While Israel as Start-Up Nation has brought the world many amazing advances in a wide range of fields, there are other Middle East exports that haven’t been welcome over the years.

When terror attacks started happening against Israel, there were warnings not to explain them away as simply expressions of grievance by the Arab world, or to justify them as a manner of resistance, lest those tactics start appearing elsewhere in the world.

Naturally, some of the techniques honed against Israel soon were seen elsewhere in the Arab world and in the Western world.

Today, many in the United States are focused on this “new” phenomenon of “fake news.” To that, supporters of Israel say, “where have you been?” Israel has dealt with that for decades in the western press.

In high school in the 1980s, we were required to subscribe to Time magazine and had a current events quiz every week. Even then, Time was known to have an extreme animus toward Israel. The Jerusalem Post had a regular “Eye on the Media” column to ferret out media bias and outright falsehoods.

The term “Pallywood” refers to manufactured outrage — staged “spontaneous” protests that happen only as television cameras are in the area, fake casualties, accusations of Israeli aggression when a Hamas rocket falls short of its destination and hits Palestinians, using heart-wrenching photos of those maimed and wounded and blaming Israel for the carnage when the photos are actually from Syria or Iraq... the list goes on.

Those advocating for Israel have long complained of a media “template” that assumes a certain narrative in the Middle East, where powerful Israel is a colonial threat to the weak, underdog “natives,” regardless of the facts.

Now, all of a sudden, people are concerned about news stories being completely wrong or slanted?

Reporters and editors are (mostly) human and do make mistakes. Some come into their positions to advance an agenda and should stick to the editorial or commentary side of the
business. There are some who want to put out
a good story regardless of the context, looking
for a pre-determined quote from an interview-
eee so they can plug it into a pre-existing idea,
regardless of whether the speaker intended it
that way.

There are willful distortions and manipula-
tions on both sides of the aisle, and that was
clearly evident in the past election cycle. One
in particular came from the sentiment on the
right that celebrities and politicians on the left
are hypocritical by speaking out against guns
while they have armed security — it’s fine for
them but not for the average citizen.

When Trump pointed that out by saying Hil-
arily Clinton’s guards should try getting rid of
their weapons, he was immediately accused of
urging his supporters to assassinate her.

Not that Trump hasn’t used more than his
share of hyperbole and extreme extrapolation,
but the overwrought umbrage to that remark
reinforced a cynicism about politics and the
media.

One shouldn’t complain about “fake news”
by one side while giving it a pass in instances
where it benefits one’s own political leanings.

Of course, none of this is truly new. Thomas
Jefferson, who faced slanted and slanderous
coverage Trump could only have nightmares
about, retorted that “nothing can now be be-
lieved which is seen in a newspaper.”

Despite his lamentations over the partisan
direction the media had taken in his day, Jef-
ferson nevertheless held that given a choice
between a government without newspapers and
newspapers without a government “I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the
latter.”

An oft-ignored next phrase then says that

Baseball pension “curve ball” affected Jewish player from Alabama

by Douglas J. Gladstone

From 1995 through 2001, Tony Clark was one of
the most productive first basemen in the
American League.

Playing for the Detroit Tigers, Clark was one of
the players who succeeded Jason Thompson
at first base. Similarly, Thompson succeeded
another Tigers first baseman by the name of
Jack Pierce.

Pierce passed away on Sept. 30, 2012 at the
age of 64. Pierce’s last year in “The Show” proved
to be his best: he amassed 40 hits in 170 at bats
for the Tigers, including six doubles, one triple
and eight homers.

He left behind a wife, six children and six
grandchildren.

Men like Pierce, who do not receive pensions
because they didn’t accrue at least four years
of service credit in the big leagues, which is
is contingent on everyone receiving those pa-
pers and being capable of reading them — in
other words, an informed citizenry using rea-
son to discern truth.

In an age where anyone with a keyboard
can go online and spread stories of question-
able validity, it is imperative to check multiple
sources and see what is credible. Especially
when it comes to forwarding an incredible
story that came from “somewhere” online.

And that also means being exposed to
sources that differ from one’s views and list-
tening to them. Not necessarily agreeing with
them, but at least considering where others
are coming from.

The polarized echo chamber we see today
hampers civil discourse.

In our stories, we strive to make them so the
reader isn’t quite sure where we fall on the po-
litical spectrum. That’s not to say we always get
it right, but we try to follow Mr. Jefferson’s in-
struction to follow truth wherever it may lead.

Like so many things in society, this “fake
news” dustup will pass, and in another gener-
ation, another president will complain about
it. Just as anti-Semitism did not suddenly ap-
pear because of Trump, fake news did not start
with this past election cycle. We’re just more
attuned to both right now.

Of course, having four threats against the
JCCs in Birmingham and New Orleans thus far
this year, we’re ready for that to pass into the
rear view mirror as well.

An oft-ignored next phrase then says that

Larry Brook
EDITOR/PUBLISHER
EDITOR@SJLMAG.COM

Documenting this community,
a community we are members of
and active within, is our passion.
We love what we do, and who we do it for.