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Living with the Bomb during the Cold War: Or, How I Learned to Start Worrying and Hate the Bomb.

More than any other single factor, the nuclear arms race shaped nearly every facet of our lives during the Cold War, with consequences that persist today, even if we no longer talk about them with the intensity that once characterized public debate about nuclear weapons. International relations, domestic politics, scientific research, higher education, popular culture, and the psychology of everyday life were all profoundly affected by the bomb.

From the Berlin blockade to the Cuban missile crisis, from Potsdam to Pugwash, from Trinity and Joe I to the Limited Test Ban Treaty, from Joe McCarthy and the execution of the Rosenbergs to SANE and the Berrigan brothers, from “The Day the Earth Stood Still” to “Dr. Strangelove, and along the way” Sputnik, the National Defense Education Act, and “duck and cover” bomb drills. Combining anecdote and history, this talk aims to remind us how our world has been changed by the bomb and to invite renewed debate about the atomic legacy.