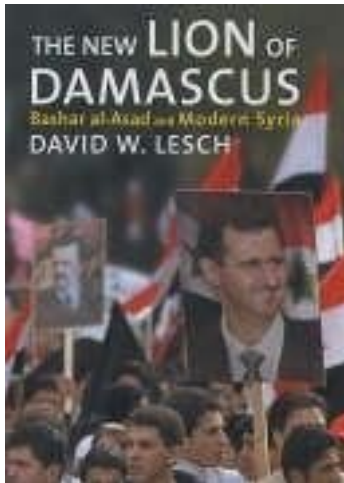


The New Lion of Damascus



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Is Syria a rogue state? How important is it to the fates of Iraq, Iran, Israel and Lebanon? This is the inside story. David Lesch has had unique and extraordinary access to Syria's President, his circle and his family. At a critical juncture in the history of the Middle East this is the essential account of contemporary Syria and its enigmatic leader. Bashar al Asad succeeded his father, Hafiz al Asad, as Syrian president in 2000. Inheriting a worn-down dictatorship, he soon encountered momentous regional and international issues involving the global war on terror and the growth of democracy in the Middle East. While Bashar seeks a seamless integration into a changing political environment, many in Syria fear the loss of the political and economic power they enjoyed during the reign of Hafiz al Asad. David Lesch's account of contemporary Syria and its leader is vital to an understanding of Syria's current place in the world, its past, present and future. The fate of Syria says much about what type of Middle East will emerge in the near future, and that fate is very much tied to Syria's young ophthalmologist-turned-president, Bashar al Asad.

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