

“A personal perspective of the changing nuclear threat”
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Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev ushered in the end of the Cold War with a summit meeting at Reykjavik in October 1986. The political changes unleashed altered the nuclear threat from one that could end civilization as we know it to one of securing “loose nukes” in chaotic Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union. Whereas during the Cold War nuclear deterrence brought an uneasy global peace, the dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in a resurgence of regional and ethnic conflicts, troubling nuclear proliferation developments, and the emergence of international megaterrorism. The gravity of these developments was demonstrated on 9/11. Now, we face the most difficult challenge of how to avoid a nuclear 9/11, which will not only cause horrific destruction, but will also threaten international order and our way of life. As director of the Laboratory from 1986 to 1997, Dr. Hecker was an active participant as these world events unfolded. He’ll give his personal perspective on these changes and the challenges that lie ahead.