



# SAM NEWS

1st Quarter 2026 Report  
April 2026

## War In Iran Stocks Retreat From All-Time Highs

*Exactly one year ago in our 1<sup>st</sup> quarter newsletter, we were writing about the Liberation Day “tariff tantrum” and the sharp 10% stock market decline that resulted. This year, stock prices are declining due to the war in Iran and the uncertainty surrounding the global economic impact that it is currently causing. U.S. stocks as represented by the broad S&P 500 are only down 4.3% year-to-date, which is much less than the 10% correction that we experienced during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter last year.*

*Oil has pushed well above \$100 a barrel for the first time since 2022 as fighting in the region is causing supply disruptions and a near shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz. Since rising energy costs affect everything from transportation to inflation, oil price moves get attention quickly. Despite the scary nightly news headlines, the broader market has held up relatively well over the last month. Investors are still weighing strong corporate earnings and long-term growth trends against the short-term uncertainty created by geopolitical events and higher energy prices. We believe that the war will be like past “shocks” and stock prices will likely rebound quickly once there is more certainty. Please read on for our SAM Outlook and SAM Strategy sections.*

### 1st QUARTER 2026 INVESTMENT REPORT

Stocks were volatile during the first quarter as investors tried to gauge the economic impact of the war in Iran. The S&P 500 declined 4.3% for the quarter while the DOW 30 was down 3.2%. The NASDAQ Composite was down nearly 7% during the quarter, suffering the largest losses of the major U.S. indices. The small company Russell 2000 finished with a slight gain of 0.9%. International stocks, as represented by the MSCI EAFE Index slipped 1.2% during the quarter. The U.S. bond market (Bloomberg Aggregate Bond Index) ended exactly flat for the quarter as investors sought safe haven in bonds. Gold prices retreated from an all-time high of \$5,626 per ounce to \$4,510 per ounce on 3/31/26- a decline of nearly 20%.

### INVESTMENT INDICES

All numbers listed are total returns (including dividends) and are percentage gains or losses.

	1st Quarter	2025	2024
Dow 30	-3.2%	14.9%	15.0%
S&P 500	-4.3%	17.9%	25.0%
Nasdaq Composite	-6.9%	21.1%	28.6%
Russell 2000	+0.9%	12.8%	11.5%
MSCI EAFE (Int'l stocks)	-1.2%	31.2%	1.0%
Bloomberg Aggregate (Bonds)	0.0%	7.3%	1.3%

*\*\*These are not the rates of return for SAM accounts, but are shown as a historical benchmark for various asset classes. SAM does not guarantee account performance. Accounts may lose value. Information taken from sources believed to be reliable, but its accuracy cannot be guaranteed.\*\**

### Last Chance to Fund Retirement Plans For Tax Year 2025

In general, most retirement plans must be funded by April 15<sup>th</sup> to be considered for the 2025 tax year. This applies to traditional IRAs, ROTH IRAs, SEP IRAs, SIMPLE IRAs, and most formal retirement plans. If you have not funded your retirement account for 2025 and are still planning on contributing, you should do this as soon as possible. If you have specific questions about how to make your contribution, please contact our office toll-free at 877-658-5193 and we will be glad to assist you.

### ANNUAL ADV OFFER

We recently filed our annual updating amendments to our U.S. Securities & Exchange ADV Part I, ADV Part II, and Customer Relationship Summary (CRS)\*. The only material change was to update our regulatory assets under management. Our annual U.S. SEC filings can always be viewed online at

<https://adviserinfo.sec.gov/firm/summary/108685>

### Upcoming Holidays

Memorial Day, May 25th  
Juneteenth, Friday, June 19th  
Independence Day, Friday, July 3th  
(observed)

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**SAM Outlook and Strategy on the following page.**



After three consecutive calendar years of solid gains, U.S. stocks notched all-time highs in late January. The broad U.S. stock market has declined roughly 6% from the recent all-time highs due to the war in Iran- back to about the same level as November, 2025. Compared to last year’s Liberation Day decline, this decline has been much slower and has experienced less volatility. We believe that this will turn out to be like previous historical geopol-

itical shocks that we have had and stocks will rebound- perhaps quickly- when there is a resolution in sight.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, stock prices closely track corporate earnings. U.S. corporate earnings are expected to grow at 12-15% in 2026, continuing the trend of the last several years. There are many factors driving this earnings growth, but the main drivers are likely to be investments in artificial intelligence, consumer spending, and tax policy tailwinds. Of course, corporate earnings could be at least temporarily impacted by the oil price shock and other geopolitical events. The level of impact will likely be determined by how long the war in Iran continues and how long it takes to re-open the Strait of Hormuz. We remain optimistic that U.S. stocks will have another positive year- probably closer to the long-term average returns of 8-10%.

## SAM STRATEGY

We continue to closely monitor our investment holdings across all strategies. Our international stock allocation and bond holdings have recently been insulating our portfolios from the U.S.-led stock decline. We are continually looking at potential new investment opportunities- especially when our view is that stocks and certain sectors are on sale.

Going into this decline, we were fully invested across our four basic management strategies. We have been dollar-cost-averaging any client cash that is available to invest and investing new deposits right away. If you have cash or savings outside of Schwab, now may be an opportune time to add new funds to your account. As John Bogle, the founder of Vanguard said, “Buy right, and hold tight.” You may still have time to contribute to certain types of retirement accounts for 2025- generally up to the time of your tax filing, with extensions.

## Increased Retirement Contribution Limits

The IRS has announced higher retirement plan contribution limits for 2026, creating additional opportunities for investors to save in tax-advantaged accounts. The annual employee contribution limit for workplace retirement plans such as 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and governmental 457 plans has increased to **\$24,500**, up from \$23,500 in 2025. Individuals aged 50 and older can make an additional **\$8,000 catch-up contribution**, allowing total annual contributions of up to **\$32,500**. In addition, under provisions from the SECURE 2.0 Act, individuals ages 60–63 may qualify for an enhanced catch-up contribution of **\$11,250**, allowing them to contribute as much as **\$35,750** in 2026.

Contribution limits for **Traditional and Roth IRAs** are also increasing. In 2026, individuals can contribute up to **\$7,500** to an IRA, up from \$7,000 in 2025, with those age 50 and older eligible for an additional **\$1,100 catch-up contribution**. While Traditional IRA contributions may be tax-deductible depending on income and participation in a workplace retirement plan, Roth IRA contributions are made with after-tax dollars but allow for tax-free qualified withdrawals in retirement. If you have not reviewed your retirement contributions recently, consider increasing your payroll deferrals or IRA contributions to take advantage of the higher 2026 limits. Even modest increases can meaningfully improve long-term retirement savings when compounded over time.

### Client Portal

Would you prefer to receive your quarterly reports and our newsletter electronically? Our secure client portal has been up and running for some time and is being adopted by an increasing number of clients. In addition to your normal quarterly reports, you will have access to additional account value and performance data on a daily basis. If you would like to sign up for our portal, please send an email to Kimberly ([kimberly@sierraam.com](mailto:kimberly@sierraam.com)) or call our office at 559-658-5193.

**"The stock market is a device to transfer money from the impatient to the patient."**

— Warren Buffett

*We sincerely appreciate your business. Our team strives to provide excellent customer service to all our valued customers. Sending new clients our way is the best possible compliment we can receive. If you know of someone who may benefit from our service, please do not keep us a secret.*