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The Day Ahead: Will Fed Week Save Bonds?

Bonds are coming off their **roughest week** in months with yields rising at their quickest pace since the mega-volatility seen during the panicked sell-off in March 2020. Before that, we'd have to go back to October 2019 (the initial bounce from the trade war rally) to see anything comparably bad.

Adding to the **gravity** of the situation is the fact that yields had been so sideways for the past 6 weeks. The juxtaposition would seem to indicate that bonds were in a holding pattern while they deliberated over the timing and pace of an economic recovery with the big jump higher in rate marking a verdict.

In other words, 10yr yields held so faithfully under the .74 and .79 ceilings that these became the dividing lines between the depths of the covid-19 economic impact and everything else. Last week's rapid move up and over those ceilings corresponded with ultra-strong economic data (versus expectations) as if to say the **darkest depths are behind us** and now it's time for rates to move higher.

To some small extent, these **same concerns** existed in early April when the growth rate of covid cases first began to level off, but the reality of the economic impact ushered yields into the sub 0.74% range (where they remained all the way until last week). All that to say that the current bounce

MBS & Treasury Market Data

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 6.0	100.39	+0.19
MBS GNMA 6.0	100.53	+0.14
10 YR Treasury	4.3602	-0.0724
30 YR Treasury	4.5918	-0.0140

Pricing as of: 7/3 5:59PM EST

Average Mortgage Rates

	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News Daily			
30 Yr. Fixed	7.08%	-0.05	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.45%	-0.02	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.55%	-0.05	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.25%	-0.04	0.00
5/1 ARM	7.07%	-0.03	0.00
Freddie Mac			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.86%	-0.01	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.16%	+0.03	0.00
Mortgage Bankers Assoc.			
30 Yr. Fixed	7.03%	+0.09	0.62
15 Yr. Fixed	6.56%	+0.09	0.54
30 Yr. FHA	6.90%	+0.11	0.95
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.11%	-0.01	0.50
5/1 ARM	6.38%	+0.11	0.54

Rates as of: 7/3

could also prove to be a **false start**, but the circumstances are definitely different than those seen in early April.

There is precious little economic data on tap this week. If markets were hoping to add to last week's recovery narrative, they'll have to look elsewhere. Instead, bonds will be focused on Wednesday's Fed announcement, where many market participants expect some sort of official QE announcement. Last Friday was the first time since emergency bond buying was announced in March that the Fed kept it's daily buying limit unchanged in MBS ($4.5 bln per day). That may give us an idea of **what to expect** if the Fed puts official QE in place on Wednesday.

Let's break this down into greater detail so it's not confusing:

The Fed is currently buying bonds on an "emergency" basis.

At one point they announced MBS purchases of "up to $50bln per day."

That has since ratcheted down under $5bln per day.

They update the amount each Friday (for the following week).

It's gotten lower every time UNTIL this past Friday when it remained unchanged at $4.47 billion / day.

Now this week, we have a Fed Announcement where some investors expect the Fed to announce a permanent QE operation (as opposed to emergency bond buying). Considering they just held the daily amount steady week-over-week for the first time, $4.47 bln / day is a reasonable starting point to guess what a QE announcement might look like for bonds. Either way, it gives us an easy benchmark to assess how generous or stingy a permanent announcement is this Wednesday (if we get one).

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