



# King Faisal of Saudi Arabia: Personality, Faith and Times

*Alexei Vassiliev*

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"A detailed and fascinating biography."—*The Economist*

"A masterpiece of scholarship. . . . [Vassiliev] has managed to bring to life the legacy of one of Saudi Arabia's most interesting and influential figures."—Anoush Ehteshami, Durham University

In 1964 Faisal bin Abdul Aziz became king of a country holding a quarter of the world's oil reserves, also home to Mecca and Medina. He was called "the most powerful Arab ruler in centuries." Eleven years later, in front of television cameras, his nephew shot him at point-blank range.

In this authoritative biography, Alexei Vassiliev tells the story of a pious, cautious and resolute leader who steered Saudi Arabia through a minefield of domestic problems, inter-Arab relations and the decline of Soviet influence in the Middle East. King Faisal maintained ties with both Egypt and the United States through two Arab-Israeli wars and the 1973 Arab oil embargo, which revolutionized the world energy market. Throughout, he staked high hopes on cooperation with the United States, a relationship that is still vital to both countries' interests.

Exhaustively researched and including original documents and interviews in Arabic, Russian, and English, *King Faisal of Saudi Arabia* offers a unique perspective of this seminal figure and is key to understanding the Arab world today.

**Alexei Vassiliev** is Honorary President of the Institute for African Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences. He is the author of over forty books, including the acclaimed *The History of Saudi Arabia*, winner of the Choice Outstanding Academic Book Award, and *Central Asia: Political and Economic Challenges in the Post-Soviet Era*.

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