



**Fair Observer<sup>o</sup>**

**Half-Yearly Update**

**2022**

## Dear Friend of Fair Observer,

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks in the US and the 14<sup>th</sup> of July festivities in France are now over. At this festive summer time, we are back and have much to share with you.

The first major news is about our [team](#). Abul-Hasanat Siddique and Anna Pivovarchuk have left the organization after years of service. As managing and deputy managing editor, both Abul-Hasanat and Anna served Fair Observer loyally for many years. They have now moved on to new pastures and we wish them all the best for their future.

After years of service, former US diplomat Gary Grappo has stepped down as chair of Fair Observer, and noted journalist Claire Price has taken over. She has over 20 years of experience at the BBC and AFP, where she was head of Africa for video. Gary continues to stay on the board and we look forward to Claire's deep media expertise to move Fair Observer forward. New team members have come in. We now have the right mix of youth and experience, and our truly global team is bursting with new ideas.

The second major news pertains to our experimentation with new forms of collaboration and new types of content. We are now publishing on a daily basis, including weekends. Editors often edit documents together online and conduct live editing sessions with authors. We have also doubled down on mentoring young authors in keeping with our original vision to publish fresh voices and multiple perspectives from around the world.

You might have noticed changes to our website, which has several new features. A podcast called The Dialectic by Fair Observer is now available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and elsewhere. Claire has inaugurated a series of short YouTube videos called [FO° Insights](#). Other features are in the works.

Before we paint a picture of the last few months, I must share thoughts triggered by the US Congressional hearings on January 6. On that fateful day, I had rushed to Capitol Hill against the advice of my friends. I spoke to a number of people in the mob besieging the grandest building in Washington. The experience gave me sleepless nights. I had and still have grave concerns about the future of American democracy as you can see in my [long piece](#) dated January 28, 2021.

By its very nature, democracy is fragile. If people cannot agree on the facts and agree to disagree, democracy can collapse. Hence, quality information, debate and discourse are global public goods. Citizen engagement, especially of the young, matters. Our work at Fair Observer remains important.

Thank you for your support and my warmest regards,

Atul

## Note to Authors

If you have been sending your pieces to Abul-Hasanat or Anna, send them instead to [submissions@fairobserver.com](mailto:submissions@fairobserver.com).

Currently, a team of three—Atul Singh, Peter Isackson and Francesca Julia Zucchelli—is doing the bulk of the editing. We will be expanding this team over the rest of the year.

## Note to Supporters and Donors

Thank you for your most kind support. It has kept us going over the years despite the pandemic and tough economic times. We will be reaching out to you for feedback individually very shortly.

## Note to Readers

We exist for you and because of you. We are one of the few reader-supported nonprofits in the world news space. No government, corporation or individual owns us or influences us. Unlike big names like The Economist, The Financial Times, Foreign Policy, The New York Times and The Washington Post, we do not have paywalls. Anyone from any part of the world can read us and publish with us.

We have kicked off what Steven Elleman has termed a “crucible of collaboration.” This involves authors, editors and, most importantly, readers collaborating to publish content on issues that matter. Collaboration takes many forms and results in articles, discussions, videos, podcasts et al. We look to you to grow and diversify our collaboration. So, send us your suggestions.

Make sure you sign up for our newsletter, follow us on social media and download our app. And please spread the word to your circle about Fair Observer.

## Highlights

**Diplomat Training:** In spring 2021, Peter Isackson and Atul Singh conducted a workshop for young diplomats of the Indian Foreign Service on the global media landscape. Using the Socratic method, both of them enabled young diplomats to make sense of the ownership, leadership, culture, ideology, class and interests of key players in this landscape.

**Boston Live 360°:** In autumn 2021, Maria and Wes Kussmaul hosted the only Live 360° in a pandemic year for Fair Observer. They live in Boston where members of our community from many generations enjoyed a “stimulating evening.” We discussed Wes’s idea of Silibandia, his term for a combination of Silicon Valley, the Broadband and Media industries, which own our digital selves. Some suggested regulation, others suggested breaking up internet behemoths while yet others had a range of creative ideas for both policy and market interventions.

**Dinners and Salons in London, Washington, DC and San Francisco:** We kicked off dinners and salons for diplomats, technology and business professionals this year. We invited supporters to informal discussions over dinners and drinks. Topics such as Russian aggression against Ukraine, farm law reforms in India and the rising tensions were food for thought. We are looking for supporters to host more such events in the second half of 2022.

**Deep Dive on Vladimir Putin’s Long Game:** On Christmas Eve, Glenn Carle and Atul Singh penned a detailed historical and philosophical [analysis](#) of what drives the Russian president. This

long piece was read by diplomats, intelligence officials, military officers, leading academics and business leaders who wanted to understand the context of the increasing Russian aggression in Ukraine, Lithuania and elsewhere.

**Membership Section Live:** We have now launched the [membership](#) section. Both individuals and institutions signed up for it and we will be scaling this up going forward.

**FO° Exclusive:** As the name suggests, this is an exclusive [event](#) for donors, members and supporters, which has turned out to be a great success. On the last Wednesday of every month, Glenn Carle, the cerebral ex-CIA man, and Atul Singh, our editor-in-chief, review the last 30 or so days. They pick out the three most important issues of the month and make sense of them. You can find these on [YouTube](#).

**Partnership with Oxford Debating:** Fair Observer’s new team member Geneva Roy negotiated an internship with Oxford Debating. Friends of Fair Observer will be answering questions of young debaters about the real world and mentoring them.

**Voices of the World Program:** Thanks to [Jennifer Wider](#), we have dusted off our 2016 Voices of the World Program, modified and relaunched it. In 2016, we trained over 400 young people around the world. Starting 2022, we are grooming young voices again to publish on issues that matter to them.

## High-Impact Content

Much of our content has had a high impact. We have become well known for our deep dives that explain the context and implications of important issues. We have also covered many topics that are often ignored by bigger news organizations, especially in the US. Needless to say, we publish authors from around the world, many of whom do not have the option to turn to another global platform. We select six recent pieces of our content for your attention.

Our top choice is a letter to the United Nations. We were the only media organization in the world news space that published this letter on the request of our friends from Afghanistan. We turned this piece overnight with team members in the US, the UK and India working together to put it up online.



*Afghan girls attend school in Herat, Afghanistan, 2019 © solmaz daryani/Shutterstock*

### [Appeal to the UN to Protect Hazaras in Afghanistan](#)

by 42 of the country's leading civil society leaders

Our second choice is an article by our chief strategy officer on the hypocrisy of Western media in its coverage of India's foreign policy on the Russia-Ukraine War.



Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar during the 7th Growth Net Summit in New Delhi. © Naveen Macro/Shutterstock.com

### [India's Foreign Minister Schools Western Journalist](#)

by Peter Isackson

Our third choice is an interview of the former head of the Africa desk for the BBC World Service. He shines the light on the Tigray War in Ethiopia, which has not received much coverage in contrast to the Russia-Ukraine War.



An Ethiopian refugee family waiting for help © Amors photos/Shutterstock

### [Making Sense of Tigray War in Ethiopia](#)

by Martin Plaut

Our fourth choice is a conversation that our Swiss Italian team member Roberta Campani conducted with Tibetan activist and writer [Tenzin Tsundue](#). In the wide-ranging conversation, Tsundue discussed exile, a protracted freedom struggle, China, Chinese brutal homogenization policies, cultural and philosophical differences between Tibet and China, and China's tortured relationship with the West.



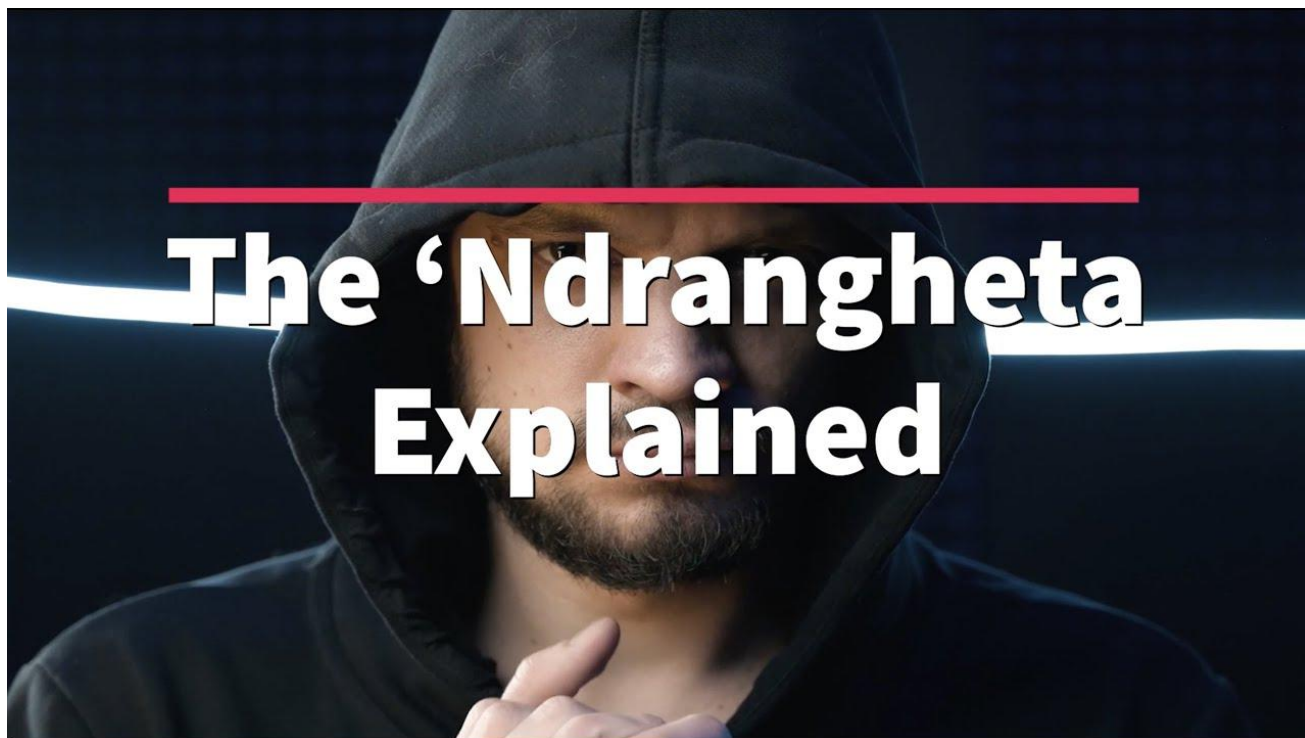
*Tenzin Tsundue talking to Fair Observer (Image taken from video interview)*



*Roberta Campani asking Tenzin Tsundue the current situation in China (Image taken from video interview)*

### [Tibetan Activist and Writer Tenzin Tsundue Talks to Fair Observer](#)

Our fifth choice is the most successful video on Fair Observer’s fledgling YouTube channel. It is an explainer video on the 'Ndrangheta, which has edged out Sicily’s Cosa Nostra, popularly known as the mafia, to become Italy’s and indeed Europe’s top criminal organization. Chiara Castro, our team member from Calabria, created this explainer video and is one of the exciting new voices on our team.



### [FO° Explainers: The 'Ndrangheta](#)

Our final choice is the podcast called The Dialectic by Fair Observer. The cerebral ex-CIA man Glenn Carle and our erudite editor-in-chief Atul Singh make sense of important issues in this podcast through a stimulating conversation. You can find this podcast on Apple, Google, Spotify and other channels.



Listen on [Apple Podcasts](#)

Listen on [Spotify](#)

Listen on [Google Podcasts](#)



## Featured Authors

### John Bruton

The former Irish prime minister and an international business leader is one of Fair Observer's advisers. He was deeply involved in the Northern Irish Peace Process leading up to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and served as the European Union ambassador to the United States from 2004 to 2009.



### Ira Tanwani

This 15-year-old home-schooler in India is passionate about animal ethics and environmentalism. She has literary and creative interests, and is a language and debating enthusiast.

## **Christopher Roper Schell**

This Capitol Hill veteran ran for the US Congress in a 2020 special election. He is contributing editor at Fair Observer and spends his spare time writing, watching movies, and entertaining benignly mad eccentrics at his carriage house.



## **Florence Bidermann**

This eminent French journalist spent her career at Agence France-Presse (AFP), holding key positions such as AFP chief editor, director of Europe and Africa, and bureau chief in London and Ankara.

## **Jennifer Wider**

This American doctor is a nationally renowned women's health expert, author and radio host. She has appeared on The Today Show, CBS News, ABC News Nightline, Fox News, Good Day NY and HuffPost Live, and is the author of four books as well as contributing editor at Fair Observer.



## **Heinz Fischer**

This statesman was president of the Republic of Austria from 2004 to 2016 after an illustrious political career. Together with former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, he currently leads the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens in Vienna

## Featured Partners

- The United Service Institution
  - Arab Digest
  - IDM (Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe)
  - Global and International Studies, University of Salamanca Graduate School
- 

Thank you for your support!

Fair Observer Team



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