The Bond

LS Edge | Investment Strategy | 투자코멘트 | 2024. 8. 26

2024년 잭슨 홀미팅에서의 제롬 파월 의장 주요 발언 정리

채권 **우혜영**
whydele@ls-sec.co.kr

물가 관련 주요 발언: 일시적 상승이란 판단은 오판이었다

파월 의장은 2021년 상반기 중 급등한 물가에 대해 연준이 일시적(transitory)이라 평가한 것은 광범위한 가격 상승이 아닌 공급 부족에 따른 특정 상품 가격(자동차 등)에 기인했기 때문이라 설명했다. 팬데믹 관련 요인은 지속적이지 않을 것이므로 통화정책 대응이 필요 없을 것이라 판단했다고 부연했다. 그러나 예상과 달리 재화에서 서비스로 가격 상승이 확산된 가운데 더딘 공급 측 개선, 추가 공급 충격(러시아의 우크라이나 침공)에 따른 국제 원자재 가격 급등 등에 물가는 더 높아졌고, 연준은 테이퍼링 후 금리 인상에 나섰다고 밝혔다.

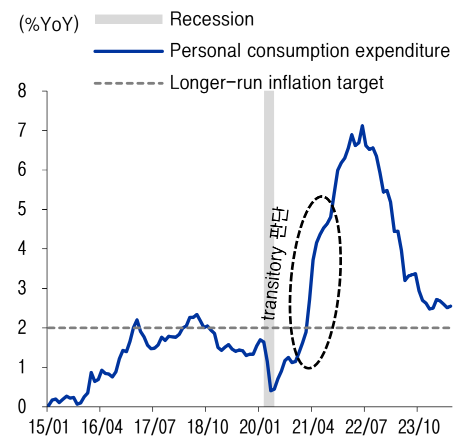
고용 관련 주요 발언: 노동시장 냉각은 자명하다

파월 의장은 노동시장이 더 이상 과열(overheated)되지 않았으며 現 노동시장 여건은 팬데믹 이전보다 덜 타이트하다고 평가했다. 이전의 과열된 수준에서 상당히 냉각(has cooled) 됐다는 내용은 두 번이나 언급됐다. 실업률은 여전히 역사적으로 낮은 수치이나 작년 초에 비해 약 1%p 상승했고 이러한 상승이 대부분 지난 6개월간 나타났음을 지적했다. 파월 의장은 실업자 증가가 경기 둔화에 따른 임시해고(layoffs) 급증이 아닌 노동 공급 증가 및 과도하게(frantic) 높았던 노동 수요 둔화에 주로 기인했다면서도, 노동시장 냉각은 분명하다고 평가했다. 아울러 연준은 노동시장의 추가 둔화를 바라거나 환영하지 않는다고 밝혔다.

향후 통화정책 관련 주요 발언: 슬며시 올려 놓은 빅스텝 옵션

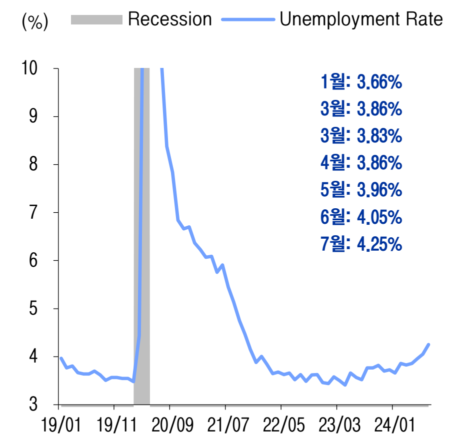
파월 의장은 이중책무에 대한 리스크 균형이 변했다고 언급했다. 인플레이션 상방 리스크는 감소(diminished)했고 고용 하방 리스크는 높아(have increased)졌기 때문에 7월 성명문에서도 이중책무 양측에 대한 리스크 모두에 주의할 것을 강조했다고 밝혔다. 특히 인플레이션이 2%로 지속 가능한 경로에 있다는 확신이 커졌다는 발언은 금리 인하의 전제 조건이 달성 됐음을 시사했다는 판단이다. 통화정책 조정의 시기가 다가오고 있고 여정의 방향은 명백하다는 발언 역시 9월 인하 가능성을 높였다. 더 나아가 물가 안정을 향해 더 나아가면서 강한 노동시장을 지원하기 위해 할 수 있는 모든 것을 할 것이라는 발언은 빅스텝 인하 가능성을 높였다. 물론 인하 시기(timing)나 속도(pace)는 향후 확인되는 데이터, 전망의 변화, 리스크 균형 등에 달렸다고 밝혔지만 혹시 모를 고용시장의 급격한 둔화가 발생할 경우를 대비 해 테이블 위 빅스텝 옵션을 슬며시 올려놓은 것으로 보인다.

그림1 **PCE 물가상승률**



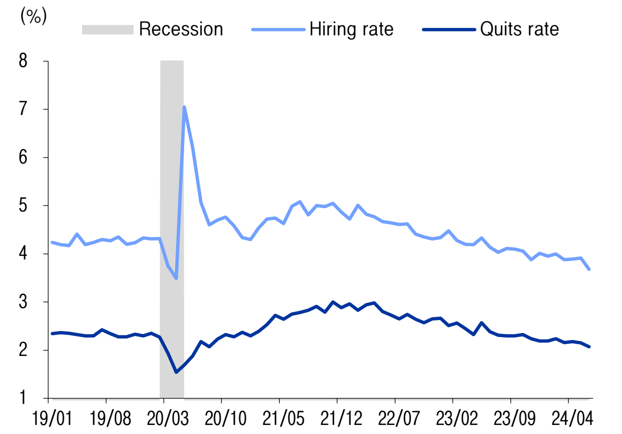
자료: Fed, LS증권 리서치센터

그림2 **실업률**



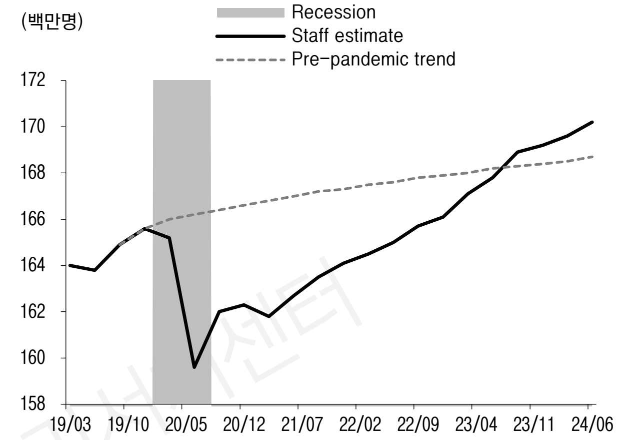
자료: Fed, LS증권 리서치센터

그림3 Hiring Rate, Quits Rate



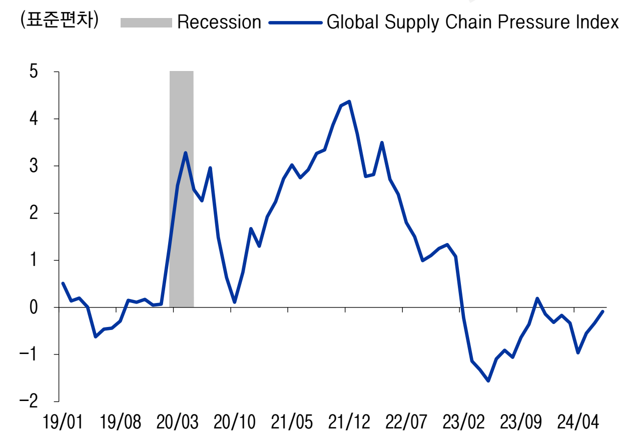
주: Hiring Rate는 총 구인 건수 대비 실제 고용된 비율
자료: Fed, LS증권 리서치센터

그림4 생산가능인구(Civilian Labor Force)



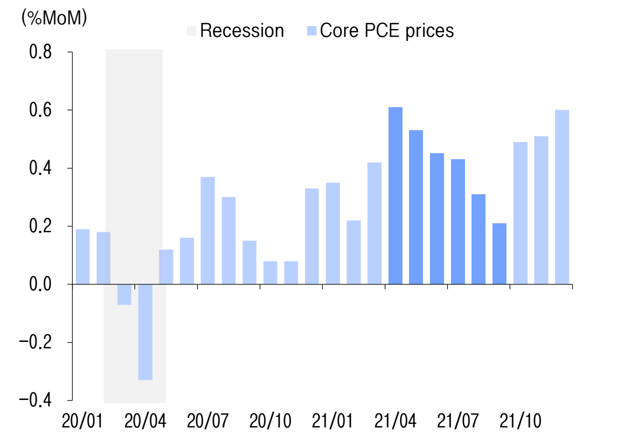
주: 실선은 연준 스태프의 생산가능인구 추정치
자료: Fed, LS증권 리서치센터

그림5 글로벌 공급망 압력(Global Chain Pressure) 지수



자료: Fed, LS증권 리서치센터

그림6 근원 PCE 물가 상승률(%MoM)

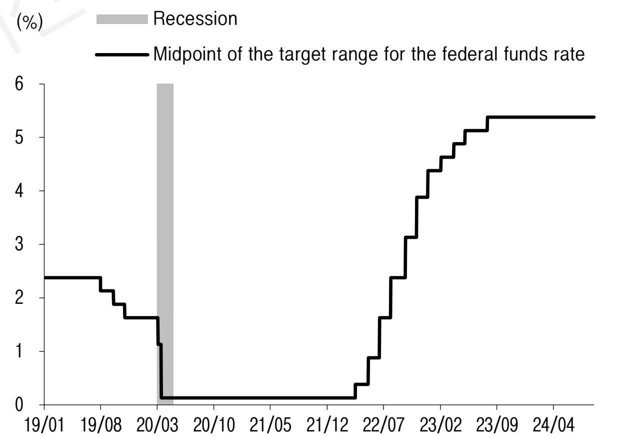


자료: Fed, LS증권 리서치센터

그림7 Job opening to Unemployment

자료: Fed, LS증권 리서치센터

그림8 연준 정책금리



자료: Fed, LS증권 리서치센터

[원문] Review and Outlook(Chair Jerome H. Powell, At "Reassessing the Effectiveness and Transmission of Monetary Policy," an economic symposium sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Jackson Hole, Wyoming)

Four and a half years after COVID-19's arrival, the worst of the pandemic-related economic distortions are fading. Inflation has declined significantly. The labor market is no longer overheated, and conditions are now less tight than those that prevailed before the pandemic. Supply constraints have normalized. And the balance of the risks to our two mandates has changed. Our objective has been to restore price stability while maintaining a strong labor market, avoiding the sharp increases in unemployment that characterized earlier disinflationary episodes when inflation expectations were less well anchored. While the task is not complete, we have made a good deal of progress toward that outcome.

Today, I will begin by addressing the current economic situation and the path ahead for monetary policy. I will then turn to a discussion of economic events since the pandemic arrived, exploring why inflation rose to levels not seen in a generation, and why it has fallen so much while unemployment has remained low.

Near-Term Outlook for Policy

Let's begin with the current situation and the near-term outlook for policy.

For much of the past three years, inflation ran well above our 2 percent goal, and labor market conditions were extremely tight. The Federal Open Market Committee's (FOMC) primary focus has been on bringing down inflation, and appropriately so. Prior to this episode, most Americans alive today had not experienced the pain of high inflation for a sustained period. Inflation brought substantial hardship, especially for those least able to meet the higher costs of essentials like food, housing, and transportation. High inflation triggered stress and a sense of unfairness that linger today.

Our restrictive monetary policy helped restore balance between aggregate supply and demand, easing inflationary pressures and ensuring that inflation expectations remained well anchored. Inflation is now much closer to our objective, with prices having risen 2.5 percent over the past 12 months. After a pause earlier this year, progress toward our 2 percent objective has resumed. My confidence has grown that inflation is on a sustainable path back to 2 percent.

Turning to employment, in the years just prior to the pandemic, we saw the significant benefits to society that can come from a long period of strong labor market conditions: low unemployment, high participation, historically low racial employment gaps, and, with inflation low and stable, healthy real wage gains that were increasingly concentrated among those with lower incomes.

Today, the labor market has cooled considerably from its formerly overheated state. The unemployment rate began to rise over a year ago and is now at 4.3 percent—still low by historical standards, but almost a full percentage point above its level in early 2023. Most of that increase has come over the past six months. So far, rising unemployment has not been the result of elevated layoffs, as is typically the case in an economic downturn. Rather, the increase mainly reflects a substantial increase in the supply of workers and a slowdown from the previously frantic pace of hiring. Even so, the cooling in labor market conditions is unmistakable. Job gains remain solid but have slowed this year. Job vacancies have fallen, and the ratio of vacancies to unemployment has returned to its pre-pandemic range. The hiring and quits rates are now below the levels that prevailed in 2018 and 2019. Nominal wage gains have moderated. All told, labor market conditions are now less tight than just before the pandemic in 2019—a year when inflation ran below 2 percent. It seems unlikely that the labor market will be a source of elevated inflationary pressures anytime soon. We do not seek or welcome further cooling in labor market conditions.

Overall, the economy continues to grow at a solid pace. But the inflation and labor market data show an evolving situation. The upside risks to inflation have diminished. And the downside risks to employment have increased. As we highlighted in our last FOMC statement, we are attentive to the risks to both sides of our dual mandate.

The time has come for policy to adjust. The direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks.

We will do everything we can to support a strong labor market as we make further progress toward price stability. With an appropriate dialing back of policy restraint, there is good reason to think that the economy will get back to 2 percent inflation while maintaining a strong labor market. The current level of our policy rate gives us ample room to respond to any risks we may face, including the risk of unwelcome further weakening in labor market conditions.

The Rise and Fall of Inflation

Let's now turn to the questions of why inflation rose, and why it has fallen so significantly even as unemployment has remained low. There is a growing body of research on these questions, and this is a good time for this discussion. It is, of course, too soon to make definitive assessments. This period will be analyzed and debated long after we are gone.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic led quickly to shutdowns in economies around the world. It was a time of radical uncertainty and severe downside risks. As so often happens in times of crisis, Americans adapted and innovated. Governments responded with extraordinary force, especially in the U.S. Congress unanimously passed the CARES Act. At the Fed, we used our powers to an unprecedented extent to stabilize the financial system and help stave off an economic depression.

After a historically deep but brief recession, in mid-2020 the economy began to grow again. As the risks of a severe, extended downturn receded, and as the economy reopened, we faced the risk of replaying the painfully slow recovery that followed the Global Financial Crisis.

ongress delivered substantial additional fiscal support in late 2020 and again in early 2021. Spending recovered strongly in the first half of 2021. The ongoing pandemic shaped the pattern of the recovery. Lingering concerns over COVID weighed on spending on in-person services. But pent-up demand, stimulative policies, pandemic changes in work and leisure practices, and the additional savings associated with constrained services spending all contributed to a historic surge in consumer spending on goods.

The pandemic also wreaked havoc on supply conditions. Eight million people left the workforce at its onset, and the size of the labor force was still 4 million below its pre-pandemic level in early 2021. The labor force would not return to its pre-pandemic trend until mid-2023. Supply chains were snarled by a combination of lost workers, disrupted international trade linkages, and tectonic shifts in the composition and level of demand. Clearly, this was nothing like the slow recovery after the Global Financial Crisis.

Enter inflation. After running below target through 2020, inflation spiked in March and April 2021. The initial burst of inflation was concentrated rather than broad based, with extremely large price increases for goods in short supply, such as motor vehicles. My colleagues and I judged at the outset that these pandemic-related factors would not be persistent and, thus, that the sudden rise in inflation was likely to pass through fairly quickly without the need for a monetary policy response—in short, that the inflation would be transitory. Standard thinking has long been that, as long as inflation expectations remain well anchored, it can be appropriate for central banks to look through a temporary rise in inflation.

The good ship Transitory was a crowded one, with most mainstream analysts and advanced-economy central bankers on board. The common expectation was that supply conditions would improve reasonably quickly, that the rapid recovery in demand would run its course, and that demand would rotate back from goods to services, bringing inflation down.

For a time, the data were consistent with the transitory hypothesis. Monthly readings for core inflation declined every month from April to September 2021, although progress came slower than expected. The case began to weaken around midyear, as was reflected in our communications. Beginning in October, the data turned hard against the transitory hypothesis. Inflation rose and broadened out from goods into services. It became clear that the high inflation was not transitory, and that it would require a strong policy response if inflation expectations were to remain well anchored. We recognized that and pivoted beginning in November. Financial conditions began to tighten. After phasing out our asset purchases, we lifted off in March 2022.

By early 2022, headline inflation exceeded 6 percent, with core inflation above 5 percent. New supply shocks appeared. Russia's invasion of Ukraine led to a sharp increase in energy and commodity prices. The improvements in supply conditions and rotation in demand from goods to services were taking much longer than expected, in part due to further COVID waves in the U.S. And COVID continued to disrupt production globally, including through new and extended lockdowns in China.

High rates of inflation were a global phenomenon, reflecting common experiences: rapid increases in the demand for goods, strained supply chains, tight labor markets, and sharp hikes in commodity prices. The global nature of inflation was unlike any period since the 1970s. Back then, high inflation became entrenched—an outcome we were utterly committed to avoiding.

By mid-2022, the labor market was extremely tight, with employment increasing by over 6-1/2 million from the middle of 2021. This increase in labor demand was met, in part, by workers rejoining the labor force as health concerns began to fade. But labor supply remained constrained, and, in the summer of 2022, labor force participation remained well below pre-pandemic levels. There were nearly twice as many job openings as unemployed persons from March 2022 through the end of the year, signaling a severe labor shortage. Inflation peaked at 7.1 percent in June 2022.

At this podium two years ago, I discussed the possibility that addressing inflation could bring some pain in the form of higher unemployment and slower growth. Some argued that getting inflation under control would require a recession and a lengthy period of high unemployment. I expressed our unconditional commitment to fully restoring price stability and to keeping at it until the job is done.

The FOMC did not flinch from carrying out our responsibilities, and our actions forcefully demonstrated our commitment to restoring price stability. We raised our policy rate by 425 basis points in 2022 and another 100 basis points in 2023. We have held our policy rate at its current restrictive level since July 2023.

The summer of 2022 proved to be the peak of inflation. The 4-1/2 percentage point decline in inflation from its peak two years ago has occurred in a context of low unemployment—a welcome and historically unusual result.

How did inflation fall without a sharp rise in unemployment above its estimated natural rate?

Pandemic-related distortions to supply and demand, as well as severe shocks to energy and commodity markets, were important drivers of high inflation, and their reversal has been a key part of the story of its decline. The unwinding of these factors took much longer than expected but ultimately played a large role in the subsequent disinflation. Our restrictive monetary policy contributed to a moderation in aggregate demand, which combined with improvements in aggregate supply to reduce inflationary pressures while allowing growth to continue at a healthy pace. As labor demand also moderated, the historically high level of vacancies relative to unemployment has normalized primarily through a decline in vacancies, without sizable and disruptive layoffs, bringing the labor market to a state where it is no longer a source of inflationary pressures.

A word on the critical importance of inflation expectations. Standard economic models have long reflected the view that inflation will return to its objective when product and labor markets are balanced—without the need for economic slack—so long as inflation expectations are anchored at our objective. That's what the models said, but the stability of longer-run inflation expectations since the 2000s had not been tested by a persistent burst of high inflation. It was far from assured that the inflation anchor would hold. Concerns over de-anchoring contributed to the view that disinflation would require slack in the economy and specifically in the labor market. An important takeaway from recent experience is that anchored inflation expectations, reinforced by vigorous central bank actions, can facilitate disinflation without the need for slack.

This narrative attributes much of the increase in inflation to an extraordinary collision between overheated and temporarily distorted demand and constrained supply. While researchers differ in their approaches and, to some extent, in their conclusions, a consensus seems to be emerging, which I see as attributing most of the rise in inflation to this collision. All told, the healing from pandemic distortions, our efforts to moderate aggregate demand, and the anchoring of expectations have worked together to put inflation on what increasingly appears to be a sustainable path to our 2 percent objective.

Disinflation while preserving labor market strength is only possible with anchored inflation expectations, which reflect the public's confidence that the central bank will bring about 2 percent inflation over time. That confidence has been built over decades and reinforced by our actions.

That is my assessment of events. Your mileage may vary.

Conclusion

Let me wrap up by emphasizing that the pandemic economy has proved to be unlike any other, and that there remains much to be learned from this extraordinary period. Our Statement on Longer-Run Goals and Monetary Policy Strategy emphasizes our commitment to reviewing our principles and making appropriate adjustments through a thorough public review every five years. As we begin this process later this year, we will be open to criticism and new ideas, while preserving the strengths of our framework. The limits of our knowledge—so clearly evident during the pandemic—demand humility and a questioning spirit focused on learning lessons from the past and applying them flexibly to our current challenges.