some questions: Is it possible to identify the characteristics and the properties for a weapon to be considered clearly of defensive nature as opposite to offensive? Second: Is it true that an advanced defense system produces destabilizing effects? And if so, why and how? Third: Why not study new ways out of the present equilibrium of terror?

We propose to establish a joint USA-USSR and European research group . . . in order to study in collaboration the above mentioned two topics, i.e.: 1) The simulation and the evaluation of the global consequences of a USA-USSR nuclear confrontation. 2) The way out of the present balance of terror; and, in a specific way, if it is possible to conceive a new type of defense system against nuclear destruction.

The joint research group is composed of scientists from US, USSR, Europe (and possibly other countries) chosen by the three parties.

—R. JEFFREY SMITH

Biological Backwaters?

I suggest that you consider publishing a "Biological Backwaters" issue. This is intended to complement your recent "Biological Frontiers" issue (18 Nov.), which contained no articles pertaining to ecology, ethology, population genetics, plant or animal taxonomy, evolutionary biology, whole-plant or whole-animal anatomy, physiology or morphology, the biology of any major plant or animal group, and a variety of other disciplines. Those of us who work in what appear to be the diverticula of a great science would appreciate an opportunity to discover what other backward spirits are up to.

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Basic Research and the Public

Recently, two very different groups (*1*) were independently given the same message: those involved in the research enterprise must make their results known to the public-at-large. If the public is not convinced of the usefulness of basic scientific research, there will be a further, potentially disastrous, drop in funding for such activities.

Many scientific societies look askance at persons who are consistently in the public eye, whose lists of publications include numerous books and articles for popular consumption. There is, however, a small step that those of us in graduate education might consider. We could require of each of our doctoral candidates that, before receiving a degree, a lecture emphasizing the significance of their particular piece of research to the development of the field as a whole be presented to a general audience and that a written exposition be made available for publication in an appropriate popular outlet. If, at an early stage, we could foster in this manner a feeling among our graduates of their indebtedness to the general public for directly or indirectly supporting their reknow the results, it might become traditional for them to proceed in such a way throughout a career.

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Notes

1. The Council for Advancement and Support of Education promoted a conference on the theme of communicating university research. Attendees included science writers, public information specialists and directors, and staff writers. Two days after this Washington, D.C., meeting, the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States convened a workshop in Toronto entitled "Graduate education: Courses and programs for practicing professionals." Here the audience consisted mainly of graduate deans.

Dissolution of Kroc Foundation

Gina Kolata, in her article of 11 November (News and Comment, p. 596), writes about the dissolution of the Kroc Foundation. In particular, the statement that the foundation assets will be assigned "to a new foundation to support research on alcoholism and drug abuse" has prompted numerous inquiries.

The new foundation has a very broad charter, but the only activity to which it is now committed is Operation Cork, the alcoholism education program which Joan Kroc founded in 1976. No decision has been made as to whether any kind of research will be funded.

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Erratum: In the report "Malaria parasites adopt host cell superoxide dismutase" by A. S. Fairchild *et al.* (19 Aug., p. 764), the caption for figure 2 on page 765 was incorrect and should read as follows: "Comparison of host and parasite SOD's (*9*) by (A) polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (*8*) and (B) isoelectric focusing (*7*). Gels were stained for SOD activity (*10*), and bovine erythrocyte SOD (Sigma, type 1) was used as a reference [*p*I = 4.95 (*13*)]. Lane 1, rat-derived *P. berghei* SOD; lane 2, rat erythrocyte SOD (*p*I = 5.1); lane 3, mouse-derived *P. berghei* SOD; lane 4, mouse erythrocyte SOD (*p*I = 5.7); lane 5, bovine erythrocyte SOD." The *p*I's of mouse and rat erythrocyte SOD's cited in the text should also be corrected to the values given above.