Letters

Retraction of Data

We write this letter to inform the *Science* readership about information pertinent to a Research Article entitled "Identification of a T helper cell–derived lymphokine that activates resting T lymphocytes" by Claudio Milanese, Neil E. Richardson, and Ellis L. Reinherz which appeared in the 7 March 1986 issue of *Science* (**231**, 1118). In our view, those biological data are not reproducible and are incorrect, and we wish, therefore, to retract the data and the conclusions based on them. To our knowledge, there is no 12-kilodalton lymphokine with the functional attributes described in that publication. A second paper on this lymphokine ("A lymphokine that activates the cytolytic program of both cytotoxic T lymphocyte and natural killer clones" by C. Milanese, R. F. Siliciano, R. E. Schmidt, J. Ritz, N. E. Richardson, and E. L. Reinherz published in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine* [**163**, 1583 (1986)] is similarly being withdrawn. We extend our apologies to the scientific community and trust that certain misinformation presented in that article can be rectified by publication of this retraction letter.

CLAUDIO MILANESE*
NEIL E. RICHARDSON
ELLIS L. REINHERZ
Laboratory of Immunobiology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, 44 Binney Street, Boston, MA 02115
and *Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA 02115*

*Present address: Turin, Italy 10125

Ballistic Missile Defense: Cost of Space-Based Laser

Having demonstrated by careful calculations that the "Ballistic Defense System . . . would be unable to maintain its effectiveness at less cost than it would take to proliferate the ballistic missiles necessary to overcome it," George Field and David Spergel (Articles, 21 Mar., p. 1387) conclude that such a system, which is expected to cost hundreds of billions of dollars, will therefore not satisfy President Reagan's own requirement for an "effective strategic defense."

Should the objective of the President's policy be not, as is generally assumed, the maintenance of military balance between the Soviet Union and the United States, but rather the attainment of military superiority over an adversary—whose total economic potential (as measured, say, by its gross national product) is commonly recognized to be inferior to that of the United States—building up strategic defense capabilities costing more than the offensive weapons they will be able to destroy might up to a point still make sense.

As long as the armaments race is confined—as it has been up to now—to the acquisition by each side of the capability to inflict greater and greater damage on the other side, it can be expected to reach an upper limit when both powers, having accumulated enough offensive weapons to be capable of utterly destroying each other, will not dare to use them but, on the other hand, will also have no reason—at least no military reason—to continue the arms race. Since technological advances increase rapidly the "size of the bang" that can be produced for a buck, that limit will be—if it has not yet already been—reached, long before the economically weaker side finds itself unable to continue to transfer its economic resources from civilian to military uses.