

# RobustQuant Weekly Compass

Weekend Edition | March 29, 2026

 **COMPASS FOR EMOTIONAL DISCIPLINE---NOT TRADING ADVICE**

*Weekly boundaries to help reduce fear and greed in market decisions*

## 1 | At a Glance

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|               |               |        |               |
|---------------|---------------|--------|---------------|
| S&P 500 (SPX) | 6,014 – 6,540 | ±4.2%  | 63/66 (95.5%) |
| Gold (GLD)*   | 358 – 476     | ±14.1% | 35/37 (94.6%) |
| REITs (XLRE)* | 37.5 – 41.7   | ±5.3%  | 26/27 (96.3%) |

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\*Newsletter-exclusive coverage

Target: ~95% of weekly closes fall within these ranges

Track record details → [robustquant.com/predictions](https://robustquant.com/predictions)




## 2 | This Week's Summary

Headlines signal panic. Prices don't. All three assets remained within expected levels.

Ground invasion talk. Trump announcing war's end. Oil sector at record highs. SPX fifth consecutive weekly decline. Dow in correction. Michigan sentiment at bottom 1st percentile. Inflation expectations jumped to 3.8%. VIX above 31.

Panic? VIX was 80 in 2020. It's elevated---not extreme. The Compass measures where markets actually closed.

### Key Results:

- S&P 500: 6,369 (lower half) 
- Gold: 415 (upper half) 
- REITs: 40.01 (lower half) 

**Pattern of the week:** After three weeks near the bottom, markets moved higher within expected levels. SPX lower half, GLD upper half---different directions, both contained. Ranges adapted to a new normal without shock. Structure held.

### 3 | What Moved Markets (Mar 23–27)

#### Ceasefire Whiplash:

Monday surged 1.15% on Trump's "very good conversations" with Iran. Tehran denied contact within hours. Thursday collapsed 1.74% as Iran rejected US peace proposal. Friday fell another 1.67%---Dow entered correction territory. VIX closed above 31. CNN Fear & Greed in "extreme fear."

#### Michigan Sentiment Collapse:

Final March reading plunged to 53.3 (bottom 1st percentile). One-year inflation expectations surged from 3.4% to 3.8%---largest jump since April 2025. Data drought otherwise: PCE, GDP, durable goods all delayed to April by the shutdown.

#### Fed Hawkish, ECB Pivots:

Philadelphia Fed's Paulson: inflation above target making her "more apprehensive." Markets now price ~50% probability of a rate hike by December. ECB's Lagarde: "We will not be paralysed by hesitation." Nagel endorsed April hike as "an option."


#### China Retaliates:

Two trade barrier investigations against US launched Friday---response to Section 301 probes. Trump-Xi summit confirmed for May 14-15 in Beijing.


→ For detailed regional breakdowns and economic data, see Appendix at end of newsletter

### 4 | S&P 500 (SPX) Boundaries (Apr 2)

 Range for Friday Apr 2: 6,014–6,540

 Hit Rate: 63/66 weeks (95.5%)

#### Last Week's Performance:

Last week: Range 6,193-6,701, closed **6,369** (lower half) 

SPX declined to a seven-month low. Range shifts lower again ( $\pm 4.2\%$  vs  $\pm 3.9\%$ ). Track record improved to 95.5% (63/66).


#### For Your Planning:

- Lower zone (6,014-6,189): Where fear often peaks
- Middle zone (6,189-6,365): Normal trading area
- Upper zone (6,365-6,540): Where excitement builds


Remember: These are weekly movement boundaries, not buy/sell signals.

## 5 | Gold (GLD) Coverage (Newsletter-Exclusive)

 Range for Friday Apr 2: 358–476

 Containment: 35/37 weeks (94.6%)

### Last Week's Performance:

Last week: Range 357.8-471, closed **415** (upper half) 


GLD closed **415** as spot gold traded a choppy \$4,430-\$4,560 range---essentially flat after last week's 10% crash. Range widens further ( $\pm 14.1\%$  vs  $\pm 13.7\%$ ). Track record improved to 94.6% (35/37).

### For Your Planning:


- Lower zone (358-397): Where consolidation may emerge
- Middle zone (397-437): Current close territory
- Upper zone (437-476): Where safe-haven demand peaks

## 6 | REITs (XLRE) Coverage (Newsletter-Exclusive)

 Range for Friday Apr 2: 37.5–41.7

 Containment: 26/27 weeks (96.3%)

### Last Week's Performance:

Last week: Range 38.1-42.4, closed **40.01** (lower half) 

REITs closed **40.01**. 10-year yield reached 4.44%, 30-year briefly pierced 5.00%. Mortgage rates climbed to 6.38% (six-month high). Range shifts lower (37.5-41.7 vs 38.1-42.4). Track record reached 96.3% (26/27).

### For Your Planning:

- Lower zone (37.5-38.9): Where rate-hike fears typically pressure sector
- Middle zone (38.9-40.3): Normal trading area
- Upper zone (40.3-41.7): Where rate-cut optimism drives positioning

## 7 | Psychology & How to Read

Monday: markets surged on ceasefire hopes. Thursday: collapsed when Iran rejected. Friday: sold off again. VIX above 31. "Extreme fear." Headlines cycling between "war ending" and "ground invasion imminent."

And through all of it---every asset closed within expected levels.

News cycles amplify narrative. They compete for attention. They shift daily. The Compass doesn't interpret which headline is right. It measures where markets actually closed.

### What They Show:

Weekly boundaries where markets typically move---designed to help you stay grounded when headlines whipsaw between hope and fear within the same week.

### **What They Don't Show:**

Buy/sell signals, price targets, or guaranteed outcomes.

### **The Retail Trap:**

Most individual investors buy high when excitement peaks and sell low when fear dominates. This pattern---amplified when ceasefire rumours drive Monday rallies and rejection headlines drive Thursday sell-offs---is the primary destroyer of long-term returns. This compass is designed to help you avoid this trap.

### **Professional Approach:**

- Stay systematic within boundaries
- Lower ranges: Fear creates opportunities for planned strategies
- Upper ranges: Excitement may warrant risk review
- Outside ranges: Market behaviour shifting beyond normal parameters

### **Key Point:**

VIX above 31 feels like panic. It's not. Markets are stressed---but they're still inside their ranges. Your plan matters more than today's headline.

## **8 | Track Record**

### **Performance Since Launch:**

- S&P 500: 63 hits in 66 weeks (95.5%)
- Gold: 35 hits in 37 weeks (94.6%)
- REITs: 26 hits in 27 weeks (96.3%)

### **What This Means:**

SPX improved to 95.5% (63/66) with lower-half close at 6,369. Seven-month low---contained.

GLD improved to 94.6% (35/37) with upper-half close at 415. Stabilised after last week's 10% crash.

REITs reached 96.3% (26/27) with lower-half close at 40.01. Yields at 4.44%. All three assets above design parameters.

### **Transparency:**

All ranges published before each week starts. No retroactive changes. Complete history available on our website.

## 9 | Method and Limitations

### **How Ranges Work:**

Combines current volatility patterns, trend direction, and momentum indicators. Targets ~95% weekly containment rate. Model tracks Friday closes, not ceasefire rumours, sentiment surveys, or central bank rhetoric.

### **When Ranges Break:**

Breakouts signal markets transitioning beyond normal parameters. These aren't failures---they're signals that create opportunities for disciplined investors prepared to recognise regime changes.

### **Current Environment:**

After three weeks near the bottom, markets moved higher. Ranges adapted gradually---no shock, just adjustment. The system absorbed the new normal.

### **Questions About Your Situation:**

#### **Q: VIX above 31, sentiment at 1st percentile---isn't this panic?**

A: VIX was 80 in 2020 and 35+ in 2022. Current levels are elevated, not extreme. All three assets closed inside their ranges. Whether this is the bottom or the beginning of something deeper---compass doesn't predict. It shows you where markets are relative to boundaries. That's the framework for your decisions.

#### **Q: Fed might hike, ECB might hike---what does that mean for ranges?**

A: Ranges are published regardless of rate decisions. If hikes come and markets fall outside range, that's information. If they stay inside, the new normal holds. Either way, you have a framework before the decision arrives.

**Next Week:** Ranges for April 2 close

**Updates:** Quick social media notes if exceptional volatility occurs

*This is a hobby project providing market context. Not investment advice. Past performance doesn't guarantee future results. Consult qualified professionals for personal financial decisions.*

**Systematic over emotional. Structure over speculation.**

# APPENDIX | Detailed Market Review (Mar 23–29)

*For readers who want comprehensive economic data and regional breakdowns*

## United States: Data Drought, Sentiment Collapse

### Michigan sentiment plunged to 1st percentile

Final March reading: 53.3 (below preliminary 55.5 and 54.0 consensus). One-year inflation expectations surged from 3.4% to 3.8%---largest jump since April 2025. Five-year held at 3.2%. Survey director Hsu attributed deterioration to rising petrol prices and financial-market volatility. Declines across all age groups and political affiliations. Equity-holding households registered steepest drops.

### Data delayed by shutdown

February PCE (Fed's preferred inflation gauge) pushed from 27 March to 9 April. Q4 GDP third estimate also to 9 April. February durable goods to 7 April. DHS shutdown reached Day 42---tying historic record. 61,000 TSA workers missed three consecutive paycheques, 510+ officers resigned, callout rates up to 55% at some airports. Senate passed funding bill at 2:20am Friday; House rejected it, passed 60-day CR instead (213-203).

### Fed hawkish post-blackout

Philadelphia Fed's Paulson: inflation above target making her "more apprehensive about policy." Governors Barr, Cook, Jefferson, Miran, Waller all appeared at NABE conference. Futures now price ~50% probability of rate hike by December 2026. Initial claims 210,000 (up from 205,000), continuing claims fell to 1,819,000 (lowest since May 2024). "Low-hire, low-fire" labour market intact.

### Warsh nomination frozen

Senate Banking Committee made no progress. Tillis blocking all Fed nominees pending DOJ investigation into Fed headquarters renovation. OGE conflict-of-interest review regarding Warsh's Estée Lauder ties adds complication. Powell's term expires 15 May.

### Markets: fifth consecutive weekly loss

SPX closed 6,368.85 (-1.67% Friday)---seven-month low. Monday surged 1.15% on Trump's Iran diplomacy claim, eroded by Tuesday. Thursday -1.74% as Iran rejected peace proposal. Friday amplified by end-of-week selling. Dow at 45,167---entered correction territory (-10% from peak). Nasdaq at 20,948 (-13% from October record). Russell 2000 already in correction. VIX closed above 31. 10-year yield 4.44% (highest since July 2025), 30-year briefly pierced 5.00%. Mortgage rates 6.38% (six-month high). BofA: 35% recession probability.

## **China retaliates on trade**

Two trade barrier investigations launched Friday---targeting US restrictions on Chinese market access and barriers to green-energy exports. Six-month window places conclusions after May Trump-Xi summit. Commerce Minister Wang met USTR Greer in Cameroon day before, expressing "grave concern." GameStop Q4 beat (\$0.49 EPS vs \$0.08-\$0.37), revenue missed (-14% YoY), 4,710 Bitcoin retained but 4,709 pledged as collateral.

## **European Union: ECB Pivots Hawkish, Stagflation Signals Flash**

### **Flash PMIs ring stagflation alarm**

Eurozone composite PMI fell to 50.5 (10-month low). Manufacturing surprised at 51.4 (45-month high)---but driven by stockpiling ahead of supply disruptions, not genuine demand. Services collapsed to 50.1. Manufacturing input costs surged at fastest pace since February 2023---10.6-point monthly jump was largest on record. Business confidence: steepest fall since Russia's 2022 invasion. Germany manufacturing 51.7 (stockpiling-driven). France sank to 48.3 (third consecutive contraction month).

### **Confidence collapses across Germany**

Ifo Business Climate fell to 86.4 (from 88.4). Expectations plunged to 86.0 from 90.2. Ifo President Fuest: "The war in Iran has ended hopes of an economic upswing." GfK consumer confidence for April crashed to -28.0 (weakest since March 2024). Economic expectations swung from +4.3 to -6.9. Income expectations collapsed from +6.3 to -6.3.

### **ECB's hawkish pivot**

Lagarde at ECB Watchers conference: "We will not be paralysed by hesitation. Our commitment to delivering 2% inflation is unconditional." Lane identified price-hike expectations and wages for new hires as critical transmission channels. Nagel: April rate hike "certainly an option." Markets pricing ~72bp of hikes by December (two to three increases). Barclays/JP Morgan project three hikes (April, June, July) to 2.75%. MUFG raised HICP forecast to 2.8%, cut GDP to 0.7%.

### **Spain CPI, Russian LNG ban, equities**

Spain flash March CPI jumped to 3.3% (from 2.3%)---highest since June 2024. EU ban on Russian LNG transshipment via European ports took effect 27 March. TTF gas eased to €54-56/MWh. STOXX 600 +1.3% for week. DAX -0.3%. EUR/USD weakened to ~1.1504.

## **China: Industrial Profits Surge, Trade Tensions Escalate**

### **Industrial profits +15.2%**

January-February profits rose 15.2% YoY to CNY 1.02 trillion (from 0.6% for all 2025). Manufacturing +18.9%. Electronics profits +203.5%. High-tech manufacturing +58.7%. Automobile profits -30.2% (domestic price war). Cost per 100 yuan revenue fell to 84.83---first decline since 2022.

## **PBOC and summit**

Pan Gongsheng at China Development Forum pledged "moderately accommodative" stance. Yuan appreciated ~1.3% vs dollar YTD. Trump-Xi summit confirmed 14-15 May in Beijing. He Lifeng-Bessent Paris talks described as "very good." PBOC held all rates---LPR unchanged 10th month.

## **Markets whipsawed**

Shanghai Composite plunged 3.6% Monday (worst day of Iran crisis), recovered mid-week, closed at 3,914 (-1.1% for week). CSI 300 fell to ~4,500 (lowest since December 2025). Hang Seng: -3.5% Monday, recovered, closed at 24,952. Offshore yuan weakened to 6.91.

## **Japan: Shuntō Delivers, Yen Breaches 160**

### **Rengo first tally: 5.26% wage growth**

Third consecutive year above 5%. Base pay 3.85% (exceeding last year's 3.84%). Toyota met demands at ¥21,580/month. Honda ¥18,500, Suzuki exceeded at ¥20,500. Steel sector fell short. Capital Economics called it "strongest in over three decades."

### **February CPI fell below target**

Headline 1.3% YoY (lowest since March 2022). Core ex-fresh food 1.6% (below BOJ 2% target for first time since March 2022). But core-core ex-food-and-energy held at 2.5%---underlying pressures persist. Energy prices -9.1% due to government subsidies masking true cost.

### **Yen breached 160**

USD/JPY touched 160.20 Friday---first breach since July 2024 intervention. Finance Minister Katayama warned of "bold actions," flagged possible joint intervention with US, and inquired about crude oil futures intervention. Flash PMIs moderated: manufacturing 51.4, services 52.8, composite 52.5---all still expansionary. Business confidence at 11-month low. Nikkei gained ~2.1% for week after prior week's steep decline. 80M barrel oil reserve release ongoing.

## **Geopolitics and Commodities**

### **Hormuz: selective passage, no breakthrough**

Iran permitted transit for China, Russia, India, Iraq, Pakistan vessels. IRGC "tollbooth" system via Larak Island---documentation, crew checks, some payments in yuan. Only 142 transits between 1-25 March (vs 100+/day pre-conflict). ~400 vessels backed up. IRGC Navy commander Tangsiri assassinated by Israel 26 March. Iran rejected US peace proposal 26 March. Agreed to UN humanitarian/fertiliser shipments 27 March. Trump extended pause on Iranian energy strikes by 10 days to 6 April. DIA estimated 1-6 months closure. IEA: largest supply event in history, Gulf production cut by at least 10M bpd.

### **Oil V-shape back above \$112**

Brent opened ~\$101 Monday on ceasefire hopes + IEA 400M barrel release authorisation. Dipped to \$99.75 Tuesday. Reversed to \$105.85 Wednesday (Iran rejected talks). \$107.81 Thursday

(Tangsirri assassination). Friday surged 4.22% to \$112.57. WTI +5.46% to \$99.64 (briefly above \$100). Dubai physical at \$126 (+76% from pre-conflict). Dallas Fed scenario: sustained closure removes ~20% global supply, pushes WTI to \$98, reduces global GDP by 2.9 percentage points annualised in Q2.

### **Gold sideways, silver down further**

Gold traded \$4,430-\$4,560 range---essentially flat after prior week's crash. Silver closed ~\$67.73-\$70.42 (down ~44% from January ATH above \$100). Copper ~\$5.46/lb.

### **European gas eased slightly**

TTF at €54-56/MWh (from €58-62 prior week). EU storage 28.4% (5pp below year ago). Netherlands at 6%. Goldman raised Q2 forecast to €72/MWh, adverse scenarios €89+. Russian LNG transshipment ban took effect 27 March. No Russia-Ukraine ceasefire progress.