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Summary

Key Trends:

- According to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) April annual report, global growth in 2025 was downgraded from +3.3% to +2.8%, 0.5% lower than 2024. Concerns related to tariffs and their impact on growth drove the reduction. The US growth forecast saw one of the larger declines for 2025 (+2.7% to +1.8%). China's growth forecast was also substantially lowered for this year (+4.6% to +4.0%), while growth in the EU is projected to be slightly higher (+1.3%) in 2025.
- Despite the recent pause and negotiations related to tariffs, many questions remain. Overall, higher tariff levels and continued uncertainty could weigh on growth while increasing prices. Inflation levels and recent developments with tariffs will likely lead to a slower pace of interest rate cuts by the Fed. Uncertainty in the US and the potential for slower growth could continue the rotation out of US assets and put continued downward pressure on the dollar.
- Some signs of stress have started to emerge on the US consumer with sentiment weakening since the start of the year. Consumers are particularly concerned about losing their jobs and the potential for higher prices. Overall, risk to economic growth and to inflation from tariffs, as well as elevated borrowing costs, could put further pressure on consumers and lead to a weaker job market. The recent resumption of collecting and reporting delinquent student loans could be a further headwind to consumption.
- US equities recovered from losses experienced during the first week of April and ended the quarter at all-time highs. A focus going forward will be whether earnings can remain resilient if growth slows. Also, the future paths of the large technology companies that have driven market gains will continue to be important.
- Trade tensions between the US and China will remain a key focus. Recently, the two countries agreed on a 90-day truce with the US lowering its maximum tariff rate on Chinese goods from 145% to 30%, with a 10% baseline level. China agreed to lower its 125% tariff on American goods to 10%. Questions remain about what will happen after the 90-day period. Notably, tariff levels on China remain higher than where they previously were.