

### In Memoriam

**Ralph Harry Magnus** (1936-2000) died on 25 October, from heart transplant complications. He was educated as a political scientist at the University of California, Berkeley. He developed his specialties in Middle Eastern studies at an early stage. His masters thesis and dissertation, and his later writings, teaching, travels, and personal involvements were all dedicated to the countries and various aspects of the Middle East. He became well versed about several countries of the region and was versatile in his approaches to the study of political, economic and conflictual issues. Perhaps due to his early orientation, he chose to concentrate on and devote much of his work to Afghanistan. His introduction to the country came when he was at the US Information Agency (1961-65) and posted as the Assistant Cultural Affairs Attaché in Kabul between 1963 and 1965. For his dissertation he went back to Afghanistan as well as Iran to carry out field research in 1970.

Professor Magnes also wrote on many other countries of the region including Arab states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Syria, Yemen as well as the Palestinians, and on Pakistan and Turkey. His writings appeared as articles, book chapters, and encyclopedic country studies. He also edited three books that included *Afghan Alternatives: Issues, Options and Policies* (1985). His last book (co-authored with Eden Naby), *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (1998), was a product of several years of research and insights on developments in Afghanistan, and was well received. It went into a second edition in 1999.

This work was timed to reflect the dynamics of events in Afghanistan with the expectation of a final victory by the Afghan people. It was clear that Ralph H. Magnus had developed a passion for this cause, and an extensive understanding of the historical events in the country. Three decades of research and writings, lectures, congressional testimonials, and consultant positions afforded him an understanding of the diversities and complexities of the Middle East that was both rare and refreshing. At a personal level, he was an active supporter of the war against Soviet aggression in Afghanistan.

Professor Magnus's work and humanitarian contributions were recognized by many, including several organizations such as the Society of Afghan Doctors, Doctors Without Borders, and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. His efforts earned him executive directorship of the "Americares for Afghans," as a subset of the Americare. His work resulted in shipments of many tons of medical supplies for the Afghan refugees and mujahidin clinics. He visited Afghanistan briefly during the post-communist defeat in 1992. Like many observers of the long costly war he was much disappointed at the struggle that followed among the former mujahidin leaders for personal power. In private talks about the ongoing crises in Afghanistan he discussed the nature of the implicit mandate the Afghan people had given to the Taliban, which, as summarized in his 1998 book, was intended "to end the warlordism of the ex-communists and ex-mujahidin alike in order to restore the unity of the country under an Islamic government" (p. 188).

In his passing, discussions of the issues surrounding Afghanistan lost a source of sound reasoning. The cause of the Afghan people also lost a friend. He will be remembered well as a caring and humanitarian person and will be missed by those who knew him.

M. SIDDIQ NOORZOY  
*Pebble Beach*

On 24 September 1999, Ottoman studies lost one of its most respected and productive figures, as **Robert Mantran**, aged eighty-two, passed away in Aix-en-Provence, France. Robert Mantran was born on 19 December 1918, in Paris. His studies at the Sorbonne and at the École des Langues Orientales put him in contact with prominent scholars such