



**A Memorial Tribute Honoring the
Life and Work of Laurent Murawiec**

1951-2009

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

Remarks

Ken Weinstein

Good afternoon.

I'm Ken Weinstein, CEO of Hudson Institute.

On October 7th, the Hudson Institute family suffered an immense loss when our beloved and esteemed colleague Laurent Murawiec passed away after a long battle with multiple myeloma.

My colleagues and I are, to this very day, nearly four weeks later, still stunned and deeply saddened by our loss.

In the midst of this grief, we wanted to pay tribute to Laurent's extraordinary life, work, and legacy.

It seemed natural to Laurent's valiant widow, Claudia Kinkela, to hold a memorial tribute here at Hudson Institute.

After all, Laurent was arguably never happier in either his personal or professional life, and certainly no more prolific, than during the seven or so years he was at Hudson – this despite the fact he spent the last third of his time at Hudson, from June 12, 2007 to October 7, 2009, battling the cancer that ultimately took his life.

I should note that today, November 4th, was selected for the memorial as it is Claudia's birthday, a day Laurent looked forward to each year, and which they celebrated with a party at their home.

We know this is at best a bittersweet birthday for you, Claudia. We can only imagine what you, his beloved daughters Morgane and Johanna, his parents Lou and Betty, his brothers Gilles and Bruno, and of course Lana, feel.

We have thirteen speakers today, some from as far as Prague and Tokyo paying tribute. To keep the program moving, we will ask our speakers to identify themselves before giving their remarks. We will speak, as it were, in chronological order as to when we first met Laurent. The one exception being Jun Isomura who flew in this morning from Tokyo and so he gets to go right after I do.

I will begin by speaking about Laurent's legacy in France. Laurent's dear French friends, I should note, are organizing a memorial tribute in his native Paris which will be held shortly before Christmas.

The personal tributes to Laurent which poured in from his native France were extremely moving, portraying Laurent as a guide, a shining light, a rarefied spirit, who had both the

brilliance of mind and intellectual courage to speak the truth about radical Islam and broader geopolitics.

He was, in short, a native son who did well, and went on to have a remarkable, but all-too-brief career in the U.S.

Before he came to the U.S., Laurent was a well-known intellectual in Paris, a fixture on French radio and television, whose works were published by the most prestigious publishing houses and newspapers, including *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*.

He was the celebrated translator of Clausewitz's *On War* from German, in a truly magisterial edition; he was also the scholar who updated Clausewitz for the era of the revolution in military affairs, with a noted book on 21st century warfare.

His 2002 book on the role of culture in geopolitics received wide critical acclaim.

Though I knew of Laurent's reputation through mutual friends, my first personal impression of Laurent was at the annual 4th of July political theory picnic about eight years ago. Now for those of you who do not have the pleasure of attending this annual gathering, you can imagine the scene: potbellied aging middle-aged men, myself included, running around in shorts, some actually wearing corduroy in the stifling heat, replete with black socks and wing tips.

In walks a strikingly handsome man, dark hair, almost out of an Italian movie, clearly very strong and muscular, in a grey t-shirt and jeans, holding the hand of his daughter, Morgane.

This first impression of Laurent –handsome, strong, and intensely devoted to his family, epitomized his character in so many ways.

Laurent's strength of intellect led him to see through things the rest of us overlooked. His brilliance of mind and forthright attitude in expressing his ideas made his native country, with its stifling intellectual conformity, a less than hospitable home.

A less frank scholar of Laurent's erudition and productivity could have easily tiptoed his way to a prominent career as a conventional intellectual luminary in France.

But the brilliant and erudite Laurent, whose learning extended from Asia to the Middle East and Europe, from theology to history and philosophy, was an intellectual dissident, a true non-conformist in France.

As much as French intellectuals pride themselves on being non-conformist, they have a tendency, as our late friend would have put it, to act like lemmings heading to the cliff.

Laurent, the cheerful pugilist, was, well, never a lemming...and certainly never one to tiptoe. He spoke openly and in ways others didn't dare about the threat to liberty in France and in Europe.

As a think tank director, I must confess I winced more than once when Laurent conveyed his ideas in his inimitable way. I still can feel the cold sweat I broke into the time Laurent took part in a prime time French television debate in the lead up to the Iraq war, with, among others, a former French Foreign Minister and other Paris notables.

While the pompous talking heads repeated their clichés about Iraq, our beloved friend – ever the enfant terrible -- declared that Hans Blix, the hapless UN weapons inspector, was “le petit mouton”, the little lamb, “qui va se faire manger par Saddam Hussein,” going to be eaten by Saddam Hussein, presumably the big bad wolf.

Despite Laurent's spiritedness and great humor, even the most noted presses in the world, the Presse Universitaires de France, Albin Michel and, of course, the Cambridge University Press, couldn't turn down his marvelous works.

After his death, a mutual friend in Paris said Laurent, with his immense learning, his power of mind and occasionally unrelenting rhetoric, was a figure right out of the 19th century.

I actually think Laurent's real intellectual forerunners were in the 16th and 17th century: the esprits forts, the so-called strong spirits, the free thinkers and loner intellectual dissidents who were the first men of the then-emerging Republic of Letters.

These men, like Laurent, were polymaths, transcending borders, languages, religions and intellectual disciplines to draw on their vast erudition in comparative theology and history and their good humor to fight superstition, clerical and intellectual intolerance.

And Laurent was not just an esprit fort intellectually – he was an esprit fort, a strong spirit, in the deepest sense, in his own character.

Up until the very end, he never complained about his fate. He lamented the books he would never finish, yet somehow summoned the strength to complete his last study on the future of Asia for the Office of Net Assessment two weeks before his death.

His deepest concerns were always about Claudia, Morgane and Johanna, not himself.

None of this should have been a surprise to us, knowing Laurent's character as an esprit fort, a strong spirit.

Though he is gone, and our world the worse for it, especially at Hudson, his strong spirit, his wit and insight live and are an example for us all.

Jun Isomura

Laurent and I have worked together on a project since 2005. It has only been four years, but it feels much longer, maybe because we enjoyed a wide range and variety of discussions.

In the beginning with Laurent, I was confused with his encyclopedic knowledge, enormous vocabulary, and his noble writing. But after a little while, I recognized that he is an outstanding fellow, and that the word “organize” does not exist in his vocabulary.

I talked with Laurent by phone two weeks before he passed away. That was our last conversation.

Laurent was the first person to listen to my idea about a new project on Mongolia. And it was his full agreement for my plan that pushed me to move forward.

In our last conversation, I told him that we were waiting his return to good health and that we would go to Mongolia together.

Last year Laurent told me that he would write a book on a Sino-Russian War in 2020. While Laurent couldn't finish his work, please remember him if a war would break out in any event between China and Russia.

I believe in the immortality of the soul.

Laurent's soul lives forever in our heart.

And Laurent's spirit and wisdom will exist in the Hudson Institute forever.

Seth Cropsey

Since there are several others here today who are likely to discuss Laurent's writing, and the high quality of his intellect I would like to say a little about the great affection that those who were lucky to be his friends felt for him and will continue to feel for his family.

Laurent loved his family, his friends, and the civilization that formed his way of looking at the world. It is no surprise that a man should love his wife and children, but this feeling bubbled out of Laurent as noisily and as torrentially as a waterfall. His smile, his way of joking with his family and with others, the pleasure he took in preparing meals, his enthusiasm about whatever particular object occupied his attention.

In the course of some otherwise very serious discussion, I recall making the mistake once of trying to illustrate a point by remarking that the French insistence that a particular mussel which is only found in the bays west of Marseille was indispensable to bouillabaisse was perhaps "overdoing it." A look of Gallic horror appeared on his face. Up he jumped from the living room chair, leapt for the refrigerator, and pulled out a container of butter. "Do you see this butter?" he asked. Yes, I did. "It comes from cows that are fed on grasses from the beaches in Normandy—they only graze when the tide is out."

"Oh, really," I asked, not quite sure whether he was pulling my leg. "Yes," Laurent said, "Try it," he said, pushing me the tub of butter and tearing off a chunk of a baguette. He was right. Then I got a lecture on the town of Guerande and fleur de sel, the salt that is harvested there in Brittany. I began to suspect that there might be some connection between his insights about ancient Chinese strategic culture and his culinary knowledge so I held my tongue. When he served the fish he'd prepared with this salt that evening I told him that I understood what he meant. My reward for this great admission was a large and magnanimous Laurentian grin—and we continued our conversation.

Another time when I visited him in Paris, I mentioned to Laurent that my grandfather had lived in the Marais for a while between deserting the Hungarian army and moving permanently to Brooklyn. I happened to remember the address, and Laurent happened not only to know the history of the area in scholarly detail, but also the building where my grandfather had lived. He insisted on driving me to see that place. It meant a lot to me and it was a perfect combination of Laurent's erudition, respect for his Jewish heritage, and thoughtfulness in making sure that I saw where my grandfather had lived. His spiritedness, eagerness, and affection were remarkable and unusual ornaments to a mind whose distinguishing characteristic was a sharp and vigorously synthesizing intellect.

Laurent's courage in the face of an illness whose seriousness he fully understood is no less an example of how a life should be lived. As most of you know, Laurent remained intellectually engaged, cheerful, and focused over the past two years. Whether by supreme effort or natural ability a conversation with him about Jihadism, the Mogul

empire, or demography stayed on course. His condition did not appear to affect his intellectual enthusiasm, his powers of concentration, or his love of a spirited exchange. Laurent knew how to partake of the world and he knew how to take leave of it.

Such an understanding puts a man's intellectual gifts in perspective. It is a demonstration of how to lead a good life and something for which we can be grateful for a very long time. It is, I think, what is meant by the hope that a memory will be a blessing. Laurent's memory is such a blessing, and I hope that his family and friends will take comfort from this.

Thank you.

Abe Shulsky

It is an honor to speak to you today about Laurent, whom I first met in the late 1990s, soon after he came to the United States and started working at the RAND Corporation. At that time, he was working on what military strategists call the “Revolution in Military Affairs.” This was a “big think” project very much in the spirit of the sort of work that had made RAND famous in the 1950s and 60s.

However, by the late 1990s, RAND had become somewhat routine, predictable and bureaucratized – everything, you might say, that Laurent was not. So, it wasn’t surprising that I was immediately intrigued by him, and made a point of getting to know him.

Several things impressed me from the beginning:

First, his immense breadth of interest and knowledge. As I mentioned, he was working on technical military issues... but his interests included a wide range of political topics as well. In the next few years he would work on issues ranging from the future of Russia and East Asia to the ideology of extremist Islamism.

Second, his passion for these subjects. His political interests weren’t merely academic in nature. A child of twentieth century Europe, he was never unmindful of the magnitude of the human disaster that could result when politics ran off the rails.

Finally, there was his good nature and bonhomie. The intensity he applied to his work was leavened by a superb wit and sense of irony. A conversation with Laurent was always a seductive mix of gravitas and levitas.

During the several years that our times at RAND overlapped, I very much appreciated having such an enjoyable and intriguing colleague.

By the end of 2001, I had moved over to the Pentagon, where the press of business prevented me from having much contact. Thus, I was excited to learn that Laurent would be briefing the Defense Policy Board on Saudi Arabia, and I managed to attend.

For all the hoopla that arose after the briefing was leaked to the Washington Post, the event itself was much less dramatic. The briefing was well received, and was discussed by the policy board members with the appropriate seriousness.

What happened after the leak was rather different – it was a typical Washington circus, full of sound and fury, but signifying, if not nothing, then certainly nothing of importance about its ostensible subject.

But it did have one silver lining – the net result was Laurent’s departure from RAND to come to the Hudson Institute, for which we remain grateful.

Thank you.

Richard Perle

Robert Straus, a great Washington figure, was once approached by columnist Robert Novak with a question: “Bob,” Novak asked, “why do people take such an immediate dislike to me?” The laconic Straus replied: “Saves time.”

Just the opposite could be said of Laurent. One knew at once—within minutes of our first meeting, in my case—that here was a man of intelligence, wit, humor and warmth, a man one wished to know better.

Many of the people in this room were fortunate to know Laurent better, and see more of him, than I did. But I helped make him famous. Here is how it happened.

It was sometime in 2002 when, as chairman of a Pentagon advisory group, the Defense Policy Board, I was invited to participate in a seminar on terrorism organized by the RAND Corporation. The seminar met three or four times but only one meeting was memorable, the one at which Laurent presented the result of his rigorous research on the role of the Saudis in the rise of jihadist extremism and the acts of terror that flowed there from. This was the first time I met Laurent and I was impressed by the clarity of his views, the logic and evidence with which he advanced them, the passion with which he had worked to derive them, and the tinge of impishness that not even a power point presentation could conceal. At the conclusion of his presentation I asked Laurent if he would present his ideas to the defense policy board, and he agreed.

Laurent’s presentation to the policy board—to such luminaries as Henry Kissinger, James Schlesinger, Harold Brown, Newt Gingrich, Tom Foley and others—was well-received. It was followed by a spirited discussion and several members of the board went out of their way to say that they wished we had more such presentations: no circumlocution, no euphemisms, no sugar-coating: just hard hitting analysis rich in information and, to use the latest buzz word, “actionable” material.

The policy board meeting was closed and confidential, but that didn’t stop someone from sharing Laurent’s slides with the Washington Post which wrenched a point or two from context to produce a sensational story that infuriated the Saudis, especially the Saudi ambassador, Prince Bandar, and sent a cowardly bureaucracy rushing for cover.

The Post story and others that followed from it made headlines around the world. Senior American officials distanced themselves from Laurent’s findings, apologies were made to the Saudis and the once proud and independent RAND Corporation disgraced itself by firing Laurent. There followed a malicious campaign orchestrated by the Saudis to discredit Laurent for his research and me for offering him a platform. But people who knew Laurent’s work—like the extraordinary Andy Marshall—took that as a sign that he was on to something important and made sure his work got the support it deserved.

Looking back, I’m proud of Laurent’s intellectual courage, his important research, his seminal books and articles, and I am honored to have played a small part in helping

people notice it. Nothing to emerge in the years since has diminished the force and wisdom of Laurent's work; and his subsequent scholarship has been and will continue to be of enormous value in understanding the menacing world in which we live.

Stephen Bryen

I am Stephen Bryen. Laurent was my friend, and one of the fun things to do with Laurent was irritate him, and I used to do that.

One of my favorites was to say that I really didn't like Mendelssohn. This was guaranteed to get a reaction from Laurent. Mendelssohn being the grandson of a rabbi, a complex figure whose music is astonishingly good, which is why I said to Laurent the music was no good—and, of course, Laurent responded with a historical interpretation of Mendelssohn's work, an assessment which would last for hours. But it got me thinking that in trying to say something today to remember Laurent, that perhaps a comparison between Haydn and Mozart may be appropriate.

Haydn, like Mozart, was a great musical craftsman—hundreds of symphonies and concertos and all sorts of music flowed—and yet if you take Mozart, who had a much shorter life—even shorter than Laurent's—and who accomplished such brilliant things in that short period. And yet, greatly admired as were Haydn and Mozart, you can see the difference—there was something else going on with Mozart that didn't happen with Haydn.

Even in humor, if you remember, Haydn's Surprise Symphony is anything but a surprise, and wasn't very amusing, and yet Mozart was full of troublesomeness and humor—if whether in the Abduction from the Seraglio or *Così fan tutte*, two of his operas, you'll find it. And yet at the same time you will also find bits of genius as in *Soave sia il vento* which is a beautiful and moving song found in *Così fan tutte*; Mozart's music in *Soave* reaches so beyond what one could expect and yet, in the rest of the Opera there is just an amusing Opera about manners.

And I think this comparison illustrates the point I want to make. This phenomenon found in Mozart—whatever you want to call it, I call it intellectual radicalism—this kind of genius that emerges in Mozart, a genius that comes from craftsmanship but goes so far beyond it, this to me is a connection right to the fingertips of God.

Some people possess this genius in more measure than others. Laurent was clearly someone who possessed much more than others, and shared his genius with us, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Thank you.

Juli MacDonald and Enders Wimbush

I met Laurent for the first time in 1996 or 1997 while I was working at Science Applications International Corporation and he was making the rounds of Washington looking for something interesting to do and a place to hang his hat. Like so many important things in my life, he had been directed to me by Andrew Marshall. Laurent established on that day a pattern that would characterize our relationship forever. He captured me intellectually in just a few moments...and stayed for two hours. When I think back, I remember not a single brief encounter with Laurent. He didn't traffic in brief or quick, in snippets of information or in punditry on this or that. Rather he seduced with his profound love of ideas, and he was unsurpassed in my experience at weaving them into a smooth fabric that rapidly emerged as a fine tapestry. His deep and profound knowledge of history, and especially of the history of ideas, transformed every conversation into a journey full of powerful forces and beguiling characters.

Many here have remarked on Laurent's capacity to absorb everything on a subject and all of its branches. I, too, have witnessed his insatiable appetite for more and more sources. He recently roared through my extensive Central Asian collection, devouring everything. He sought out my colleagues and friends with collections of their own and devoured these, too. The sheer volume of his reading was to me unimaginable.

But Laurent was more than just another scholar with the ability to cite many sources in support of an argument. He saw things most others miss, especially little things that have large consequences. John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, is not someone for whom we might expect Laurent to feel particular affinity, yet when I think of Laurent's exceptional ability to start with the smallest facts or ideas and to understand how they were essential parts of the intellectual foundations of things that became much larger, I am reminded of Muir's observation, which I paraphrase, that one begins by looking at a flower in the cranny of a rock only to discover that it is hitched to the universe. Or, as Tennyson described his flower in a crannied wall: "if I could understand What you are, root and all, and all in all, I should know what God and man is." Laurent's great talent, in my view, was finding these little flowers, whether in belief systems or political systems or crannied deep in cultures, then attaching them to our understanding in large and provocative ways.

In its tendentious obituary of Laurent, the Washington Post remarked snidely that he "was known as a fearless and original thinker by those who shared his world view." But as the Post often does, it bought the stereotype and missed the story. To my knowledge, Laurent was known as a fearless and original thinker by everyone who knew him, especially by those who disagreed with him. Nothing in Laurent's intellectual makeup imprisoned him within narrow or conventional intellectual or ideological boundaries. Laurent's world view was that he loved truth and hated hypocrisy. He did have strong views on many subjects, and where the evidence was strong he took his stands without equivocation. But the Laurent that many of us knew was highly nuanced in his thinking; he listened carefully to counter-arguments; and he changed his mind constantly. Laurent would have loved the irony that in characterizing him as it did, the Post caricatured itself.

Others will speak of Laurent's contributions to knowledge and of his scholarship. I would like to share some personal memories.

Laurent loved so many things. He loved good food and wine. Some of our fondest memories of Laurent invariably include several good bottles of something red and some ripe cheese. He loved parties and threw many. He loved to cook, and it was a rare treat to share the kitchen with him. In this as in some many other things, Laurent was impeccably French. He also drove like a Frenchman, looking neither to the right nor the left while blasting like a rocket through heavy traffic.

Laurent was a very funny man. He loved jokes of all kinds, especially double entendre or slightly, even decidedly off-color. He was a punster of Olympic caliber. Laurent twinkled. He could switch from being deadly serious to dead funny in an instant, pulling everyone around him into his mirth. For years we swapped jokes by email. I suspect that ten years from now my warmest memories of Laurent will be him doubled over in quiet laughter, a mischievous grin on his face. This, especially, I shall miss.

This man, more than anyone I have known, really was a force of nature. The extraordinary power of his brain, his unbounded and unbridled energy, his enormous capacity to learn, to imagine, to write, to participate fully in the debate, were balanced by his generous disposition and loving nature, his infectious humor and his good fellowship. Several years ago, I discovered that Laurent loved the early poems of Rilke, especially my particular favorite, his beautiful *Herbsttag*, or *Autumn Day*:

Lord: It's time. The summer was too much.
Spread your shadow across the sundial,
And in the fields, let loose the wind.

Laurent, this force of nature, is now a wind let loose across the fields, and everything it touches will be the better for it.

Barbara and Michael Ledeen

He left too soon. He was too young, too full of energy, too creative, too full of imagination and good humor. Though we knew how sick he was and how hard he fought, we are still stunned that he is gone. We mourn him today both to pay him the tribute he so richly deserves and to convince ourselves that he is gone. Paying him tribute is easy. Adjusting to his death is not.

With the passage of time, we and others will gradually recognize the magnitude and rigor of his intellect, the elegance with which he expressed himself—in so many languages! He said many hard things, things most people are unwilling to hear. He knew he would pay a price for this, although certainly not the preposterous one he had to pay. All those who have endured the sort of vilification directed at him for his brave and elegant book on Saudi Arabia know about that, but few have responded with the charm and good humor that Laurent demonstrated: all in all, perhaps a useful exercise, he said, dryly.

This was the most celebrated example of Laurent's career as agent provocateur, but there are many. In an early work, a decade ago, on 21st century war, he asked his readers to suspend judgment until they had finished reading the whole work: "We will indeed have to wage war," he said, "it behooves us at the least to think about it and prepare for it."

And that was written at a time when most people, voicing the conventional wisdom, were saying that henceforth, conflict would be political and economic, but certainly not military. Laurent knew better, and encouraged the nations of the West to participate in the strategic and technological "revolution in military affairs," and he was one of the first to explore its significance.

His last published work, from Cambridge University Press, was "The Mind of Jihad," which typically dove deep into the nightmare visions of the fanatics who threaten our civilization, and reached broadly to show their links to the other messianic movements that we fought in the last century. Who knew that so many of the radical Islamic leaders had studied at the feet of leading Communist and Fascist killers? Laurent did, and documented it, and explained it. Our current enemies are very much like our earlier ones.

At the same time, Laurent insisted on the integrity of culture, and wrote a wonderful little book, "The Spirit of Nations," that effectively demolished the notion that globalization would bring an end to the nation state by blending everyone and everything into a single techno-economic goo. He hated that sort of nonsense; he adored diving into different cultures in order to see what the world looked like to them. Laurent understood that each culture, above all the old ones, would absorb elements of globalization in different ways. He warned that China, for example, had never assimilated foreign ideas very well, that Russia had sometimes done it, but always in an imperfect way that left the situation very unstable, and that, while India could indeed embrace foreign ideas, the basic rhythms of Indian life and death would make fundamental change very difficult.

Not for Laurent the easy way out of happy thoughts about multiculturalism. He would have nothing but rightful contempt for the fashionable notion that all men are fundamentally the same, and fundamentally good.

For all this, we are indebted to him. And future scholars and students, and if we are lucky, future policy makers, will be grateful to him for years to come.

But there's more to be said of a personal nature. Laurent was fun. Fun to be with, fun to read, fun to debate. He had a terrific sense of humor, which was part of his remarkably playful nature. He loved language games and could pun in half a dozen languages. He studied games, although he wasn't an avid game player, and he adored science fiction, because both games and science fiction stretch the mind, exercise some of its underdeveloped muscles, and compel us to look at ourselves and our world in entirely new and often very amusing ways.

In this, as in many other ways, he takes after Machiavelli, who was an avid card player, and never limited himself to writing dry works of non-fiction, but wrote poems and plays, and some of the most ribald letters of the period. No one has yet read Laurent's letters, but no doubt they are also great fun.

He was fun to the end. In Michael's last conversation, Laurent poked fun at himself, having become an ongoing medical experiment, and he was able to laugh at the absurdity of his condition. There is no doubt that his ability to fight his affliction was greatly strengthened by his laughter and by his fierce love of his family. In my last conversation with Laurent, he spoke at length about his pride in how Morgane is growing up to be a wonderful young woman, how Johanna has added energy and hope to his daily life, and how Claudia deserves the respect of kings for her limitless patience and care.

In conclusion, Michael wrote, "I have no doubt that he is laughing now, with limitless time to explore the endless mysteries and comedies that occupied his short years here with us.

Won't it be fine to hear what he's learned?"

Herb London

I'm Herb London, the President of Hudson Institute. A southern minister, about to deliver a sermon, said to those assembled in his church, "the end of days is coming. And with it there will be crying and wailing and the gnashing of teeth." He repeats it yet again in typical fire and brimstone fashion. Finally, a young man sitting at the front of the church said to the minister, "Minister, I don't have any teeth." The minister replied, "At the end of days, teeth will be provided."

Teeth did not have to be provided for Laurent. I knew about Laurent long before we met. I read the piece that he wrote about Saudi Arabia, and understood the extraordinarily courageous stance he took at RAND. I recognized the undeviating positions that he had adopted. And I called him up and said, "I would love to meet you." We met at a New York café; I told him at the time I only had about an hour for lunch. But 3 hours later we were still chatting about Truffaut films, Andre Gide, the New York ballet company, and the NBA. Laurent knew something about everything. He was quite remarkable.

Soon after, I asked him to join me, with a little group I met with regularly in New York, the New York Discussion Group. It is made up of jaded journalists, writers, typical New York types. We sat around lunch and listened to Laurent engage in a discussion of international affairs. At the end of it, this jaded group stood up as one and applauded. It never happened before. So taken was I that immediately after this meeting I called my friend and colleague, Max Singer, and I said, "Max, tell me about this fellow Laurent Murawiec." He said, "Herb, the wisest decision you will ever make at Hudson Institute is to hire Laurent Murawiec as a Senior Fellow." That decision was made 5 minutes after that telephone call, and indeed it was among the wisest decisions I ever made. Thank you.

Robert Lieber

Laurent was unique.

I've lived in Paris where predictability, "stultifying conformity" (to use Ken Weinstein's phrase of earlier this afternoon), along with certain stylistic tropes are the hallmark of the public intellectual, and can mask considerable shallowness as well.

Laurent, who made his mark there, was deeply and broadly learned, fearless in confronting the conventional wisdom, not only in Paris, but also here in Washington, where such virtues are equally rare and equally valuable.

This was evident in many ways, most recently in his terrific book, *The Mind of Jihad*, which I first came to know when I read it in manuscript for Cambridge University Press.

It was a highly original and important book. Laurent drew on a remarkable range of historical, religious, ideological and ideational sources. And the breadth and insight of his treatment deserve comparison with the work of Bernard Lewis, the foremost living expert on the Arab-Muslim world. In the work, Laurent he broke new ground in shaping our understanding of the contemporary jihad movement and in particular what he called, "the etiology of such a love of death, a worship of blood, a cult of violence."

The work is unflinching in its depiction of this lethal cult and the roots of its messianic millenarianism. Laurent described the novelty of the contemporary jihadis in his memorable observation that, "This transgression of the norms of civilized society – Muslim included – is grounded in and justified by a theology of death."

Laurent was not shy of saying what he thought was necessary and desirable, even when it proved politically incorrect. The work provided an absorbing analysis of how violent jihadism had emerged as an extraordinary synthesis from elements adopted by the ideologists of radical Islamism. He identified the "Islamic revolution" which defied Muslim doctrine and at the same time absorbed the Leninist legacy as well as elements from imperial Germany and fascism in order to originally undercut the British Empire, and involved a cynical embrace of these contrary, but coordinated elements. It is striking how 20th Century leading Islamists, including figures such as Sayid Qutb, Ayatollah Khomeini, and others, especially absorbed and embodied those thoughts.

Laurent persuasively argued that the structure of this ideology mirrors that of the millenarian insurrections that wreaked havoc and shed torrents of blood in Europe from 1100 to 1550. As he noted, those movements arose under conditions of intense social dislocation caused by rapid change and which triggered individual and societal disorientation. An analogy with the present day, perhaps, where globalization and modernization have left turmoil in the contemporary Arab/Muslim World.

The other element of Laurent's work in that book which stands out is that it is a seminal contribution to understanding and an antidote to treatments that emphasize radical Jihadism as primarily a response to U.S. foreign policy, "insensitivity, or "occupation".

In all, this was a fine work, a profound and important book by a gifted thinker, a fine man, and a close friend.

We will miss him and we will remember him.

Eleana Gordon

Many before me today, and earlier at Laurent's funeral, have spoken so beautifully and eloquently of Laurent as a friend, and an intellectual. They have described how he enriched their understanding of the issues he examined – whether it was the ideological and military threats of our age, or the finer points of French cuisine.

Laurent did stand out as a generous friend. However, what I wish to share today as we remember Laurent is the person I knew as a husband to Claudia, and a father to Morgane and Yohanna.

One of my earliest memories of Laurent, when I met him eight years ago, was when he introduced me to Claudia. We were at a policy event, here in Washington D.C. We had barely exchanged a few words when he took me by the arm, and rushed me across the room to a tall, lovely woman. He was bursting with excitement as he introduced me to his “fiancée, Claudia.” She and I went on to become close friends. As I recall that moment, Laurent's arm around Claudia's shoulder, the image that comes to me is of his face, his entire body, simply beaming with joy.

And indeed, always when I saw Laurent surrounded by Claudia, who he loved so deeply, and his two daughters, who he adored, he was beaming.

I had the privilege of speaking at Claudia and Laurent's wedding. I remarked at the time that what seemed to bind their relationship was the “tremendous delight they find in one another, and in the daily pleasures of life.” And that seems to have remained true for all the time they spent as a family, and with the people they loved.

If you have ever visited Claudia and Laurent in their home full of books, art, and objects collected from their travels, you would see in their bright orange and blue kitchen an entire wall covered with snapshots of their times together - rows and rows of smiling pictures of hikes at Great Falls, walks to see the Cherry Blossoms, boat rides on the Seine, pushing stroller in Cologne, playing with cousins, and more than anything, hugs, and hugs and more hugs. Like in the pictures you see in the back of your memorial books.

On another wall, there is a large map of the world with pins marking each city that one of them had visited; and on the pantry door, postcards from all those places. Laurent thus lived surrounded with daily, visual reminders of the times and places he had shared with his girls. Laurent knew, always, that every moment with them was precious.

It seemed that Laurent was living exactly the life he wanted, and relishing every second.

I know from him, and from people who were close to him long before I met him, that this was not always the case; the journey to this time in his life was turbulent and at times quite painful, for him and for those around him. Perhaps it is because of those past experiences that when Laurent eventually placed his professional anchor here among his

colleagues in DC, especially at the Hudson Institute where his flourished, and his personal anchor in his life with Claudia, Laurent felt that he had arrived where he wanted to be and was determined to lived his life as fully as possible. There is no sense, in the years that I knew Laurent, of missed opportunities, or regrets over time wasted on unnecessary squabbles or activities he disliked. Combative as he was as an intellectual, as a husband to Claudia Laurent was easy going and wholly accepting.

In remembering someone we cared for and admired, we run the risk of putting too shiny a gloss on him. So with Claudia and Lana's permission, I will address my last comment to his daughters, who I imagine will one day read the wonderful tributes that have been made to their father. Morgane and Yohanna, do not be intimidated by your father's achievements. He was far from perfect, an all-too-human and complex person. Do not be afraid to learn about his flaws and his mistakes.

But one thing about him that you need never doubt is the depth of his love for you. The Laurent that I knew had no agenda as a father other than to enjoy every moment he had with you, share the best that life has to offer with you, and be your rock of love and support. And that is something you can carry with you always.

Michael James

My comments today come from a somewhat different perspective. Most have spoken of Laurent's prodigious intellectual and professional accomplishments, or of his role as a respected colleague or beloved friend. I too could express sentiments such as these, though it is doubtful that I could add much to what has been said thus far. But Claudia asked that I convey a different message, reflecting a different facet of Laurent; she asked that I communicate in some small way the profound impact that Laurent had on her, personally and emotionally.

Although I certainly cannot pretend to know the power of the love they shared, or the depth of the loss that she and Yohanna today suffer, I do have a good sense of how greatly he changed her life. For while most of you have come to know Claudia as the wife of Laurent, and the mother of their daughter, I have known her longer, from the days when she quite adamantly professed her desire never to marry, let alone have a child. As you can see, she certainly has changed her tune. And the reason, of course, was the man that she married, and with whom she had this beautiful child, Laurent Murawiec.

One wonders at the gravitational pull he exerted on her. Truly terrible, I suppose, but in the original, positive sense of the word, as formidable. For as anyone who has seen Claudia and Laurent together would know, there existed between them a strong sense of mutual respect and admiration. She changed her life for him, because he changed her life. As it happens, Claudia visited me the day after she met Laurent at a conference in DC. As we drove together towards my home in central Pennsylvania, she could not contain her desire to tell me of this man she met, and about whom she could not stop thinking: his intelligence; his warmth; his shyness. From that day on, Claudia began changing her life, because he changed her, by loving her so thoroughly, so sincerely, so unconditionally. As can attest anyone who has ever had an argument with Laurent – and I've had a few – he certainly could be forceful. But with Claudia, things were not forced. He pulled her in with a gentle and loving embrace. She changed willingly, because she saw what he could give her, things she did not realize that she lacked.

Claudia, today, I cannot console your loss, for in truth I cannot fathom it. But nor can I measure the blessing that you had. You knew a love so deep, and so wide. Cherish that, as you go forward. And do go forward. Your child needs you to do that. And your husband would have wanted you to.

John O'Sullivan

My name is John O'Sullivan. I am the Executive Editor of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague, and a former Senior Fellow at Hudson.

It's about 15 years since I first met Laurent. I find myself going to a French restaurant in New York city to meet someone who I was told was a French strategist, and I can't say I knew more than that and the idea of having dinner with a French strategist wasn't overwhelming to me. And I didn't then know the risk I was taking in inviting Laurent to a French restaurant and subjecting it to his criticisms. But I was accompanied on this occasion by Dorothy McCarthy, my colleague at National Review, with whom I was then attempting to organize a conference, which then became the Congress of Prague. And it was to discuss that that Laurent and I were getting together.

Well, as soon as we sat down and ordered a glass of champagne, I realize that we were going to have an extremely entertaining evening. He absolutely spun a series of jokes, amusing remarks, while at the same time what we were discussing was serious and I gained an enormous amount of information and he gave me wonderful advice. And as we left the restaurant that night—and I have to tell you, we closed the place, and I suspect that was quite a common event with Laurent—as we walked away, Dorothy McCarthy said to me, “it's a bit like getting a brilliant lecture on geopolitics from Maurice Chevalier.”

For the next few years I met Laurent from time to time as we ran into each other at conferences and events. For me, his appearance was always a sign that things were going to be enjoyable-- a guarantee that although I was going to be learning something, I would remember it not as a process of learning but as one of swapping jokes and having a good time. And we saw each other from time to time on these sorts of occasions. But not regularly, and not often enough—I was always glad to see him.

Four years ago I arrived here at Hudson, and I was unpacking my books in the room when at the doorway there suddenly appeared Laurent, who said, “I am a fellow here too, old boy, why don't we go have something to eat?” So we went off and soon I was having the French restaurant experience repeated—enjoying a good meal, laughing a great deal, and generally finding myself in company that was both convivial but at the same time, in some curious way, uplifting.

Laurent skated brilliantly over a number of topics. But he never skated on thin ice. He knew the topics he was talking about—he was moving a topic that he had mastered some years ago to one that he was in the process of mastering at the time. His was a restless mind, as well as a brilliant one. But it was not a mind that we used to call, when I was an undergraduate, a ‘butterfly’ mind. It was a mind that really drew sustenance from the topics which he learnt about.

I had not heard about, until an earlier speaker today, I had not seen that remark from the Washington Post. It is a terribly cheap remark, but I have to tell you, that I think Laurent

would have been less wounded by the insult than he would have been contemptuous at the tired construction of the joke. Because his own wit—many of you have used the term impish, and I think there was a kind of quicksilver quality to Laurent's personality, which was thrilling to a friend and to a conversationalist. It was something like that that was the essence of the man

I have been living away from America for two years. When I have been here I generally ran into Laurent, and I knew he was ill. But I was shocked when, the other day, I heard the news of his death. And when I did I felt that feeling that I am sure we have all felt on this occasion and may have felt on other occasions—how I wish that I had tried to see more of him when he was alive. How foolish I was not to take greater advantage. Well, that's true, but the fact is when I did see him I had a wonderful time.

His books are only a tenth of the achievement he leaves behind. The stories that you can all tell here, some of the things that we have heard from this platform, some of the love and amusement and charm that he gave us while he was alive, as long as people who remember him are around, he will be living, and he will be entertaining us long after we have ceased to entertain ourselves. Thank you.