

www.fathomjournal.org

Celebrating a decade of deeper understanding of Israel and the region.



### Editor's Reflections at 10

**Professor Alan Johnson** 

#### The Idea of Fathom

Fathom was created by BICOM in 2012 for the long haul. We were created not to chase the news but, over time, to help realign opinion about Israel, particularly among the mostly skeptical, mostly liberal opinion formers and decision makers found in western universities, think tanks, politics, journalism and civil society.

Fathom was to make a balanced and expert case for rejecting the demonising conceptual frameworks, false historical narratives and hate-filled sensibilities about Israel that were becoming increasingly prevalent in parts of western intellectual culture, especially in civil society and on the left. These frameworks, narratives and sensibilities, we believed, were becoming a wall separating people in the West from having a more balanced view of Israel and the conflict. We were created to knock that wall down, not to be cheer leaders for any particular party in Israel.

The hope was that by refusing to deal in cheap slogans, or to paint Israel as perfect, by having a bandwidth able to take in left and right, Israeli and Palestinian, and by warning readers that there would likely be an article in every issue they really did not agree with, Fathom could showcase a new way to think and talk about Israel, marked by an openness to complexity and nuance, to historical context and political balance, and to intellectual creativity and fresh ideas. We thought a principled and values-based approach to ends could be married to a real-world and prudential approach to means.

#### **Some History**

We launched with a bang in 2012: a quarterly journal accessible on three platforms, no less — a website, an app, and a glossy print edition. Back breaking, but we turned heads — the print journal and the app were extravagantly praised — and we began to attract a readership. Sceptics began to change their minds.

A review in 2014 told us the bulk of our money and time was going into the app and the print edition, while the bulk of our readers were going to the website. So the app and print edition were closed, a small fortune was saved, and the website was completely redesigned by our colleagues at Graphical.

As we started to better understand how the new online world worked we moved to a weekly, then a fortnightly format. An elist was built up. Soon, we knew that, as well as general intelligent Israel-interested readers, our content was being read by the very opinion formers and decision makers we were created to reach, week in, week out.

#### The First Decade

Fathom content – by now we have published around 1000 articles, interviews, book reviews, film reviews, ops, diaries, as well as our series 'My Israeli Music', 'Three Best Books', 'Rereadings' and more – has been read two million times by over half a million unique users from well over 150 nations.

Fathom has published the best writers and they have been read in foreign ministries, editorial offices, party headquarters, think tanks, and universities all over the world.

Fathom eBooks were soon appearing: The Life and Legacy of Yitzhak Rabin, Two States for Two Peoples: The Fathom Essays 2012–2016, Balfour 100, The Six Day War, Essays on the British Mandate, 1920–1948, In Defence of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism, and, the one I am most proud of, Rescuing Israeli–Palestinian Peace: The Fathom Essays 2016–2020, which at 464 pages and 54 contributors, is perhaps the most comprehensive collection of expert and creative thinking about the peace process available today.

Fathom organised seminar series in London. An invited audience of journalists, academics, think tankers, MPs and civil servants meet in conversation with an expert speaker in an informal setting in which contacts can be established and relationships built.

As our reputation grew, we began to forge new partnerships. With the Anti-Defamation League for a major online project to mark the 50th anniversary of the 6 Day War; with RUSI to organise a London conference also on that conflict; with Chatham House and BICOM for a series of track two discussions with Israelis and Palestinians; with INSS in Israel for a joint conference on aspects of the BDS threat; with The Jewish News and BICOM to host a policy conference in Westminster, and more.

As Fathom's reputation grew the Fathom editor appeared on many platforms including BBC Newsnight, BBC Panorama, Al Jazeera, Sky News, The Guardian, Times of Israel, Haaretz, The New York Times, Prospect, New Statesman and The Daily Telegraph; became a regular speaker on university campuses, debating Ilan Pappe, Norman Finkelstein, and others; undertook speaking tours of Australia and New Zealand, addressed the European Parliament, spoke at the UN, and gave talks to Friends of Israel groups and Synagogues around the country.

Fathom felt it had to develop an additional focus: the new antisemitism. We commissioned a steady stream of expert analyses of antisemitic forms of 'anti-Zionism'. Around 30 of these will be published by Routledge in 2023 in an edited collection, Mapping Left Antisemitism: The Fathom Essays. Our output helped rally the response to antisemitism in the UK Labour Party and provide those on the front lines with the intellectually ammunition to win the day. The Fathom report, Institutionally Antisemitic: Contemporary Left Antisemitism and the Crisis in the British Labour Party was cited in the final report into the party conducted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

As we started to better understand how the new online world worked we moved to a weekly, then a fortnightly format. An elist was built up. Soon, we knew that, as well as general intelligent Israel-interested readers, our content was being read by the very opinion formers and decision makers we were created to reach, week in, week out.

The greetings we have received on our 10th birthday give us all the encouragement we need to do even better in the next decade.

#### **Some Thank Yous**

There are too many people to thank for getting Fathom this far than I have space for here. But I must tip my hat to the BICOM Board who in 2012 generously and boldly backed a radical idea on a piece of paper from an academic they didn't really know. And a special shut out for Dermot Kehoe, then the CEO of BICOM, who greenlighted the project, backed the journal when we stumbled, as every new journal does, and spent many hours with me after work in London pubs plotting Fathom's next steps. The current chairs, and CEO Richard Pater have also been unstinting in their support.

The editor has been blessed with brilliant editorial colleagues: Toby Greene, Lorin Bell-Cross, Calev Ben-Dor, Sam Nurding, and now we welcome Jack Omer-Jackaman and Kira Lewis. Our interns have been stellar, so thank you to Hadas Altwarg, Simon Smith, Jack May, Sam Taylor, Alin Martin, Jonathan Van Der Valk, Amy Boekstein, Sapan Maini-Thompson, Alex Chalmers and Julian Graham, and to everyone who has helped the journal these ten years.

A final word for the most important people of all: our donors. Without you, we would not exist: it's really that simple. So, from everyone at Fathom, a huge thank you to each and every one of you.



### Founding Statement (2012)

Today's discussion about Israel is too often supercharged with emotion and underpowered in expertise and nuance. It is time to confront this challenge. We stand at a crossroads and in need of tough-minded and expert intellectual analysis.

First, there is a desperate need for a deeper understanding of Israeli society itself – complex and fast-changing, commanding global attention, yet often reduced to a mere caricature by parts of the mass media, civil society and intellectual culture. Fathom will present Israel in HD.

Second, the revolutionary changes in the Arab world have transformed Israel's neighbourhood into a radically different and bitterly contested political terrain. Social movements with eyes fixed on democratic vistas have been overshadowed on the one hand by the possibility of chaos and on the other by new forms of authoritarianism, religious and secular. Fathom will map this historic contest and explore the profound implications it bears for both Israeli security and the Middle East peace process.

Third, the Israel-Palestinian peace process requires fresh thinking. Two states for two peoples remains the only way to balance Jewish and Palestinian demands for sovereign independence and national self-determination, but there has been a waning of support for this project, among intellectuals especially. Fathom will be a partisan and artisan of the two-state solution, helping to put some intellectual substance back into the project of mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Though the significance of the obstacles to resolving the conflict cannot be ignored, we refuse to give in to the current vogue for pessimism. 'the peace process is dead' is one of Middle East journalism's favourite clichés. But giving up is not an option for millions of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians who yearn for a better future. And there is no cause to give up: majorities on both sides want peace and a conflict-ending agreement has been glimpsed more than once in recent negotiations.

Fathom will offer hard-headed realism about where we are in the peace process, but we will also open our pages to ambitious thinking about where we want to be and how to get there.

Fourth, Fathom will explore the current state and future prospects of the strategic relationship between Britain and Israel. The two countries share a history as well as many progressive values and a wide range of interests — not just strategic and political but in business and trade, culture and civil society, and science and technology.

Fathom will fuse the rigour and intellectual credibility of the old-school journal to the tremendous potential of new publishing technologies and social networks. The journal is published by the Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre, an independent British organisation founded in 2001 to foster a more complete understanding of Israel.

BICOM believes in the right of the State of Israel to live in peace and security and in the rights of the Palestinians to statehood. We support a close relationship between Britain and Israel, based on shared values and interests. Unusually, Fathom's contributors and advisory editors will be drawn from across the political spectrum. Our goal is not to push a narrow party line but to build a global intellectual space for serious bipartisan debate about Israel and the region. We intend to create a more interesting conversation about Israel – more knowledgeable, more nuanced and more challenging (for all parties) than the tired slogans that are shouted in the boring megaphone war.

So beware: there will be at least one piece in every issue that you disagree with, perhaps vehemently! Our wager is that you will keep coming back because you value expert analysis, acute commentary and grown-up debate. In that spirit we invite your submissions and your feedback.

fathom at 10



### Paul Berman Author, critic-at-large, Tablet

Some of the most vexing debates of the age are the ones over Israel, Zionism, the Jews, and the left. And Fathom is the single best magazine anywhere in the world on those interrelated topics.

It is a brilliant magazine. It has become an indispensable magazine.

### Michael Walzer Professor Emeritus, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, and Editor Emeritus, Dissent

My sense of time must be confused. Fathom can't be 10 years old since It has already published half a century's worth of critically important essays and reviews.

And it also can't be 10 since I remember admiring the first issue just yesterday.



### Einat Wilf Former Labor Party MK

One cannot imagine modern Jewish and Zionist history, without well edited papers that brought together the most important Jewish writers and thinkers of their day. As Jews continue to wrestle with the challenges and opportunities wrought by modernity to Jewish life, forums such as Fathom Journal, have pride of place, in enabling a thoughtful and wide ranging conversation from original thinkers. Throughout its decade of existence Fathom has helped me develop my thinking, both by challenging me to address difficult issues, and by bringing to my attention smart pieces that enhanced my thinking and educated me about our people. Thank you Fathom and Happy Birthday!

### Yael Halevi-Wise Chair, Departments of English and Jewish Studies at McGill University

Fathom Journal is what they call a long read. That's what we need when something is historically and politically complex and interesting. For headlines and bold allegations one can turn to any number of newspapers and magazines. For a thoughtful and detailed presentation, we turn to Fathom. Thank you and may you continue to fill this important role for many years to come.



### Neil Wigan OBE British Ambassador to Israel

On the occasion of the journal's tenth birthday, it is my pleasure to congratulate the editorial team on a significant achievement in the field of professional journalism. Over the past ten years of dramatic shifts and events, Fathom provided in-depth, independent and reliable articles, forecasts and analysis. During the nearly four years I have been serving as the British Ambassador to Israel, the journal has been an important, impactful source of information for me, for the Embassy, and for our contacts. I greatly enjoyed being interviewed in it as part of the January edition in 2021.

The British Embassy and BICOM have had a partnership for several years, as we work together on our joint mission of strengthening the relationship between Israel and Britain in a variety of important areas such as trade, defence, technology, cyber and regional cooperation.

I wish you and the journal many more years of meaningful, interesting and insightful work.



### Yair Hirschfield Professor at the University of Haifa and Architect of the Oslo Accords

Fathom Journal has not only provided all its readers with most important information, as well as analytical accounts of developments in the Middle East, but has become an advocate for human rights, mutual dialogue and understanding and as such has emerged as a most important island of rationality and decency in a very rough sea. Many good wishes for the coming decades of work.

### Derek Penslar William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish History, Harvard University

Fathom is a rarity -- a serious journal of opinion that is open to a range of perspectives on Israel Affairs. Given the nature of Israel's incoming government and the possibility of seismic shifts in Diaspora Jewish attitudes towards Israel, that breadth of vision is needed now more than ever.

Congratulations to Fathom on its tenth anniversary!



20 years after Oslo II: How to renew the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians

Edited by Alan Johnson, Toby Greene and Lorin Bell-Cross

fathom eBook No. 1 ....

Looking back: Fathom's first eBook



### Michael Wegier CEO of the Board of Deputies of British Jews

Congratulations to Fathom on reaching its 10th birthday. And especially to its editor Alan Johnson. Fathom's greatest virtue is that it combines academic integrity, high quality accessible writing and a clear commitment to understanding Israel in the context of Middle East and global politics. It holds is neither a propogandist perspective nor a 'built in' anti Israel agenda. It delves into tough complex issues, always shedding light and helping readers deepen their knowledge and broaden their understanding of Israel's challenges and opportunities. Its contribution to the field is invaluable and I wish it many more successful years.

### Sara Hirschhorn, Visiting Assistant Professor of Israel Studies, Northwestern University

A hearty congratulations to Fathom Journal for bring insightful, informative, and innovative news and views to your audiences for 10 years! I have relied on your coverage for the past decade and looking forward to your next chapter!



### Efraim Halevy former Director of Mossad and former Head of the Israeli National Security Council

The tenth anniversary of Fathom is an appropriate date to assess its outstanding contribution to responsible and accurate discourse on key issues related to both Israel and the entire Middle East in the vital areas of defence, security, foreign affairs, and politics.

Under the professional leadership of the editor Professor Alan Johnson and two senior staff associates Sam Nurding and Calev Ben-Dor, they have also succeeded in recruiting academics and practitioners who have filled the pages with high quality and often incisive articles that are fair and well-founded.

For me the constant flow of material is invariably in the "must read" category. The mix of congratulatory items and pointed criticisms is just what we need and graciously receive.

May Fathom continue and serve its mission for many years to come.

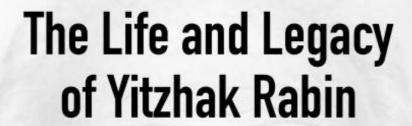


### John Ware BBC Panorama Documentary Maker

If you find yourself lost — as often I do — in the turbulent seas of claim and counter claim in the Israel-Palestine conflict, somewhere in the Fathom archives will be a North Star to guide you home safely onto dry land. Fathom offers the ever-curious a rich mix of insightful, measured, evidence-based argument. Commentators who want to be taken seriously would be well advised to explore their thesis by reference to Fathom's archive before pressing print. Happy Birthday Fathom. KBO.

### Donna Robinson Divine Morningstar Family Prof. of Jewish Studies and Prof. of Government Emerita, Smith College.

A birthday is an occasion to mark achievements and offer tributes to Fathom for continuing to publish important and creative articles on Israel and on the country's complicated and ever-changing global and regional ties. No other journal has been able to cover the range of topics that appear regularly in Fathom. Given what has happened in and to the world in the past ten years, that Fathom has sustained its mission and its high quality is both amazing and awesome. Looking forward to the next decade...





### **CONTRIBUTORS**

**Uri Dromi** 

Luciana Berger

Sir Martin Gilbert

Tzipi Livni

Shlomo Avineri

Omer Bar-Lev

Sara Hirschhorn

**Einat Wilf** 

Reuven Rivlin

**Ronen Hoffman** 

Michael Herzog

fathom eBook No. 2

Looking back: Fathom's second eBook



### David Horovitz Founding Editor, The Times of Israel

Congratulations on 10 years of Fathom Journal, and on the continued important work that you do. Every ounce of independent, fair-minded coverage of Israel is essential, and so I also wish you ongoing success for the coming 10 years.

### Izabella Tabarovsky Senior Program Associate at the Kennan Institute, the Wilson Center

Big Mazal Tov to Fathom on this important anniversary! Fathom is one of those rare publications that translate careful research and argumentation into the language of journalism, making academic knowledge available to general audiences. In a field where ignorance, misinformation and political agendas often rule, Fathom's contribution cannot be overestimated. I can't wait to see what the next decade brings!



# David Hirsh Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London and Academic Director of the London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism

Years ago, Alan Johnson said that democratic thinking was being squeezed out of academic and political debate to such an extent that we had to build our own journals. It was genius of BICOM to fund him to do it for discourse about Israel and antisemitism and it is typical of him that he got on and did it.

Fathom is a model of a rational and democratic approach to a subject that has largely floated away into menacing fantasy. Britain was lucky to have fathom when Corbyn led the Labour Party.



### Col (ret.) Adv. Pnina Sharvit Baruch, Head of Law and National Security Programme, the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)

In this era of post-truth, alternative facts, and black and white discussions, FATHOM is a beacon of light. Understanding the complexity of the situation in Israel is imperative for anyone who is genuinely interested to form a serious opinion about what has occurred and what should be done. When media tends to reinforce the fringes, the extreme positions. Thank you for presenting the complicated reality. By doing this you contribute to the hope that moderates manage to overcome extremists, and here lies the key to a better future. HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

### Jake Wallis Simons Editor, The Jewish Chronicle

Happy birthday Fathom! In a sea of inaccuracy and misinformation, this journal is a wonderful source of proper, reliable information and solid, expert analysis. Free from ideology and politicking, it is indispensable for anyone who wishes to genuinely understand the complex and fast-moving reality of what is going on in Israel.



COLIN SHINDLER FOREWORD

ALAN JOHNSON INTRODUCTION

TOBY GREENE WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

ELIAS ZANANIRI WHY BRITAIN SHOULD NOW RECOGNISE THE STATE OF PALESTINE

GERSHON SHAFIR BRITISH CHRISTIAN ZIONISM AND THE ROAD TO BALFOUR

AZRIEL BERMANT CHAIM WEIZMANN, THE GUARDIAN AND THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

JAMES SORENE BRITISH POLICY IN PALESTINE 1917-1925

EFRAIM HALEVY AARON AARONSOHN AND THE NILI INTELLIGENCE NETWORK

RONNIE FRASER WHY LABOUR SUPPORTED THE DECLARATION

DONNA ROBINSON DEVINE BEING JEWISH IN PALESTINE AFTER BALFOUR

JONATHAN SCHNEER A HISTORIAN REFLECTS

Looking back: Fathom's Balfour 100 eBook



### Yossi Klein Halevi Senior Fellow and Co-Director of the Muslim Leadership Initiative, Shalom Hartman Institute

Just to say how grateful I am to you for your excellent and nuanced writing on Israel. You consistently get right what so many otherwise intelligent people get so wrong. Thank you for providing one of the few forums where friends of Israel can be intellectually and spiritually replenished in this generation's war for truth.

### Justin Cohen Editor, The Jewish News

From marking landmark anniversaries in the Middle East to supporting parliamentary conferences in the mother of all Parliaments, the depth and reach Fathom's coverage continues to mark it out. In a short space of time it's established itself as a must read and we've been delighted to publish bite-size versions of its content on our platforms. Mazel to its editor Alan Johnson and the entire team and best of luck for the next decade.



### Dahlia Scheindlin Pollster, Political Analyst and Fellow at Century International

There are few publications with the breadth, integrity, curiosity and creativity of Fathom. This approach is what readers need in general, but especially Israelis, Palestinians and anyone who cares about the region. Over the course of a decade, Fathom has made itself a place to think, confront, learn, and think again. The editors deserve great credit for steering a sober course in the toughest times, while keeping the content enthusiastic, with unflagging integrity. Thank you and happy 10-year anniversary.

### Alan Craig former Chair of the European Association of Israel Studies

Fathom is a valuable source of objective, informed and insightful coverage of Israel. As such, it is amazing that it has survived let alone thrived over the last 10 years. Congratulations to all involved. May you go from strength to strength.



# Lesley Klaff Senior Lecturer in Law at The Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice, Sheffield Hallam University, Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism

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### Dave Rich Head of Policy, the Community Security Trust

Fathom manages to combine being academically meticulous, thoughtprovoking and topical, open to fresh perspectives and always readable and engaging. To do this for ten years is a fine achievement and one worth celebrating

### Rescuing Israeli-Palestinian Peace The Fathom Essays 2016-2020

DENNIS ROSS DAHLIA SCHEINDLIN HUSAM ZOMLOT

SARAI AHARONI HUDA ABU ARQOUB TIZRA KELMAN

HUSSEIN AGHA ALI ABU AWAD KHALED ELGINDY

AMOS GILEAD YAIR HIRSCHFELD JOEL SINGER

EINAT WILF YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI ZIAD DARWISH

YOSSI KUPERWASSER ORNA MIZRAHI TOBY GREENE

KOBY HUBERMAN SETH ANZISKA LAUREN MELLINGER

SARA HIRSCHHORN ALEX RYVCHIN GRANT RUMLEY

MOHAMMED DAJANI MICHAEL HERZOG AMIR TIBON

DORE GOLD TONY KLUG ILAN GOLDENBERG

JOHN LYNDON AZIZ ABU SARAH MEIR KRAUSS
AYMAN ODEH MICAH GOODMAN SHANY MOR

CALEV BEN-DOR SHALOM LIPNER DAVID MAKOVSKY

ASHER SUSSER GILEAD SHER NED LAZARUS

MICHAEL KOPLOW MICHAEL MELCHIOR ORNI PETRUSHKA

NAFTALI BENNETT KRIS BAUMAN ODED HAKLAI

JACK OMER-JACKAMAN DORON MATZA GERSHON HACOHEN

SHAUL JUDELMAN NAVA SONNENSCHEIN NOAM SCHUSTER-ELIASSI

Edited by Alan Johnson, Calev Ben-Dor and Samuel Nurding

Looking back: The Fathom Essays eBook

# Alvin Rosenfeld Professor of English and Jewish Studies and Irving M. Glazer Chair, Jewish Studies Director, Center for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, Indiana University at Bloomingtor

Congratulations to Fathom on its 10th anniversary! In an era of polarization and polemics, the journal has been serving as a reliable source of information and credible platform for well-reasoned discussions, insightful analyses, and diverse perspectives. I am most grateful to the editors for the tremendous service they provide and hope it continues its meaningful work for many years to come.

### Oded Haklai Prof. of Politics, Queen's University, Canada

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### Mark Gardner Chief Executive, Community Security Trust

Ten years is hard to believe, because that time has flown by. It can only be because the material is of the highest quality, both its content and its readability: and all of this in stark contrast with so much of the other material circulating in this arena!

### Noga Emanuel Fathom's film critic and a literary translator, works at McGill Community for Life Long Learning

Fathom is imbued with the spirit of the late great Norman Geras, epitomizing integrity, knowledge, wisdom and an abiding adherence to the principle of charity. 10 years after its establishment, this spirit is strong and methodically upheld. This is no small feat in the winds of today's political climate. Hannah Arendt valued thoughtfulness above all other intellectual virtues. If I had to describe the prop upon which Fathom's excellence is achieved, I would have to say: The quality of thoughtfulness.

Happy Anniversary, Fathom. Even keel and steady as she goes!

### Haviv Gur Senior Analyst, The Times of Israel

For ten years, Fathom has been both a platform and an argument: A platform for indispensable yet overlooked voices, an argument that a monolithic discourse produces bad ideas and intolerant minds. It has shown that it's possible to challenge preconceptions and expand the boundaries of debate. I, for one, am a grateful and devoted reader.

### Yisrael Medad former Director of Educational Programming and Information resources at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center

Congratulations on Fathom's first decade. Your enterprise has provided much in-depth knowledge, information, views and insights into the historical record, politics, and the people involved and has done so intelligently, in a balanced manner and with respect for all those involved. I am honoured that I have played a small part in all this. Success for the next decade and more.

### Eve Garrard Former Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Keele University and Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Manchester

Congratulations to Fathom on the occasion of its tenth birthday.

It's a remarkable achievement to have maintained a stance of balanced, fair-minded and truth-oriented enquiry in a region where such things are in rather short supply, and at a period where the idea of truth itself has been under attack from various greater and lesser intellectual sources. All credit to its splendid editorial team, and to the very impressive range of contributors who individually and collectively make the journal what it is: the go-to source for anyone who wants a more than superficial understanding of the nature of Israel and the Middle East, the problems it faces, and its impact on the rest of the world. There are several other regions of the world which would benefit from the presence of a similar journal of thoughtful and probing enquiry; Fathom would be an outstanding model for them all.

May its next ten years be as illuminating and successful as these past ones.

### Anshel Pfeffer Haaretz Journalist

In the space of a mere decade Fathom has established itself as an invaluable platform for informed debate, research and incisive analysis on all things Israel. The words "balanced" and "fair" are all too often abused in describing journalism but the sense of balance and fair-mindedness that Fathom provides in this most treacherous of journalistic and academic waters is truly unique.

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