



Fair Observer^o

Independence, Diversity, Debate



THIRD QUARTER UPDATE

2024



Dear FO^o Supporter,

I write this letter to you late at night in Japan. Professor Haruko Satoh of the Osaka School of International Public Policy (OSIPP) has very kindly invited me to the Asian Political and International Studies Association conference on “Asian Governance,” hosted by OSIPP and supported by the Korea Foundation, no less. I am spending a lot of time with some of the finest minds from this vast continent.



Modern buildings and traditional gardens, Tokyo

We rarely see the world from East Asian eyes or even recognize that their gaze may be different from ours. For instance, some European scholars at our conference patronizingly told the Japanese that Russia was an imperial power. They forgot that Japan has a long history with Russia. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 marked Japan’s arrival on the global stage. In 1939, Soviet war hero Georgy Zhukov smashed Japanese troops in the fateful Battles of Khalkhin Gol, which paved the way to Pearl Harbor.

More importantly, the Japanese remember how Joseph Stalin repudiated the Soviet–Japanese Neutrality Pact after World War II. After the US dropped two atomic bombs on Hiroshima (August 6, 1945) and Nagasaki (August 9), Soviet troops invaded South Sakhalin. Since then, Russia has conducted ethnic cleansing on the island, and hardly any Japanese are left there. Till today, there is no final Russia–Japan peace treaty, and the status of four neighboring islands remains disputed.



From left to right: Professors Brendan Howe, Jaewoo Choo and Haruko Satoh

Upon the Japanese pointing out that Russia is a common security concern between Asia and Europe and that sharing each other’s threat perception is ever more important today, another European all-so-knowingly asserted that, “Southeast Asians don’t talk about Russia as a security concern” amidst an audience that included Southeast Asians. Evidently, the memory of the “threat” of SS-20s in the 1980s is lost on this new generation of Europeans who claim to know Asia.

In 2021, before the Russia–Ukraine War kicked off, no fewer than ten Russian and Chinese warships circumnavigated Honshu, the main island of Japan. Tokyo is under no illusions about its rough neighborhood. Russia, North Korea and China are not exactly benign neighbors who champion

trade, cooperation or peace. In such an environment, one roundtable at the conference was devoted to discussing the potential of (and need for greater) Japan–South Korea cooperation for Asia. This is a topic rarely picked up, let alone discussed, in Europe; predictably, the Europeans at the conference had little to say on this matter.

The ignorance and ethnocentrism of some of our European friends came as a surprise, since they had come all the way to Japan for a conference. One would have thought that they would demonstrate good manners, if not empathy at the very least.

The experience made me realize why we need Fair Observer more than ever. Within countries, politics has become more polarized. Globally, people are retreating yet again into their shells. At this time of increasing conflict both domestic and international, we need to view the world through other people's eyes, engage, empathize and understand. That is why we are championing community and conversation, and that is why we publish perspectives we profoundly disagree with as long as they are fact-based and well-reasoned.

Finally, I want to ask you for your help in boosting our [crowdfunding campaign](#). We want 1,001 recurring donors by the end of 2024. As a section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we do not have owners or advertisers. We do not have paywalls. We provide a global public good. So, we request you to spread the word and ask your circle to support us this year.

Thank you for supporting us in our journey so far. Please tell us how we can do even better.

My warmest regards,

Atul

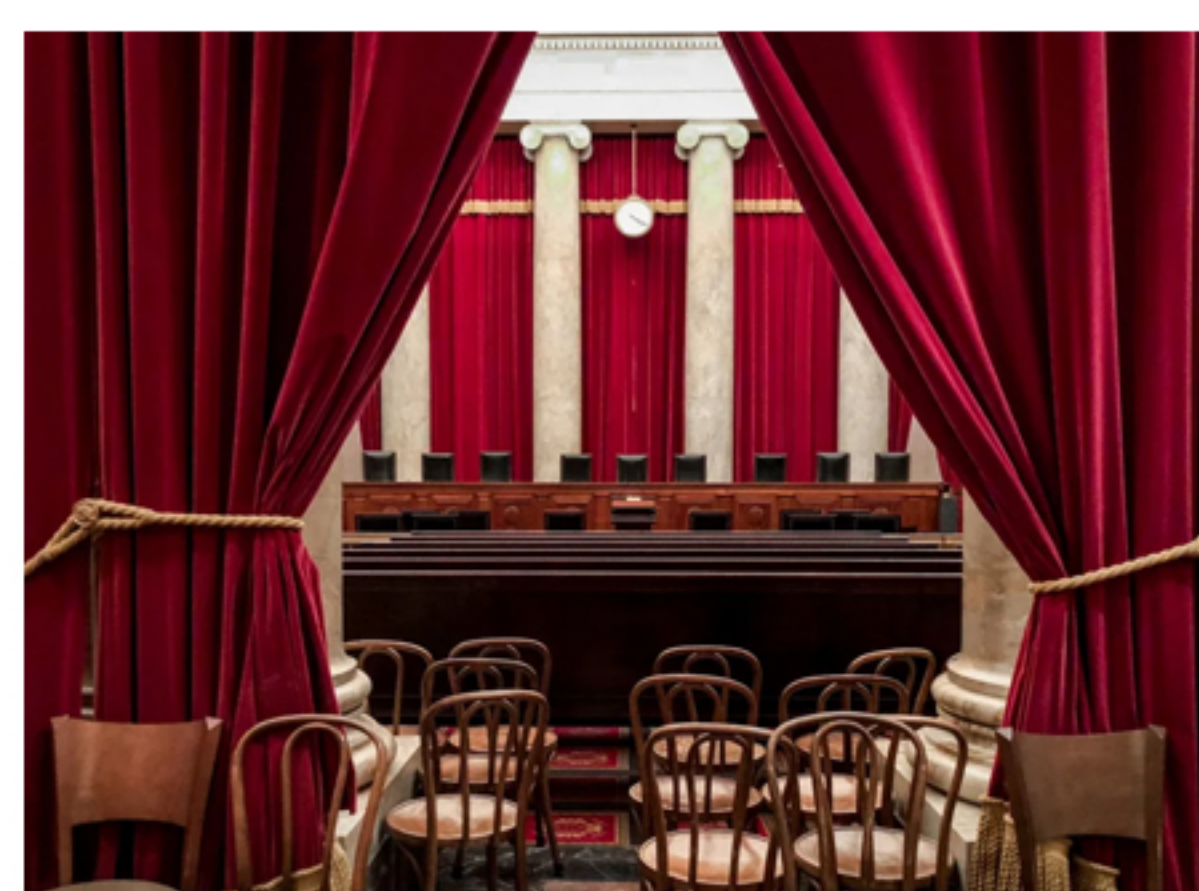
FO^o Editorial Update

Our young editors' training program continues to pay great dividends. On Saturdays, we gather together from around the world for our online workshops. Sometimes, these take the form of editing a document together. At other times, the workshop turns into a lesson about context where history, culture, politics or economics come to the fore.

Recently, we have produced finished pieces after our 90-minute sessions, two of which you can find below.



Are ETFs Now Cannibalizing Mutual Funds, and Is That Good?



Chevron Overturn Signals Volatile Emerging Storm of Litigation

Editing together is a rewarding experience. Our editors come from different backgrounds and have diverse perspectives. When we collaborate, we produce a better final product. This breathes life into the crucible of collaboration that Chief Strategy Officer Peter Isackson is championing at Fair Observer.

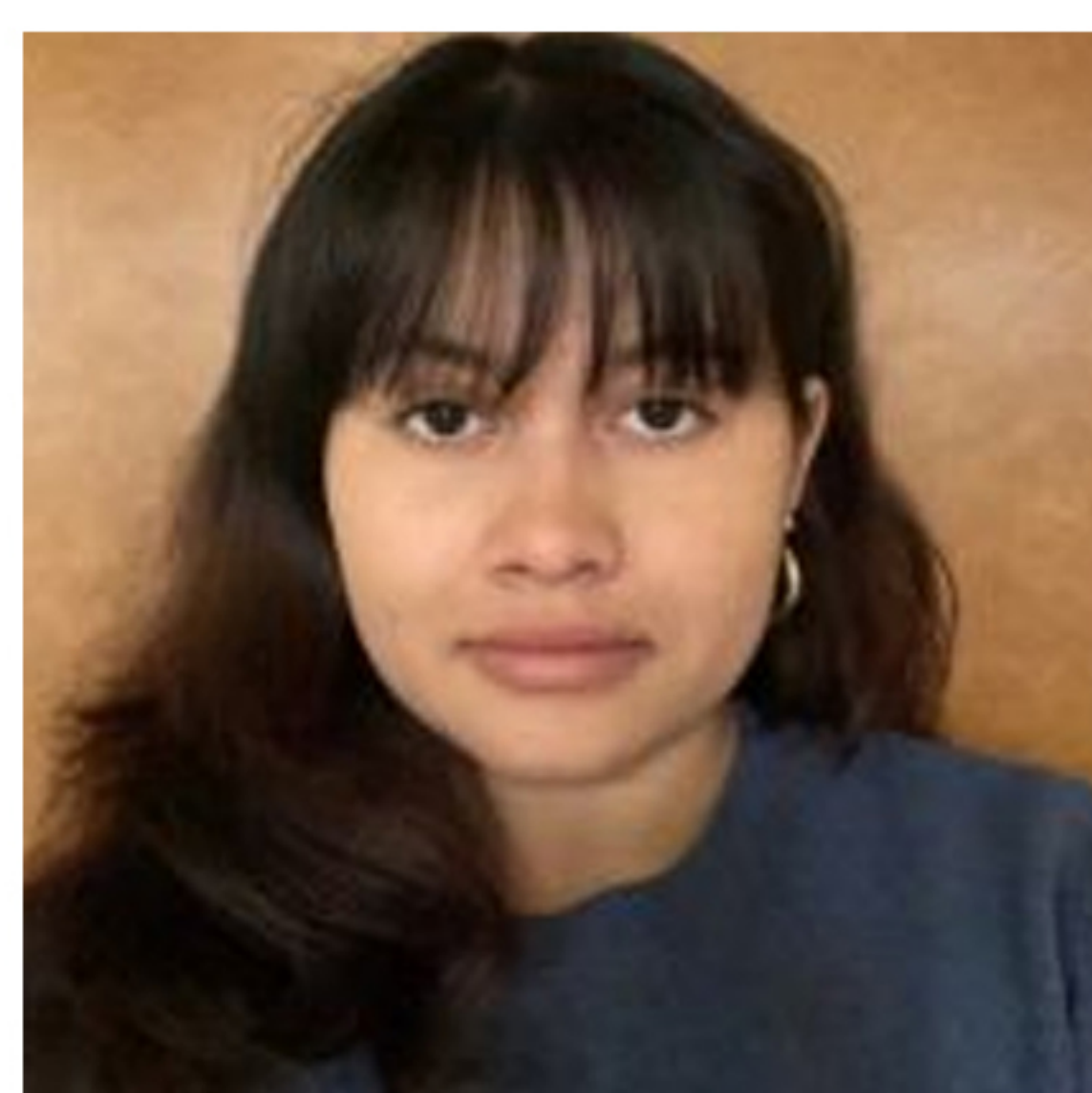
Our Young Editors Program is proving successful in producing better editors and authors. **Lee Thompson-Kolar** graduated from this program to join us as an associate editor and has found his niche working with our most experienced authors, including Peter Isackson. They know our editorial guidelines and Lee can edit pieces speedily, improving the timeliness of their work.



Lee Thompson-Kolar
Associate Editor



Liam Roman
Assistant Editor



Cheyenne Torres
Assistant Editor



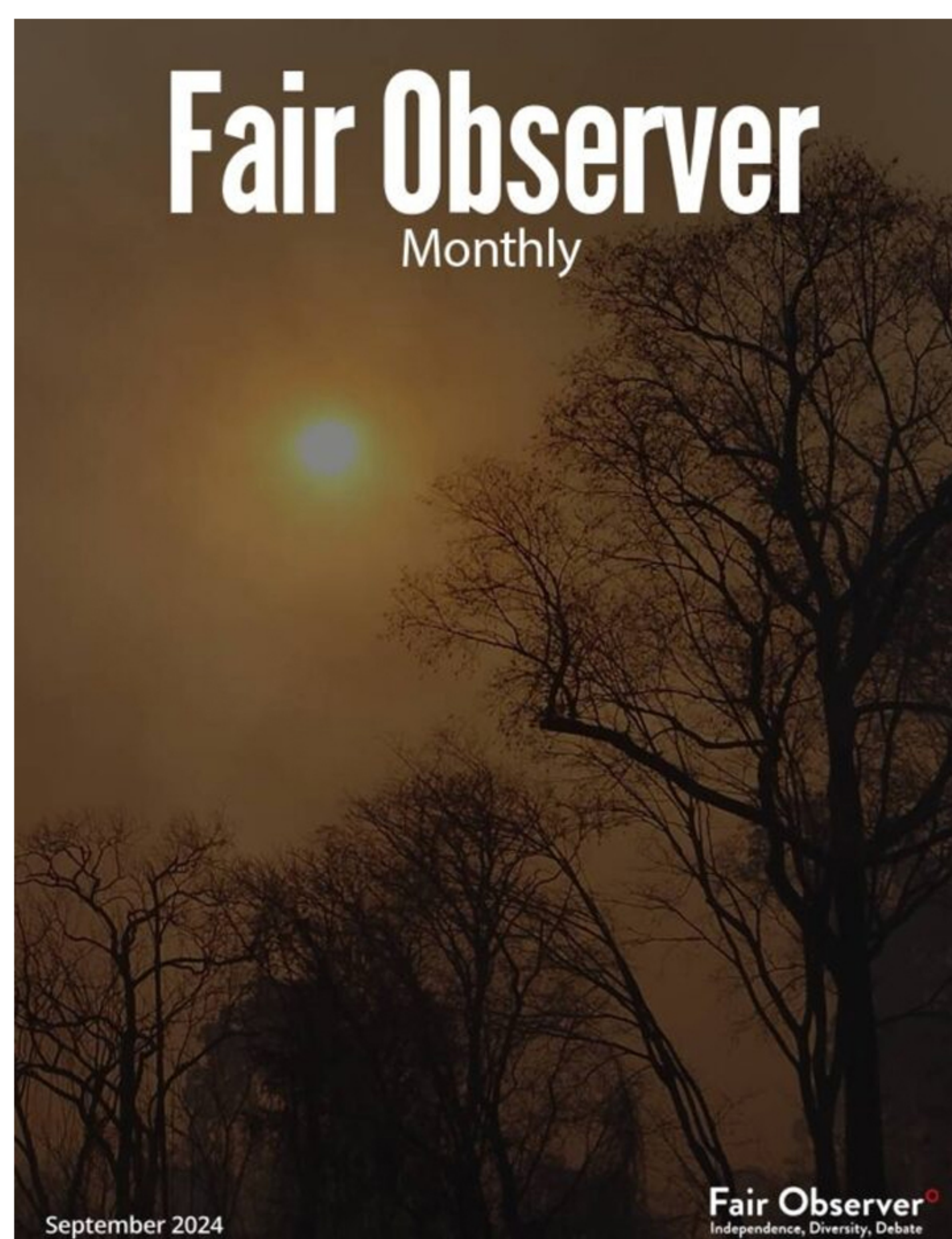
Peter Choi
Podcast Assistant

Assistant editors **Liam Roman** and **Cheyenne Torres** continue to do great work. Not only do they edit pieces conscientiously but they also provide invaluable guidance to new editors both inside and outside our editorial workshops.

Peter Choi continues to produce both podcasts and written summaries with great professionalism. Thanks to our terrific experience with Peter, we are now expanding our multimedia team to produce content in different forms such as podcasts, videos and timelines.

FO° Content Update

We publish the best of our content in the form of a monthly magazine, which you can find [here](#). In this quarter, we have been promoting this magazine and some institutions are finding our magazine useful.



FO° Monthly September 2024

We continue to publish interesting authors from around the world. [Masaaki Yoshimori](#) has published on topics from central bank independence to Japanese economic reform. Argentinian researcher [Lucía Converti](#) cast the light on her country's new right-wing President Javier Milei. [Vivien Ábrahám](#), a Hungarian tennis player who represented the University of Minnesota in tennis, examined the hurdles faced by female student athletes.

[Haruko Satoh](#), whom I mentioned above, participated in three illuminating discussions on South Korea, its relationship with Japan and its potential role in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, better known as the Quad. Pakistani lawyer [Hassan Shad](#) has begun writing for us for us again after a three-year hiatus and offers an insightful look into issues from Islamabad to Riyadh.

Finally, along with Anton Schauble, young FO° Contributing Editor [Aniruddh Rajendran](#) penned an in-depth analysis of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's electoral flop this June.

As mentioned in the previous section, much of our content came from those participating in our Young Editors Program. Editorial intern [Kaitlyn Diana](#) warned us about the dangers of adult novelists publishing explicit content in the Young Adult category. [Joey T. McFadden](#) has begun a series on contemporary art criticism as he attends exhibitions in New York. [Elizabeth Tate](#) discussed the chilling rape and murder of a female doctor in India's West Bengal with journalist [Ankita M. Kumar](#). High school student [Tanisha Desai](#) has written on topics as diverse as flooding driven by climate change and the role of women in The Mahabharata, arguably the greatest epic in classical Indian literature.

FO° Meetups and Partnerships Update

Our meetups are going well. We have built up a strong community in New York, Washington, DC and London. We are starting to build a community in Geneva too. Inevitably, we discuss issues like democracy and demagogues, geopolitics and war, economics and financial crises. We also discuss philosophy, art, literature and culture.

Our meetups bring together interesting people from all walks of life. the discussions are rich and people often forge friendships. They make for a much richer experience than just reading a piece, watching a video, listening to a podcast or attending one of our monthly [FO° Exclusive](#) sessions.



FO° Meetup: London

To build community, we are not only organizing meetups but also meeting our partners. In Vienna, Editor-in-Chief Atul Singh met The Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) and had a great discussion with the IDM team. [Malwina Talik](#) of IDM, who has published many pieces with us, took this photograph after the discussion.



Meeting the team at IDM

We are deepening our partnerships with our existing partners like the Graduate School of Global and International Studies at the University of Salamanca and the United Service Institution in India. We are also negotiating partnerships with institutions in other parts of the world.

Why Supporting FO^o Is a Jolly Good Thing

You can see from the above that we have been active. We are working tirelessly to increase our impact. One key goal is to approach foundations and donor-advised funds for support. We would be grateful for any introductions. We are also looking for grant writers — if you know any, send them our way.

As you know, we rely on your support. Here's what you can do:

- Ask people in your circle to **sign up** for our [newsletter](#) and **follow us** on social media: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#).

- Introduce us to those who might want to **publish** with us.

- **Share** our newsletters, articles, podcasts and videos to your circle.

- **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.)

- **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 monthly or even an annual contribution of \$5, \$3 or \$1 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.

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Thanks to your support, Fair Observer examines global issues through local lenses. In a world of filter bubbles, echo chambers and polarization, Fair Observer is 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, and plan to do much more.

With gratitude,

Claire, Atul, Peter, Roberta, Anton, Lee, Aniruddh, Liam, Cheyenne, Peter Choi and the rest of the FO^o Team

