

FINANCE

WINNERS FOR THE WEEK ▲

STOCK	SYMBOL	52-wk LOW	52-wk HIGH	PRICE 3/31	PRICE 4/7	CHANGE
Triple-S Management Corp.	GTS	16.49	27.70	17.57	18.05	0.48
Evertec Inc.	EVTC	12.98	18.60	15.90	16.05	0.15

LOSERS FOR THE WEEK ▼

STOCK	SYMBOL	52-wk LOW	52-wk HIGH	PRICE 3/31	PRICE 4/7	CHANGE
Popular Inc.	BPOP	26.52	45.96	40.73	40.08	-0.65
OFG Bancorp	OFG	6.26	14.48	11.80	11.20	-0.60
First BanCorp	FBP	2.60	7.05	5.65	5.54	-0.11

U.S. STOCKS

	M	T	W	TH	F
DOW	-0.06%	0.19%	-0.20%	0.07%	-0.03%
S&P	-0.16%	0.06%	-0.31%	0.09%	-0.08%
NASDAQ	-0.29%	0.07%	-0.58%	0.25%	-0.02%

U.S. FUELS AVERAGE PRICE MARCH 27

Regular Gasoline	\$2.424
Premium Gasoline	\$2.724
Diesel	\$2.582

EUR/USD

	M	T	W	TH	F
OPEN	1.0658	1.0667	1.0671	1.0661	1.0642
CLOSE	1.0671	1.0674	1.0663	1.0644	1.0590

USD/JPY

	M	T	W	TH	F
OPEN	111.38	110.87	110.74	110.68	110.79
CLOSE	111.89	110.75	110.70	110.81	111.07

Think Strategically: Syria Attack, China Summit, Jobs Report; Joseph Stiglitz

BY FRANCISCO RODRÍGUEZ-CASTRO
frc@birlingcapital.com

SYRIA ATTACK

President Trump decided to take action following the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's deadly chemical warfare attack on its citizens. Last week the administration announced the U.S. Navy had fired missiles at the Syrian air base responsible for the chemical attack, which the U.S. and NATO blamed on the Damascus government. The Trump administration's action is a substantial departure from stated policy toward Syria. The change stirred reactions from stocks to currencies, but did not significantly impact the markets, with the Dow Jones closing down to 20,656.10 and the S&P 500 at 2,355.54.

CHINA SUMMIT

Last week President Trump started a two-day summit with President Xi Jinping of China.

INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERINGS FOR WEEK OF APRIL 10

Company	Ticker	Exchange	Price Range	Deal Size (\$ M)
Vantage Energy	VEACU	Nasdaq	\$10.00-\$00.00	\$400
Warrior Met Coal	HCC	NYSE	\$17.00-\$19.00	\$300
Netshoes	NETS	NYSE	\$18.00-\$20.00	\$157
Cadence Bancorp	CADE	NYSE	\$19.00-\$21.00	\$150
Yext	YEXT	NYSE	\$8.00-\$10.00	\$95
Tocagen	TOCA	Nasdaq	\$10.00-\$12.00	\$80

One of the top priorities of the summit was an agreement for a 100-day plan for trade talks to reduce the trade deficit and boost U.S. exports. Xi has often said that China's nearly 40% trade surplus is generated by U.S. companies operating in China, while he also stated that bilateral trade agreements create 2.6 million U.S. jobs. Much more to come as talks resume.

JOBS REPORT

Last Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Jobs Report noted

that unemployment declined 0.2 percentage points to 4.5% in March, which is the lowest unemployment rate in at least a decade. Nonfarm payroll employment increased a paltry 98,000, which was much less than the 180,000 estimate, especially after increases in January and February. The total number of new jobs during the first quarter was 533,000. The labor-participation rate also remained unchanged at 63% in March. We have not seen the expansive manufacturing growth that Trump expects,

which is crucial to improving our participation rate.

P.R. UPDATE: CNE'S STIGLITZ KEYNOTE

An inaugural event by the Center for a New Economy's Growth Commission hosted Nobel laureate, economist Dr. Joseph Stiglitz, and more than 1,000 visitors. In a highly informative chat, Stiglitz stated his views on current actions by the Financial Oversight & Management Board. "The policies that have been put forward could, in fact, lead to another lost decade for Puerto Rico."

This statement supports the views of economists Andrew Wolfe, José J. Villamil and Gustavo Vélez, which point to a 4% economic contraction during each of the next two fiscal years. However, Stiglitz goes much further, saying the financial plan's measures are more "draconian" than those in Greece. He further stated that Puerto Rico does not have an unwillingness to repay, but rather is unable to repay without causing long-term suffering to its citizens.

Stiglitz said a real debt restructuring is one where the country starts to grow again in a short period. However, since 1970, more than 50% of the restructured debt has been followed by another debt restructuring or default within five years, and this is the record we need to recognize.

FINAL WORD

We commend the CNE and its members for bringing Dr. Stiglitz to Puerto Rico and elevating the discussion on our economic situation. You may concur or not with Stiglitz's view, but participating and listening to expert points of view are vital. We must recall the difference between a travel agent and a tour guide. A travel agent helps us plan a great trip and it usually is up to us once we get there. However, a tour guide is a different story: They go with you on the journey, experience every site and hear every sound right with us. For what Puerto Rico is facing, we need the best tour guide we can get. ■

Francisco Rodríguez-Castro, president & CEO of Birling Capital with over 25 years of experience, has been a key executive in government, global, multinational and public companies as well as a key corporate adviser to multiple entities in a diverse array of market segments. He has participated in structuring over \$10 billion in municipal finance, corporate, commercial, asset-based, P.R. Industrial, Tourism, Educational, Medical & Environmental Control Facilities Financing Authority (Afica), and mergers & acquisitions transactions.