

The Doomsday Clock



In its most recent reset in 2020, the hands moved from two minutes to midnight to 100 seconds to midnight. The hands were set farthest from midnight in 1991 when the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. The treaty called for deep cuts to the two countries' strategic nuclear weapons arsenals, prompting the Bulletin to set the clock hand to 17 minutes to midnight.

In 1947, the greatest danger to humanity came from nuclear weapons, in particular from the prospect that the United States and the Soviet Union were headed for a nuclear arms race. In 2007 hand-setting deliberations considered catastrophic disruptions from climate change for the first time.

The Clock's hands are set by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists Science and Security Board - 18 experts, with diverse backgrounds ranging from policy and diplomacy to military history and nuclear science. The Board meets twice a year to discuss events, policies, and trends. They consult widely with their colleagues across a range of disciplines and also seek the views of the Bulletin's Board of Sponsors, which includes multiple Nobel laureates. Each year, the Clock's position is announced in late January.

