

## Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

### Behind the Faisal assassination

*Ali Alyami, a Saudi Arabian dissident leader, was complicit; he's now after Prince Fahd.*

Arab security services are closing in on a key figure in the Anglo-American intelligence operation that in 1975 brought about the assassination of Saudi Arabia's King Faisal.

According to an independent investigation carried out by the *Executive Intelligence Review*, Ali Alyami, a Saudi Arabian dissident operating out of San Francisco, is the ringleader of the militant Voice of the Vanguard, an underground Saudi opposition group based in Denver and San Francisco. The underground group is committed to overthrowing the Saudi Arabian monarchy.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was Alyami who personally tracked and groomed the future assassin of King Faisal. Since then, Alyami has become a leading organizer of efforts to overthrow the current Saudi regime, and is contacting point men both inside and outside the kingdom to destabilize Prince Fahd.

"We have a few more years to go before the monarchy is overthrown," Alyami confided to a colleague recently. "Unless, of course, we can get rid of Prince Fahd sooner. King Khaled really has no power. When Khaled dies, which will probably be soon, since he is a very sick man, it won't mean too much. Fahd is the key guy. Once he goes, then everything will begin to unravel, and we will be able to take over."

For Saudi Arabian intelligence,

the assassination of King Faisal remains a continuing preoccupation. The unmasking of Alyami provides an important piece in the intelligence puzzle surrounding the destabilization of the Persian Gulf.

Ali Alyami is no newcomer to radical Arab politics. A bedouin from southwest Saudi Arabia, Alyami was fired by the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) in the mid-1960s for his subversive political activities.

Soon after coming to the United States in 1967, Alyami introduced King Faisal's nephew and future assassin, Prince Faisal ibn Musaed, to one Christine Surma, a third-rate actress who seduced the young prince and kept him under her control in the years leading up to the assassination. Surma and the prince lived together for several years in Colorado and California, the two operational bases of the Voice of the Vanguard.

The immediate family of Prince Faisal were actively involved in anti-monarchist activities inside Saudi Arabia and opposed King Faisal's modernization drive. In 1965, Prince Faisal's older brother, Prince Khaled, was killed when police intervened to break up a violent demonstration Khaled was leading of Islamic fundamentalist zealots who were attempting to storm the newly established TV station in Riyadh to protest King Faisal's introduction of television, which they denounced as "un-Islamic."

Although Prince Faisal was described by people who knew him as apolitical, he underwent a substantial personality change following his liaison with Alyami and Surma, and became obsessed with avenging the death of his brother.

Part of his personality change involved joining the drug counter-culture, of which both Surma and Alyami were (and remain) devotees.

In 1975, when the prince, back in Riyadh, murdered his uncle the king, Surma publicly endorsed the assassination as the act of a good man seeking justice and predicted that her former lover would eventually be recognized as the liberator of Saudi Arabia.

In addition to his position as leader of the Voice of the Vanguard (known in Arabic as the Sout al-Taliah), Alyami is also the director of the Middle East program for the American Friends Service Committee in San Francisco.

The AFSC, which is tied to the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation in Britain and is sympathetic to the Khomeini regime in Iran, has publicly endorsed Alyami's anti-monarchist work as being of "extreme importance." In a recent piece prepared under AFSC auspices, Alyami welcomed the 1979 uprising in Mecca by Muslim Brotherhood fanatics and the demonstrations by dissident oil workers in eastern Saudi Arabia as the "elements of a revolution that nearly succeeded."

According to his associates, Alyami, who has been banned from entering Saudi Arabia by government officials there, crossed the border several months ago from South Yemen to firm up contacts with anti-monarchist networks inside the kingdom.