

Oil Tracker: Record Low Financial Demand vs. Resilient Physical Demand

The Brent crude price continued sliding down over the last week to the lowest level since December 2021, with the <u>disappointing</u> US jobs report on Friday pushing Brent close to our \$70/bbl floor in tandem with the broader risk asset sell-off. <u>An extension</u> of OPEC+ production cuts till December helped to keep the floor under crude prices last week. Brent edged up on Monday as well on <u>increasing</u> risks to Gulf of Mexico oil production from the strengthening Tropical Storm Francine and on higher <u>US</u> SPR purchases.

Despite the macro-driven selloff, our trackable net supply decreased by -0.6mb/d last week on lower Russia and Canada production and on a moderate recovery in our China demand nowcast. In contrast to stronger physical demand, oil financial demand dropped to its new all-time low, and has plummeted by a massive average 7mb/d over the past two months. Together with the tightening physical market, any normalization from the currently extremely low speculative positioning and sizable undervaluation of the Brent 1M/36M timespread should help crude prices to recover further, and we expect Brent to average at \$77/bbl next quarter. However, with the risks to our \$70-85 range still skewed to the downside and a broadly anticipated 2025 surplus, positioning and valuation may remain lower for longer.

Chart of the Week

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mb Oil Crude and Products Net Managed Money mb 1600 1600 1400 1400 1200 1200 1000 1000 800 800 600 600 400 400 200 200 Latest: 103m 0

Exhibit 1: Oil Net Managed Money Positioning Plummeted to Its New All Time Low Driven by Crude and Middle Distillates

Source: CFTC, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

2014

2016

2012

Key Trends

 Our chart of the week shows that oil net managed money positioning dropped to its new all-time low in the data starting from 2011 — 58mb below its month ago record-low.

2018

2020

2022

2024

2026

- ☐ Crude and middle distillates positioning drove the decline in oil financial demand, with gasoline positioning holding steady (in the CFTC's latest report capturing positioning up till last Tuesday).
- ☐ Financial demand plummeted by over 7mb/d over the last two months, and although it tends to mean revert historically, positioning may remain depressed in the absence of a catalyst on broader expectations of softer 2025 balances.
- Further on the positive side for prices:
 - ☐ Our Russia production nowcast decreased by 0.2mb/d last week as seaborne exports decreased, largely driven by <u>maintenance</u> at an offshore Arctic field.
 - Our Canada oil production nowcast edged down last week, but is still roughly in line with our August expectations.
 - □ Our China oil demand nowcast increased by 0.3mb/d last week in the first early September reading on draws in products stocks and higher refinery runs.
 - The recent <u>pick-up</u> in China traffic congestion index also implies that July and August weather-related activity weakness is reversing.
 - Our China economists <u>expect</u> China GDP growth to pick up in 2024H2 as the government remains committed to the "around 5%" GDP target.
 - Our OECD Europe oil demand nowcast remained at 14.2mb/d last week,
 0.6mb/d above IEA July expectations on strong gasoline and jet fuel demand.

- ☐ The steep front-driven selloff increased Brent 1M/36M undervaluation to \$5-10/bbl while our OECD oil commercial stocks nowcast edged down last week.
 - Our tracking of visible global oil commercial stocks decreased by 21mb last week on larger EM draws on water.

On the negative side for prices:

- ☐ The Canada oil and gas rig count <u>increased</u> by 25 in August (or by 13%) from July.
- ☐ Our Libya production nowcast remained in line with our August expectations of 1.1mb/d, while some tankers were reportedly loading crude <u>from storage</u> and some oil fields <u>started</u> to receive orders to bring back production.
 - Libya's eastern and western governments <u>reportedly</u> moved closer to an agreement last week, and we now <u>expect</u> Libya oil production to recover by early October.
 - However, Murban prompt timespreads remained high last week as Libya production disruptions put an upside pressure on the prices of other regional light grades.
- ☐ Despite some press reports indicating <u>fading</u> chances of a ceasefire in Israel-Hamas war, the call options implied volatility skew dropped to its year-to-date low.

Exhibit 2: Our Trackable Net Supply Decreased by 0.6mb/d Week-on-Week

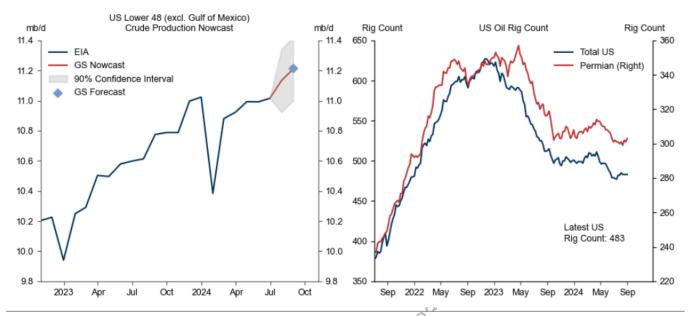
Indicator	Current value	Change from last week	Change from 4 weeks ago	
Supply				
US Lower 48 crude nowcast (mb/d)	11.2	0	0	
Oil rig count	483	0	-2	
Canada liquids nowcast (mb/d)	6.1	-0.1	0.1	
Russia liquids nowcast (mb/d)	10.3	-0.2	-0.7	
Iran crude nowcast (mb/d)	3.6	0	0.1	
Libya crude nowcast (mb/d)	1.1	0	-0.1	
Demand				
China oil (mb/d)	16.1	0.3	0.3	
OECD Europe oil	14.2	0	0.4	
Total change in trackable imbalance, Supply-Demand (-0.6	-1.3		
Inventories				
OECD commercial stocks (mb)	2815	-3	-9	
Global commercial stocks (mb)	4787	-21	-25	
Timespreads				
Brent 1M/36M gap with fair value (pp)	-14	-3	-10	
Average crude basis (%, change in pp)	1.4	-0.5	0.3	
Average crude prompt timespread (%, change in pp)	0.9	0.0	-0.4	
Oil net managed money positioning (mb)	103	-113	-58	

Our 1- and 4-week changes are based on the real-time values recorded as of 1 week or 4 weeks ago. Red color highlights changes in our trackable imbalance that are bullish for prices, blue color highlights changes that are bearish for prices.

Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

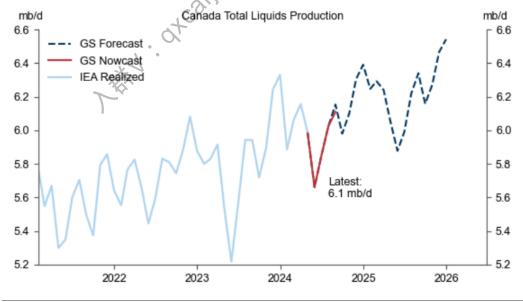
Supply

Exhibit 3: Our US Lower 48 (excl Gulf of Mexico) Crude Production Nowcast Remained at 11.2mb/d, in Line With Our August Expectation; the US Oil Rig Count Remained Unchanged at 483



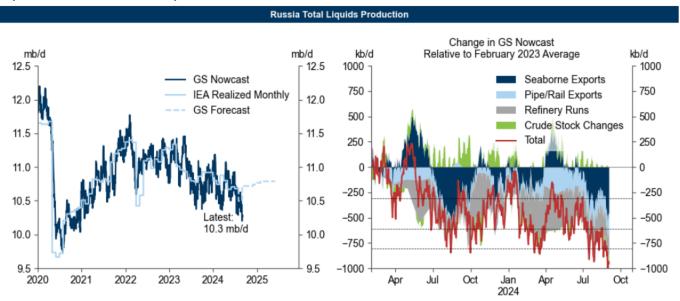
Source: EIA, Genscape, Baker Hughes, Haver Analytics, Bloomberg, Primary Vision, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 4: Our Canada Total Liquids Production Nowcast Edged Down by 0.1mb/d to 6.1mb/d Last Week but Remains Roughly in Line With Our August Expectation



Source: IEA, AER, EIA, Kpler, IIR, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

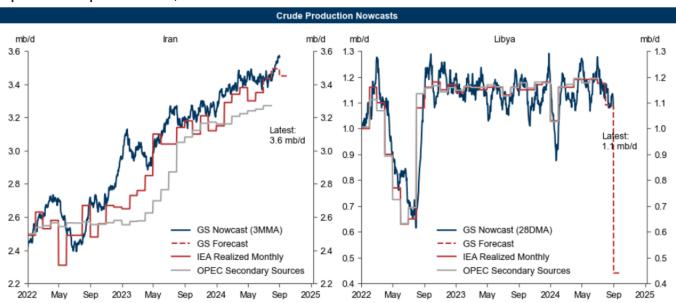
Exhibit 5: Our Russia Production Nowcast Decreased by 0.2mb/d to 10.3mb/d Last Week (and Is Now 0.4mb/d Below Our September Expectation) on Lower Seaborne Exports



Nowcast is a 28-day moving average. Dashed lines on the right show pledged cuts of 0.5, 0.8, and 1.0mb/d cumulatively vs. revised February 2023 level. The combination of output (0.5mb/d) and export (0.5mb/d) cut pledges creates uncertainty about the size of the total supply cut pledge. The war may reduce the ability to measure maintenance and refinery runs in Russia. We have limited visibility of stock changes from the satellite data as a large share of Russia stocks is stored within the pipeline system. As a result, we may underestimate reallocation of crude to stocks after the recent refinery attacks, and thus understate production.

Source: IEA, Petro-Logistics, Kpler, IIR, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

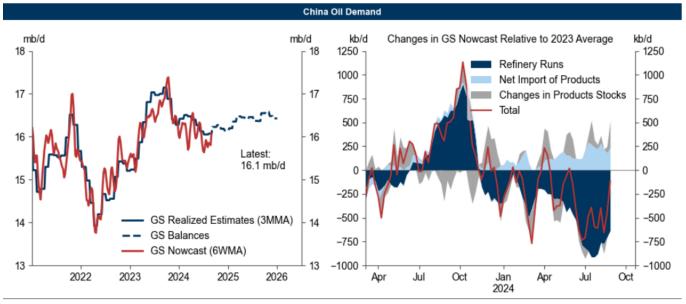
Exhibit 6: Our Iran Crude Production Nowcast Remained at 3.6mb/d and 1.1mb/d Last Week, Respectively (Libya Production Disruptions Are Captured in Our September Forecast)



Source: Kpler, JODI, GTT, IEA, OPEC, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

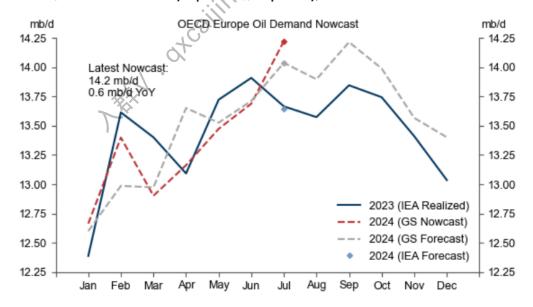
Demand

Exhibit 7: Our China Oil Demand Increased by 0.3mb/d Last Week to 16.1mb/d on Larger Draws in Products Stocks, and Is Now in Line With Our September Expectations



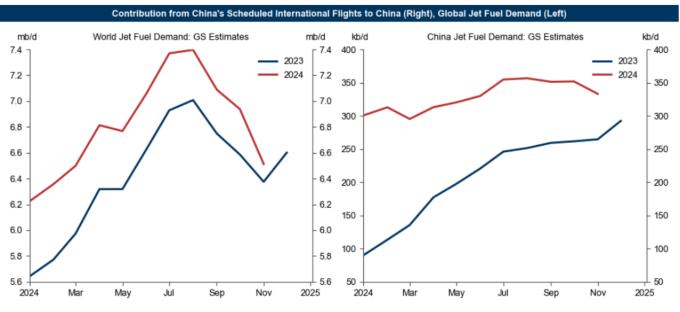
Source: IEA, S&P, Kpler, GTT, Oilchem, MySteel, Bloomberg, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 8: Our OECD Europe Oil Demand Nowcast Remained Unchanged Last Week at 14.2mb/d (0.2mb/d and 0.6mb/d Above Our and IEA July Expectations, Respectively)



Source: IEA, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 9: We Expect Global Jet Fuel Demand to Decrease Sharply Next Month, With China Jet Fuel Demand Moving Sideways and Edging Down Later in the Fall

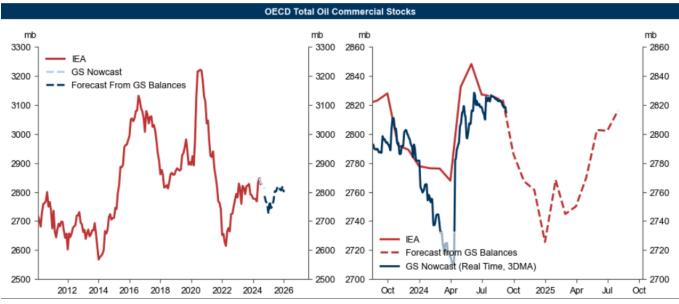


RHS: Left axis is scaled by 2 because only half of the total fuel demand from international China flights enters China demand.

Source: OAG, IEA, JODI, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

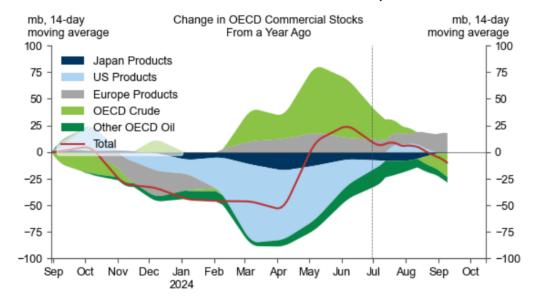
Inventories

Exhibit 10: Our OECD Total Oil Commercial Stocks Nowcast (as of Early September) Decreased by 3mb Last Week to 2,815mb, and Is Now 29mb Above Our End-of-September Balance Forecast of 2,786mb



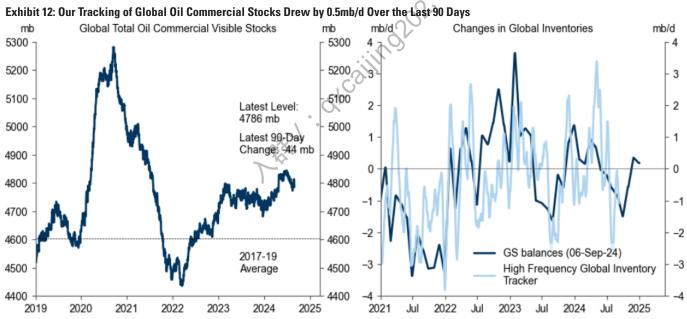
Source: IEA, Kpler, DOE, Euroilstocks, ARA PJK, PAJ, Haver, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 11: Our OECD Commercial Stocks Nowcast Is Down 10mb From Its September 2023 Level



The dotted line indicates the latest realized observation from the IEA (end of June).

Source: IEA, Kpler, DOE, Euroilstocks, PAJ, ARA PJK, Haver, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research



LHS: The chart shows the sum of all data available through the coverage period of the last US DoE Weekly Petroleum Report, and assumes a few datapoints not reported yet remain stable (by forward-filling). RHS: GS Balance series is a 28-day moving average of monthly balances. The high frequency global inventory tracker is a 28-day change, 14-day moving average that uses all visible crude and product stocks data with rescalings to estimate invisible stocks. Areas of coverage include the US, ARA (Antwerp-Rotterdam-Amsterdam) in Europe, Fujairah in the Middle East, and Singapore and the locations covered by Longzhong in China.

Source: Kpler, DOE, Euroilstocks, ARA PJK, PAJ, Singapore Enterprise, Fujairah, OilChem, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 13: Global Total Oil Commercial Visible Stocks Decreased by 21mb (0.4%) Last Week on EM Draws on Water and Are Now Down 26mb (-0.6%) From 4 Weeks Ago (Although Uncertainty Around Satellite Data Is Always Significant)

Global Total Oil Commercial Visible Stocks									
Timely Stocks Data	Region	Change From Week Ago		Change From 4 Weeks Ago		Last Date of Most			
		in mb	in %	in mb	in %	Recent Coverage			
Kpler Crude	DM	-8	-0.9	-13	-1.4	9/6/2024			
	EM	-3	-0.2	-3	-0.2	9/6/2024			
DOE Products	US	-1	-0.1	-9	-1.0	8/30/2024			
Euroilstocks Products	Europe	0	0.0	0	0.0	7/31/2024			
ARA Products	Netherlands and Belgium	-1	-2.3	3	6.3	9/1/2024			
PAJ Products	Japan	0	0.8	3	6.1	8/31/2024			
Singapore Enterprise Products	Singapore	1	3.3	0	0.5	9/1/2024			
Fujairah Products	UAE	-1	-5.3	0	0.7	9/2/2024			
Longzhong Products	China	-1	-0.4	-7	-3.1	9/4/2024			
Kpler Oil on Water	DM	3	2.1	14	10.8	9/6/2024			
	EM	-11	-2.4	-15	-3.2	9/6/2024			
Total Landed Crude		-11	-0.5	-17	-0.7				
Total Landed Products		-2	-0.1	-9	-0.5				
Total Oil on Water		-8	-1.3	0	0.0				
Total Oil		-21	-0.4	-26	-0.5				

The chart shows all the visible stocks released through this week.

Source: Kpler, DOE, Euroilstocks, ARA PJK, PAJ, Singapore Enterprise, Fujairah, OilChem, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Prices

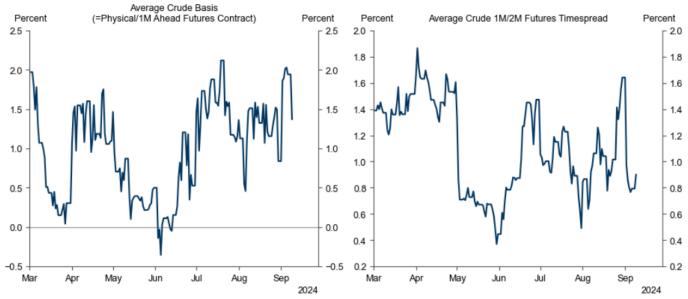
Exhibit 14: The Gap Between the Brent 1/36M Timespread and Its Inventory-Implied Fair Value Decreased to the Lowest Decile



We report the percentile of the timespread's residual in a sample from January 1st, 2005 till the most recent observation.

Source: IEA, CME, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

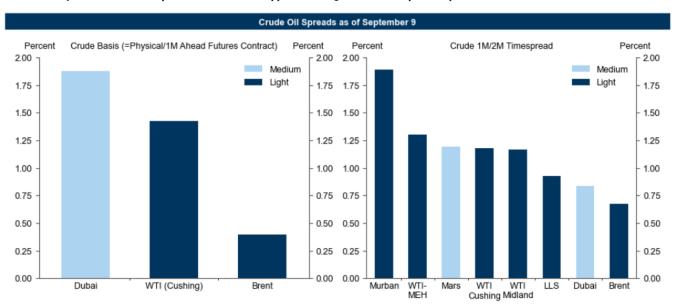
Exhibit 15: The Average Crude Basis Decreased by -0.5pp Last Week, While the Average Prompt Timespread Remained Unchanged



Basis represents the difference (in % of 1M ahead futures) between spot physical crude futures and 1M ahead financial futures. We include Brent, Dubai, and WTI in crude basis on the left panel and Brent, Dubai, WTI, Mars, Midland, LLS, and WTI-MEH in 1M/2M timespreads on the right panel. We construct average crude spreads by first taking an unweighted average of crude types within a region and then taking a production-weighted average across regions.

Source: Platts, CME, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

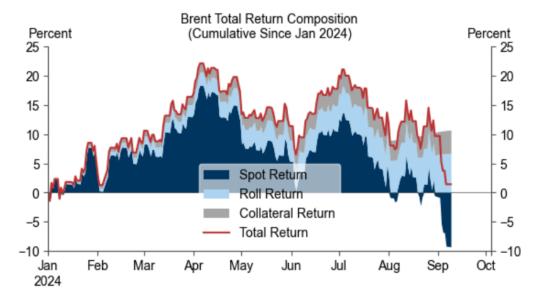
Exhibit 16: Libya Production Disruptions Continued to Support a Strong Murban Prompt Timespread Last Week



We measure WTI Cushing crude basis as WTI Calendar Delta in percent of 1M ahead WTI futures.

Source: Platts, CME, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 17: The Total Return on Brent Futures Dropped to 1.4% Year-to-Date After the Last Week's Selloff



The collateral return corresponds to the interest earned on a hypothetical fully collateralized contract position on Brent futures.

Source: Platts, Haver, ICE, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Performance of Open Trade Recommendations

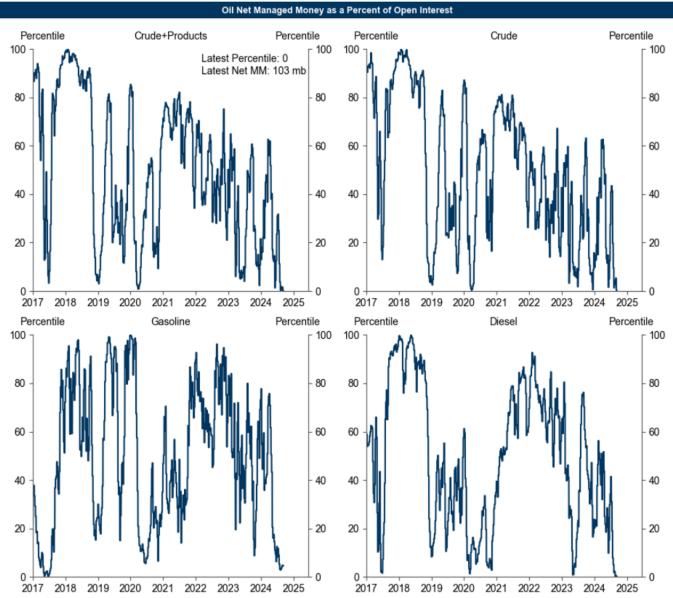
Exhibit 18: We Continue to Recommend a Long Position in Distillate Cracks Reflecting Our Structurally Bullish View on Refining

Open Trade Performances (\$/bbl)									
Trade Name	Trade Specification	Opening Date	Value at Opening	Current Level	Change Since Opening	7-Day Change			
Structurally Strong Diesel	Long Dec-24 NW European (ARA) Gasoil- Brent Cracks	2024-03-11	23.58	16.71	-6.86	-1.12			
Performance of Trades Closed Since Jan 1st 2024 (\$/bbl)									
Trade Name	Trade Specification	Opening Date	Value at Opening	Closing Date	Value at Closing	Profit at Closing			
Summer Gasoline Tightness	Long summer (2Q24 & 3Q24) EBOB gasoline-Brent cracks	2023-10-03	11.44	2024-02-06	17.28	5.84			
	Short Jun24 Brent \$70 put, long \$80/\$90 call spread	2023-12-17	-0.22	2024-02-25	2.29	2.51			
Constructive Crude	Long Dec24 Brent	2022-09-27	71.25	2024-03-13	79.69	8.44			
OPEC Range Winter24 Short Put	Short Dec24 Brent \$70 put	2024-02-23	4.26	2024-03-13	3.07	1.19			
Summer24 Deficit	Long Aug/Sep-24 Brent spreads	2023-11-16	0.26	2024-04-07	0.96	0.70			
OPEC Range Winter24	Long Dec24 Brent \$80/\$90 call spread	2024-02-23	3.30	2024-06-25	4.43	1.13			

Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Positioning

Exhibit 19: Total Oil Net Managed Money Plummeted to Its New All-Time Low of 103mb (in a Sample From 2011)

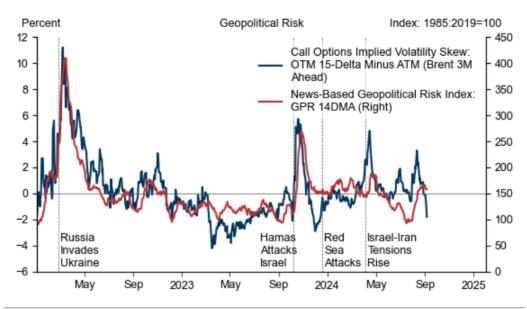


We report the percentile of net managed money, not including other reportables, for Brent, WTI, Nymex H0, Nymex RBOB, and ICE Gasoil as a percent of open interest in a sample from January 1st, 2017 till the most recent observation.

Source: CFTC, Refinitiv Eikon, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Geopolitical Risks

Exhibit 20: The Call Implied Volatility Skew Dropped to Its Year-to-Date Low Despite Persisting Tensions in the Middle East



Source: Federal Reserve Board, ICE, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Methodology Notes for GS High Frequency Oil Indicators

- 1. Russia total liquids production nowcast: Our Russia supply nowcast estimates total liquids production as the sum of refinery runs, crude stock changes at ports and refineries, and crude seaborne and pipeline exports (latest methodology here).
- 2. US Lower 48 crude production nowcast: Our Lower 48 crude production nowcast includes all crude production from the US excluding Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico. We estimate crude production using daily pipeline-implied flows from Genscape, equipment needed to fracture oil wells (frac spreads), and the gap between official EIA and pipeline-based production estimates (latest methodology here.)
- **3. Iran crude production nowcast:** Our Iran supply nowcast estimates crude production as the sum of tracked crude exports, untracked crude exports, refinery intake of crude, and changes in crude inventories (latest methodology here).
- 4. Libya crude production nowcast: Our Libya supply nowcast estimates crude production as the sum of tracked crude exports, refinery intake of crude, and changes in crude inventories.
- 5. Canada total liquids production nowcast: Our Canada supply nowcast estimates total liquids production using changes in Alberta production and changes in implied production defined as the sum of exports, refinery runs, and changes in crude inventories (latest methodology here)
- 6. OPEC model implied probability: Our estimated probability of OPEC production decision is based on an unweighted average of five ordered multinomial logit models that regress OPEC decisions to decrease, hold, or increase production on

- OECD commercial stocks, cyclical oil price moves, Saudi's market share, and speculative positioning (latest methodology <u>here</u>).
- 7. China demand: We perform a bottom-up nowcast of China oil products demand as the sum of refinery runs, net products imports, and product stock draws. We model monthly changes in S&P refinery runs as a function of monthly changes in refinery utilization rates from Mysteel, and monthly changes in capacity utilization from IIR. We then estimate model-implied 4-week changes in weekly refinery runs from 4-week changes in the 4-week moving average of refinery utilization rates and slow-moving changes in capacity. We initialize our refinery runs nowcast to match the level of "realized" refinery runs over the last 2 years. Similarly, we model changes in GTT net imports of products as a function of monthly changes in Kpler net imports of the corresponding products. We smooth the final nowcast using a 2-week moving average (latest methodology here).
- 8. **OECD Europe demand:** We estimate OECD Europe demand based on demand in the EU4 (Germany, France, Spain and Italy), and incorporate jet demand using our jet fuel demand model. Our nowcast uses timely inputs on oil markets (e.g. refinery runs), macro activity (e.g. PMIs), fuel retail sales, preliminary national oil demand releases, and flight schedules (latest methodology https://example.com/here/).
- 9. Jet demand: Our methodology for measuring jet fuel demand uses global commercial flight schedule data combined with our aircraft efficiency database. We further calibrate this model on monthly IEA/JODI/Woodmac jet-type kerosene demand data for the OECD and a handful of other countries to estimate non-commercial flight demand (latest methodology here).
- 10. Global total oil commercial visible stocks: We add up all visible oil stocks for both crude and products without any rescaling. Our data includes onshore crude stocks, crude oil on water, products on water, and measures of products stocks at various locations. The locations are the US, 16 European Majors, ARA (Antwerp-Rotterdam-Amsterdam) in Europe, Japan, Fujairah in the Middle East, and Singapore and the locations covered by Longzhong in China. The China Longzhong stocks cover all stocks except for those at SOE refineries, gas stations, and the national strategic reserves.
- 11. OECD commercial stocks: Our OECD commercial stocks nowcast consists of several region- and product-specific models, which regress IEA monthly historical data on high frequency stocks measures. We model monthly changes in OECD commercial stocks components using relevant high-frequency stocks and trade data, seasonality, Covid effects, and lagged stock changes for products (latest methodology <u>here</u>).
- 12. Brent timespreads: We estimate timespreads using our OECD commercial stocks nowcast and our OECD demand forecast. We estimate Brent 1/36M timespreads based on the historical relationship with 1-4M ahead OECD commercial stocks as days of demand covered (DoDC) vs their 5-yr average after accounting for the impact of 3-Year US Treasury yields. We keep stocks as DoDC vs their 5-yr average constant over the next 1-4 months at the most recent observation based on our nowcast (latest methodology here. Finally, we remove March 2020-February 2023

- observations from our sample to calculate the 5-year average for OECD commercial stocks DoDc.
- **13.** Release lags for nowcasts using Kpler exports and inventories data: Given the frequent and sizable revisions to the early vintages of high frequency data, we wait 3 and 7 days before publishing nowcasts using high frequency inventories and exports Kpler data, respectively.

Disclosure Appendix

Reg AC

We, Yulia Zhestkova Grigsby, Daan Struyven and Callum Bruce, CFA, hereby certify that all of the views expressed in this report accurately reflect our personal views, which have not been influenced by considerations of the firm's business or client relationships.

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