



State of Failure: Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Unmaking of the Palestinian State

Jonathan Schanzer

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The biggest obstacle to Palestinian statehood may not be Israel

In September 2011, president Mahmoud Abbas stood before the United Nations General Assembly and dramatically announced his intention to achieve recognition of Palestinian statehood. The United States roundly opposed the move then, but two years later, Washington revived dreams for Palestinian statehood through bilateral diplomacy with Israel. But are the Palestinians prepared for the next step? In *State of Failure*, Middle East expert Jonathan Schanzer argues that the reasons behind Palestine's inertia are far more complex than we realize. Despite broad international support, Palestinian independence is stalling because of internal mismanagement, not necessarily because of Israeli intransigence. Drawing on exclusive sources, the author shows how the PLO under Yasser Arafat was ill prepared for the task of statebuilding. Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, used President George W. Bush's support to catapult himself into the presidency. But the aging leader, now four years past the end of his elected term, has not only failed to implement much needed reforms but huge sums of international aid continue to be squandered, and the Palestinian people stand to lose everything as a result. Supporters of Palestine and Israel alike will find Schanzer's narrative compelling at this critical juncture in Middle Eastern politics.

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