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RIF - PR - 9/15/05

10 Jul 56

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DOD DIR 5200.10

Mr. Harlow H. Curtice
President, General Motors Corporation
General Motors Building
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Mr. Curtice:

In keeping with Western Development Division policy of informing the top management of each of our contractors concerning our over-all status, I am taking this opportunity to discuss with you the effort that the AC Spark Plug Division of General Motors Corporation is making in support of the ballistic missile program,

Last December AC Spark Plug was given full responsibility for the development of an all-inertial guidance system for the Air Force Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile Program. It is now necessary that we take action to provide for an operational capability with this missile at the earliest possible date. Therefore, we have decided to place the additional responsibility for production of this guidance system with the AC Spark Plug Division. No other guidance system is now planned for the initial operational capability of the IRBM. The entire IRBM program is of the greatest importance to our nation and is being carried out with the highest national priority. Accordingly, the General Motors Corporation shares a tremendous responsibility for the attainment of a successful operational capability.

We have noted shortcomings at AC Spark Plug which we feel result from an insufficient number of personnel experienced in the management of large scale research and development programs. Although this situation has been improving due to sincere effort on the part of the AC Spark Plug project personnel, we believe there is need for further action and for assistance from top General Motors management to AC Spark Plug.

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To help solve the problems my staff have noted, and others that may arise as the program grows, more direct participation by the General Motors corporate management in the AC Spark Plug program would be of great benefit. For example, I urge you to consider establishing a steering committee to regularly review the AC program and insure that this effort is receiving appropriate support from other divisions of the General Motors Corporation. Such a committee, headed by Dr. Lawrence E. Hafstad, Vice President, Research Staff, and composed of carefully selected personnel from the research center and the corporation at large, would very materially increase our confidence in the success of the program. A similar organizational arrangement at General Electric headed by Dr. W. R. G. Baker, Vice President and General Manager, Electronics Division, has been most helpful to our program there. Dr. Baker has given particular aid in obtaining the transfer of key personnel to our project when needed.

I would appreciate your careful consideration of my proposal. If you agree to the formation of a committee of this type, I would like the opportunity to discuss more of the details with Dr. Hafstad in the immediate future. I have known Dr. Hafstad for many years and have the highest regard for his capabilities. The Air Force would be very pleased with a formal organizational arrangement which would insure Dr. Hafstad's continued and active support of the AC Spark Plug program.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
General Schriever
10 July 1956

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