

Fair Observer^o

Independence, Diversity, Debate

FO^o ANNUAL UPDATE 2025:
CELEBRATING GROWTH AND IMPACT



Independent, nonprofit
journalism for over a decade

Uncompromising editorial
standards

12,000+ 

articles by 3,000+ authors
worldwide

Training the next generation: 

15 editors,
two now on staff

| Highlights from our Website

130% 

increase in Chinese users

Over **270,000** 

active users in America

40% 

of audience is aged 18–24

| YouTube Channel

Highest all-time views



200%

jump in watch hours



30%

increase in subscribers



Over **30,000**

podcast engagements



700%

increase in downloads for [*The Dialectic*](#)



Dear FO° Supporter,

I am writing this letter sitting in a splendid library. At university, some of us preferred to study in our rooms. That was not the case with me. I belonged to the camp of people who fled to the library. For some reason, I always do better surrounded by books. The towering shelves make me realize in a very real way that I have read little and understand even less.

I bring up libraries because, much like newspapers and magazines today, they are suffering too. When I walk into public libraries in the US, I often encounter homeless people looking for shelter rather than interested readers. The staff seems to be overstretched, and I cannot find the latest issues of newspapers and magazines I want to read. This scarcity is not a result of overwhelming demand. Older librarians tell me that people, especially younger people, are simply not reading as much as before. Laptops and smartphones are taking their toll. One of them wistfully remarked that, in the age of YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, we face the risk of turning into a post-literate society. They say that libraries are increasingly underfunded and they are too busy helping people fill out forms or collecting their COVID testing kits to do their real work as librarians.

When I first came to the US, public libraries were in better shape.

I would run into doctors, lawyers, teachers, students and children at these wonderful institutions. Since I am no churchgoer (no temple- or mosque-goer either), libraries provided me the opportunity to dip into the local community in much the same way churches do for others. Though, I have had many interesting conversations in public libraries I couldn't have in a church, ranging from the impact of the Enlightenment on American Founding Fathers to the spread of Buddhism from India to Japan. My life is a lot richer thanks to the many libraries that have been my home, not only because of the books I have read but also because of the people I have met.

Now, I no longer meet the same cross-section of people in the public library as I did when I first came to the US. Even private institutions are suffering. I often visit the National Press Club (NPC), one of Washington, DC's spectacular institutions. Sadly, I rarely meet American journalists from *The Washington Post*, *Foreign Policy* or National Public Radio there. Even foreign journalists from institutions like the BBC and Al Jazeera are conspicuous by their absence.

In the past, the NPC was a congregation point where not only journalists but also politicians gathered together to talk about both sordid power struggles and the great matters of the state.

For a whole host of reasons, we now lack congregation points where people come together and engage with each other. Institutions, both public and private, are not what they once were.

What can and must we do

This letter is not meant to be a lament. As the Buddha said a wee while ago, change is the only constant in life. Just as we could not go back to the pre-fire age or the pre-industrialization era, we could not uninvent the smartphone. Also, we have to recognize that the smartphone does give us some advantages. We can access a lot of information instantaneously on this powerful device. As an example, my smartphone just told me that the US national debt is inching up to \$39 trillion, which is useful information not only for someone like me but also for any citizen worried about the future.

Fair Observer would not be possible without the many technological tools that are now available for free or relatively cheaply. Our core editorial team is spread across Asia, Europe and the Americas. Because of Google Meet, we are able to meet weekly for free. We use Google's other free tools such as Gmail, documents and spreadsheets. We use Zoom, Canva and other platforms too. All of these help. In a nutshell, we are not Luddites.

We understand fully well the problems of the old media models, which were almost always top-down, exclusive and even expensive. Technology has certainly helped democratize discourse.

At the same time, we cannot throw out the baby with the bathwater. The best media models of the past were good about checking facts, holding the feet of the powerful to the fire and fostering a sense of community. I have talked about how we fact-check everything we publish and how we have remained resolutely independent in an era where billionaire-owned media is increasingly facing public scrutiny. In this annual update to you, I want to focus on our community, avoiding clichés and jargon. I firmly believe that communities matter. We want to meet like-minded people and connect with them. That is partly why people join reading groups or sports teams.

In 2025, we tried very hard to start fostering a sense of community. We believe that, for all the advantages of online meetings, there is no substitute for face-to-face interactions. Debate, discussion and discourse still matter. That is why our meetups have been building up steam over the last few months. We get together to discuss key topics such as immigration as a political issue worldwide, as well as the Trump administration's National Security Strategy.

We are one of the few communities these days where people across party lines are having vigorous discussions. On immigration, it was not Americans who ended up in the most vigorous discussion at the NPC.

It was Pakistanis and Afghans who had the most passionate debate about the rights and wrongs of Islamabad's new immigration policies.

In a world where many are losing faith in democracy and conflate it just with political parties or voting, we are championing communities that cherish discourse. In a democracy, we have to collectively figure out how to put out the rubbish and when to collect it. We have to learn how to run our public schools and public libraries. We also have to discuss tricky issues like rising national debt and the fairness of loading up liabilities for future generations. That is what we have set out to foster; that is what *Fair Observer* can do and must do.

Through our articles, videos, podcasts and meetups, we are doing our best to fight the echo chambers created by algorithms.

We publish many pieces that our editors vehemently disagree with because we believe it is important to know how their authors think. Like a good library, we are home to very different points of view, and our authors help us make sense of the world.

You can rest assured that we will not feed you more of the same, and Fair Observer will continue to be a place that will inform, educate and challenge you in the days to come. We are a new version of an old-fashioned library for learning, reflection and community.

Thank you for your support, enjoy this update about our endeavors in 2025, and continue to support us this year.

My warmest regards,



Atul Singh

February 11, 2026



Photo from the Washington, DC FO° Meetup on November 14, 2025.

How can you support us?

- 1 Ask people in your circle to sign up for our [newsletters](#) and follow us on social media: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).
- 2 Introduce us to those who might want to [publish](#) with us.
- 3 Encourage curious young people to **apply** for our FO° Young Editors Program by writing to rebecca.zhuo@fairobserver.com.
- 4 **Share** our newsletters, articles, podcasts and videos with your circle.
- 5 **Download** our [e-publications](#): monthly magazines, yearbooks and more. You can read them on your e-reader or print them out. (That will save your eyes from overexposure to [blue light](#).)
- 6 **Ask your friends to [support us](#)**. Remember, a free press is not free. The number of donors and their level of engagement makes a large difference. A \$11 annual donation costs less than \$1 a month but goes a long way. Keep in mind that companies like Visa and Google **match your donation** because we are a 501(c)(3) organization. Our EIN is 46-4070943.
- 7 **Volunteer** with us and help us with marketing, fundraising, creating timelines or podcast and video production. Write to roberta.campani@fairobserver.com if you are interested.



Fair Observer Editorial



Kaitlyn Diana
Chief of Staff

Editor-in-Chief Atul Singh's new editorial chief of staff, [Kaitlyn Diana](#), joined the team full time. She worked her way through the Young Editors Program, from assistant editor to associate editor, until finally becoming the editorial chief of staff. She published three *FO° Wednesday* newsletters and three interviews in 2025.



Fair Observer Is a Window Into the World

June 25, 2025



The Lord of the Rings Redefines Masculinity Through Love and Vulnerability - Fair Observer

August 27, 2025



FO° Talks: Life Inside Donald Trump's Notorious Alligator Alcatraz Detention Center in Florida

September 27, 2025



FO° Live: Is America Headed for a Population Collapse? Elon Musk Was Right!

September 30, 2025



Liam Roman
Assistant editor

Assistant editor [Liam Roman](#), who has been with our Young Editors Program for two years, contributed an insightful analysis of the Jeffrey Epstein scandal and the call to release the Epstein files. He also joined our newsletter group and helped write several Sunday newsletters.



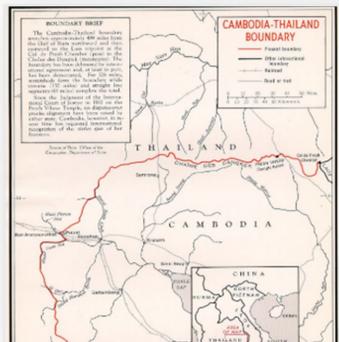
The Epstein Files: A Political Ticking Time Bomb

October 07, 2025



EU Seized Russian Funds, Indefinitely

December 21, 2025



A New Chapter in a Century Of Conflict: Thailand and Cambodia

December 28, 2025



Farhang Faraydoon Namdar
Young Editors

[Farhang Faraydoon Namdar](#) joined our Young Editors Program. He is a researcher and journalist who covers the Middle East. At *Fair Observer*, Farhang has expanded his coverage beyond the Middle East and has now examined other parts of the world. He wrote and contributed to several Sunday newsletters and wrote a reflective piece on the growing risk of nuclear war with Russia.



[Nuclear War Only Happens Once](#)

October 09, 2025



[Iran's Seesaw Between Sanctions and War - Fair Observer](#)

October 05, 2025



[Bolivia's Historic Runoff: How a Centrist Victory Could Redefine the Andes](#)

October 26, 2025



Laura Pavón
Editor

We welcomed Spanish academic [Laura Pavón](#) onto our team as a contributing editor. In 2025, she published three articles and one *FO° Wednesday* newsletter. She painted on a broad canvas, examining issues in the US, Spain and Latin America.



Spain Imposes Arms Embargo on Israel as Pro-Palestine Protesters Disrupt Vuelta

September 23, 2025



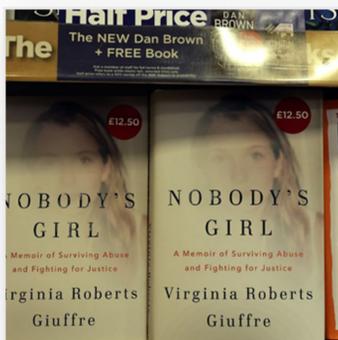
US Revokes Colombian President's Visa: The Volatile Relationship Between North and South America

October 22, 2025



Echoes of New Order and Lorca: How an 80s-Born Millennial Bridges History and Hyper-Connectivity - Fair Observer

November 12, 2025



Nobody's Girl: Virginia Giuffre's Memoir Reached Libraries Six Months After Her Suicide

November 23, 2025



Alex Gloy

German economist and Editor-at-Large [Alex Gloy](#) continued to publish with us. He authored 12 articles last year, several of which focused on US President Donald Trump and analyzed actions and policies of his second term. Alex also wrote a really incisive piece on the EU's proposed seizure of the frozen Russian assets.



[The One Big Beautiful Bill: Trumpism in Legislative Form](#)

July 24, 2025



[Neither Art nor Deal: Trump's Risky US-EU Trade Agreement](#)

August 03, 2025



[Shooting the Messenger: How Trump Blamed the Bureau of Labor Statistics for Weak Job Creation](#)

August 17, 2025



[The Battle Over Euroclear and Russia's Frozen Billions](#)

December 17, 2025



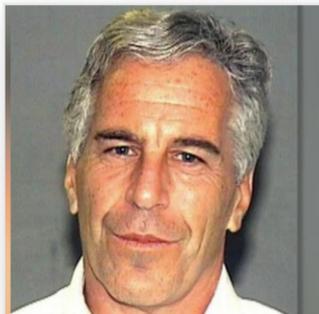
Ellis Cashmore

Our resident sociologist, [Ellis Cashmore](#), published 18 articles and three timelines with us in 2025. The topics ranged from the scandal involving former US President Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky to Australia's social media ban. Obviously, Ellis also wrote about Jeffrey Epstein.



[Bill Clinton, Monica Lewinsky and the Politics of Spectacle](#)

August 09, 2025



[THE TIMELINE OF JEFFREY EPSTEIN](#)

November 11, 2025



[A Century of Royal Scandal: Britain's Shocking Monarchy - Fair Observer](#)

November 20, 2025



[Australia's Idiotic Social Media Ban](#)

November 22, 2025



Masaaki Yoshimori

We also continued to publish [Masaaki Yoshimori](#), a very thoughtful Japanese economist. He provided our readers with valuable insights into a range of economic issues as well as political developments in Japan. He published a whopping total of 32 articles in 2025.



The Long-Term Dangers of China's Expanding Swap Line Strategy: Financial Dependence and Geopolitical Influence

February 25, 2025



The History and Political Context of the Japan–South Korea Currency Swap Line

March 15, 2025



Japan's 2025 Upper House Election: Fiscal Reckoning, Market Jitters and the Waning Patience of the Middle Class

July 27, 2025



The Dollar at a Crossroads: Trade Wars, Tariffs and Stress on the World's Safe-Haven Currency

December 21, 2025



Peter Isackson
Chief Strategy Officer

Chief Strategy Officer [Peter Isackson](#) closed the book on his “Devil’s Dictionary” column in 2025. However, he traded in his dictionary so that he could begin “poking holes” in the dominant narratives with his new column, “The Devil’s Advocate.”



[Our Devil Closes His Dictionary and Muses on Its Roots](#)

August 27, 2025



[The Devil’s Advocate: Europe’s Accelerating Descent into Hell](#)

September 05, 2025



[Halloween Special: Is Trump a Devil Masquerading as a Monster?](#)

October 31, 2025



[Europe Endorses Assisted Dying: Its Own Suicide](#)

November 28, 2025



Abdul Galil Shaif

We also welcomed new authors to our growing international community. One of them is [Abdul Galil Shaif](#), a notable South Yemeni scholar, author and political advocate, who published ten articles and one interview, all of which shed some light on the ongoing conflict in Yemen.



FO° Live: Make Sense of the Houthis and Civil War in Yemen

June 07, 2025



A Two-State Solution is the Only Way Forward for Yemen

August 26, 2025



Houthis, Israel, Iran and Yemen: A Nation on the Brink

September 12, 2025



Houthi Ambitions and the Southern State: A Regional Flashpoint

December 20, 2025

FO° YouTube Channel Update



Rohan Khattar Singh

[Rohan Khattar Singh](#) joined the team full time as YouTube Producer and Social Media Manager. He interviews authors from around the world and oversees the entire YouTube workflow. This involves fixing and preparing for the interviews. Then, he records and oversees the production of these interviews. He also writes descriptions, tags the interviews and uploads our videos and audios onto different platforms.

Thanks to Rohan's efforts, our FO° YouTube channel grew by more than 150% in both views and watch time. In 2025, our channel got more than 700,000 views and nearly two million impressions, a 208% jump compared to 2024. In addition, people from all age groups across more than 50 countries tuned into our channel.



[Understanding Japan's Taiwan Stance: Why PM Takaichi's Comments Triggered China | Fair Observer](#)

Dec 9, 2025



[Ukraine's Rafale and Gripen Deals Overshadowed by Major Corruption Scandal | Fair Observer](#)

Nov 21, 2025



[Nepal's Prime Minister Oli Resigns After Deadly Protests, What Next? | Fair Observer](#)

Sep 10, 2025



Leonardo Vivas

[Leonardo Vivas](#), an academic of International politics and former professor and coordinator of the Latin American Initiative at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, spoke to us throughout the year about the situation in Venezuela. Leonardo, a Venezuelan himself, was among the first to predict US military action directly against Nicolas Maduro. Leonardo made this prediction on December 11, 2025, three weeks before Maduro's capture in Caracas.



Venezuela on the Brink: Is Trump Planning a Military Strike on Nicolas Maduro? Fair Observer

Dec 11, 2025



David Mahon

[David Mahon](#), the executive chairman of Mahon China Investment Management Ltd, spoke to us about the state of the Chinese economy. Drawing on his firsthand experience of living in China since 1984, David provided insights into China's real estate debt, youth unemployment and demographic decline while making the argument that, contrary to outside perception, China is a decentralized and dynamic economy.



Is China's Economy Really Collapsing or Is the West Misreading the Numbers? Fair Observer

Dec 16, 2025



Josef Olmert

[Josef Olmert](#), a Middle East scholar, former Israeli peace negotiator, political insider, published journalist and author, spoke to Atul in great detail about the geopolitical chess that is being played out in the Horn of Africa and Somaliland.



[The Gaza Peace Deal Could Define Trump's Legacy and Break Netanyahu's | Fair Observer](#)

Oct 23, 2025



Haruko Satoh

[Haruko Satoh](#), an eminent geopolitical analyst at the Osaka School of International Public Policy, held a roundtable conversation with Herman Joseph S. Kraft from the University of the Philippines and Kei Koga from Nanyang Technological University on how Southeast Asian states perceive the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) — the informal strategic forum linking the United States, Japan, India and Australia. Their conversation allowed *Fair Observer* to grow its audience in countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines.



[Is the Quad Still Relevant? Why Southeast Asia No Longer Trusts This Alliance | Fair Observer](#)

Dec 30, 2025

| Fair Observer Podcasts

Our podcast audience grew by more than 300% last year. In December 2025, we hit an all-time high with more than 7,000 podcast downloads.

| *The Dialectic: A Podcast by Fair Observer*

Our flagship podcast with hosts Atul and Glenn Carle, a senior partner at the geopolitical risk advisory firm FOI, saw a 700% jump in engagement. The Dialectic has a dedicated audience in the US, Canada, Belarus, Russia, Norway and India.

The most listened-to episode of the year was on Project 2025 and US President Donald Trump's attacks on the Federal Government.



Project 2025 and Donald Trump's Dangerous Dismantling of the US Federal Government | The Dialectic
Sep 8, 2025

In addition, three episodes on Europe gained popularity, with two of them having 2,000 engagements each. These episodes also led to healthy debates within our own team.



Can Germany and France Make Europe Great Again? The Dialectic
Oct 14, 2025



Can Germany Outgrow Its Postwar American Model? The Dialectic
Nov 2, 2025



France: The Eternal Crisis Strikes Again. What Now? The Dialectic
Dec 7, 2025

| *FO° Podcasts*

We also have an insightful guest-based series where we have interesting conversations with interesting guests about interesting issues. In 2025, the audience for *FO° Podcasts* increased by 400%, with November and December seeing more than 3,000 engagements each.

The most popular episode involved [Ankit Jain](#), Washington, DC's shadow senator, who sat down with Atul Singh to talk about the deployment of National Guards in the capital. This episode of *FO° Podcasts* achieved almost 2,500 engagements.



[Why Has Trump Deployed Thousands of National Guard Troops in Washington, D.C. | FO° Podcasts](#)

Aug 27, 2025

The episode featuring [Lauren Greenberg](#), Deputy General Counsel at White & Case LLP, also did well, achieving more than 2,000 engagements. Lauren spoke passionately about women's sports and the transformative impact of Title IX on women's right to play sports in the US.



[The Right to Play: How Women Fought and Won the Battle for Equality in Sports | FO° Podcasts](#)

Nov 25, 2025

| FO° Newsletters

In 2025, our newsletters have evolved into a richer ecosystem and better reflect our core mission. [FO° Features](#), published on Sundays, has taken the form of a media-watch: Each edition focuses on a single issue and examines how it is framed across international media, placing these perspectives within wider political, cultural and historical contexts. The goal is to broaden readers' horizons and encourage critical engagement with competing narratives. Sometimes, we dwell less on competing narratives and instead dive deeper into one underreported issue.

[FO° Wednesday](#) offers our readers a newsletter of a different genre. Unlike the weekly [FO° Features](#), this is a biweekly affair and, yes, we publish it on Wednesday. Designed as a space for voice and reflection, it features a personal take on an issue by a member of our team or a longtime author. We welcome personal reflections from new people, too, in our quest to see the world through many prisms.

To support this newsletter work, Roberta welcomed three promising editors whose analytical abilities, professional maturity and superb writing skills have strengthened both the quality and the reach of our newsletters. We have already mentioned Liam and Farhang earlier. We now want to shine the light on [Casey Herrmann](#), who is the third musketeer in our newsletter group and brings top-level professionalism to our work.

“The newsletter team has given me an opportunity to grow as a writer with the help of a team of people, and highlight issues I always thought could use a little more limelight.”

- Casey Herrmann

“This team has been a great experience. It has allowed me to improve as a writer and research geopolitical events that are often overlooked.”

- Liam Roman

Our Community: FO° Meetups



Photo from the Washington, DC FO° Meetup on August 1, 2025.



Photo from the New York FO° Meetup on September 25, 2025.



Photo from the Washington, DC FO° Meetup on November 14, 2025.



Fair Observer^o

Independence, Diversity, Debate

Thanks to your support, *Fair Observer* examines global issues through local lenses. In a world of filter bubbles, echo chambers and polarization, we provide a forum for discussion, debate and dialogue across borders, backgrounds and beliefs.

Thanks to you, we are educating young authors, young editors and young readers.

A thousand thanks!

Atul Singh, Claire Whitaker, Peter Isackson, Roberta Campani, Kaitlyn Diana, Lee Thompson-Kolar, Rohan Khattar Singh and the rest of the FO^o Team

