

## To Mars and Beyond!

On February 9, 2021, the UAE Space Agency's HOPE spacecraft entered the orbit of Mars. The HOPE mission was designed and led in the United Arab Emirates, and the spacecraft was assembled in the United States. As the UAE celebrates its Golden Jubilee this year, this and other collaboration shows how the relationship between the UAE and the United States has, over the past decade, extended well beyond trade in oil and gas. It is focused on the future, on pushing the limits of human knowledge and experience.

This bilateral spirit of exploration and innovation has been equally successful on earth. Partnership with the Cleveland Clinic, one of the United States' premier health-care institutions, has made world-class health care available in Abu Dhabi. New York University's Abu Dhabi campus is preparing young minds from the UAE, the United States, and across the world to address the challenges of the coming millennium.

The basis for much of the energy in this relationship is cooperation to find new ways to deal with common challenges. Near the top of that list is climate change and the need to adapt to climate fluctuations, devastating storms, and rising oceans that threaten both countries. The UAE's significant investment in renewable technologies is part of its drive to be a net-zero producer of greenhouse gases by 2050. Since the landmark nuclear cooperation agreement between the two countries in 2009, the UAE has brought the Arab world's first nuclear power plant online, part of Abu Dhabi's effort to increase the share of clean electricity in its energy mix.

The UAE has been the United States' largest export partner in the Middle East for more than a decade, and many U.S. businesses call the UAE home. Financial partnerships have contributed materially to grow each other's economies as well: in 2020, Americans invested nearly \$20 billion in the UAE, and Emiratis invested more than \$17 billion in the United States.

The UAE, like the United States, has set as a priority the development of a diverse, well-educated, and productive population. Its commitment to achieve a peaceful society that not only tolerates, but accepts, different cultures and faiths and acknowledges the worth and dignity of every individual is a laudable goal. In the region, the UAE hopes the signing of

the Abraham Accords with Israel, in conjunction with Washington, will open up new opportunities for trade, investment, and tourism, as well as a new paradigm for dealing with long-standing conflicts in the region, including more directly addressing the desires of Palestinians.

Does all of this mean that there will never be disagreements between the United Arab Emirates and the United States? Almost certainly not. Relations between countries – like relations between individuals – are never without some stress or challenge. But, like the HOPE spacecraft, as long as the relationship is built on knowledge, shared values, mutual respect, and cooperation, the trajectory is likely to be true.

