

Department of Physics Colloquium

Speaker: Dr. Frank von Hippel

Senior Research Physicist, Professor of Public and International Affairs (Emeritus) and
Co-founder
Program on Science and Global Security, Princeton University

“The continuing risk of nuclear war and how physicists, acting as citizen-scientists, can help reduce it”

Open to the public, free of charge

Monday, March 18, 2024 - 4 p.m. – 1110 Rood Hall

Refreshments: 3:30-3:50 p.m., Bradley Commons, 2202 Everett Tower

Abstract: With the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the public, including most physicists, and Congress, assumed, the danger of a nuclear war had ended as well. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. Indeed, the danger of accidental nuclear war may be increasing. US and Russian strategic missiles remain in a launch-on-warning posture in an era when hackers have penetrated some of our supposedly most secure computer systems and China appears to be moving toward a similar posture. Both Russia and the United States have committed to hugely costly programs to replace their nuclear weapons with new systems designed to maintain that status quo for the remainder of the century. Meanwhile, an offense-defense nuclear arms race is developing between the US and China, which is building up the number of its nuclear weapons that can reach the US as the US increases the number of its ballistic missile interceptors – nominally to defend against North Korea. In the past, independent physicists have played leading roles in informing Congress and the world about the dangers and offering ideas for how to reduce them – both unilaterally and through agreements with our adversaries. The American Physical Society has supported the Physicists Coalition for Nuclear Threat Reduction during its first two years to help renew the engagement of physicists and other physical scientists and engineers with Congress and the public on nuclear-weapons issues. Following the colloquium, there will be a discussion of opportunities to contribute to this effort.

Parking: Metered parking is available in Parking Structure #2, near Miller Auditorium.

More information: (269) 387-4941 [Department of Physics email](#) [Campus map](#)

