

**BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

## Stocks Close Mixed As Fed Announcement Looms - U.S. Commentary

After coming under pressure in morning trading, stocks turned mixed over the course of the trading session on Wednesday. The Dow and the S&P 500 bounced off their lows and into positive territory, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq remained stuck in the red.

While the Nasdaq fell 54.09 points or 0.7 percent to 8,107.77 after ending the previous session at a record closing high, the Dow rose 38.52 points or 0.2 percent to 26,592.91 and the S&P 500 crept up 2.80 points or 0.1 percent to a new record closing high of 2,945.83.

A steep drop by shares of Alphabet (GOOGL) contributed to the loss posted by the Nasdaq, with the parent of Google plunging by 7.5 percent.

The sell-off by Alphabet comes after the company reported first quarter earnings that exceeded analyst estimates but on weaker than expected revenues.

On the other hand, shares of General Electric (GE) moved significantly higher after the industrial conglomerate reported first quarter results that exceeded analyst estimates.

Fast food giant McDonald's (MCD) posted a much more modest gain after reporting better than expected first quarter results.

The mixed performance on Wall Street also came as traders looked ahead to the announcement of the Federal Reserve's latest monetary policy decision on Wednesday.

The Fed is widely expected to leave interest rates unchanged, although traders are likely to keep a close eye on the accompanying statement and Fed Chairman Jerome Powell's subsequent press conference.

A day ahead of the Fed announcement, President Donald Trump urged the central bank to slash interest rates by as much as a full percentage point.

"Our Federal Reserve has incessantly lifted interest rates, even though inflation is very low, and instituted a very big dose of quantitative tightening," Trump said in a post on Twitter.

He added, "We have the potential to go up like a rocket if we did some lowering of rates, like one point, and some quantitative easing."

Some analysts accused the Fed of capitulating to Trump's demands by revealing after its last meeting that officials no longer expect to raise rates this year.

Traders largely shrugged off some upbeat economic data, with reports showing bigger than expected rebounds in consumer confidence and pending home sales.

