ROBERT STRAUSZ-HUPÉ: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

By Harvey Sicherman

Harvey Sicherman (1945-2011) was the president of FPRI and a former advisor to three secretaries of state. This article is reprinted from the Spring 2003 issue of Orbis, FPRI’s quarterly journal of world affairs. Robert Strausz-Hupé lived an extraordinarily long and varied life, dying on February 24, 2002, a month short of his 99th birthday. He was born into a world run by Europe, made his way into another divided between America and Russia, and passed from the scene at the birth of a third, that of America’s predominance.

A penniless immigrant who became an eminent professor and later an ambassador, Strausz-Hupé achieved that rare distinction: a detached love for his country. A critical distance disciplined his enthusiastic patriotism. That combination enabled him to become a preeminent educator, able to speak to both America’s strengths and weaknesses. When America moved at last to participate fully in world politics, Strausz-Hupé would be ready to explain why this was necessary and how it should be done. His legacy is well worth pondering for the future.

The Old World

The date and place of Strausz-Hupé’s birth—March 25, 1903, in Vienna, capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—bespoke the pre-1914 era of European domination, the “long peace” that few thought would ever end in a long war. Much of the world was shaped by decisions made in European capitals. International security and prosperity depended on the judgment and wisdom of a very few men not often elected, who presided over a common heritage called “Western civilization.” European society, wealth, arts, philosophy, science, and technology offered the international standards of the day against which everyone else measured their achievements.

In his 1965 memoir IN MY TIME, Strausz-Hupé wrote a sometimes lyrical description of his youth in this world. Among his earliest memories was the grand celebration held in Vienna in 1908 to commemorate Emperor Franz Josef’s sixtieth year on the throne. Strausz-Hupé was destined to serve as a soldier or bureaucrat in the Imperial Service, so he thought, as the sole son of an upper middle-class family with social connections. But then the Great War intervened. Trained as a cadet for a disappearing empire, he and his mother (his parents having separated) found themselves financially ruined. The young man tried many different trades, finally ending as an escort for a wealthy young friend whose aristocratic father quite accurately feared the boy would go wrong. Soon the guardian himself fell prey to adventures as the two young men escaped to the United States. When his charge was forced to return to Europe, Strausz-Hupé decided to stay and try his luck in America.

Of his youth, he would write fifty years later: “Most of all I remember being desperately unhappy.” Strausz-Hupé’s very name offered a clue to a less fortunate aspect of the Old World. He told me that the Strauszes were his father’s family, well-to-do Hungarian Jews in the grain business. His mother belonged to the Hupés, whom he described as well-connected descendants of prominent Huguenots. Two centuries before they had fled the France of Louis XIV for more tolerant Habsburg realms.

In the highly stratified society of those days, the Strausz-Hupé union was problematical. The Strausz family, mortified by his father’s marriage to a non-Jew, broke off all relations. Robert never knew what happened to them after he left Europe. His status was peculiar: his mother not being Jewish, he did not belong to the Jews yet his
father and his name made him Jewish in the eyes of others. Perhaps it was this sense of being in, but not quite of, a society that sharpened his skill at detached observation.

Yet Strausz-Hupé, as Robert Strausz would call himself in America, retained a warm feeling for the doomed Habsburg enterprise. He had an extraordinary recollection of the great families of the realm: who married whom, who did what to whom, incidents that gained or lost someone imperial favor, why certain ambassadors were trusted and others were not. In old age he briddled at even being called an Austrian, declaring that “this Alpine Republic” was foreign to him. “I was a subject of the Emperor!” He was realistic about Franz Josef, however, whom he described as a stubborn man of enigmatic views, few convictions, and skill in using his old age and family sorrows to cultivate public sympathy.

Strausz-Hupé held unusual views about the seemingly solid prewar European political structure. Austria-Hungary, often thought the shakiest of the Great Powers, had a long, successful history of swaying with the winds. An accommodation with the Slavs, the objective of the assassinated Archduke Ferdinand, could have bought another generation after Franz Josef, by which time some sort of federal state might have evolved.

The really weak and dangerous monarchies, so Strausz-Hupé argued, were those of Germany and Russia. Both were ruled by foolish men. Even in the absence of war, he believed neither would have lasted another decade. As for the British, they suffered from a terminal inability to commit themselves until it was too late. They were expert ditherers but too full of mixed signals to hold the ring in 1914.

That said, he laid the blame for much of the disorder in the late Habsburg imperial period on Hungarian obstruction. He remarked that although his father's family hailed from Hungary, the Hungarians regarded him and his mother as either Jewish or German. But when the town of Timisoara was transferred by the Versailles Treaty to Rumania, the family was dispossessed of its estate there on the grounds that they were Hungarians! He was equally bitter about Austria in the late 1990s, when Jörg Haider, after cultivating political anti-Semitism and pro-Nazi sentiments, emerged as a major factor in Austrian politics. Strausz-Hupé called these “old tricks.” After all, he had seen Hitler perform in a Munich beer hall in the early twenties. Strausz-Hupé recalled his companion's description after they left: “What a common guttersnipe!” (Doubtless the German expression was less suitable to print.)

Ultimately, Strausz-Hupé reached his own compromise with his origins. Although raised a Protestant, he had little personal use for organized religion. He recognized the power of religion to bind societies and establish moral codes; these were important social artifacts best described as the “Judeo-Christian heritage.” He seems to have been attracted occasionally to Roman Catholicism and at least in some of his books he attributes much of Europe's endemic modern ideological temptations to the breakdown of a unified Christianity after the Renaissance. Of Judaism, he knew very little. Yet there was one Hebrew phrase he remembered from his father that, as we shall see, expressed his belief in a mysterious Divinity.

Thus, the young man who entered America at the beginning of the Roaring Twenties already knew the extremes of life: self-confidence and doubt, belonging and not belonging, ease and distress, wealth and poverty. Such experiences may explain a sometimes ill-disguised desire for distinction and membership in the “high classes” of society. He could show a generous disregard of money but more often sought anxiously to accumulate it: “I am not so rich as I seem to be” was his constant refrain. He could distinguish quickly between substantial men of affairs and those simply on the make, and all the bounders in-between. Above all, he had been thrown on his only real resource, himself, and having survived the wreck of the Old World, was quite prepared to tackle the New.

The New World

Strausz-Hupé sought out America primarily for economic rather than political reasons, unlike many in the later, Nazi-driven Central European exodus of the 1930s. He needed work. He lacked any particular skill, but was full of a beguiling charm and a first-rate classical education that included French and English in addition to his native German.

Strausz-Hupé’s critical impressions of America were very European. Steeped in history himself, he found little sense of it in Chicago, his first stop, and even less regard for it on the national level. But it would be a mistake to credit the young immigrant in the twenties with the big thoughts of the thirties, forties, and fifties. By his own confession, he concentrated most on the difficult task of making a living enough to sustain himself and help his mother.

Looking back, Strausz-Hupé told me of his first great stroke of luck. Out of money and with no prospects, he was walking along Fifth Avenue when suddenly he espied a boyhood friend from the fashionable spas where his parents
vacsationed before the war. This man, Sasha, belonged to the Russian aristocracy and his family had managed to escape the Bolshevik Revolution with a hoard of gold coins and a huge vodka supply. Sasha’s spacious apartment contained a large library, its floor-to-ceiling shelves stocked with liquor bottles instead of books. Sasha offered Strausz-Hupé a place to stay until he got on his feet. In prohibition-era America, vodka and gold allowed the Russian émigrés to live much as they had before 1914 except that the “servant problem” in New York was insufferable. No one, it seems, was servile enough.

Strausz-Hupé was traveling in fast company. Eventually becoming a Wall Street runner and then something of a political risk analyst for American holders of European bonds, he accumulated enough money to bring over his adored mother after his father died. Always a bon vivant, he delighted in the company of women, and his reddish hair, impeccable dress, wonderful manners, and amusing speech delighted them. Somewhere in the course of Strausz-Hupé’s social activity, he was introduced to Eleanor Cuyler Walker. A tall, forthright woman who knew what she wanted, Eleanor came from an old and prominent Philadelphia family. They were married in 1938, a union that lasted thirty-six years until Eleanor’s death in Sweden, where her husband was then posted as ambassador. I stood near Strausz-Hupé in the churchyard the day of her funeral, after her burial. After a silence, he turned to me and said: “My father used to say Etzbah Elohim when he saw something miraculous. Eleanor for me was Etzbah Elohim.” (The words, which mean “finger of God,” come from Pharaoh’s magicians—Exodus 8:15.)

Truly for Strausz-Hupé, Eleanor was a miraculous find, more so even than the chance meeting with Sasha in New York. She gave him financial security and even more important, opened to him the exclusive world of Philadelphia’s Main Line society and through it the somewhat larger but still very exclusive ambience of America’s upper classes. In short, Strausz-Hupé began to meet the people who ran the United States.

Robert and Eleanor made a tempestuous union. Suffice it to say that they were both strong-willed and had their own circles of close friends. Despite many a spark, however, they held together, and no one who knew them could doubt their love for each other. A friend of both Eleanor and Robert related many years later that Main Line society was fascinated by Strausz-Hupé. But “the Austrian professor,” as he came to be known, remained sensitive to his background. As Strausz-Hupé once remarked to me, quoting Disraeli, “I myself was never quite respectable.”

Shortly after their marriage, the Strausz-Hupé’s decamped for Paris, where Robert continued his bond work. Simultaneously, Strausz-Hupé discovered his vocation, and it was not to buy or sell. In the thirties, Strausz-Hupé would have laughed at the idea that he might become a famous professor. But he had been developing a keen interest in European affairs through his bond business. He troubled to read _MEIN KAMPF_ and also chanced upon a book on geopolitics written by a German general named Haushofer. He became convinced early on that Nazi Germany was a serious danger to human liberty and the democracy he had come to cherish. In his view, Hitler was a demented thug whose ascent was made possible only because of the social upheaval that followed World War I. The stability of the middle classes had been destroyed and the aristocrats demoralized and discredited. The new barbarians advanced in the guise of familiar terms although their purposes were revolutionary. Haushofer, “the Nazi Machiavelli,” to use Strausz-Hupé’s words, wrote the user’s manual that justified Hitler’s Lebensraum and racial theories in the language of geopolitics. But Nazi geopolitics meant a German imperium intended to replace, not adjust, the traditional balance of power.

Strausz-Hupé proved unable to convince anyone important of these dangers. He encountered what he called later “the commercial mentality,” and recounted in his memoirs a failed attempt to persuade influential Britons of the Nazi menace. In the end, the great men of England believed that once the Nazis were in power their foolish mouthings would be replaced by a businesslike calculation of costs and benefits. Behind the fanatic lurked the pragmatic. Herr Hitler would adjust the balance of power rather than undo it.

This experience would affect Strausz-Hupé for the rest of his life. He, and indeed many prominent Americans later his allies, worked under what came to be called “the Munich Metaphor”: the unwillingness of democratic leaders to see their enemies realistically and to understand that the Hitlers (and Stalins) of this world were not interested in negotiating an end to conflicts but rather winning them. Recognition of this fact did not mean that war was the only way for the democracies to defend themselves. An effective defense, however, required a keen understanding of the threat, the techniques used by the adversary, and a strategy that exploited his weaknesses.

**Geography and War**

The Second World War amplified Strausz-Hupé’s message about the Nazis. In those times, when few outside the government were concerned about international affairs, he came quickly to the attention of those who mattered. A
lacked a bachelor's degree, Strausz-Hupé enrolled as a special student and, after earning his Ph.D., joined the faculty. An extremely popular professor, Strausz-Hupé's lectures and seminars were eagerly attended and long remembered.

Simultaneously, Strausz-Hupé's work on Haushofer brought him to the attention of Isaiah Bowman, then the most eminent geographer in the United States. Again the connection clicked and he found himself Chief of Research on what he described as a typical FDR-style enterprise: a special project on refugee affairs and resources commissioned by and responsible to the president. He became intimately familiar with, among other things, the water resources of the Near East and the economy of China. Through his wife, he became a regular at the salon run by Henry Field, a half-English American heir, anthropologist, and head of the Refugee Project. There he met, among others, the brilliant if somewhat mysterious and always comical Isaiah Berlin.

Eleanor's circle also gave him a role well beyond that of a commissioner and Ph.D. student. One of her closest friends, James Forrestal, had become assistant secretary (he later became secretary) of the Navy. Another acquaintance was Dean Acheson, whose wife was close to Eleanor. Both of these men were to figure significantly in Strausz-Hupé's movement from analyst of Nazi geopolitical schemes to Cold War strategist.

Forrestal was well connected to FDR and possessed a superior knowledge of America's industrial capabilities, gleaned from a successful Wall Street career. Forrestal was on the fast track, ultimately too fast. He was, as his biographers called him, a “driven patriot.” By 1944, he had begun to focus on postwar issues, specifically the problem posed by Stalin's Russia. Aroused by Churchill, embassy reports, and his antipathy for Marxist doctrine, Forrestal tried to sound the alarm. He began his campaign to alert his superiors by commissioning a report on Soviet foreign policy and consulted Strausz-Hupé about it.

Strausz-Hupé approached the Soviet Union from both philosophical and geopolitical angles. He thought little of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German philosophy and could be very entertaining about theories that, as he put it, posited a “perfected consciousness’’ so perfect it could do nothing better than contemplate itself. As an advocate of freedom and democracy, he detested Marxism's pretentious social engineering, intended to produce a new “Soviet man” utterly free of morality save that of “scientific socialism.”

On the political front, Strausz-Hupé deemed Marxism a crude scientific fraud that had been turned by Lenin into a vehicle for gaining and then holding absolute power. Stalin's Soviet Union had amalgamated the imperial Russian tradition with the revolutionary overtones of Marxism-Leninism. By background and study, Strausz-Hupé understood them both.

Strausz-Hupé gave Forrestal a word of caution. He related to me that once as he was opining somewhat indignantly on U.S. policy, he noticed Forrestal laughing. What was so entertaining? “Oh,” said Forrestal, “it's so refreshing to hear you because you are so delightfully naïve about Washington.” In this case, however, Strausz-Hupé offered realistic advice. It would be a mistake, he told his friend, to think that Soviet foreign policy was guided strictly by ideology. (Later, he would say that sometimes it was and sometimes it wasn't. You could not tell which you were getting, a Soviet or a Russian foreign policy; this was the mystery about it.) He suggested that Forrestal get his report rewritten by someone who could give it diplomatic and geopolitical weight.

Forrestal took Strausz-Hupé’s advice and eventually in early 1946 found George Kennan, whose long telegram, reflected in the famous “Mr. X” article in FOREIGN AFFAIRS, offered an intellectual rationale for the containment policy. Later Kennan recanted some of his arguments. In the late fifties Acheson rebuked him for seeming to suggest that NATO might be unnecessary. Strausz-Hupé said once that “Mr. X” was the only instance of a pen name being wiser than the real author.

Strausz-Hupé had the highest regard for Dean Acheson, whom he described as “one of the greatest public servants in the employment of the Republic.” He could do a wicked mimic of the aristocratic Acheson twirling a mustache while exuding condescension toward some hapless congressman. Strausz-Hupé, like many others, faulted Acheson for not including South Korea (on the eve of the Korean War) in America’s perimeter of vital interests; unlike others, he accepted Acheson’s explanation that he could hardly do otherwise because neither Congress nor the president had accepted it; and they remained firm friends. All of this contradictions of course those who depicted Strausz-Hupé as some sort of reactionary Republican partisan. For him foreign policy was not a party plaything.
Western Man and the Balance of Tomorrow

In 1946, Strausz-Hupé earned his Ph.D. and soon became a leader in the new field of international relations. He pioneered what we call today the interdisciplinary approach that drew on political science, history, economics, and even sociology to gain a better understanding of world politics. Meanwhile, he had reached his own conclusions about the two world wars that wrecked Europe and how to prevent yet another conflagration.

Strausz-Hupé was an early supporter of European unification—or more precisely, European federalism—as the only way to prevent a recurrence of catastrophe. He argued (along with Clarence Streit) that the United States should bring this about as part of an even larger federation. Through an Atlantic Alliance, the United States could solve the German problem while simultaneously defending Western Europe against Soviet encroachments. The issue was whether democratic statesmen would act in time.

These ideas were similar to those of Acheson and Churchill, both of whom were anxious to commit America to Europe and to keep the Germans down and the Russians out (to paraphrase Lord Ismay’s rationale for NATO). For Strausz-Hupé, NATO rather than Monnet’s functional “European integration” was the key institution. Integration reminded him of the commercial mentality. It might serve to draw France and Germany together but could never create the political will needed to secure the future. That kind of project, in his view, would not emerge from the exhausted, demoralized, and compromised European states of his youth. Their moment was over. The question was whether the Americans or the Russians would seize the European prize. If America won, then Western civilization had a chance; if Russia won, then the communist night would be hardly less dark than the Nazis’.

In 1952, Strausz-Hupé authored what he considered the most original of his works, titled THE ESTRANGEMENT OF WESTERN MAN in Europe and THE ZONE OF INDIFFERENCE in the United States. His depiction of Europe was stark. While the old continent was the primary battleground of the Cold War, as it had been for the preceding conflicts, the Europeans themselves, “categories of the defeated,” were weak: “its most ancient nations are rent by internecine conflict … it doubts itself.” The issue was whether for the long haul the arrangements made by the United States to rescue Europe from its weakness, including NATO, could count upon “a community of devotion, a culture.” The answer was “yes” if Western civilization remained whole, marked by converging cultural developments between Europe and the United States. Did they share similar ideas of freedom, justice, law? Did their “social mind” share personal, interpersonal and social conceptions?

After positing the triumphs of a West that was shaped by Greece, Rome, Christianity, and geography into a distinctive culture, Strausz-Hupé traced its sudden, dramatic decline: its geographic shrinkage in the face of a resurgent Asia (Soviet Russia qualified as “half Asiatic”) but most important the disjuncture between its technology and its spirit. Formed in agrarian societies, Western values now stood assailed by the very products of technological prowess: mass organization, impersonal machinery, atomized societies. If the sources of its living culture dried up, then superior technology would not long outlast it. “Man may master even vaster natural resources; he may no longer master himself,” he wrote.

Strausz-Hupé then described the great dangers for Western culture as a series of imbalances: the useful division between church and state that, pressed too far, destroyed the “binding sanction of a transcendental order”; a materialism that in its hubris reduced man to an engineering problem, exemplified by “positivism, the philosophy of social mathematics and hence of perfectly organized boredom”; disintegrationist philosophies that left the individual at the mercy of his instincts and anxieties and thus prey to the promise of extreme ideologies. Most of all there loomed the menace of “relativism.” If there was no absolute standard of morality or truth, there could be no moral code or social order.

Against all of these, America stood resistant. A product of the late Enlightenment, the United States mastered industrialization without alienating its population from the country’s founding values, not least of which was “a healthy skepticism toward the intellect.” Western civilization in the end had come to survive “by the grace of American power.” But if Europe had succumbed to the absolutes of nationalisms that filled the void of religious faith, then America had also failed to reconstruct the West on a sound basis. “Wilsonianism” through Versailles “extended the Balkans into the center of Europe.” Thus, the ills afflicting Europe were reinforced by American intervention. Neither Europe nor the United States could afford another such mistake.

Strausz-Hupé argued that, after 1945, there were but two choices. One was to concentrate power in an American imperium with Europe as a province. No matter how kind the master, Strausz-Hupé believed that the relationship would corrupt both America and Europe. Besides, the Americans were simply not cut out to do it. The other, better
alternative was to reintegrate the Western community through social reconciliation at home and a federal system that allowed for autonomy among the variegated parts of Europe, “building down rather than vertical integration … opposing the growth of shapeless gigantism.” The great task was “to find the common ground upon which the leading powers of Europe, Great Britain and France, can join hands in the making of European unity.” Germany could not but follow, and a successful Western Europe, secured against Soviet intimidation and communist subversion by the Atlantic Alliance, would ultimately shake Central and Eastern Europe loose from the unsustainable Russian grip.

Strausz-Hupé recognized the obstacles to this second choice in Europe itself and was particularly solicitous of Britain’s difficulties. Yet the absence of England would leave that proud country a second-rate, isolated power and simultaneously reduce the European experiment to a “functional” economic unity that fell well short of redemption. He appealed for statesmanship. A Europe united along his lines would “possess the military power to insure its security and to share with the United States the burden of Western defense the world over.”

Strausz-Hupé concluded ESTRANGEMENT with an appeal for cultural and intellectual change. Scientism and irrational hankering for absolutist “laws” of human nature had to be discarded. Room had to be made for faith, a religious dimension to life.

These ideas, which seem so current now, give a prophetic quality to Strausz-Hupé's least known work. Employing elements of his own experience, his vast reading of history, an unusual excursion into sociology and an already astounding mastery of international politics, the book was also distinguished by an entrancing style. Strausz-Hupé's orotund, nineteenth-century cadences were punctuated by a mordant wit. THE ESTRANGEMENT OF WESTERN MAN offers the bedrock of Strausz-Hupé's moral and political philosophy. His later writings would draw upon its ideas, although usually expressed in less sophisticated form. He had found the key problems, isolated the choices and offered the vision. Strausz-Hupé would spend the rest of his life educating others to these truths. He was not yet fifty.

The Foreign Policy Research Institute and Protracted Conflict

Strausz-Hupé did not find the new Eisenhower administration or the American foreign policy establishment particularly hospitable to his ideas. He did not care for John Foster Dulles’ blend of moralism and legalism and was critical of America’s overemphasis on nuclear weapons in its defense strategy. He strongly opposed Eisenhower's humiliation of the British and French in the Suez crisis, arguing that it badly harmed NATO and added fuel to de Gaulle's case against the alliance. The German revolt (1953), the Hungarian uprising (1956), and Khrushchev's “deStalinization” campaign all confirmed his views about Russia's tenuous hold on Eastern Europe and the chronic malfunctioning of the Soviet system. But the West was not winning the Cold War and its technical lead in weapons was being fiercely challenged by Soviet achievements such as the Sputnik space launch in 1957.

Strausz-Hupé's own vision, along with his wide range of political and academic contacts and his dissatisfaction with American policy, led him to create a new institution. In 1955, he persuaded the University of Pennsylvania and the Smith Richardson Foundation to establish the Foreign Policy Research Institute. Its central idea was to bring the best of scholarship to bear on international problems, offering a new sense of strategy that integrated “the long view” with current policy.

The Institute assembled under its auspices top-ranking academics, many of whom had Washington experience, to describe the issues and debate a course of action. Government officials were also sometimes present. Dr. James Dougherty, then a graduate student at Penn recalled elegant dinners held under the solemn gazes of ancient Pharaohs at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology or at the posh Cosmos Club in Washington, with Strausz-Hupé presiding over free-ranging discussion among the Institute Associates, as the participants were called. Frequently the ideas became articles or books. Among the original luminaries were Hans Kohn, the great historian of nationalism; William Y. Elliot of Harvard, a founder of the CIA; William R. Kintner, then head of the Army’s Planning Staff and later to be Institute Director; and, among the younger set, Henry Kissinger and James Schlesinger. Reflecting Strausz-Hupé's broad outlook, the Associates also included economists (notably Lawrence Krause of Brookings) and regional specialists. After the initial grant, the Institute relied on the A. W. Mellon Foundation in Pittsburgh (in particular, Adolph Schmidt and later R. Daniel MacMichael) plus the occasional government contract (usually classified) to make its way.
As a full professor, Strausz-Hupé could devote only part of his time to the Institute. Yet the output of the organization was astonishing, producing a dozen books and innumerable articles over its first decade. In 1957, not content with FOREIGN AFFAIRS in New York, where he never published an article, Strausz-Hupé began ORBIS, a quarterly journal that in those days contained an anonymous editorial section he often wrote himself.

The main activity, however, was the development of a strategy for the West to win the Cold War. Strausz-Hupé and Kintner traveled widely in 1956–57, gathering information abroad and then working the results through seminars and consultations. The research unfolded in two stages: first, the Soviet adversary had to be understood, especially Moscow's methods of conducting the conflict; second, a strategy had to be developed that countered Soviet strengths and exploited their weaknesses.

Strausz-Hupé laid out his objectives in the inaugural issue of ORBIS. His essay “The Balance of Tomorrow” began boldly: “The issue before the United States is the unification of the globe under its leadership within this generation.” He concluded no less boldly: “The mission of the American people is to bury the nation-states….” Reread today, the essay still pulsates with urgency. Strausz-Hupé had clearly shifted from his 1952 alternative of a federal Europe toward the other, less attractive but more likely concept of an American empire. Doubtless the Suez crisis and the near collapse of France over the Algerian crisis suggested that the Europeans were simply incapable of any initiative.

Strausz-Hupé’s most famous work, PROTRACTED CONFLICT, published two years later, offered even more stimulus for action. This book and its subsequent companions, A FORWARD STRATEGY FOR AMERICA (1961) and BUILDING THE ATLANTIC WORLD (1963) were no longer his alone. The multiple authors reflected both the discussions that gave birth to the concepts and a committee method for producing books at a rapid clip. Yet no one reading them will mistake the style. Drafts were written by others but Strausz-Hupé put his rhetorical stamp on the results. As James Dougherty recalled, the experience could be vigorous. Strausz-Hupé sat at his desk rewriting extensively while the hapless authors of the draft stood around him, called upon occasionally to defend an awkward phrase. The Master took special offense at the adjective “appropriate” and using verb forms of “implement.” Anything that smacked of scientism would fall under a withering glare. He replaced the word or phrase then raised his eyes, read it and said: “um, um?” It took a brave soul to contest his changes.

PROTRACTED CONFLICT did to the Soviet Union what GEOPOLITICS had done to Nazi Germany. It outlined the methods by which the Soviets and their allies were conducting a “protracted conflict” that, in the style of early Islam, posited a realm of peace (the Soviet bloc) off-limits to democratic influence and a realm of war (the West) to be worn down. There might be periods of truce, called détente or peaceful coexistence, often dictated by Soviet weakness, but these were just temporary. (Communist ideology would never permit a real peace.) As by any measure, the United States and its allies exceeded Soviet strength, Moscow’s strategy would press conflict short of confrontation while encouraging defeatism in the West through psychological warfare. (The book’s appendix on such warfare was written by one of Strausz-Hupé’s close intellectual soul mates, Stefan Possony, a refugee from Hitler’s Germany then working for the U.S. Air Force. Possony wrote originally under a pseudonym.)

Protracted Conflict’s rhetoric is strident and wide-ranging. Its argument, NEW YORK TIMES columnist C. L. Sulzberger wrote, “is profound, and its conclusions are direct, logical and terrifying.” The reader emerges with a view that the Soviets were a many-headed hydra bent on disabling the West and that the West’s prospects in the late fifties were not very good. Democracies seemed ill-suited to this subtle warfare and inclined to see the best until too late, when only increasingly desperate measures could save the day. Protracted Conflict also offers an extended critique of containment as it had become known, not the “halt and reverse” ideas of the Forrestal-Acheson era but the passive “wait 'til they strike” strategy that allowed the Soviets great tactical mobility. Not surprisingly, Acheson himself endorsed the book, as did a host of other luminaries including Kissinger. As Strausz-Hupé said years later, the book proved popular because it struck a public nerve already there.

A FORWARD STRATEGY FOR AMERICA, finished in November 1960 and published in 1961, included some of the same thinking, although it reads much more like a committee project. It proposed to counter protracted conflict tactics with pressure all along the Soviet periphery while making solid the edifices of Western unity and military strength. An active Western tactic along these lines would force the communists to make strategic decisions that passive containment did not. Bereft of tactical flexibility and confronted by superior force, the Soviet threat could be defeated by the West. The authors insisted that American strategy “must be based upon the premise that we cannot tolerate the survival of a political system which has both the growing capability and the ruthless will to destroy us.” FORWARD STRATEGY thus advocated what we would call today “regime change.”
The finale of the trilogy, *Building the Atlantic World*, emerged in 1963. Authored by the familiar cast of Strausz-Hupé, Dougherty, and Kintner, the book draws on favorite ideas from a platoon of contributors, many of whom attended an FPRI conference on the North Atlantic Community held in Bruges, Belgium (1957). Its progenitor included a study on U.S. policy contracted by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; the preface includes a quote from the committee’s Chairman J. W. Fulbright. The book issued a clarion call dear to Strausz-Hupé: the transformation of NATO into a model for Hans Kohn’s “age of global history,” the passing of the nation-state system into a supranational unity. If NATO did not founder on the complexities of nuclear strategy, the United States had the chance to consolidate the Atlantic (Western) world, thus permanently weighting the balance of power against the Soviets. This ought to be, the authors argued, the highest American international objective. Otherwise, “Western disunity supplies the openings for communist penetration.”

Eclipse

Strausz-Hupé rode high in the years 1959–63. His books were widely acclaimed and his professorship at Penn one of the University’s crown jewels. Moreover, the public mood seemed most receptive to his thinking. As he noted ruefully later, the new Kennedy administration, like Eisenhower’s in 1953, voiced the rhetoric of a more active American prosecution of the Cold War across all fronts. The evidence suggests that Strausz-Hupé expected big things. When Protracted Conflict was reissued in paperback in 1963, it contained an epilogue (written before the Cuban Missile Crisis) that carefully praised Kennedy for increasing the defense budget despite the absence of an immediate crisis. This was always a Strausz-Hupé litmus test of political courage in a democracy.

Yet within three years Strausz-Hupé would write *In My Time*, making no reference to either FPRI or the book trilogy. The preface says, “My barque will never float again;” the last chapter offers a somewhat weary philosophical digression from a man who, at age sixty-two, saw his career as over. Meanwhile, even his work at the University was imperiled as both his methods and FPRI came under increasing criticism.

What had happened? The answer lay in the rapid shift of American politics following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Kennedy assassination, the presidential election of 1964, and the Vietnam War. In 1962, Strausz-Hupé’s ideas were center-right, counting many Democrats and Republicans; by 1964 he was cast as right-right, a discredited Goldwater adherent.

Strausz-Hupé always thought that the risk of nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis had been grossly exaggerated by pro-Kennedy propagandists who sought to disguise the real cost of the settlement for the United States. Like Eisenhower, whose conversation with Kennedy was captured on a recently revealed Oval Office recording, Strausz-Hupé thought the Kremlin would never trade Moscow for Havana. American nuclear superiority ensured that much; otherwise why would Khrushchev have put nuclear missiles in Cuba? Yet the United States had secured a removal of the missiles only at the cost of guaranteeing Castro’s tenure. At that time, very few Americans knew that Kennedy had also agreed to the withdrawal of American missiles from Turkey, something concealed for years.

After the crisis, the Kennedy administration abruptly shifted course, seeking a détente with the USSR based on a nuclear arms agreement. This was completely antithetical to Strausz-Hupé’s approach: he deemed American military superiority to be fundamental. Arms control agreements created a misleading balm that left Moscow free to meddle politically elsewhere. Increased American involvement in Southeast Asia, the other main U.S. effort, might be justified if it succeeded in repelling yet another communist subversion. But neither arms control nor Vietnam constituted the main theater, which remained Europe.

In 1964, Strausz-Hupé found a ready recipient for his ideas in the Goldwater campaign, and he emerged as a strong public supporter of the candidate. The Johnson campaign, however, succeeded easily in portraying Goldwater as a dangerous extremist. The Republican was repudiated in a landslide.

Strausz-Hupé was now typecast as a man whose ideas might lead to nuclear confrontation with the USSR. Senator Fulbright, so lauded in *Building the Atlantic World*, began his opposition to Vietnam, which would expand to a critique of containment and pave the way for McGovern’s “Come Home America.” Fulbright attacked Strausz-Hupé by name. On the University campus, increasing unrest focused on classified research performed for the government; the FPRI was a major target. Finally, the hated “scientism” had made its way into the Political Science Department. History, philosophy, and case studies were out; statistics, logical positivism, and moral neutrality were in. By the late sixties, Strausz-Hupé was an increasingly isolated figure at Penn and his creation, the Foreign Policy Research Institute, was itself under attack, eventually becoming independent of the university in 1970— in his view a necessary though regrettable decision.
Revival

In the very year that began Strausz-Hupé’s eclipse he unknowingly planted the seed of his revival. In 1962, ORBIS featured his magisterial article on “The Sino-Soviet Tangle and U.S. Policy.” It was Strausz-Hupé at his best. He argued eloquently that reports of ideological disagreement between Moscow and Beijing were either exaggerated or, in any event, did not matter much. On the ground, where it counted, both communist states continued their efforts to undo the West. Yet there was another angle: Marxist-Leninism had a weak spot, its defective analysis of nationalism. Russian encouragement of Chinese revolutionary independence might backfire, especially because Tsarist conquests of the last century were deeply resented in China.

Strausz-Hupé noted that if the West were to play the geopolitics of the balance of power between the Soviet Union and Maoist China, ideological preconceptions should be abandoned. As in nineteenth-century Europe, the swing power would choose the weaker, not the stronger, with whom to ally. That dictated China rather than Russia as America’s choice of temporary partner, although both were morally reprehensible. He concluded, “The responsible statesman cannot dismiss these considerations out-of-hand, however distasteful he may find them.”

Strausz-Hupé’s article attracted the attention of a then-failed politician, former vice president Richard Nixon, who had also been impressed earlier by PROTRACTED CONFLICT. In October 1967, Nixon published “Asia After Vietnam” in FOREIGN AFFAIRS, which hinted at what became his revolutionary policy to exploit Sino-Soviet differences. The article’s reasoning closely resembled that of Strausz-Hupé’s, especially its approbation of the Atlantic Community, its recognition of the rise of Asia and its argument that China might have its own independent role to play.

When Nixon narrowly won the 1968 election, Strausz-Hupé’s career suddenly brightened. The posting he got from Nixon (helped by Republican operative Bryce Harlow) was originally supposed to be Ambassador to Morocco. But Senator Fulbright blocked the confirmation of a man he described as “the very epitome of the hard-line, no compromise”; Strausz-Hupé’s record of supporting Israel in the 1967 War was enough to put off King Hassan's government. It proved another stroke of luck. Denied the Moroccan appointment, he missed the king’s 42nd birthday party in July 1971, where one hundred guests including the French ambassador, but not the king, were killed in a coup attempt.

Strausz-Hupé’s own preference was not an embassy at all but rather the National Security Advisor position that Nixon gave to Henry Kissinger. The deciding factor, Strausz-Hupé told me, was his view on Vietnam. Strausz-Hupé had advised Nixon that the United States should take the war to the North and get it finished, or abandon what appeared an endless morass deeply dividing the country and gravely weakening it against the real threat, the Soviet Union. Nixon had seemed to agree, but Strausz-Hupé later became convinced that the widely published idea of “Vietnamizing the war” associated with Nelson Rockefeller and Kissinger was closer to Nixon’s real view.

One wonders whether Strausz-Hupé would have worked well as National Security Advisor. He was already sixty-five and had never been much of an administrator or a committee man. At Penn, Strausz-Hupé evinced little enthusiasm for academic intrigue. The cutthroat world of Washington politics would not have caught him at his strengths. I sense that he understood this, yet he always felt that he could have done more than diplomatic work.

Ambassador

Blocked by Fulbright on Morocco, Strausz-Hupé was nominated successfully for Ceylon (Sri Lanka) with the help of Col. Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Kissinger’s military assistant. Thus began a diplomatic career that stretched over two decades, ending in 1989, when he was eighty-six years old. He went from Ceylon to Belgium, thence to Sweden, and in 1975 he achieved the summit of his expectations, U.S. Ambassador to the NATO Council. Strausz-Hupé conducted important business at several of these posts. Among other things, he negotiated with Britain for America’s use of Diego Garcia as a military base. At NATO, he became an early advocate of deploying U.S. Pershing II missiles against the Soviet build-up of SS-20s, designed to prevent NATO’s reinforcement capability, which was crucial to the Alliance’s military strategy and political cohesion.

During these years, Strausz-Hupé made important contacts. He hosted Governor and Mrs. Reagan in Brussels; the future president was a wholehearted admirer of PROTRACTED CONFLICT. At NATO, he worked closely with General Alexander M. Haig, Jr., then Supreme Commander, who was also instrumental in securing for Strausz-Hupé his last embassy in Turkey in 1981.
Strausz-Hupé surprised everyone with his diplomatic facility. He told me once that he had to do some acting. In the United States, he was “the barefoot boy from Newtown Square saying things so simple even Washington could understand them.” Abroad, in an embassy full of Foreign Service officers naturally resentful of a political appointee, Strausz-Hupé pretended to be the absent-minded professor. Thus underestimated, he could sort out quickly the trustworthy from those who were not. Of one Deputy Chief of Mission he observed. “He attempted to make me his enemy but he did not succeed.” Nonetheless, it could not have been entirely easy. Strausz-Hupé was not accustomed to checking with others or informing subordinates in detail when one of his plans was underway. Sometimes he preferred to be the sole junction between foreign officials and his superiors in Washington. But his cables made good reading and were widely circulated.

Strausz-Hupé also astonished his hosts. The late Sri Lankan Prime Minister Bendaranaike was an ardent socialist not fond of America. The Swedish leader Olaf Palme epitomized a flamboyant anti-Americanism. Strausz-Hupé charmed both by locating a common interest, whether it was dental trouble, tennis, or modern philosophy, then took it from there. Policies may not have changed, but he reduced the heat and gained a respectful hearing for U.S. positions.

Gerald Ford’s defeat in 1976 cut short Strausz-Hupé’s career at NATO before he could do much work, an immense disappointment. Yet there were real satisfactions, especially in the turnabout of his reputation on Capitol Hill. At his confirmation hearing for the NATO post, Strausz-Hupé was delighted when Senator Hubert Humphrey moved a resolution of approval saying that “Robert Strausz-Hupé was the right man in the right place at the right time.” As he remarked after the hearing, patience in politics is sometimes a great virtue if you have the patience for it.

In 1977, Strausz-Hupé returned to White Horse Farms in Newtown Square, the home he and Eleanor had fixed up so many years before. He had been working on “Maxims,” several dozen of which appeared in the now-defunct transatlantic literary magazine ENCOUNTER even while he was ambassador. (Many more were published in ORBIS during the 1990s.) These were acute observations: “It is more difficult to unravel a half-truth than to spot a falsehood. Only fools tell complete lies.” “To govern is to make no more decisions than necessary.” “The best conservative causes have been lost by inflexibility, and the best liberal ones by vacillation.” But he was far from finished as a diplomat. He had become close friends with General Haig, who spent a year at the FPRI after retiring from NATO. As Reagan’s first Secretary of State, Haig supported Strausz-Hupé’s nomination to become ambassador to Turkey.

It was a troubled time for that crucial NATO ally. The Turkish military had overthrown a corrupt and incompetent civilian leadership, putting its government at odds over human rights and civil liberties with its NATO partners at a critical moment of the Cold War. As Strausz-Hupé wrote: “The junta and Washington had suspended all diplomatic relationships except for routine matters.” President Reagan’s instructions were brief: “Keep Turkey with us.”

Toward the end of his life, Strausz-Hupé was collecting material to write about his experiences, especially the Turkish embassy. Various other sources have given a picture of him at work. Evidently sensing that his own State Department could not manage the Turkish generals, indeed could barely understand them, Strausz-Hupé ran interference for the Defense Department, thereby preserving the relationship through some turbulent times. This got him into a good deal of trouble with Foggy Bottom. During Reagan’s second term, there was a determined effort to replace him. The Department chose unwisely to make its case to Reagan on grounds of age, leading the President to observe that he preferred to have someone in government older than he himself.

I spent a few days with the Strausz-Hupés in Ankara in 1983 while on a speaking tour. After Eleanor died in 1974, Robert had married Maerose Nugar of Sri Lanka, who was a gracious hostess and keen observer of the guests. The ambassador ran quite a salon. He conducted it as if he were back at the Institute, choosing a group from all aspects of Turkish life. The conversation ran freely, and Strausz-Hupé intervened himself only to sharpen a point or summarize a topic. Later, tired from several hours of repartee, I sought to nap. The eighty-year-old Strausz-Hupé was deeply disappointed that I could not join him for a vigorous game of late afternoon tennis.

Another account comes from the celebrated American playwright Arthur Miller, who led a delegation of PEN writers to investigate civil liberties in Turkey. To Miller’s surprise, Strausz-Hupé readily conceded that things could be better, but here they were discussing freedom freely. The Turks wanted to improve; that was most significant. But Miller and company wanted something more exciting and eventually they got it. As the overly lubricated celebrities took their leave, one created a scene only to be ordered out of the house by an indignant ambassador.
Strausz-Hupé supported the main lines of Reagan’s foreign policy, which was a lineal descendent of what he had advocated twenty years before. The Soviet protracted conflict could be defeated if Western leaders kept the moral issues clear and supported their foreign policies with superior military forces. Writing in Orbis in 1992, Strausz-Hupé singled out the deployment of the Pershing IIs, his old NATO project, as a key step that led to strategic decisions in Moscow.

It could not hope to break down the military and political barrier of containment…. President Reagan’s policies forced the issue. It was the buildup of NATO’s forces during the years of his presidency and the consistency of his foreign policies that broke the back of a regime that had nothing better to offer its people than a stagnant ideology and the lifestyle of the nomenclature.

Strausz-Hupé, of course, was greatly pleased by the outcome. The Cold War had not been a pleasant trip, he remarked, but it was well worth the destination. The democracies had outrun the Soviets after all.

The Last Hurrahs

Strausz-Hupé’s diplomatic career ended in 1989. He left an unpublished brief fragment, written in 1996, that summed up his own years of his diplomatic achievements. These included critical intelligence on the then-secret relationship between the Sri Lankan government and that of Indian Prime Minister Indira Ghandi; the lease on Diego Garcia; the F-16 deal with Turkey, two major air bases, and a salvaged relationship that kept Turkey in NATO. At eighty-six, he felt himself fit for more public service but came to conclude reluctantly that his age told against him. He returned to Philadelphia, again taking up the post of Distinguished Diplomat in Residence at FPRI. A Heritage Foundation Fellowship gave him the opportunity to spend time in Washington.

Although troubled by a heart ailment that forced him to give up tennis, Strausz-Hupé was still in fighting form, able to lecture for an hour without notes on almost any subject. In Philadelphia, Strausz-Hupé also had a comfortable home, a loving wife, and intellectual stimulus at the Institute. As he said to me, he never thought his life would go on so long. What would he do with the rest of it?

Strausz-Hupé began to write another memoir to cover what In My Time had omitted, notably his activity at FPRI and the books. In addition, he could review his twenty years of diplomacy. Yet in short order, he decided not to do it. Perhaps it was too great an effort; something so personal he would have reserved for his own hand and that hand was no longer so strong. “There is nothing wrong with me,” he exclaimed once, “except I am ninety-three years old!”

Perhaps there was another reason. Strausz-Hupé did not wish to finish his story. The future was more interesting “short as my horizon might be.” Approached by a publisher to reissue In My Time in 1995, Strausz-Hupé wrote a new preface. He noted that he no longer knew the man he had written about thirty years earlier. What is more, he was no longer interested in him. His message instead: read this about a man shaped by the old world but remember that the new world is fundamentally different.

It was indeed the new world that preoccupied him in retirement. “The ascendancy of mass society” and its impact on foreign policy was the subject. After cobbling together various grants, he wrote Democracy and American Foreign Policy, published in 1995. Ostensibly an examination of Alexis de Tocqueville, the brilliant early analyst of American society, it became Strausz-Hupé’s opportunity to write his final words on a variety of subjects.

How could American foreign policy hope to succeed, given the famous defects Tocqueville had identified: its lack of secrecy, dispatch, and a distracted public opinion? Strausz-Hupé’s answer: these defects were “a challenge rather than an irremediable deficiency.” Despite “inordinate subservience to domestic politics,” the Constitution’s clash of checks and balances did manage to work, “though scandalously wasteful …whatever peace there is on the earth is due to the exertions of its flawed and paradoxical system.” The book then becomes a set of essays that argue on geopolitical terms that demographic, technological, and ecological problems are breaking down the nation-state system. (Years earlier he had called these the “uninvited guests” at the table of industrialization.) Only the United States could lead the world toward a new political order, a “federation of the democracies.”

These were ideas directly derived from his writings of forty years earlier, “the balance of tomorrow” now all the stronger because the Soviet menace had disappeared. Strausz-Hupé was disappointed in his book’s reception. He was even more disturbed by the course of American foreign policy following the Cold War which, to him, exhibited most of the bad habits: a careless self-indulgence and a rising to responsibility only after things had gone badly wrong. The Balkan crisis reminded him of his youth; he had a sure hand in analyzing the breakup of Yugoslavia.
He recommended an early decisive military intervention so that the region could be returned to obscurity once more.

As for the big powers, Strausz-Hupé argued for a reversal of alliances. Relations with Russia should be cultivated, the better to restrain what he feared might be an arrogant Chinese assertion of Asian hegemony. He also wanted the U.S. to forge an alliance with India, “If,” he said with a knowing sense of New Delhi’s prickliness, “that is possible.”

The Europeans frustrated him. He regarded the European Union as “a powerful stomach muscle” but little more, and he discerned in EU-U.S. frictions the old follies of wishing to be free of the Atlantic Alliance. Strausz-Hupé supported NATO expansion into the old Habsburg realm but would have stopped at the Baltics. Better not to push the bear too hard. It was better, too, not to disturb the Germans. “They want to stay at home,” he said once, “and any policy that encourages them to stay at home is a good one.” Keeping the Turks out of the EU, on the other hand, was more than stupid. After all, the Ottomans had been part of European history and the balance of power for centuries. A democratic state of Muslims aspiring to Western politics and economics was the best antidote to the failed despots and archaic monarchies of the Arab lands.

Strausz-Hupé remained puzzled to the end of his life by the Holocaust. He knew Austrian and German anti-Semitism, but such a gigantic moral failure had never seemed in the offing even in the bad days following World War I which, in his view, were far more severe than the 1930s. He strongly criticized the only institution that he thought might have risen to civilization's defense, the Catholic Church. Pius XII was a good diplomat, Strausz-Hupé said, but the Church had needed a man who would have sacrificed all, including his own person, to oppose the Holocaust. This was a moral failing that, in his view, ensured the eclipse of Christianity in postwar Europe, which the current Pope has been anxious to revive by renewed evangelism.

Turkey was a favorite subject. Strausz-Hupé thought highly of Turkey’s President Turgut Ozal and shared his view that the United States should have knocked out Saddam at the end of the Gulf War. He worked incessantly to promote a “peace pipeline” that would convey Turkish fresh water to Israel and the Arabian desert, seeking to join the Turks, the Israelis, and the Saudis in a great functional undertaking that like Monnet's Coal and Steel Community, would ease tensions. (Shortly after Strausz-Hupé’s death, Israel did buy some water from Turkey.) Strausz-Hupé, both as ambassador and afterwards, encouraged closer Turkish-Israeli relations.

Strausz-Hupé gradually became aware that his long life was making of him a semi-legendary figure. This pleased and amused him. When a former student declared, “Professor Strausz-Hupé, you are a legend in your own time,” he leaned on his cane and said with a smile, “You behold the wreck of the legend!” At his 95th birthday party, hosted by the Institute, he declared, “the only advantage of great old age is that my critics have fallen silent, one by one, until only my voice is heard!” Yet he never ceased to be interested in the future. Reminiscence was interesting. The future mattered.

After 1999, Strausz-Hupé noticed his own weakening, which eventually made it difficult for him to get out. “I am a victim of my own good health,” he complained. “There are too many parts inside that should have been removed years ago.” This from a man who smoked incessantly from age twelve until ninety-two when he finally gave up his favorite thin cigars. A series of small strokes and heart problems slowed him. Increasing deafness made conversations sometimes difficult. Still, the mordant humor: when I rang him at hospital once he said he was attached to a machine. I asked, “What does it do?” “Oh,” he said, “it trolls for money.” Yet, he continued to work, reading books and writing an occasional short piece.

Strausz-Hupé retained a sharp judgment even in his final days. He recognized that September 11 had ended an era. In a last effort, published posthumously, he saw the war on terrorism as another protracted conflict. Like the Cold War, it had to be won, not compromised. The proliferation of nuclear weapons, he had warned in the 1990s, could bring measureless catastrophe in the wrong hands. Yet he was confident that America would win out. Things had been worse, much worse, during his lifetime.

Robert Strausz-Hupé died peacefully in his sleep on February 24, 2002. Life, Strausz-Hupé sometimes remarked, had been kind to him. The “finger of God” was there when he needed it. He wrote in the 1995 edition of In My Time: “I examined my own life and what history did to it. I now see it as a bridge between the Europe I left and the America I found, the land in which the immigrant’s boldest dreams come true.” His story was truly American with a European accent.
Strausz-Hupé was a child of his times. He understood the balance of power and how to operate it; a League or United Nations held no appeal for him. But after 1914 and 1939, he wanted desperately to “civilize” the balance, and the only system that could do it was American-style democratic federalism. America truly was the “world’s last best hope” as Lincoln said (quoting Thomas Jefferson’s first inaugural speech). As conservatives went, Strausz-Hupé could not be easily pegged. He was suspicious of absolutism, whether in political philosophy or political science. He preferred order to chaos, evolution to revolution, and first class to steerage. Yet Strausz-Hupé had experienced all manner of men. Moral crusading and rampant do-goodism left him cold and suspicious. He was far more tolerant of individual weaknesses and variations; vice never surprised him.

Strausz-Hupé’s scholarship stands the test of time. His footnotes are reliable and his work his own. At the forefront of the multidisciplinary approach, Strausz-Hupé never found in statistics or the theories imitating the natural sciences a substitute for the hard business of establishing evidence case by case, essentially the method of historians but pointed toward conclusions useful for the future.

Any appreciation of Robert Strausz-Hupé must also address the question, what difference did he make to his chosen objective, a more effective American foreign policy? By his own lights, he failed once and he succeeded once. He began by exposing the reality about Nazi statecraft in his pioneering work on geopolitics but had little effect until too late. Determined to prevent another such outcome, he took upon himself the education of the American people and their leaders to the realities of protracted conflict with communism.

Unlike so many others who did so much less, Strausz-Hupé wrote, “I will not claim that I have won the Cold War.” Yet he could certainly claim that without him the blunders would have been greater, the recovery less assured, and those who led to victory far less informed about their work. He could have been describing himself when he defined a statesman’s duty: “His is the task to persuade the people to ‘silence their immediate needs with a view of the future.’ The history of democratic foreign policy is the history of men who succeeded or failed at this task.” Robert Strausz-Hupé was surely a man who succeeded. The history of the Cold War is the unfolding of a protracted conflict eventually won by the West in a way strikingly similar to his ideas.

I see him now in my mind’s eye, sitting in his study surrounded by his books, dressed in a rakish sport coat and ascot. A cup of tea sits on a sideboard, illuminated by the late morning sun, the art on the walls shaded in half tones. Several newspapers lie at his feet, recent well-thumbed biographies by his side. We talk of some famous men and some infamous episodes. But what of the future? I ask. Does the twenty-first century hold your vision of a new world arrangement that federates the failed nation-state system into another “long peace” under American leadership, this time one that avoids a 1914? “A very interesting question,” he would say. He takes a short puff on his cigar. The face crinkles, the eyes twinkle, and he says in a slightly English accent, “but not half as interesting as the answer.”