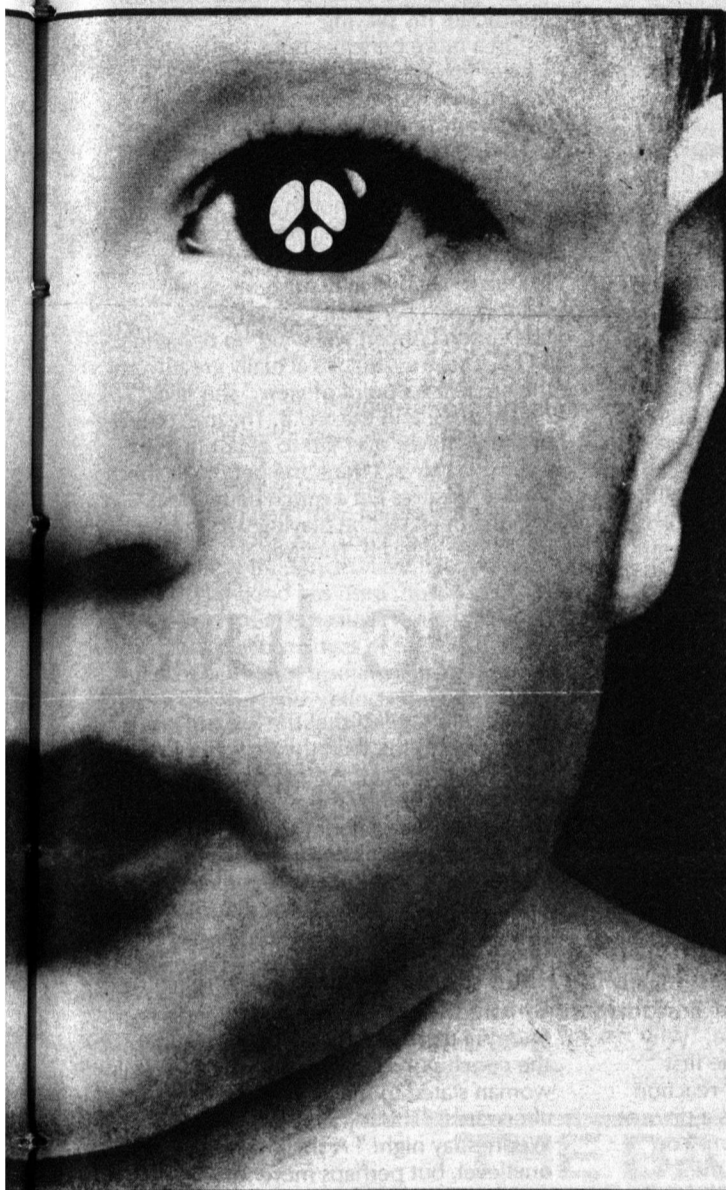


# entrusted

## US



"windows of vulnerability", this quest for superiority has sustained the arms race to the present, with the Soviet Union eventually catching up to any U.S. innovation.

A third set of myths surrounds the assumption that politicians currently direct the military and scientific establishments. Instead, Malcolmson refers to "technological creep", the phenomenon that new developments in weapons labs determine military strategies and then acquire political justifications.

"In short, we inhabit a world in which the military-technological tail is commonly wagging the political dog," he writes.

Despite this, Malcolmson wrote the book as an exercise in hope, based on the premise we can choose a world that doesn't look like Hiroshima if we understand our nuclear past.

As for the future, he advocates greater political control over weapons labs through simple measures such as test bans or the restriction of facilities producing enriched uranium or plutonium.

Malcolmson also argues that a combined civilian-military alliance against nuclear weapons will be more effective than a solely civilian peace movement — some hope for this can already be seen in the appearance of such groups as generals or veterans for nuclear disarmament.

Another proposed solution is joint U.S.-Soviet staffing of communication centers to minimize misperceptions in times of crisis, and reduce the likelihood of accidental nuclear war.

What makes *Nuclear Fallacies* worth reading is the wealth of material that gives 40 years of historical continuity to our current nuclear dilemma.

But an overabundance of quotes in proportion to original material, complex sentences, and long paragraphs combine to give a dry, academic quality, which is ultimately less accessible than other works on the subject.

The book's biggest difficulty, however, is its failure to really explore the question implied by the title, namely the mechanisms by which the public has been misguided in its understanding of American

**...even the pure theoretical version of deterrence, which advocates a retaliatory strike only, is tragically flawed.**

nuclear strategy and foreign policy.

There is little examination of how the academic world and the media have supported the idea that all is well, even when the death of the planet is only 30 minutes away, according to the Doomsday Clock.

Nor is there any exploration of the idea the body politic itself may be ill, that public involvement in politics in general may be inadequate.

Finally, with the phrase "how we have been misguided," Malcolmson avoids stating that many of us are doing a good job of misleading ourselves — by denying awareness of the global deadline, by pursuing life in the fast lane, by distancing ourselves from political activity, we refuse responsibility for our lives and the future of the planet entrusted to us.

communications, and resisting demands for urgent military action.

A second theme is the dynamic of the arms race. Here, Malcolmson says the U.S. actively chose ongoing competition soon after 1945 when it first entertained the fallacy of a continued technological and numerical superiority over the Soviet Union.

Together with the fear of falling behind expressed the illusory "missile gaps" or

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