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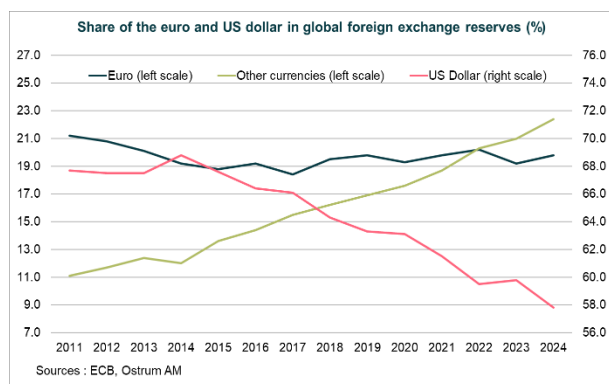
## • Topic of the week: Dedollarization: A Golden Opportunity for the Yuan by Zouhoure Bousbih

- The political shock across the Atlantic has seriously shaken the hegemony of the dollar, providing China with a golden opportunity to accelerate the yuanization of the global economy;
- To achieve this, Chinese authorities can rely on a parallel financial infrastructure based on the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), equivalent to CHIPS;
- And the e-CNY, the digital yuan, which is more controlled by the state, is used in the mBridge platform, providing faster and cheaper alternatives to traditional dollar transactions;
- This allows countries to diversify away from the dollar, providing protection against U.S. sanctions and facilitating the creation of a digital Silk Road through the expansion of the mBridge platform to other countries.

## • Market review: Has the Hierarchy of Risks Been Disrupted Again? by Axel Botte

- Israeli strikes in Iran bring geopolitical risk back to the forefront of market concerns;
- United States: Inflation indices come in below expectations;
- Rates: The T-note is trending back towards 4.40%;
- Sovereign Debt: Italian spreads outperform, while Belgium is downgraded to A+ by Fitch.

## • Chart of the week



The share of the euro in global foreign reserves (at constant exchange rates) has remained relatively stable since 2011, fluctuating around 20%. This contrasts with the decline in the share of the US dollar, which has decreased since 2016, falling from 67.6% to 57.8% in 2024. This decline has benefited other currencies, which now account for 22.4% of global foreign reserves, particularly the Canadian and Australian dollars for diversification reasons.

In 2024, the share of gold in global foreign reserves (at market valuation) increased to 20%, surpassing that of the euro (16%), according to the ECB. Gold has thus become the second-largest reserve asset, behind the dollar, due to record purchases by central banks and a significant rise in the price of gold to record levels. Central bank gold holdings are now close to levels seen in 1965, during the Bretton Woods era. The main reasons for this are diversification to hedge against economic risks (including inflation) and protection against geopolitical risks.

## • Figure of the week

15

It represents the percentage of the economic output of the Eurozone threatened by water scarcity, the best performance of the MSCI World excluding the United States since the beginning of the year in 40 years, and the rise in crude oil prices following the Israeli attack on Iran." Source: ECB, Bloomberg.

● Topic of the week

## Dedollarization: A Golden Opportunity for the Yuan

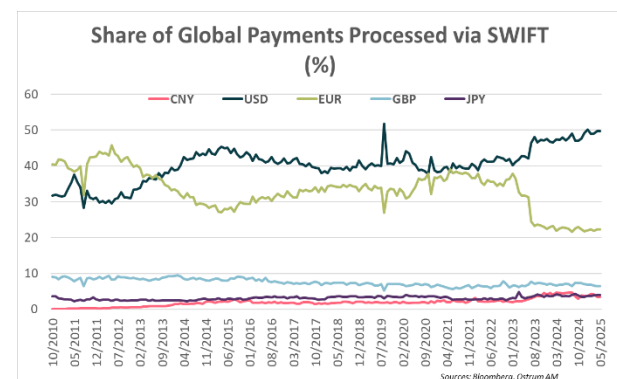
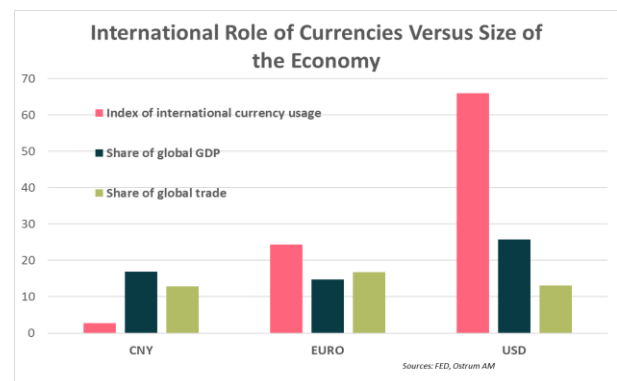
The political shock across the Atlantic has now severely undermined the hegemony of the dollar, creating a golden opportunity for the yuan. Indeed, despite Beijing's intent and efforts to supplant the dollar with its own currency, the yuanization of the global economy has only been achieved partially. China wants to accelerate the yuanization of Asia, as evidenced by the recent bilateral agreement signed with Indonesia, which provides for the use of local currencies for trade with Southeast Asia's largest economy. Its Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) could enhance the appeal of Chinese alternatives to the current system, thereby strengthening its influence on the international financial system. The mBridge project, a platform using the e-CNY, more state-controlled, offers faster and cheaper alternatives to traditional dollar transactions. Will China succeed in the yuanization of the global economy? The frequently mentioned obstacle is the closure of its capital account. However, the dollarization of the global economy began in 1950, when capital controls were still present in the United States. Beyond economic considerations, geopolitical factors should strengthen the role of the yuan in the global financial system.

### The Yuan Is Still Far from Surpassing the Dollar...

*The yuan accounts for only 2.5% of currencies used internationally...*

Despite Beijing's efforts to overtake the dollar, the yuan remains behind. The adjacent chart from the Fed illustrates that, despite China's significant share in global GDP (17%) and world trade (12.8%), the yuan accounts for only 2.5% of currencies used internationally, trailing far behind the dollar, which holds a 66% share. The international currency usage index is a weighted average of each currency's share in disclosed global foreign exchange reserves (weighted at 25%), foreign exchange transaction volume (25%), foreign currency debt issuance (25%), international foreign currency and banking claims (12.5%), and international foreign currency and banking liabilities (12.5%).

The renminbi also represents just 3.5% of payments through SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication), the secure communication network for financial institutions that facilitates financial transactions worldwide. Transactions continue to be predominantly conducted in dollars, accounting for 50% of total payments. It is worth noting the apparent decline of the euro starting in 2023, attributed to a major



.....But China aims to accelerate the yuanization, particularly in Asia.

Between 2020 and 2025, cross-border transactions in yuan increased by nearly 300%!

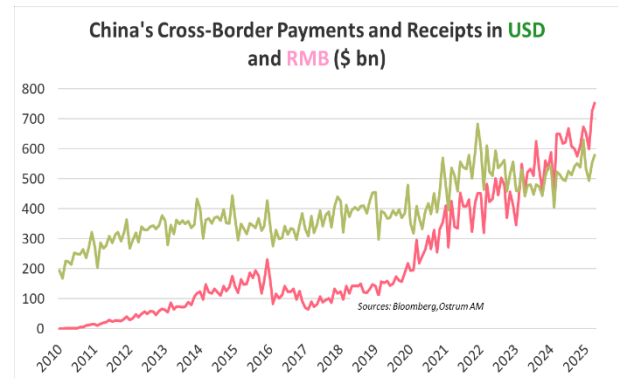
change in the payment platform in Europe and the adoption of a new SWIFT messaging standard. However, despite this, the euro's share has remained stable at around 20%.

### ... But Its Role Is Increasing in International Trade

In the economic (and technological) war against the United States, China is striving to promote the yuan in international trade. In this context, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) has significantly increased its gold reserves, which now represent 7% of its international reserves but remain below the global average of 15%, suggesting room for maneuver to accumulate more of the precious metal and support its value.

China also aims to dedollarize part of Asia to establish the yuan as the dominant currency in trade with the region. It has already laid the groundwork for such an endeavor with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest free trade agreement, which includes 15 countries such as Japan, South Korea, and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). RCEP is now entering its third year, and trade is expected to grow gradually over the next 10 to 15 years, at which point 90% of goods covered by the agreement will be exempt from tariffs.

China's cross-border transactions in yuan amounted to \$754 billion in April, accounting for 55% of its cross-border financial transactions, surpassing those denominated in dollars for the first time, as shown in the adjacent chart. U.S. financial sanctions against Russia, particularly the freezing of its dollar assets following its invasion of Ukraine, have accelerated the use of the yuan in trade with China. In 2024, the share of cross-border payments in yuan for goods trade reached 30%, according to the governor of the PBOC.



China encourages its trading partners, particularly Asian countries like South Korea, to settle their payments in renminbi. Chinese exporters are requesting South Korean importers to pay in yuan by offering them price discounts, and Chinese banks absorb the costs of exchange rate hedging. Consequently, the share of payments to Chinese exporters in yuan has more than doubled, from 6.5% in 2020 to 13.7% last year, according to the Bank of Korea.

On May 26th, China raised the minimum ratio for trade transactions denominated in yuan from 25% to 40% to promote the use of the yuan in commercial transactions. By accelerating the internationalization of its currency, China also combats the extraterritoriality of U.S. law that applies to the dollar and seeks to protect itself from potential U.S. financial sanctions.

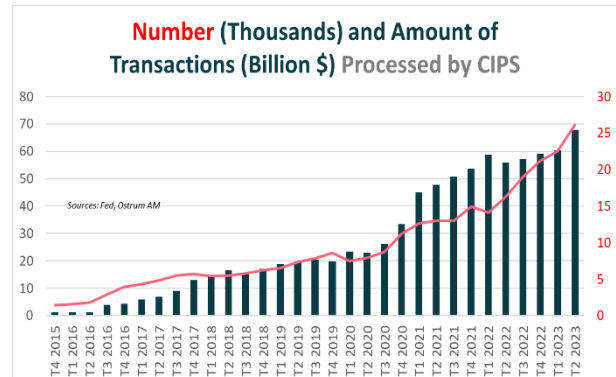
### China Exerts Influence on the International Financial System via CIPS (Cross-Border Interbank Payment System)

The United States and its allies have deployed a significant financial arsenal to sanction Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. This has included disconnecting Russian banks from SWIFT, prohibiting transactions with Russian counterparts, and freezing the central bank's dollar assets. These measures were possible because SWIFT's shareholders are Western banks, CHIPS—the largest private-sector dollar clearing and settlement system—is supervised by the Fed, and because the dollar is the dominant currency.

*The Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) could enhance the appeal of Chinese alternatives to international finance.*

The Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), supported by the People's Bank of China (PBOC), could enhance the appeal of Chinese alternatives to international finance. Launched in 2015 to increase efficiency and reduce transaction costs in yuan, CIPS typically uses SWIFT messaging for cross-border clearing and settlement. The U.S. equivalent is CHIPS. CIPS has already convinced 1,300 banking institutions across 110 countries.

The adoption of CIPS accelerated following sanctions against Russia in 2022, reaching a volume of \$60 billion per day in Q2 2023, as shown in the adjacent chart. The Chinese government thus intends to use CIPS to exert its influence on the international financial system.



*The e-CNY allows China to build a parallel financial architecture.*

## E-CNY: A Disruptive Potential

China also initiated a digital yuan pilot project, the e-CNY, as early as 2017. Since then, the country has been at the forefront of the central bank digital currency revolution. According to the 2024 survey by the Bank for International Settlements, 87% of G20 central banks have taken the Chinese model into account in their research, attesting to the viability of the digital yuan.

China has included the e-CNY in projects like mBridge, a multi-bank central bank digital currency platform for executing cross-border payments. Other participants include Hong Kong, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. mBridge is experiencing 300% annual growth, with \$22 billion processed in 2023.

On this platform, cross-border transactions are processed in less than 10 seconds compared to 2 to 3 days for SWIFT! mBridge is also available during SWIFT's closing hours, enhancing its appeal. Countries under U.S. financial sanctions, such as Russia, Iran, and Venezuela, view the e-CNY as a means of bypassing SWIFT. Thus, the e-CNY, more state-controlled, could undermine the dollar's dominance by offering faster and cheaper alternatives to traditional dollar transactions. An expansion of mBridge is also planned this year to 15 new countries, potentially generating \$500 billion annually compared to \$5 trillion in daily flows for SWIFT. To accelerate the adoption of its e-CNY, China might impose yuan pricing for its rare earths, which account for 80% of the global supply. This is likely a point of contention in current negotiations with the White House.

## Conclusion

The international financial system adopted since World War II, which grants the dollar a dominant position, is increasingly being challenged across the globe. China is seizing this opportunity to accelerate the yuanization of the global economy. To achieve this, authorities can rely on a parallel financial infrastructure based on the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) and the e-CNY, more state-controlled, utilized on the mBridge platform, offering faster and cheaper alternatives to traditional dollar transactions. This allows countries to diversify away from the dollar, providing protection against U.S. sanctions and facilitating the creation of a digital Silk Road through the expansion of the mBridge platform to other countries. While increasing the attractiveness of the yuan depends on the strength of the Chinese economy, CIPS and mBridge enable China to exert its influence on the international financial system, reshuffling the geopolitical landscape.

Zouhoure Bousbih

- **Market review**

## **Has the Hierarchy of Risks Been Disrupted Again?**

**Financial markets often traverse several logics in succession. Geopolitical risk is once again taking center stage, benefiting the bond markets, which are also supported by inflation figures that have come in lower than expected.**

Israeli strikes in Iran introduce a risk of extended armed conflicts in the Middle East, prompting a strong response from Iran. Meanwhile, the trade war is not over, despite supposed advancements. In the United States, the almost insurrectional context in California also calls for caution. The old reflex to seek safety in T-notes is re-emerging, putting the budgetary issues on the back burner. The cushioning effect of long-term rates is preventing a more significant correction in risk assets, while gold prices are rising.

From a macroeconomic perspective, U.S. inflation has surprisingly declined for the second consecutive time. Economists had anticipated a more pronounced effect from tariffs. The U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI) thus remains stable at 2.4% in May, with a 2.8% reading excluding energy and food. Certain categories of goods (such as clothing and household appliances) subject to tariffs are even seeing price declines. Early signs of a reversal in real estate prices are also likely to favor disinflation. The Federal Reserve, under constant pressure from the administration, maintains a cautious stance on inflation, reminiscent of its communication from spring 2024, even though the tariff shock continues to hinder consumption. However, the confidence shock appears to be easing. The Fed will soon need to take into greater account the deterioration in the labor market. The number of individuals receiving unemployment benefits stands at 1.95 million, the highest level since 2021. Layoff announcements are accumulating, and certain sectors are struggling to recruit due to immigration policies. The FOMC's growth projections will likely be revised downward, alongside upward revisions for inflation and unemployment expectations.

The T-note is trading around 4.40%, supported by underwhelming price data and a renewed flight to quality following the Israeli attack in Iran. The trend toward flattening has thus been interrupted. However, it is likely that budgetary concerns will revive upward pressure on long-term rates in the coming weeks, driven by credit spreads. Provision 899 of the budget could impact foreign demand for U.S. assets, including Treasuries. Currently, interest income benefits from an exceptional regime that seems to be under scrutiny. The Bund is trading without a clear trend around 2.50%. The ECB maintains an accommodative bias in its rate policy, but quantitative tightening is dampening the impact of deposit rate cuts on longer maturities. Anticipated inflation is rising in the short term with developments in oil prices. Peripheral sovereign bonds continue to outperform French and Belgian debt. Following France, Belgium has been downgraded to A+ by Fitch due to its structural budget deficit. Selling pressure on OLOs (57 bps) appeared to intensify towards the end of the week. The convergence of Italian BTPs towards better-rated but fragile countries will continue.

In the credit market, current valuation levels raise questions, but the primary market still sees strong demand from investors. The spread against swaps (85 bps) reflects market resilience, as does the iTraxx Crossover, which finishes the week without exceeding 300 bps. U.S. equities show modest declines, while European stocks have fallen by 2% over five sessions. Volatility has risen above 20%, while Asia appears relatively unscathed.

**Axel Botte**

• Main market indicators

G4 Government Bonds	16-Jun-25	1w k (bp)	1m (bp)	2025 (bp)
EUR Bunds 2y	1.86%	-1	+0	-23
EUR Bunds 10y	2.55%	-2	-4	+18
EUR Bunds 2s10s	68.7 bp	-1	-4	+41
USD Treasuries 2y	3.96%	-4	-4	-28
USD Treasuries 10y	4.43%	-4	-4	-14
USD Treasuries 2s10s	46.4 bp	0	-1	+14
GBP Gilt 10y	4.56%	-8	-9	-1
JPY JGB 10y	1.44%	-3	+2	+2
€ Sovereign Spreads (10y)	16-Jun-25	1w k (bp)	1m (bp)	2025 (bp)
France	70 bp	+3	+4	-12
Italy	85 bp	-7	-13	-31
Spain	61 bp	+3	+2	-8
Inflation Break-evens (10y)	16-Jun-25	1w k (bp)	1m (bp)	2025 (bp)
EUR 10y Inflation Swap	1.97%	+3	+4	+4
USD 10y Inflation Swap	2.47%	-1	-4	+1
GBP 10y Inflation Swap	3.23%	+4	-1	-29
EUR Credit Indices	16-Jun-25	1w k (bp)	1m (bp)	2025 (bp)
EUR Corporate Credit OAS	97 bp	+1	-2	-5
EUR Agencies OAS	51 bp	+2	+2	-11
EUR Securitized - Covered OAS	48 bp	+1	+2	-8
EUR Pan-European High Yield OAS	324 bp	+6	-9	+6
EUR/USD CDS Indices 5y	16-Jun-25	1w k (bp)	1m (bp)	2025 (bp)
iTraxx IG	57 bp	+1	-1	-1
iTraxx Crossover	293 bp	+4	-8	-21
CDX IG	55 bp	+1	-1	+5
CDX High Yield	340 bp	+2	-9	+29
Emerging Markets	16-Jun-25	1w k (bp)	1m (bp)	2025 (bp)
JPM EMBI Global Div. Spread	322 bp	+3	-5	-4
Currencies	16-Jun-25	1w k (%)	1m (%)	2025 (%)
EUR/USD	\$1.158	1.348	3.700	11.8
GBP/USD	\$1.358	0.199	2.221	8.5
USD/JPY	JPY 144	0.250	1.033	9.0
Commodity Futures	16-Jun-25	-1w k (\$)	-1m (\$)	2025 (%)
Crude Brent	\$73.4	\$6.4	\$8.6	0.7
Gold	\$3 412.4	\$86.2	\$208.8	30.0
Equity Market Indices	16-Jun-25	-1w k (%)	-1m (%)	2025 (%)
S&P 500	5 977	-0.39	0.31	1.6
EuroStoxx 50	5 329	-1.70	-1.81	8.8
CAC 40	7 767	-0.31	-1.52	5.2
Nikkei 225	38 311	0.58	1.48	-4.0
Shanghai Composite	3 389	-0.32	0.63	1.1
VIX - Implied Volatility Index	19.81	15.44	14.91	14.2

Source: Bloomberg, Ostrum AM



## Additional notes

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