

139 EAST 57<sup>TH</sup> STREET BUILDING  
NEW YORK

TELEPHONE ELDORADO 5-6222  
CABLE ADDRESS "WEBSTOS"

OFFICE OF  
THE BUILDING

June 10th, 1957

The Honorable Secretary of Defense  
Mr. Charles E. Wilson  
Pentagon Building  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:-

I greatly admire your energetic and capable handling of the U.S. defense system. You've done a damn good job, just as you did with G.M. Only a rugged individualist, firm in his own convictions, could put up with some of the guff you've had to contend with from various vote-conscious parasites. You've done a lot for the U.S.,...for which we all can be thankful.

You have, amongst others, an equally astute subordinate who, like yourself, is a rugged individualist, has also contributed greatly to our national defense, and is as patriotically motivated as yourself. Can you imagine a ruling being enforced that would restrict G.M. to producing nothing but Jeeps, Ford only Ramblers, and Chrysler a few Hudsons, then banning those companies from further development and research? Sure it's possible, but what about the men who have devoted their best energies, initiative, and brains to perfecting super versions of their own products? Mr. Secretary, a man who has put years of technical training and perseverance into a specific project and sees success just around the corner; well,...he just doesn't chuck it into the wind. Granted that military discipline demands conformance. But, I know from my OCS days that some other prerequisites of a good officer are initiative, common sense, perseverance, and devotion to duty.

Yes, I'm writing because I'm selfish; I want the best defense system in the world. You head the Defense Dep't.. You'll do well to thoroughly evaluate Col. J.C.Nickerson's performance of duty. He's built much the same as you, has the same drive, and has done a remarkable job,... ..as demonstrated by the recently successful performance of the Thor's objectives.

Nickerson is the only one of many officers I trained under and associated with during 5 years army service whom I respected, admired, and well remember for his high calibre leadership. I served under his command for 6 months in the 45th F.A.Battalion as an enlisted man. I later was commissioned and served as an officer in numerous capacities until my honorable discharge at the end of World War II. During and since those years I've never met an officer who I felt did more credit to the Army. His own record confirms my judgement.

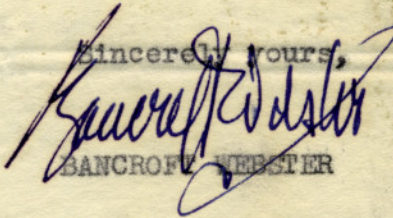
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Mr. Secretary, I ask your indulgence that Col. Nickerson gets the most careful consideration so that we may further reap the benefits of his valuable services and continue to strengthen the U.S. defenses. Lastly and man to man, I'd feel thoroughly disillusioned to see such a 1st class officer sacked.

Sincerely yours,



BANCROFT WEBSTER

BW/jc

Follow-up post card to Wilson under date of 6/21/57:

"Regarding my letter to you of June 10th wherein I referred to the Thor missile, same was meant to refer to the successful testing of the Jupiter missile. I'm sure you knew my intended reference."