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ROHR-BLOG: Shades of 2008! Quick Take, Calendar

1 message

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Dear Subscribers,

We never mean to be a Cassandra shrieking dire warnings. Yet the latest political shenanigans in Washington DC speak of a massive lack of institutional memory that puts the economic and market rescue packages at risk.

And while always attempting to be as nonpartisan as possible, this seems to be on the Democrats. Regarding our nonpartisan stances, note that recent political criticisms are more so on President Trump. See Friday's 'Disconsonant Dissembling' research note for more on his ineffectual communication regarding the COVID-19 epidemic.

Yet now the Democratic Party leadership in the House and Senate appear to be playing politics with the major COVID-19 relief bill that was coming along well. This is in contrast to Senate Majority Leader McConnell telling the Republican troops with reservations about one of the bills sent over by the House, "...gag and vote for it anyway."

As opposed to that, Democratic House and Senate leadership pulled their negotiating teams from the 'bottom up' bipartisan negotiations where both sides had allowed some forbearance. And the reason? The bills were indeed 'bottom up', and had not been crafted by the Democratic leadership.

Wait. What?! That sounds like pure politics on being able to claim credit for bills into this fall's US general election instead of moving with the requisite speed that the current dire situation requires. That's not our estimation; just go back to our March 12th post-ECB meeting citation of Madame Lagarde reminding the relevant parties, "*The shock is 'severe' yet still 'temporary' IF right actions are taken by all players.*" (Our punctuation.)

The operative term there is 'IF'. The following day's research note revisited the September-October 2008 situation, where the Democrats had issues with providing a 'bank bailout'.

They reversed that when the US EQUITIES meltdown early the following week made it clear they had made a mistake in not moving timely. See Thursday's 'What Price?' research note for a relevant Bob Dylan quote on how can we get out of repeated mistakes?

In the meantime, there was public information on the problems still weighing on US EQUITIES despite a massive further Federal Reserve commitment to buffering problems (<https://reut.rs/2WEh8QH>.) CNBC had the estimable Mohamed El-Erian saying that the lack of a timely relief package would lead from an 'earnings' crisis to a 'solvency' (potential bankruptcy) crisis from many companies. Not Good!

Regarding the government machinations, CNBC also had two key Republicans on with the background on how the relief package negotiations had ground to a halt. First there was the very market adept (it's where he made his fortune) Senator Toomey (R-PA) (<https://cnb.cx/39cAdMH>) on benefits to individual workers and small businesses Democrats claim are missing from this 'big business' bailout.

And for anyone who wants to get into the weeds on the specific process and how it became bogged down, see the extensive interview (<https://cnb.cx/2WC5wxD>) with House Minority Leader McCarthy (R-CA.) [Due to a CNBC glitch, you need to use the timeline bar to scroll forward to 6:00.] He highlights the specific steps Democrats should have found it easy to take, yet refused.

Shades of 2008, as our March 13th 'Whole of Government Decision' research note hopes are now fading.

Market Quick Take

The COVID-19 virus spread had caused the US EQUITIES intermediate-term bull psychology to ‘crack’. Yet does this signal a ‘breakdown’ into a bear trend? The current overall selloff below FRONT MONTH S&P 500 FUTURE 2,600 area being a fresh DOWN Break would speak of that. As bad as US EQUITIES already looked on the violation of key congestion around mid-2019 highs (highlighted in our previous ‘Crunch Time’ research note), the ‘broad’ trend support has now been violated.

2,600 area was the lower US EQUITIES trend support on the longer-term weekly chart channel (<https://bit.ly/2xl5MXe> updated as of Friday’s Close.) So in addition to JUNE S&P 500 FUTURE (front month since Friday) violating the support from the 2019 3,030-00 previous all-time high congestion and push above the multi-year topping line at 3,070 and now the late-February 2,970 DOWN Break below the up channel (from 2,313 late 2018 low), it now has failed below major lower support.

That was also below FRONT MONTH S&P 500 FUTURE congestion in the already noted interim 2,850 area followed by the more prominent 2,750 area. That 2,600 area broadest weekly channel support (also 48-month MA) had a Tolerance to the late 2018 2,413-09 weekly UP Closing Price Reversal (also historic congestion.) The extreme low trade of that UP CPR was 2,313 (more historic congestion) since the late 2016 rally that has now been violated as well.

Below that next supports are not until the interim 2,275 already tested on Friday and now violated, and more credible 2,200 mid-2016 congestion also traded below earlier today. More major lower support is not until the major all of 2015 2,125-00 congestion, and ultimately hefty 2013-2016 congestion at 2,000-1,970.

Even with previous US consumer-driven improvement, overall weakness of international data on balance continued despite selective previous partial improvement. That is of course now significantly deteriorating.

This was reinforced by central banks’ perspective even prior to them understanding the extent of the COVID-19 impact. That includes especially the ECB, with more telling perspective from Mario Draghi’s last press conference (<http://bit.ly/2Nda1II>) and even Christine Lagarde’s warning on the need for further structural reform at her first press conference as ECB President (<http://bit.ly/2LNRSpQ>.) Her views at last Thursday’s press conference (<http://bit.ly/2vh3dVJ> Statement with presser link on the side) were even far

more pointed; including repeated admonitions that coordinated fiscal action needed to be timely to prevent a larger crisis.

While the Fed was more balanced, it was also concerned about global weakness despite previous US strength, as evidenced by its previous rate cuts and now acting on its discussion of being prepared to do what is necessary if the COVID-19 impact spreads in the US.

As previously noted for months, this was also consistent with serial downbeat OECD indications on a weaker global outlook. We saw more of the same in the December OECD Composite Leading Indicators (<http://bit.ly/2RA16VO>.) Even after those were reversed to some degree by the January release (<http://bit.ly/2tbMfa0>), the February indications (<http://bit.ly/2OXkpX1>) were that growth remains below trend and was threatened by the commercial impact of the rapidly spreading COVID-19 virus. And as we noted on March 9th, they summarily cancelled the next release that morning, which is a very radical step that says the future is very uncertain.

All of which was reinforced in a major way by their ‘out of normal cycle’ (typically not until May) March 2nd Interim Economic Assessment “Coronavirus: The world economy at risk” (<http://bit.ly/3cqTKeY>.)

Of special note in each case are the lower growth prospects for China despite the US-China Phase I deal. As we have noted previous, the trade ‘truce’ (i.e. NOT a full peace treaty) avoiding tariff escalation still leaves the earlier economic activity-stifling tariffs in place.

Future economic weakness expectations have also been reinforced in the relatively recent indications outside of the mixed global Manufacturing PMIs. Those include more comprehensive global data, like late-November’s OECD G20 International Merchandise Trade Statistics (<http://bit.ly/2rvPCaK>) that are now surely only that much worse. While all of that may improve to some degree once the COVID-19 threat passes, informed observers were already still cautious in any event due to the levels of tariffs that remain despite recent reductions announcements prior to the COVID-19 impact.

Evolutionary Trend View

Moving on now to a very concise critical market assessment in the wake of the US EQUITIES dropping below overall 2,600 trend support from the early-2016 FRONT MONTH S&P 500 FUTURE 1,800 area lows (projected from (from the

2,313 late 2018 low.) After the past month-and-a-half of seeing GLOBAL GOVVIES strength, that has also significantly reversed on the prospect of the major global fiscal stimulus likely weighing on those markets as well.

The MARCH T-NOTE FUTURE surging into a new all-time high three weeks ago above the 134-00/-08 summer 2016 previous high was understandable (see the weekly chart through last Friday's Close <https://bit.ly/2J8w41B>.)

As we had based our future expectation on its historic weekly Oscillator activity likely extending its rally at least into the 135-16/136-00 area (MA-41 plus 06-00/-16), which had already been violated two weeks ago. Sustained activity above that zone pointed to the next Oscillator resistance into the 138-00/-16 area (MA-41 plus 08-00/-16) it was already testing back then into its parabolic extension to the weekly Oscillator resistance in the 139-16/140-00 area (MA-41 plus 09-16/10-00) two weeks ago prior to its sharp setback.

In fact, that sharp selloff later that week created a DOWN Closing Price Reversal (CPR) back below the 138-00 area (Tolerance the previous week's 138-16 high.) That is now resistance fully reinforced by Oscillator resistance up to the 139-00 area (MA-41 plus 08-00/-16) with 140-00/-16 area next.

Yet it was now not a major surprise in the fiscal concerns context that it had sold off from last week's early week test of that 138-00/16 DOWN CPR retest to temporarily back below the 136-16/137-00 area (now MA-41 plus 06-00/-16) with some temporary slippage back toward the 134-00/-08 lower support.

Similarly, the previous strong sister BUND FUTURE had seen the MARCH CONTRACT rally back to fully test and exceed its 177.00-.50 resistance from last summer (weekly chart <https://bit.ly/33FOWym>.) Much above that next resistance was not until 178.50 congestion from back then it hit prior to a week ago Friday's expiration, with a DOWN CPR at 179.20 (Tolerance at 179.67 all-time high) above.

Yet there was a twist here on the typical very early expiration of the MARCH CONTRACT that Friday with the JUNE BUND FUTURE trading almost 3.00 lower. While there was a chance it would be back into or below the 175.60-.00 area, in the event the strength of the uptrend extension in the MARCH BUND FUTURE to test that mid-179.00 resistance left the JUNE BUND FUTURE trading above 175.60-.00. That implied instead of weakening back below it, it was more likely to trend up into the 177.00-.50 resistance and above.

And while we always expect the second month contract to swing back up to front month values if the BUND maintains its up trend, the JUNE BUND

FUTURE had done this in record time: literally between becoming the front month two weeks ago Friday into only early afternoon (Central European Time) the following Monday. That push up into the low 179.00 area was once again only a retest of the early September DOWN CPR.

And after that last week it sagged back below the 177.50-.00 area since Tuesday, and had been unable to sustain activity back above it, and even left a fresh DOWN CPR from the previous week's 176.52 Close. As such, despite the strength of the other GLOBAL GOVVIES that weakness carried it below next lower support in the 175.60-.00 range, below the next lower 173.25-.00 support, and even back below the previously staunch 170.50-.00 NEGATED early November DOWN Break support tested extensively over the winter. It is a clear sign of how concerned the BUND is about the necessary fresh fiscal largesse necessary to counter the heavy European COVID-19 impact, it is also

Next lower support was not until back in the major 168.58-.00 area hefty congestion from during the summer 2016 previous all-time high congestion that has held so far on the recent test. Much below that next support is 166.50-.00 multiyear congestion.

As far the MARCH GILT FUTURE (expiring at the end of this week) is concerned also at new all-time highs like the T-NOTE saw it overrun the September 2019 135.26 weekly DOWN Closing Price Reversal (Tolerance to 135.87.) That also overran some historic weekly Oscillator resistance at 137.00-.50 (MA-41 plus 4.00-.50.)

This left the next weekly Oscillator resistance at 139.00-.50 (MA-41 plus 6.00-.50) it had already tested three weeks ago and overran temporarily two weeks ago. And much like the T-NOTE, last week's selloff left a DOWN CPR from the previous week's 139.00 area Close (Tolerance right there as well due to that Close being at the high of the week.) Not only did the MARCH GILT FUTURE fall back down into the 137.00 area, but the full point discount in the JUNE GILT FUTURE left it back below the 135.26 violated weekly DOWN Closing Price Reversal support.

That also saw the JUNE GILT FUTURE below the 130.00-.50 FRONT MONTH GILT FUTURE support into next historic low-128.00 congestion it hit temporarily on Thursday prior to the current major rebound into the mid-135.00 area.

In FOREIGN EXCHANGE the DEVELOPED CURRENCIES have also seen massive shifts over the past few weeks. As noted previous, even though the

US DOLLAR INDEX had a 'haven' bid as recently as three weeks ago, since then it has been under extensive pressure against the other **DEVELOPED CURRENCIES** (including the recent atypical depression of the other 'haven' **JAPANESE YEN**.) While the volatility in this area is also historically extreme, previous **US DOLLAR** weakness was not a surprise with **COVID-19** is spreading in the previously 'safe' United States. Yet that is now reversed on worse impacts elsewhere.

Firmer US economic data had assisted the **US DOLLAR INDEX** last summer in finally fully overrunning the mid-upper 97.00 resistance. That inspired the push above the April-May 98.37 area trading highs which occurred in early August prior to lapsing back into near-term weakness. Next levels were the interim 99.00 area, yet with the more prominent area not until the 99.50-100.00 'big penny' historic congestion at which it failed again on the retest two weeks ago (just like last October.)

After weakening in the end of February it recently failed back below 98.37-.00 (also important cluster of weekly MAs in the upper 97.00 area) on its way to also cracking the 96.50-.00 well-established congestion range support held at the end of last year. With the previous **COVID-19** flight to US safety reversed, it was retesting the longer-term congestion in the 96.00-95.84 area (12-month trading low.) Much below that is the interim congestion into the recently tested 95.00 area it held again this week, with the more major 94.00-93.70 area below.

Yet the recent return of concerns elsewhere has seen it surge back above the 98.37-.00 area, and even above previously tested (February high) 99.50-100.00 and interim 101.30 into a current test of the more significant 102.00-.25 (late-2016/early-2017) congestion.

Along with the extreme concerns now affecting the **BUND** on a fiscal basis, European currencies are under pressure again versus the **US DOLLAR**. **EUR/USD** was also under pressure previous early this year due to its still weak economy, the initial response to the **COVID-19** spread there took it to 33-month lows below last October's 1.0878 trading low prior to the current sharp recovery. The **EURO** was strengthening so much against the temporarily weak **US DOLLAR** due to previous 'greenback avoidance'. The **US DOLLAR** losing its haven bid had seen **EUR/USD** surge back above 1.0800 and even the more prominent 1.1000 area as well as the heavy 1.1250-00 area. That was the next lower support, yet with the greenback surging once again it was readily violated.

It has now failed back below it as well as the interim 1.1100 area and even the more prominent 1.1000-1.0950 area. It is now also back below last October's 1.0878 trading low once again. It also weakened below the more prominent historic and recent congestion in the 1.0800 area with a buffer to the weekly chart gap higher from a mid-April 2017 1.0722 weekly Close it weakened below prior to the current modest recovery. Yet that is just part of an entire broader range with interim congestion at 1.0500, a low end into the January 2017 1.0340 more than 17-year trading low (i.e. from the time of the EUR/USD recovery back above 1.0000 after several years of travails following its 1999 inception.)

GBP/USD had already held up much better against the US DOLLAR than other DEVELOPED CURRENCIES in the wake of the Brexit vote finally confirming its exit from the EU. While failing from 1.3500 again in December as well as back below the interim 1.3200 congestion, it only worked its way gradually into the historically important 1.3000-1.2800 range. Even on the late February US DOLLAR surge, GBP/USD only dropped to a Close near the bottom of that range.

However, the BoE leading the emergency rate cut efforts spooked the POUND bulls, leaving it back below 1.2800. Since then it Closed below 1.2500-1.2450 last week and even the interim 1.2200 area and major 1.2000-1.1960 September 2019 three-and-a-half year trading low.

It is now even below the October 2016 post-Brexit political crisis 1.1711 35-year trading low. While it sounds like a long way down, due to the nature of the aggressive 1984-1985 selloff and recovery, next support is the 1.1000 area. Yet even that is also relatively minor congestion from that 1984-1985 swing down into the 1.0345 February 1985 all-time low.

And despite US-China rapprochement on the Phase I trade and tariffs agreement, AUD/USD remains depressed on the heavier East Asian COVID-19 impact. That is only as expected, even as it has finally seen a minor bounce this week on the US DOLLAR weakness. Yet that is still from well below the .7000 area held in mid-May of last year.

Minor squeezes temporarily back above the .7000 area were only a prelude to slipping more definitively below it last July. Next lower major support was the .6825 area early-2016 10-year trading lows it also slipped below around the same time.

That is important after it slipped below next interim support at .6690-77 in early February on COVID-19 driven weak Chinese economic concerns. The .6500 area was the next support it slipped below along with violating the .6250 area next support. That was the last interim congestion this side of the now also violated .6000 area October 2008 17-year trading low. The 'good' news here it that there are somewhat substantial 1998-2003 congestions at .5720, .5325-15 and near .5000 this side of the major April 2001 .4793 all-time trading low.

In light of the recent more radical swings we are resurrecting our analysis of the USD/JPY. This was the prima facie example of the extreme mid-February 'haven' bid in the US DOLLAR, as the typical fellow 'haven' currency YEN came under heavy pressure on the USD/JPY surge above 110.00 for the first time since May 2019, leading to an immediate rally to the prominent 112.00-.50 area into the end of that week.

Yet here as well, once the US DOLLAR came under pressure on its loss of 'haven' status due to the COVID-19 spread in the previously safe US, at the end of February it 'crashed' back below the 110.00 area to Close into 108.00 again. Yet that did not hold since two weeks ago began on weakness that carried below the interim 106.00 area and once again below the very prominent 105.00-104.50 range (39-month trading low with major tests in March 2018, January 2018 and August 2019.)

Next lower congestion was not until the interim 102.50 area that it traded below recently prior to and recovering back above the low 105.00 area as well as 108.00 to test 110.00 once again. More major lower congestion is into the summer 2016 100.00-99.07 summer 2016 extensive major range 6-year trading lows.

And EMERGING CURRENCIES that had been under pressure were recovering to some degree, yet are now back under pressure. The SA RAND has seen USD/ZAR overrun 15.40-.50 into testing the 15.69 September 2018 high prior to pulling back. Yet even though it sagged all the way to 15.20 early last week, it was back above 15.40-.50 and challenging the 15.69 resistance late week. It started out this week surging above the 16.00 and 16.30 next higher congestion resistances all the way to the 16.95 resistance (nearer the major January 2016 17.94 all-time high) prior to setting back around 16.00 earlier this week. However, fresh economic concerns have seen it rally back above 16.30 and interim 16.45 as well as the 16.95 area once again, with nothing again now until that 17.94 all-time high.

The RUSSIAN RUBLE had seen USD/RUB push above 66.50-67.00 on weak Crude Oil as well (economic weakness driven) prior to dropping back on short-term EQUITIES and CRUDE OIL recovery. Back out above it last week left the bigger resistance not until 69.00-70.00 it began this week pushing sharply above. And historically there is not much resistance again until the 75.00 area (early 2016 congestion) which it has duly tested early this week prior to pulling back nearer to the interim 71.00 area.

Yet here as well the return of economic stresses has seen it rally back up above 75.00 of late (trading high 75.46) prior to trading just below it last week and again right now at present. Higher resistances are the 80.00 area it has treaded above once again and is currently trading around at present, and the 85.00 area also last seen on the early 2016 surge.

Even the previously more resilient MEXICAN PESO has seen USD/MXN surge through 19.50-.60 on its way to testing the interim 19.95 area prior to slipping back temporarily. Yet it recently exceeded that once again along with a temporary surge above the 20.25 resistance prior to dropping back below it at the end of last week. Yet here as well we had noted that PESO weakness might continue on the COVID-19 North American impact, with next resistances not until 20.50 and 20.65 that were sharply overrun on Monday.

That also saw it surge above the 20.96 June 2018 high (also congestion) on the way to a retest of the 22.03 January 2017 all-time high prior to setting back around the 20.96 area earlier last week. Yet the return of the economic stresses and weak Crude Oil prices have seen it surge to a new 22.95 all-time high prior to setting back toward the 22.00 area last week. Yet at present the renewed economic concerns and Crude Oil weakness leaves it trading up into 25.00 area after setting a new 25.0731 all-time high earlier today. Of note, this also significantly exceeds previous prominent weekly Oscillator resistance (MA-41 plus 2.30) that should have kicked in around 21.60 two weeks ago... time to reassess that once the current surge is over.

Of note, the TURKISH LIRA had been relatively steady through all of the EMERGING CURRENCY turmoil elsewhere. Yet it has been under pressure since USD/TRY held key 5.50-5.45 support and pushed back above 5.65-.60 range along with last July's 5.7871 high from after the central bank governor dismissal. Key resistance at 5.90-5.93 was also exceeded again in January.

USD/TRY has now even strengthened above the 6.00 area that seemed to point to a retest of interim 6.15 area that was also exceeded on the way to a test of the May 2019 crisis 6.25 area 17-month trading high. Compared to the

weakness of other EMERGING CURRENCIES this previously left the LIRA a bastion of stability. Yet recently above the 6.25 area left the door open to a test of the higher September 2018 6.45-6.55 congestion it has now exceeded again. The extended higher resistances are 6.72 and 6.83 levels, or even the 7.10 area all-time high that were all seen during the 2018 LIRA crisis.

While still obviously less relevant (as we have been noting for some time and is most glaringly apparent again at present) on the standard report releases in the midst of more major global trade and political cross currents, the Weekly Report & Event Calendar (accessible for Sterling and higher level subscribers) is available via the www.rohr-blog.com sidebar.

As we have been noting for some time in our research notes, regularly scheduled releases are obviously less relevant in the face of 'macro' factors; and especially (as our anticipatory views into mid-February had highlighted) the highly pernicious impact of the COVID-19 virus. This now extends to the timely or untimely US government response.

That said, there are still some very important economic releases and central bank influences in this once again typically very full week. Even if they will only act as a backdrop for the future COVID-19 impact and other 'macro' influences, they will still be important.

After a relatively quiet reporting Monday, Tuesday sees the global Advance PMIs followed by additional important data on Wednesday. Thursday brings the next BoE rate announcement and other important information (yet with no scheduled press conference) and the beginning of the late month data flow; including dated US Q4 GDP data. Friday sees some further data.

Also still keep in mind that for this week the US is already on Daylight Savings Time with Europe and the UK moving their clocks forward on Sunday, March 29th.

And due to the vagaries of the COVID-19 volatility, we maintain our recent classic advice: Keep those seat belts firmly fastened.

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