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by Francisco Rodríguez-Castro
frc@birlingcapital.com

The U.S. & European stock markets continued their free fall as worrisome investors delivered the second consecutive losing week. The U.S., Russia, and Ukraine conflict took it up a notch, with Russia starting nuclear drills in the region, showing no signs of de-escalation.

In addition to the war threat, which impacts the markets in a very material manner, since today is options expiration day, an occurrence that happens the third Friday of each month. Trillions of dollars in options, futures on stocks, indexes, and ETF's expire, causing the market to swing even further. The V.I.X. Index rose to 29.59, with a highly volatile session.

Key economic data:

- U.S. Existing Home Sales: rose to 6.50 million, up from 6.09 million last month, increasing 6.73%.
- Canada Retail Sales Month-over-Month: fell to -1.75%, versus 0.78% last month.
- Canada New Housing Price Index Year-over-Year: rose to 11.83%, versus 11.65% last month.
- U.K. Retail Sales excluding Fuel Year-over-Year: rose to 7.20%, versus -3.80% last month.

Puerto Rico COVID-19 Daily Update:

- New Cases: 135, down 11.76%.
- Positivity Rate: 6.90%, up 1.73%.
- Puerto Rico Vaccination Rate: 84.8%.
- Total Hospitalizations: 158, down 5.95%.
- Deaths: 9, up 80%.
- Source: Puerto Rico Department of Health

Eurozone Summary for February 18:

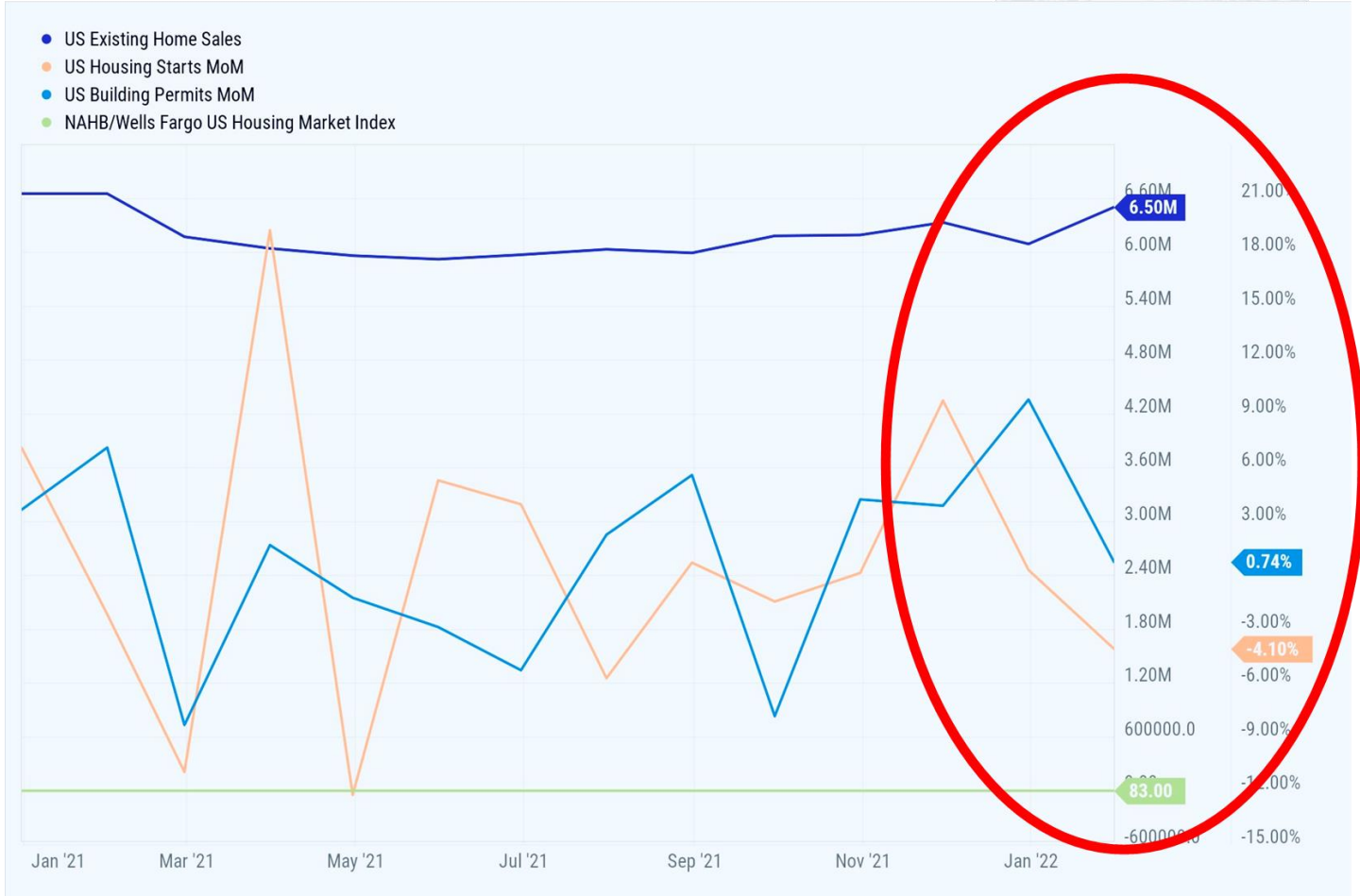
- Stoxx 600 closed at 461.15, down 3.40 points or 0.73%.
- FTSE 100 closed at 7,513.62, down 23.75 or 0.32%.
- Dax Index closed at 15,049.37, down 218.26 points or 1.43%.

Wall Street summary for February 18:

- Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 34,079.18, down 232.85 points or 0.68%.
- Standard & Poor's 500 closed at 4,348.87, down 31.39 or 0.72%.
- Nasdaq Composite Index closed at 13,548.06, down 168.65 points, or 1.23%.

- Birling Capital Puerto Rico Stock Index closed at 2,895.12, down 97.79 points, or 3.27%.
- The U.S. Treasury 10-year note closed at 1.92%.
- The U.S. Treasury 2-year note closed at 1.47%.

U.S. Housing Statistics



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