

US shows off its star-studded Expo 2020 pavillion in Dubai -- The U.S. showed off a literally star-studded pavilion on Wednesday for Dubai's upcoming Expo 2020, complete with a replica SpaceX rocket body beside it. Two fog machines swirled smoke around the replica, trying to lend the impression it just landed at the still under-construction Expo site in Dubai's southern desert. The 3,344 square-meter (36,000 square-foot) pavilion will include a "24-minute experience" of America with moon rocks, a Mars rover and Thomas Jefferson's Quran, Rakolta said. What an American experience means also could be open to interpretation for a Middle East audience, particularly after years of travel bans targeting predominantly Muslim nations and tensions with Iran under the current Trump administration. Rakolta, a Republican appointed by Trump, added: "You only agree with about 80% of what even your own party might have to offer." ADVERTISEMENT That extra time came in handy for countries participating in the event, particularly the U.S. America struggled to come up with funding for their pavilion and ended up relying on what it called "the generosity of the Emirati government" to cover its estimated \$60 million cost. The pavilion's exterior appeared finished Wednesday, but its interior remained a worksite. John Rakolta, the U.S. ambassador to the UAE, made a point to repeatedly praise the Emirati government for its donation, without offering a figure for the final cost. Asked if that Emirati donation would influence what the U.S. displayed, Rakolta called the UAE "open" and "inclusive." "They've encouraged us to reach for the stars," Rakolta said.