sioners (a third phoned in his comments) and two former general counsels for the FDA. There was unanimous agreement among these former public servants that the major problems besetting the FDA have little or nothing to do with drug legislation and cannot be corrected by statute.

Even Kennedy's own staff overwhelmingly indicated, at a 23 May Senate hearing on S. 2755 held at FDA's Parklawn Building, that the bill will actually slow down drug approval, despite the fact that the correction of delays is a prime goal of the legislation. Indeed, most knowledgeable drug experts predict that the unbelievably complex legal instrument proposed in March would only aggravate most of the problems I enumerated.

No one wishes more fervently than I for the rapid obsolescence of my critique. I see no hope for this, however, unless current FDA leadership is willing to learn from the lessons acquired so painfully by previous top FDA officials. The public will not be well served by mere rhetoric, no matter how clever. The squid's inky cloud is splendid for purposes of obfuscation, but who wants to more forever backward?

LOUIS LASAGNA
School of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York 14642

References

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2. ———, "Turtles and other chronic hazards," paper presented before the Consumer Federation of America, Washington, D.C., 19 January 1978.

Smallpox Eradication

In the article "Biological warfare fears may impede last goal of smallpox eradicators" by Nicholas Wade (News and Comment, 28 July, p. 329), the implication that the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research–U.S. Army Institute of Infectious Diseases is retaining variola viruses for other than archival purposes is both unfortunate and a misrepresentation of the facts. It is neither my personal view nor that of the Center for Disease Control that U.S. military researchers are engaged in offensive biological warfare activities.

The Center for Disease Control is presently completing an initial and voluntary national control effort to further limit the number of facilities retaining or working with variola viruses. More stringent controls will be necessary when global eradication is certified as being achieved. Until then, the two facilities currently retaining variola viruses for archival purposes will continue to do so.

JOHN H. RICHARDSON
Office of Biosafety, Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia 30333

Pluto's Neighbor

The skepticism attributed to me in Richard A. Kerr's article (Research News, 11 Aug., p. 516) about the apparent discovery of a satellite of the semimajor planet Pluto correctly reflects the opinion that I held at the time of my conversation with him, but it must be remembered that this was only shortly after the U.S. Naval Observatory (USNO) press conference, and I had very little information. Over the course of several years, however, the Outer Planet Satellite Project, of which I am director, has accumulated a small number of observations of Pluto. Frankly, we were not interested in Pluto, and the observations were taken primarily because they represented very little additional effort, and could eventually be useful to someone, somewhere, sometime. One of the splendid advantages of the photographic plate is its capacity for storing enormous amounts of information for essentially indefinite periods of time, an advantage that has been greatly highlighted by the story surrounding the discovery of minor planet Chiron. Since talking with Kerr, I have examined the few Pluto plates that we have, but most are of inadequate quality to detect such a small deformation of the image as is required by Harrington's proposed orbit of the double system. Three of those plates, however, did seem to be of sufficient quality to merit further examination, one from December 1976 and two from May 1977, all taken by P. J. Shelus. According to Harrington's predictions, two of those plates should show stellar-like images, and the other should show an elongation in the declination direction. This is exactly what we found. This apparent support for the USNO finding causes me to withdraw my name from the ranks of the unconvinced. I retain some reservations about the semantic situation, but not about the physical reality of the second body.

J. DERRAL MULHOLLAND
Department of Astronomy, University of Texas, Austin 78712