LEVERAGED FINANCE MARKET PERSPECTIVE LETTER

Trends and Tremors

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February was a turbulent month for the markets as investors navigated significant geopolitical, technological, and financial market disruptions. While the foundation of the economy still appears sound, an undercurrent of mounting risks has emerged including potential AI-driven displacement across sectors, concerns of a protracted war in the Middle East driving oil prices higher, persistent inflation complicating the Fed's policy calculus, and uncertainty surrounding the Supreme Court's ruling on President Trump's use of emergency powers to implement global tariffs. Given these potential market-moving dynamics, anxiety now runs deep across markets. U.S. economic resiliency may now be tested, though higher GDP growth, relatively stable labor markets, positive wage growth, stronger corporate earnings, and stimulus from tax code revisions should provide support. Though equity markets were rattled, safe-haven assets such as Treasuries and investment-grade bonds acted as an anchor, posting strong gains for the month. Over the near term, investors are likely to focus on the consequential appointment of incoming Fed Chair Kevin Warsh, who will be challenged with overhauling the bureaucratic Federal Reserve while engineering interest rate cuts amid conflicting economic signals. If credit spreads widen and yields rise, the resulting dislocations could offer opportunities to purchase high-conviction assets at favorable entry points. Concurrently, the leveraged finance markets could serve as an attractive alternative to the more volatile equity markets, offering compelling relative value for patient investors.

Please reach out to InvestorRelations@ShenkmanCapital.com for the full letter.

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The ISM Manufacturing Index is a monthly gauge on the level of economic activity in the U.S. manufacturing sector versus the previous month.

The ICE BofA Current 10-Year U.S. Treasury Index (GA10) is a one security index comprised of the most recently issued 10-year U.S. Treasury Note.

The ICE BofA U.S. Corporate Index (C0A0) has an inception date of December 31, 1972 and tracks the performance of U.S. dollar denominated investment grade corporate debt publicly issued in the U.S. domestic market.

The ICE BofA U.S. High Yield Index (H0A0) has an inception date of August 31, 1986 and tracks the performance of U.S. dollar denominated below investment grade corporate debt publicly issued in the U.S. domestic market.

The Morningstar LSTA US Leveraged Loan Index is a market value-weighted index designed to measure the performance of the U.S. leveraged loan market based upon weightings, spreads and interest payments.

The Refinitiv US All-Cap Focus Convertible Bond Index has an inception date of December 1993, is a subset of the Refinitiv US Convertible Bond Index and includes securities that have a price between 60 and 140 and a conversion premium of < 100%, among other criteria. The Refinitiv US Convertible Bond Index includes convertible securities that are denominated in USD, have a market value of over $300mm, and have underlying stocks that trade on US equity markets.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a price-weighted average of thirty blue-chip stocks that are generally the leaders in their respective industries.

The Russell 2000 Index measures the performance of the small-cap segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes approximately 2000 of the smallest securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership.

The S&P 500 Index is designed to reflect the U.S. equity markets and focuses on the large-cap sector of the market, which includes the 500 leading companies in leading industries of the U.S. economy.

The NASDAQ composite index is a market-capitalization weighted index of the more than 3,000 common equities listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange. The types of securities in the index include American Depositary Receipts, Common Stock, Limited Partnership Interests, Ordinary Shares, Real Estate Investment Trusts, Shares of Beneficial Interest, and Tracking Stocks. The index includes all Nasdaq listed stocks that are not Security types not included in the Index are closed-end funds, convertible debentures, exchange traded funds, preferred stocks, rights, warrants, units and other derivative securities.

The MSCI Emerging Markets Index captures large and mid-cap representation across 24 Emerging Markets (EM) countries. With 1,398 constituents, the index covers approximately 85% of the free float-adjusted market capitalization in each country.

The MSCI World Index, which is part of The Modern Index Strategy, is a broad global equity index that represents large and mid-cap equity performance across 23 developed markets countries. It covers approximately 85% of the free float-adjusted market capitalization in each country and MSCI World Index does not offer exposure to emerging markets.

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