal and interest by the U.S. government. Bonds are subject to interest rate, inflation and credit risks. Investments in foreign securities (including ADRs) involve special risks, including foreign currency risk and the possibility of substantial volatility due to adverse political, economic or other developments. These risks are magnified for investments made in emerging markets. Investments in a certain industry or sector may pose additional risk due to lack of diversification and sector concentration. There are special risks associated with an investment in commodities including market price fluctuations, regulatory changes, interest rate changes, credit risk, economic changes and the impact of adverse political or financial factors.

Alternative Investments are speculative and involve a high degree of risk.

Alternative investments are intended for qualified investors only. Alternative investments such as derivatives, hedge funds, private equity funds, and funds of funds can result in higher return potential but also higher loss potential. Changes in economic conditions or other circumstances may adversely affect your investments. Before you invest in alternative investments, you should consider your overall financial situation, how much money you have to invest, your need for liquidity and your tolerance for risk.

Nonfinancial assets, such as closely-held businesses, real estate, fine art, oil, gas and mineral properties, and timber, farm and ranch land, are complex in nature and involve risks including total loss of value. Special risk considerations include natural events (for example, earthquakes or fires), complex tax considerations, and lack of liquidity. Nonfinancial assets are not in the best interest of all investors. Always consult with your independent attorney, tax advisor, investment manager, and insurance agent for final recommendations and before changing or implementing any financial, tax, or estate planning strategy.

© 2025 Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved.