

# Strengthening Relations With UAE

*NYU's Abu Dhabi campus was a factor that helped Israel achieve deal*

By LAWRENCE H. SCHIFFMAN

In 2008, when word got out that NYU was establishing a full-fledged campus in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with support of the government of

## PERSPECTIVE

Abu Dhabi, all kinds of questions were raised by members of the Jewish community and supporters of Israel.

In an April 30, 2008 article in the *New York Jewish Week* ("Washington Square on the Persian Gulf," by Stewart Ain) I, then serving as Chair of NYU's Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, explained that NYU, at the very first meeting, had made clear that this campus could only be established if Jews and Israelis would be welcome in the country.

I further explained that in order that the Abu Dhabi representatives would understand NYU's commitments, NYU President John Sexton had appointed an Orthodox Jewish colleague to NYU's negotiating committee and that Sexton had made sure to introduce me to the visiting Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, a crown prince of the UAE who was very involved in the setting up of NYU Abu Dhabi. To test the waters, NYU even sent a senior administrator to Abu Dhabi on an Israeli passport early in the process of opening the campus.

What I didn't tell the interviewer was that in response to concerns of quite a number of University trustees, NYU had con-

encourage a process of modernization and openness to the wider world that was already beginning to develop. More importantly, they

Israeli businesspeople in official delegations, sports teams, even cabinet ministers, and it became obvious in which direction things were

strategy has been to bring Israel closer to American-aligned Sunni Arab states that, like Israel, feel threatened by Iranian-sponsored

tion. I cannot tell you whether Netanyahu's "campaign" for annexation of 30% of the West Bank was a bluff or not, designed to stimulate peace talks with other Arab nations, but I can tell you that the tremendous value of normalization of diplomatic relations with the UAE more than justified the abandonment of this misguided proposal.

Israel has pursued a policy for some time now of seeking to establish and strengthen relations with these Sunni states with the intention of dealing only later with the problem of the two geographically and politically separated Palestinian entities that border on Israel. Preferring the UAE agreement to the quest for annexation certainly fits this overall plan.

Did the presence of academic and cultural institutions such as NYU Abu Dhabi bring about the UAE's willingness to make peace with Israel? That question is way too simplistic. What brings about the elimination of hostility and the dropping of boundaries between nations is a combination of enlightened self-interest, common diplomatic, defensive, and economic needs, and openness to one

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*NYU Abu Dhabi's architecture reflects the school's three identities: Abu Dhabi, New York, and the world. It is the setting for interaction between faculty and students, living and learning, and research and teaching.*

understood that such contact would lead to the dropping of historic religious barriers. It didn't hurt, as we now know, that the UAE was seeking sophisticated U.S. military hardware

Any observer could see over the entire period of 12 years, from 2008 to today, that the UAE and Israel had been progressing in this direction. Besides the establishment of various foreign university and museum projects in the UAE, which betokened a much greater openness to aspects of Western culture, there has been a series of increased contacts between Jews,

moving.

That establishment of diplomatic relations with the UAE was a goal of Israel and its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been clear for some time. Netanyahu's overall

terrorism and by Iran's nuclear program.

In fact, the same fears are gradually bringing the Saudis into contact with Israel. This is especially the case in regard to security coopera-

**American Jewish organizations have visited the Emirates for many reasons, always trying to build diplomatic ties.**

sulted with the State Department and the Foreign Ministry of Israel before moving forward with this project. Both were completely positive. Further, a number of Israeli university presidents were also strongly in support. Now that Israel has established full diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates, it is clear that the professionals in foreign affairs of both the US and Israel understood the direction in which the UAE was moving.

They fully understood that the presence of institutions such as NYU Abu Dhabi in the UAE would

Israelis and the Emirates. Already when NYU established its campus in Abu Dhabi, large numbers of Jews and Israelis were going to the Emirates for business. Only recently the Jewish community in the UAE became a public entity with its synagogues no longer a secret.

Further, American Jewish organizations have been visiting the Emirates under numerous guises, understanding all along that they were seeking to break down the barriers between this alliance of Sheikdoms and the State of Israel. Then we started to see visits of

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# Matters

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financially from widespread use of hydroxychloroquine — a cheap, generic drug — and because the journal loathes President Donald Trump, who, when the first reports of successful treatment with hydroxychloroquine surfaced, had announced that using the drug could save lives.

Horton had labeled Trump's withdrawal of U.S. funding of the World Health Organization (WHO) "a crime against humanity" after the WHO's politicization of the coronavirus, including behaving as a puppet of the Chinese

Communist Party when it condemned Trump's Jan. 31 ban on travel from China.

The number of Americans killed by medical boards, pharmaceutical boards, the FDA, and the CDC for not allowing doctors to prescribe hydroxychloroquine in the early days following a patient's diagnosis with COVID-19 and outside of a hospital setting — and the number killed by the doctors who could, but would not, prescribe hydroxychloroquine — is likely in the tens of thousands.

On my radio show, Yale University epidemiologist Dr. Harvey Risch said, "Because we were blocked from using [hydroxychloroquine] in the United States to

the present point, probably at least 100,000 people have died."

Based on the retracted study in *The Lancet*, *The Washington Post* headlined "Hydroxychloroquine

**The fake study was encouraged because companies make little profit from selling hydroxychloroquine.**

Drug Promoted by Trump as Coronavirus 'Game-Changer' Increasingly Linked to Deaths." And social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter immediately remove any citation of a scientist who promotes hydroxychloroquine.

A fourth example is the American Psychological Association, or the APA, choosing leftism

over psychology in declaring, "40 years of research [show that] traditional masculinity is psychologically harmful and that socializing boys to suppress their emotions causes

damage that echoes both inwardly and outwardly."

The one good thing to come out of the APA's pathologizing masculinity is that people searching for a competent psychotherapist for themselves or their child now have an easy method by which to identify the incompetent: Simply ask the prospective therapist if he

or she agrees with the APA statement. If they do, or if they merely hesitate to distance themselves from it, you know you want another therapist.

Forthcoming columns will deal with more areas of life ruined by the Left, including, most troubling of all, America itself. As seen in their treatment of the statues of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, the Left can tear down, but it cannot build.

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# UAE

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another's culture.

But none of this can take place without human interaction, often among people who don't even understand that they are playing that role. So I would not suggest that we at NYU take credit for this momentous positive step forward, but I would propose that

tact with the people and the leadership of Abu Dhabi and the Emirates. We, along with many similar institutions as well as business people, helped to create an environment in which diplomats could bring about this tremendous achievement.

Of that small role NYU should indeed be proud since it demonstrates the tremendous value of international cooperation in academic endeavors, the intellectual globalization that is a major char-

ship in global education.

Allow me to return to 2008 and the numerous other questions I was asked about NYU's move to Abu Dhabi beyond that interview. Would it affect relations with Israel? No, NYU Tel Aviv is an extremely strong part of NYU's global academic footprint. Would it mean that Judaic studies would be deemphasized? No, the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies is the largest program of this kind in any general university outside the State of Israel. Would it mean a decrease in the attractiveness of NYU to Jewish students? No, just look at the wonderful activities and programs of the Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life.

So if you ask me, the establishment of NYU Abu Dhabi has more than justified its purposes, with no downside. But was I one hundred percent sure of these answers when I gave them? I had every reason to be confident in the commitment to these goals of the NYU administration but I have to admit having had nagging

fears of unintended consequences.

Happily, 12 years later, the only consequences that resulted were those that were intended. One of those was bringing the UAE closer to the values that underlie our university and our country. And now these values we harbored have truly resound-

ed to the benefit of the State of Israel.

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## Israeli relations with Sunni states had the intention of dealing only later with geographical and political problems.

we should be proud of the fact that we played a small part in bringing the UAE further towards the modernization and openness that were necessary to make this happen.

Further, we played a minor but important role in bringing Americans, including Jewish Americans and Israelis, into con-

acteristic of today's institutions of higher learning in the United States, and especially of NYU, the global university. Higher education, be it on the level of research or teaching, is in fact a diplomatic asset that brings about peace and understanding among peoples and nations. And we should take pride in our leader-

# Evenings

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- 2/3 cup black japonica rice
- 2 large cloves garlic, crushed or finely chopped
- 3 cups diced peeled butternut squash, sweet potato or sliced carrots
- 3 to 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt, freshly ground pepper
- 2 cups corn kernels
- 3 or 4 cups shredded or diced roasted or grilled boneless skinless chicken
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 to 2 tablespoons Korean chile flakes (gochugaru) or red

chile hot sauce to taste, optional

- 1/2 cup thinly sliced or julienned radishes
- 1/4 cup each, chopped, fresh: chives, cilantro

### Directions

1. Put rices and garlic into a rice cooker along with 2 2/3 cups water. Cover and cook according to manufacturer's instructions. (Alternatively, simmer rices and garlic with 3 cups water in a medium saucepan, tightly covered, until rice is tender, about 40 minutes.) Fluff rice with a fork and turn out onto a shallow platter or baking sheet to cool.

2. Meanwhile, heat oven to 400 degrees. Toss squash with 2 table-

spoons of the oil on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Roast, stirring once or twice, until tender and golden, about 20 minutes. Add corn to baking sheet. Roast, 5 minutes. Cool.

3. Put rice mixture into a large bowl. Stir in chicken, remaining 1 or 2 tablespoons olive oil and the vinegar. Add squash mixture and chile flakes or hot sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

4. Stir in radishes and herbs. Serve at room temperature or slightly chilled.

*JeanMarie Brownson chronicles a life spent cooking in her bimonthly column for the Chicago Tribune, "Dinner at Home."*

# Home

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Canadians, Palatnik is guiding Britons, Australians and South Africans on the Lone Soldiers moms' bus.

The mothers of Lone Soldiers will be joined by a delegation of Israeli mothers from Poreshet, a community for IDF women retirees whose children have also served in the military. By experiencing Momentum alongside Jewish women from around the world, Israeli

meet other mothers."

And they'll meet people like Jonathan Amram, who says that in the "grand scheme of things, I'll stay on in Israel. My soul feels a lot more settled in Israel."

And being in Israel allows him to meet up his little bro' when he gets off duty, and tell him to play it smart and play it safe, within reason. The veteran always has the right to give advice to the active-duty soldier:

"A lot of what I tell him is that there are always going to be difficult things, physically and mental-

**"Lone soldiers are usually place on kibbutzim with adoptive families. It's such love from the general public."**

mothers can help them better understand Israeli culture and the society in which their children are now immersed.

"Your child is across the world," Palatnik said. "To be a mother of a Lone Soldier, you're praying. Most parents of Lone Soldiers are not connected to Israel, and do not have the opportunity to come. If parents are feeling positive, that will help soldiers serve in a positive way."

Laurie Amram looked forward to expanding her sisterhood: "You become a part of a network of moms. I've come to Israel more than 30 times, but never done an organized tour and am excited to

ly. But our human limits are so much further than we think they are. Limits are more in our mind than our body.

"I tell him to always be looking out for your teammates. There are always some who are weaker mentally. Pulling them along is very important to keep together as a team. Keep in the back of your mind to always be in the moment, that there are times that may seem difficult, but you're in uniform to protect your nation."

*George Castle is a journalist and author based in Chicago.*

*Chicagojewishnews.com*