

Palestinians reject demilitarized state

by UPI

RAMALLAH, West Bank -- The Palestinian Authority has rejected Israel's call for a Palestinian state without a military and for authority to allow its own army to operate there. Palestinian Authority officials also said that recent Israeli security measures on its borders with Gaza and the West Bank have hampered the Fatah government in the West Bank to take control of all Palestinian areas, The Jerusalem Post reported. "The Palestinian Authority rejects talk about a demilitarized Palestinian state," a senior official told the newspaper. "A Palestinian state that does not have a strong security force won't be able to survive for one day. Every day Israel sends yet another message that it does not want peace with its neighbors." Another official said that an Israeli withdrawal to its 1967 borders, giving Palestinians control of East Jerusalem, isn't negotiable. U.S. President George Bush is scheduled to visit the region next week in an effort to get the peace process moving. Yasser Abed Rabbo, a Palestinian negotiator, is in Washington to discuss the president's trip and officials said he would demand that Bush also call for an end to Israeli expansion of settlements.

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