

## Middle East Report by Robert Dreyfuss

### Not exactly fraternal

*London's Muslim Brotherhood operatives threaten Crown Prince Fahd's peace plan efforts.*

**W**hy did Saudi Arabia's number-three leader, National Guard Commander Prince Abdullah, visit Syria last week?

Immediately after Abdullah's visit, Syrian intelligence orchestrated a vicious propaganda campaign against Abdullah's rival in the Saudi power elite, Crown Prince Fahd.

Among the facts that are known:

Prince Abdullah is the chief Saudi sponsor of the secret society known as the Muslim Brotherhood. For many years, Abdullah has been widely known as "Britain's boy" in the ruling Saudi family. Further, Abdullah has secretly maintained relations with the Soviet Union's KGB, through Syria and through Romania. In addition, Abdullah is the brother-in-law of Rifaat Assad, the gangster-assassin brother of Syrian President Hafez Assad.

Two months ago, Prince Fahd outlined an eight-point peace plan calling for Arab recognition of Israel in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. Since then, Fahd's plan has won worldwide support.

Moreover, it is believed that Fahd's plan had been advanced only after careful consultation with top Arab officials, including the late Egyptian President Sadat and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Potentially, the Fahd plan might become the basis for a general settlement in the Middle East. On Oct. 14, in Japan, the PLO's Arafat

called the Fahd plan "a good basis for a comprehensive peace." And several top officials in Egypt's Foreign Ministry have tentatively supported the plan.

But, acting on behalf of the London interests that assassinated Sadat, the Muslim Brotherhood has launched a campaign to destroy a plan they call the "Fahd-Arafat plan."

The question: is Prince Fahd being undermined by his own brother Abdullah?

Leading the campaign against the Fahd plan was Syrian official Muhammad Haidar. Haidar, a corrupt party leader, is close to Romanian intelligence circles. In an Oct. 16 statement, Haidar declared that the Fahd plan was a "mistake" and that it "conflicts with our strategy."

At the same time, leaders of the terrorist Syrian-controlled Saiqa Palestinian group and of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), backed by Libya and Syria, denounced Arafat for supporting Fahd. Saiqa called the Arafat endorsement a "deviation" from PLO policy!

More ominously, from Austria it was reported that intelligence officials there had uncovered a plot to assassinate Arafat, under the direction of Syrian-backed terrorist Abu Nidal.

According to some observers, it is highly unlikely that Syria would take the responsibility to launch a

direct attack against Fahd, especially on the eve of the Arab summit in Morocco this month, unless Syria were supported in doing so by a prince of Abdullah's stature.

London's strategy is fairly simple. The British are aiming to undermine American influence in the Arab world, re-insert themselves fully into the Middle East, and try to strike a separate deal with the U.S.S.R. over the "arc of crisis."

Pessimists see the failure of the AWACS sale to pass Congress, and various bungled responses from the Reagan administration in the wake of Sadat's murder, as signs that American policy is heading for a total debacle in the area. London's expressed willingness to sell Nimrod radar jets to Saudi Arabia—to replace AWACS—and to dispatch Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, over to Riyadh are only the beginning.

The British also got some unexpected support from the PLO's number-two man, Abu Iyad, a reputed terrorist and the figure who would probably move into power if Arafat were assassinated. In fact, Abu Iyad might be disposed to give Arafat a little push.

"Now is the time for Britain to make a return to the Middle East," grunted Abu Iyad, "since unlike the Americans, who are amateurs, the British have a good understanding of the area."

Optimists concede that the Reagan White House is indeed a bunch of rank amateurs. But, they note that since Reagan is meeting with Fahd in Mexico and then with Jordan's King Hussein in Washington, the opportunity is there. Chances are small, however, that the Reagan White House would know an opportunity if they fell over it.