
Fair Observer
Independence, Diversity, Debate
THIRD QUARTER UPDATE
2026

Dear Friend of *Fair Observer*,

I write to you as the sun streams in from my window in Washington, DC. The leaves of the tree that towers above my window are still green. The East Coast is known for the extraordinary change in color of tree leaves, which turn a spectacular yellow, orange and red. In the Shenandoah Valley in neighboring Virginia, they have started changing color. Autumn, the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," as John Keats memorably wrote, has begun. My neighbors have decked out their front yards for Halloween. Pumpkins, skeletons and spider webs abound.

Impressions of Europe

On a personal note, I have just got back to Washington after a hectic trip to the Old World. It is good to be back after a productive but sobering trip. I started off in London, where we hosted an event at the British Parliament. In the UK, I found politics to have stabilized for now. Prime Minister Andy Burnham has got off to a flying start in terms of poll ratings, but borrowing costs for the UK have risen to the highest levels since 2008. In his first appearance at Prime Minister's Questions, a fantastic British tradition in the House of Commons where the leader of the opposition grills the prime minister every Wednesday at noon, Burnham attempted to calm bond markets. Needless to say, he did not quite succeed.

From London I went to Amsterdam, where there was less of a sense of crisis despite a fragile and unstable coalition. Even though inflation and bond yields have been rising, the economy is growing and the cost-of-living crisis did not seem as dire as in the UK. The infrastructure is superb. I took the train from Utrecht to Amsterdam numerous times, and the WiFi on the train worked fantastically well. I sensed unease but, looking back, the Netherlands was almost idyllic compared to the UK and France.



My next stop was Paris, where a sense of crisis was palpable. I listened to debates and discussions among French friends about the future of the Fifth Republic. Some argued that polarization in the country was the key problem and no new republic would solve it, while others made the case that the Fifth Republic is neither fish nor fowl. This creation of Charles de Gaulle with an imperial presidency is now woefully out of date. Since I have left la grande nation, protests have erupted in full fury. In the words of The Financial Times, France is now caught "between the bond market and the barricades."

Despite the sense of crisis, I have to say that Paris remains as seductive as ever. Walking around Paris has always been one of the joys of my life. I found the metro and metro stations spruced up. Clearly, France poured in a lot of money to host the 2024 Paris Olympics and the city is better off as a result. Libération Editor-in-Chief Sonia Delesalle-Stolper was gracious enough to take time off from her extremely busy schedule to spend some time with me. So did the brilliant photographer Peter van Agtmael. I had delightful conversations with both of them and many others, leaving Paris with a feeling that France had a lot going for it in terms of talent despite its manifold problems.



In Vienna, Sebastian Schäffer of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) hosted me for a couple of discussions. One was on youth protests in different parts of the world, while the other was on Silicon Valley hotshots like Elon Musk backing AfD. Schäffer was a great host, and IDM has been one of our partners for years. I thank him for being a great partner and we hope to establish partnerships with think tanks like IDM from around the world.

I also spent time with Nicolai Leski, one of our advisors who studied classics as an undergraduate before embarking on a career in finance. He advised me to reach out to Eric Frey of Der Standard, and I had a delightful lunch with him. I heard his diagnosis of Austrian politics with much interest. He spoke about Austrian far-right politics, touching upon the late Jörg Haider who was in the news when I was a student at Oxford and the current strength of Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), known in the rest of the world as the Freedom Party of Austria. The likes of FPÖ are promising simple solutions to complex problems and people seem to be falling for them because they are dissatisfied with the status quo. It remains to be seen what lies ahead but a sense of unease certainly prevails in this stunning city that was once the capital of the Habsburg Empire.

We soldier on at a time of unease

That unease is far more acute in the US. On getting back to Washington, we hosted a meetup at the National Press Club and then I dashed north to New York for another meetup before rushing back. In both cities and on the train, I met numerous people and had interesting conversations. Midterms are round the corner and most Americans are worried about the future. This is neither the time nor the place to talk about those worries, many of which are well known. Instead, I want to give you a glimpse of what we are planning in the months ahead.

As you know, we bring you perspectives from around the world. Unlike most media organizations that are top down and give you a New York, London or Doha view of the world, we publish perspectives from around the world. These include perspectives we disagree with because we strongly believe democracy needs discourse. We know that our readers are intelligent and open-minded. They want to make sense of the world by looking at it through many prisms. Our 3,000+ authors from 90+ countries provide this nutritious diversified diet to our readers. You do not get all authors singing from the same hymnsheets. Anyone can publish with us but everyone, including yours truly, goes through the same editorial process. In the months ahead, we will keep diversifying your intellectual diet and expanding our author base.

To ensure that we hold the feet of these authors to the fire, we will expand our Young Editors Program. Those who join this program get a world class education in not only journalism but also humanities. Cheyenne Torres, Kaitlyn Diana and I conduct a workshop every Saturday that is quite like an Oxford tutorial. Our young editors also get to join a worldwide community that is deeply engaged. Importantly, they get credit for their work and develop a portfolio that they can showcase to universities when applying for advanced degrees or to future employers. Alumni of our program have gone on to top universities like Harvard and Oxford as well as work in diplomacy, intelligence and journalism.

We are also updating the technology underlying our publishing platform. We are working to launch a brand new platform with a clean, user-friendly design. This will have many features that will work seamlessly such as saving articles, following authors, leaving comments and much more. We are also planning to deepen our existing partnerships and, as mentioned earlier, tie up new ones. More audio, video and timelines are also on the cards. In a nutshell, we have big plans for the future.

None of our plans would be possible without you. We need your support to keep going. If you believe in the work we are doing, then please sign up as a recurring donor here if you have not already done so. We are one of the few nonprofits in the world news space and we can only keep going if more of our readers sign up to be donors. In case you are already a donor or do not have a budget for donations this year, you can still help. Get your friends to sign up for our free newsletters, follow us on LinkedIn and subscribe to our YouTube channel. If you know folks with something interesting to say, ask them to publish with us.

I leave you with one parting thought. What we do is difficult and, we believe, important. So, we need your attention, time and support.

Season's greetings and my warmest regards,



Atul Singh
Founder, CEO & Editor-in-Chief

FO° Editorial Update

The topic of elections dominated this quarter. In the US, law student Spencer Woodall offered a South Carolinian's perspective on the state's Republican Senate runoff. Farther north, American journalist Vikram Zutshi examined Michigan Senator Abdul El-Sayed's victory in the state primary. In Brazil, journalist Luiz Cesar Pimentel highlighted the growing role of social media algorithms in political competition. Atul and Sebastian Schäffer, Director of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, explored whether the AfD's historic victory could undermine German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.



A Disgruntled South Carolinian's Breakdown of South Carolina's Republican Senate Runoff

By Spencer Woodall — August 29, 2026



Brazil's 2026 Election Is Becoming a Competition for the Algorithm

By Luis Cesar Pimentel — September 11, 2026



Could Abdul El-Sayed Be the Muslim Politician America Needs?

By Vikram Zutshi — September 14, 2026



FO Talks: Will Historic AfD Victory Now Sink German Chancellor Friedrich Merz?

By Atul Singh and Sebastian Schäffer — September 25, 2026

We also explored the global financial system's vulnerabilities and the challenges facing economic policymakers. Japanese economist Masaaki Yoshimori argued that completing Europe's financial union could unlock private savings for innovation, investment and economic competitiveness. Atul and FOI partner Manu Sharma discussed the US Treasury's intervention to support Japan's yen and what selling euros to finance the move revealed about Washington's strategic priorities. Yoshimori also examined how monetary policy must balance central bank guidance with markets' ability to form independent expectations. Atul also spoke with retired CIA officer Glenn Carle, warning that mounting debt, persistent inflation, trade disruptions and financial market risks could converge into a global crisis.



Europe's Untapped Financial Power: Completing Financial Union for Growth, Innovation, and Competitiveness

By Masaaki Yoshimori August 18, 2026



FO Talks: Why the US Treasury Dumped Euro to Save Yen

By Atul Singh & Manu Sharma August 24, 2026



Who Should Form Expectations?: The Future of Monetary Policy

By Masaaki Yoshimori September 12, 2026



FO Exclusive: Global Economy Teetering on Brink of Major Crisis

By Atul Singh & Glenn Carle September 30, 2026

This quarter, we also examined defense and security geopolitics. In her piece, war correspondent Hollie McKay exposed the contradiction between Saudi Arabia's public role as a mediator in Sudan's civil war and allegations of its involvement in arms transfers to the Sudanese Armed Forces. Research assistant Sajal Shahid considered how the US–Iran conflict could shape the future of AI-enabled drone warfare. Elliot Neaman, a professor of European intellectual history, questioned what regime change really means and whether outside powers understand the consequences of attempting it. In Europe, Antoine van Agtmael, principal founder, CEO and CIO of Emerging Markets Management LLC, examined if the continent can defend itself while rethinking its reliance on the US within NATO.



Riyadh's Sudan Contradiction: Mediator by Day, Arms Broker by Night

By Hollie McKay — August 7, 2026



The Future of AI-Enabled Drone Warfare After the US–Iran Conflict

By Sajal Shahid — September 3, 2026



Regime Change: What We Don't Understand About Both Words

By Elliot Neaman — September 7, 2026



Can Europe Defend Itself? Rethinking the US Role in NATO

By Antoine van Agtmael — September 8, 2026

We also focused on the economic and political implications of AI. Founder and CEO of CoinFund, Jake Brukhman, considers the role decentralized AI models play in the great AI race. Yoshimori explores how central banking might change with the rise of AI, and how bankers can react to that change. Global business leader Usama Malik explored how AI may make software more abundant and shift scarcity toward physical resources. FO's Chief Strategy Officer Peter Isackson and Devina Mehra, Founder and Chairperson of First Global, unpacked the forces driving the AI boom and the challenges of separating lasting economic change from speculative excitement.



You Don't Need Data Centers to Win the AI Race

By Jake Brukhman — July 27, 2026



When AI Confuses the Central Banker

By Masaaki Yoshimori — July 30, 2026



Abundance Has a Landlord: AI Is Shifting Scarcity From Software to Substance

By Usama Malik — August 18, 2026



FO Talks: Making Sense of the AI Boom

By Peter Isackson & Devina Mehra — September 8, 2026

Of course, we had to cover America's 250th anniversary this quarter. Peter considered the enduring influence of America's founding texts and the principles they established. Atul celebrated the country's imperfect complexity while reflecting on the sources of hope for its future. Glenn drew on French historian Alexis de Tocqueville's observations of American democracy to explore what national celebrations and public parades mean. Steve Forester, an American educational technologist, examined the tension between competing visions of liberty, asking whether American freedom can fulfill its promise for everyone.



250 Years of American Scripture

By Peter Isackson July 3, 2026



Happy Fourth: Hope in Magnificently Messy America at 250

By Atul Singh July 4, 2026



What's in a Parade? Tocqueville's America at 250

By Glenn Carle July 10, 2026



Celebrating 250: America's Two Visions of Liberty

By Steve Forester July 12, 2026

Finally, we spent a lot of time this quarter discussing the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) in India. Assistant editor Swapnarka Arnan compared the Indian government's response to the hunger strikes of Sonam Wangchuk and Irom Sharmila. Student Ira Tanwani explored how the CJP uses satire to question power and revive public accountability. In the July FO Exclusive, Atul and Glenn examined how the youth-led protests are challenging Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. Editor-at-large Ranjani Iyer Mohanty and Barun Mohanty, an Indian global social-impact leader, unpacked the CJP's origins, methods and significance in India's political landscape.



Wangchuk, Sharmila and a Tale of Two Hunger Strikes in India

By Swapnarka Arnan — August 3, 2026



The Duty to Mock: How India's CJP is Reviving Accountability Through Satire

By Ira Tanwani — August 4, 2026



FO Exclusive: India's Youth Cockroach Protests Rattle Prime Minister Narendra Modi

By Atul Singh & Glenn Carle — August 13, 2026



FO Podcasts: Cockroach Chronicles — Making Sense of the CJP

By Ranjani Iyer Mohanty & Barun Mohanty — August 29, 2026

Young Editors Program

Our editorial team has gone above and beyond this quarter. We have 17 active editors, all of them hard workers who are eager to learn the trade. Cheyenne, Kaitlyn and Atul continue to host workshops on Saturday, 10 AM EST. Atul teaches the interns (and Cheyenne and Kaitlyn, too!) the necessary context to understand major events. Cheyenne gives out tricks of the trade, and Kaitlyn makes sure the interns know our rigorous guidelines inside and out.

Our editorial interns work hard to make sure *Fair Observer*'s content is enjoyable, readable and fact-checked. We owe the success of our content to them. Many of them have published articles with us as well! You can check out some of their articles below.

Independent policy writer Lora Karch, who just joined Fair Observer, analyzed US President Donald Trump's meeting with Syrian interim president Ahmed al-Sharaa. She hypothesizes that this meeting marks a new era in US diplomacy.



Trump's Syria Meeting Matters More than NATO Spending Debates

By Lora Karch July 16, 2026

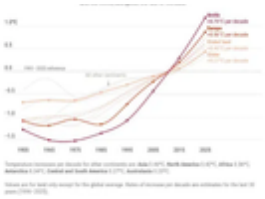
Hong Kong-based writer and editor Vasavi Seethepalli took a close look at Sonam Wangchuk's 20-day hunger strike during the CJP protests. She questions whether Wangchuk's powerful display of protest will push Indian leadership to acknowledge the CJP's demands.



Will the Gen Z-Fueled CJP Achieve What It Set Out To Do?

By Vasavi Seethepalli July 24, 2026

Francesca Collu, journalist and data analyst, investigated why Europe is warming twice as fast as the global average. She merged climate data and journalistic reporting to analyze the European heat wave.



Summer in Europe: Hotter Than Yesterday, Colder Than Tomorrow

By Francesca Collu July 29, 2026

Canadian Aliyah A. Omar delved deep into Alberta's referendum on seceding from Canada. She argues that the referendum is more symbolic than practical due to logistical complexities, and points out that separation talk is often dramatized.



The Conservative Divide and Logistical Barriers in Alberta's Separation Movement

By Aliyah A. Omar August 1, 2026

Yasmine Haji, who lives in Morocco, wrote an insightful piece about the stigma Moroccan society carries regarding sub-Saharan countries. She analyzes the language in Moroccan social media used to distinguish Morocco from other African countries.



To Be African Or Not: Morocco's Old Struggle

By Yasmine Haji September 6, 2026

We also wanted to highlight Kayra Altan, another wonderful young editor here at Fair Observer. Kayra is an incredibly bright, British-Turkish high school student at The Brearley School in New York City. You can take a look at her profile here:



Kayra Altan
Assistant Editor

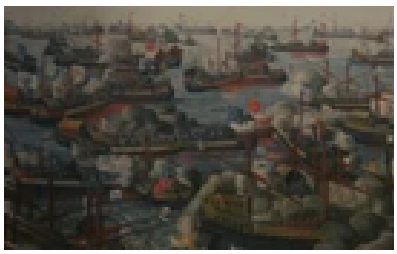
Last quarter, alongside Lee, Kayra made "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire" timeline. Beautifully detailed and exceptionally well-done, the timeline takes the reader through the history of the Ottoman Empire. You can view it here:



The Rise of the Ottoman Empire

Researched and written by Kayra Altan June 27, 2026

This quarter, Kayra has done it again. This time, she has done top-notch work on a timeline about the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Under Lee's wonderful guidance, Kayra has produced this fantastic, informative piece. Give it a look and share it with anyone who might be interested in learning more about this fascinating topic.



The Fall of the Ottoman Empire

Researched and written by Kayra Altan July 28, 2026

Outreach & Partners

Missouri State University, School of Defense and Strategic Studies

Fair Observer recently partnered with Missouri State University's School of Defense and Strategic Studies (DSS). Several DSS students applied and were accepted to be associate editors here at Fair Observer.

Atul plans to record a podcast series with DSS faculty. The first in the series will be with Dr. Christopher Ford, former assistant Secretary of State and acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security; and Dr. James Anderson, former Assistant Secretary of Defense and acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

Next quarter, we will focus on finding more partners that align with Fair Observer's vision of an ecosystem of fact-checked, well-written information that is easily accessible. If you would like to suggest a partnership, please reach out to us.

IDM

As many of you may know, we often partner with IDM for events. During his travels, Atul and IDM Director Sebastian Schäffer hosted two events. You can view both of them below.



Student Protests in the Danube Region & Globally: Is Gen Z a New Force for Political Change?

Atul Singh and Sebastian Schäffer September 28, 2026



Downstream from Silicon Valley: How Apartheid-Era Algorithms are Reshaping the Danube Region

Atul Singh and Sebastian Schäffer September 29, 2026

FO° Events

As usual, Atul and Glenn Carle, retired CIA officer and partner at FOI, conducted three excellent FO Exclusive events this quarter. FO Exclusive, which takes place on the last Wednesday of every month, analyzes that month's most important developments. You can find the July, August and September episodes below. In July, Atul and Glenn take a close look at the World Cup — and the many catastrophes happening in the global background. August global economic downturns and food crises. Finally, in September, the two investigated the potential fall of the House of Saud, the new Canada–EU relationship and the space race.



World Cups and World Catastrophes: Making Sense of July 2026

By Glenn Carle & Atul Singh July 29, 2026



Crises Build, Economies Plummet: Making Sense of Major Events in August 2026

By Glenn Carle & Atul Singh August 26, 2026



New Threats Reshape World Order: Making Sense of September 2026

By Glenn Carle & Atul Singh September 30, 2026

FO° Community

In his letter, Atul spoke about his many travels. We had just as many meetups — people flocked to exchange dialogue and build discourse. The highlight of this quarter's events was the London expert panel hosted by *Fair Observer.* Sharon Hodgson, MP for Washington and Gateshead South, hosted the event to gain a better sense of the conflicts and geopolitical issues happening in Sudan and Yemen. So did many other MPs. You can view the panel here:



Islamic Extremists Are Prolonging the Conflict in Yemen and Sudan

By Fair Observer September 14, 2026



London: Wednesday, September 16



New York: Thursday, September 10



Paris, France: Wednesday, September 23



Washington, DC: Friday, July 17, 2026



Amsterdam, The Netherlands

FO Newsletters

It was with a pinch of the heart that Roberta accepted to change the title of Fair Observer's newsletters. Our famous FO Features, sent every Sunday, is now titled FO Spotlight to better reflect the way the newsletter takes a close look at a single issue every week. The even more famous FO Wednesday, our biweekly reflections written by Fair Observer team members, is now aptly named FO Reflections. You can find all of our past newsletters here:

FO° Reflections

FO° Spotlight

FO Spotlight

Associate editors Casey Herrmann, Aliyah Omar and Alexandros Ouzounis continue to do great work in informing our readers on underreported issues. They are highly independent, contribute fantastic ideas and take charge each week. Casey continues to put out fantastic writing. Alexandros approaches research with enthusiasm. Aliyah edits and polishes the newsletters with excellent precision.

In his final FO Spotlight, associate editor Liam Roman joins Casey and Alexandros in analyzing the Trump Administration's blatant corruption. In another newsletter, Casey, Aliyah and Alexandros take a close look at the rampant ICE deportations happening across the US. Recently, Roberta joined Casey and Alexandros to investigate what a win for the far-right political party AfD means for Germany.



Pay to Play: Corruption and Influence in and out of the Trump Administration

By Liam Roman, Casey Herrmann & Alexandros Ouzounis

July 26, 2026



Even After Murders and Protests, ICE Deportations Ramp Up

By Casey Herrmann, Aliyah A. Omar & Alexandros Ouzounis

August 30, 2026



AFD Wins in Saxony-Anhalt: Firewall or Taboo

By Casey Herrmann, Roberta Campani & Alexandros Ouzounis

September 13, 2026

FO Newsletters

FO Reflections

In these past three months, FO Reflections has gone global. Climate change was a popular topic, from Roberta writing from Switzerland about Europe's heat wave to across the Atlantic, where Editor-at-Large Ranjani Iyer Mohanty wrote about climate change in Canada. Fair Observer's social media director, Lucy Golish, reflected upon the polarization changing the face of American political conversations. Associate editor Lee Thompson-Kolar wrote a great piece on the new species of cat discovered in the Bolivian jungle, and editorial chief of staff Kaitlyn Diana delved deep into the education crisis in the US.



The Architecture of Misunderstanding

By Lucy Golish — July 29, 2026



No Fresh Grasses for the Cows, No Mosquito Net for the Mind

By Roberta Campani — August 26, 2026



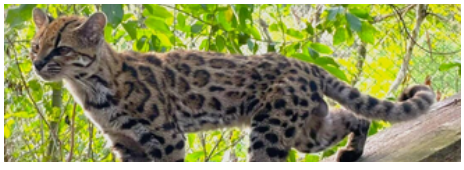
Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer: Climate Change in Canada

By Ranjani Iyer Mohanty — September 9, 2026



America the Uneducated?

By Kaitlyn Diana — September 16, 2026

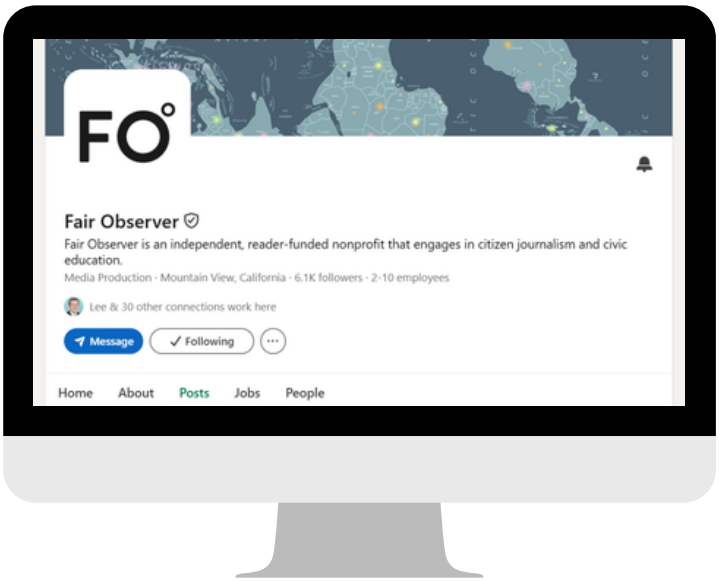


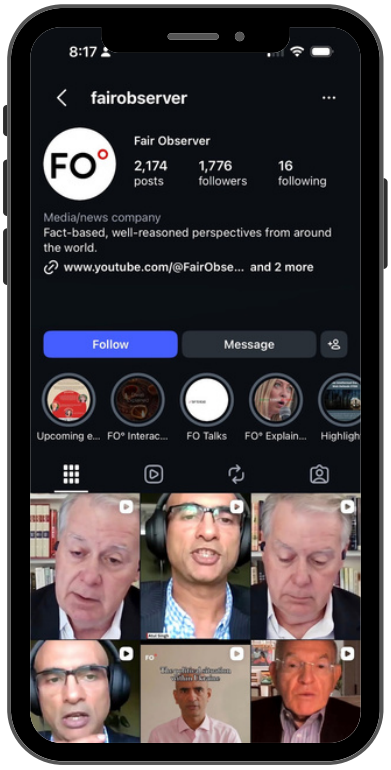
The Worst News You've Ever Read in All Your Nine Lives

By Lee Thompson-Kolar — September 30, 2026

Social Media Highlights

We reached 6k subscribers on Linkedin in a purely organic way — no ads, no subscription, no boosting!





Thanks to Lucy's hard work and a new type of Instagram content, we have increased our Instagram following by 7.4%. The new posts averaged approximately 33% more likes per view and 233% more comments per view when compared to previous content with similar reach.

That content has also exploded our share rate on Instagram, averaging over 700% more shares in the same comparison.

YouTube Highlights

Many changes have come to our YouTube channel, and we're seeing a positive impact because of them. We now have a consistent publishing schedule, improved thumbnails and a fresh batch of ideas on how we can improve. Lucy and Aryan have been working hard to make the YouTube channel appealing to a younger audience.

Our content is doing well. People continue to enjoy our in-depth analyses. We feel a sense of achievement that our content is reaching so many people. Our mission to provide well-reasoned, fact-checked information to the global citizenry is well underway.



Pakistan Is the Garrison State and India Is the Babu State

By Ishtiaq Ahmed & Atul Singh July 31, 2026



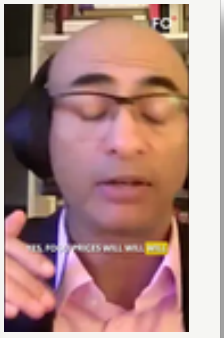
Make Sense of India's Youth Cockroach Protests

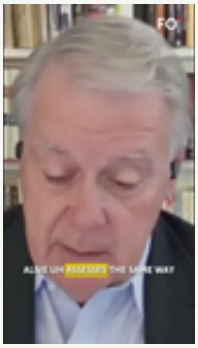
By Sam Tully & Atul Singh August 23, 2026



The Looming Global Food Crisis: How Hunger and Famine Will Trigger Instability

By Atul Singh & Glenn Carle September 14, 2026



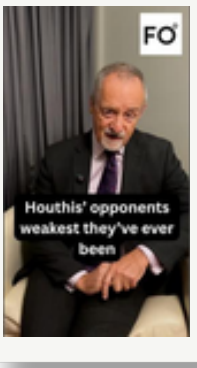


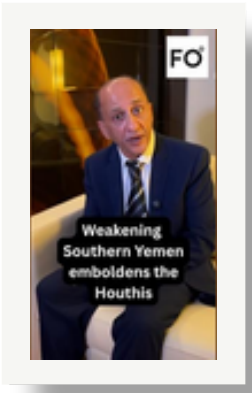
We have changed the format of our YouTube shorts to better reflect our dedication to clear, independent, accessible information. There has been improvement in our viewership since then.

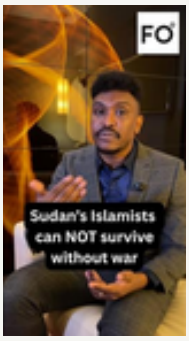
Here are two Shorts taken from the August edition of the *FO Exclusive*. In the first, Atul warns that the continuing conflict may trigger a global food crisis. In the second, Glenn explains why economists predict that US Social Security will go bankrupt.

As many of you may know, *Fair Observer* hosted an expert panel in London with Sharon Hodgson, MP of Gateshead and South.

Claire Whitaker, Chair of *Fair Observer,* filmed Shorts of the expert guests speaking on the topic of Yemen and Sudan. Former UK ambassador to Yemen, Edmund Fitton-Brown, speaks about the weakness of Houthi opponents. Dr. Abdul Galil Shaif, STC at the UN in Geneva, also explains how a weak Southern Yemen emboldens the Houthis. Scientist and human rights advocate, Anas Himedan, talks about why Sudan's Islamists cannot survive without war.







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What You Can Do

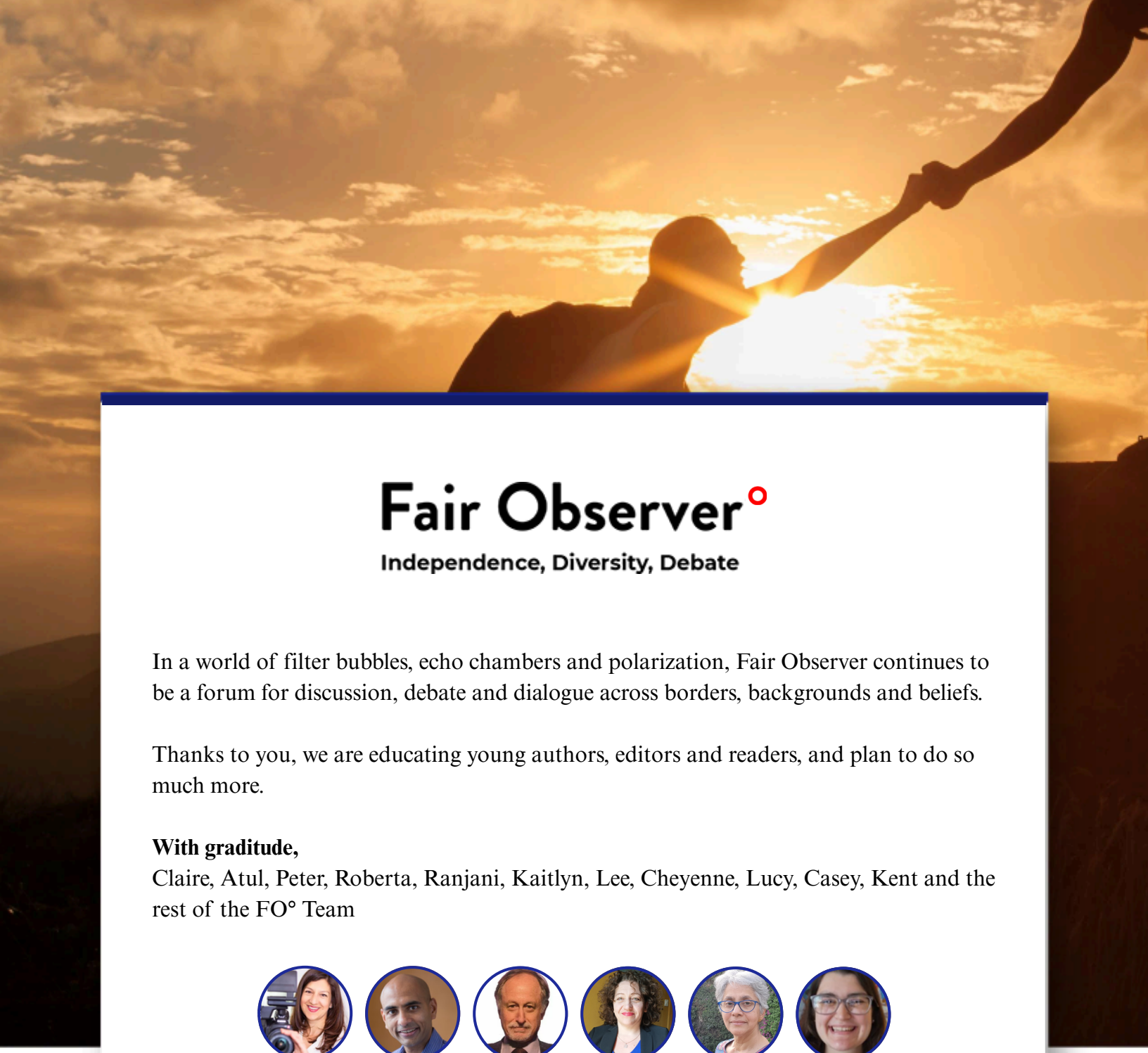
1. You can sign up for our newsletters and get others to do so, too.

2. You can follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, X, YouTube & Instagram, if you use any of these.

3. You can write for or interview with us and introduce us to folks who have interesting things to say.

4. You can host a meetup, discussion or salad for us at your institution or your home.

5. You can introduce us to potential authors or young people who want to become editors with us.



Fair Observer°

Independence, Diversity, Debate

In a world of filter bubbles, echo chambers and polarization, Fair Observer continues to be a forum for discussion, debate and dialogue across borders, backgrounds and beliefs.

Thanks to you, we are educating young authors, editors and readers, and plan to do so much more.

With graditude,
Claire, Atul, Peter, Roberta, Ranjani, Kaitlyn, Lee, Cheyenne, Lucy, Casey, Kent and the rest of the FO° Team

