

**US:International markets roundup**

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M SYDNEY, April 17 AAP - NEW YORK:US stocks closed higher on Monday, getting a boost from the technology and healthcare sectors as investors were optimistic about earnings season and appeared less worried about US-led missile attacks in Syria.

The weekend's air strikes marked the biggest intervention yet by Western countries against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his ally Russia, which is facing further economic sanctions over its role in the conflict.

Stocks had ended lower on Friday on worries about Syria. But investors seemed less anxious about the potential for retaliation from Russia, an Assad ally, since there was none at the weekend.

"Geopolitical conditions calmed," said Tim Ghriskey, Chief Investment Strategist at Inverness Counsel in New York. "There's a lot of anticipation about very strong earnings growth in the quarter. That may be attracting traders and even longer-term investors back into the market."

Netflix shares gained around seven per cent after the market closed following its quarterly report. Its subscriber growth beat analyst expectations. It had ended the regular session down 1.2 per cent.

SP 500 companies are expected to report an 18.6 per cent jump in first-quarter profit, on average, the biggest rise in seven years, according to Thomson Reuters data.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 212.9 points, or 0.87 per cent, to 24,573.04, the SP 500 gained 21.54 points, or 0.81 per cent, to 2,677.84 and the Nasdaq Composite added 49.63 points, or 0.7 per cent, to 7,156.28.

JB Hunt Transport Services jumped 6.2 per cent after the trucking company's profit topped estimates.

Bank of America rose 0.44 per cent after a bigger-than-expected increase in quarterly profit.

LONDON:UK shares eased, with two corporate events taking centre stage: CEO Martin Sorrell's exit from advertising company WPP and US hedge fund Elliott Management raising its stake in hotel and coffee-shop operator Whitbread.

The blue chip FTSE 100 index ended the session down 0.9 per cent at 7,198.20 points, with traders across Europe remaining cautious, fearing that the weekend's missile strikes in Syria could increase tensions between the United States and Russia.

Germany's DAX 30 index closed 0.4 per cent lower, and in France the CAC 40 index was down 0.04 per cent

Relief over the lack of an immediate escalation of military action pushed oil prices lower and UK energy stocks followed suit. BP was down 1.6 per cent and Royal Dutch Shell 0.7 per cent.

Shares in WPP ended 6.5 per cent down as investors gauged how the world's biggest advertising agency would do without its founder, gone after an allegation of personal misconduct.

TOKYO:Asian share markets were mixed and oil prices fell on Monday as relief US-led strikes on Syria looked unlikely to escalate was tempered by concerns at Russia's potential reaction to new sanctions from Washington.

Japan's Nikkei rose 0.3 per cent. Yet MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan slipped 0.4 per cent as Chinese blue chips skidded 1.7 per cent.

The United States, France and Britain launched 105 missiles targeting what the Pentagon said were three chemical weapons facilities in Syria in retaliation for a suspected poison gas attack in Douma on April 7.

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned on Sunday that further Western attacks on Syria would bring chaos to world affairs, as Washington prepared to increase pressure on Russia with new economic sanctions.

But with President Donald Trump declaring mission accomplished, investors wagered the worst had been avoided.

WELLINGTON: On Monday, New Zealand's SP/NZX 50 index fell 0.1 per cent, to 8,406.35.

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