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(54) **SEISMIC ATTENUATION SYSTEM FOR A NUCLEAR REACTOR**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
G21C 9/04 (2006.01)
G21C 5/10 (2006.01)
(Continued)

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CPC **G21C 9/04** (2013.01); **G21C 5/10** (2013.01); **G21C 13/024** (2013.01); **G21C 1/322** (2013.01); **Y02E 30/40** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC combination set(s) only.
See application file for complete search history.

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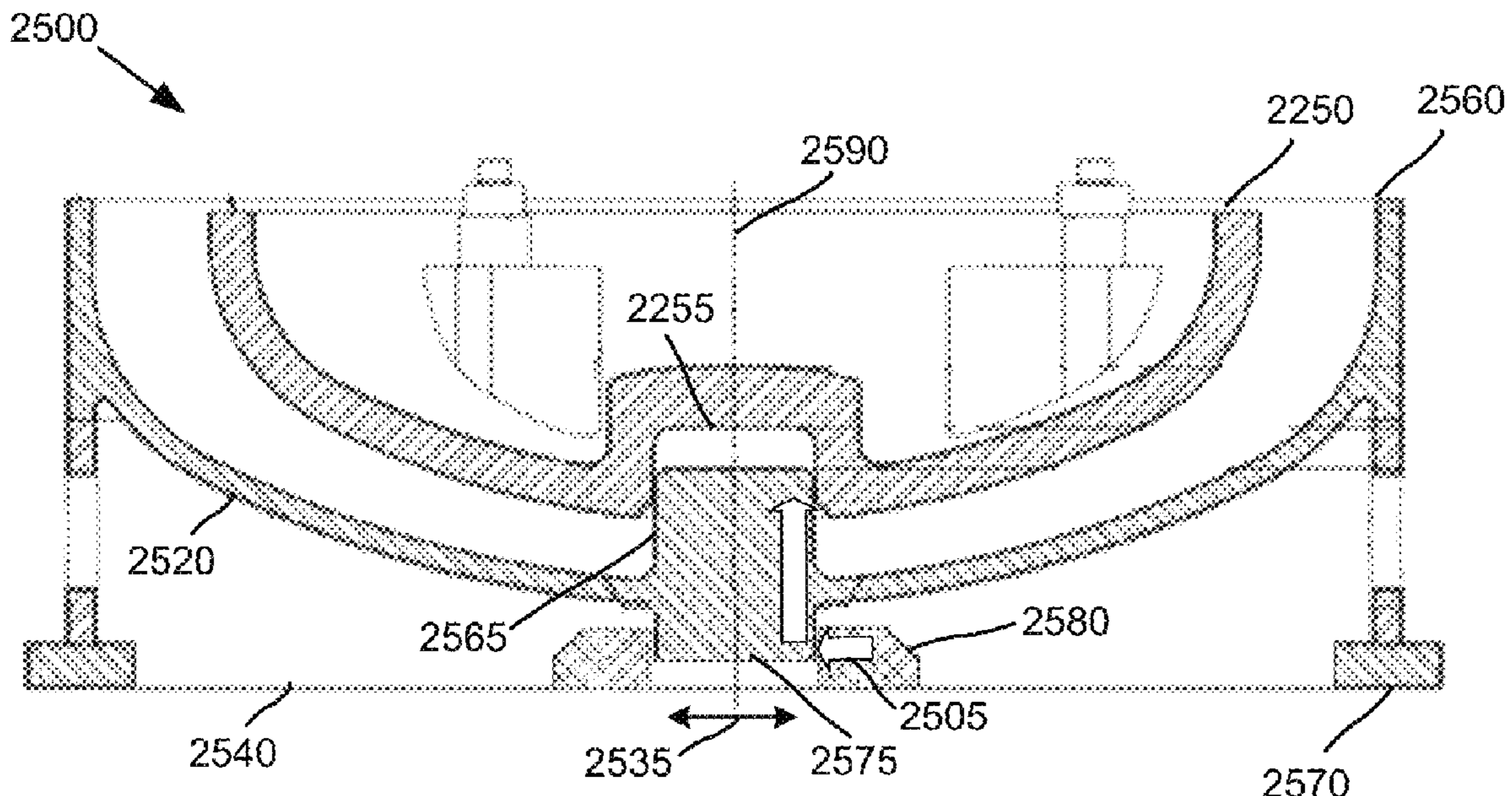
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system for attenuating seismic forces includes a reactor pressure vessel containing nuclear fuel and a containment vessel that houses the reactor pressure vessel. Both the reactor pressure vessel and the containment vessel include a bottom head. Additionally, the system includes a base support to contact a support surface on which the containment vessel is positioned in a substantially vertical orientation. An attenuation device is located between the bottom head of the reactor pressure vessel and the bottom head of the containment vessel. Seismic forces that travel from the base support to the reactor pressure vessel via the containment vessel are attenuated by the attenuation device in a direction that is substantially lateral to the vertical orientation of the containment vessel.

16 Claims, 19 Drawing Sheets



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G21C 13/024 (2006.01)

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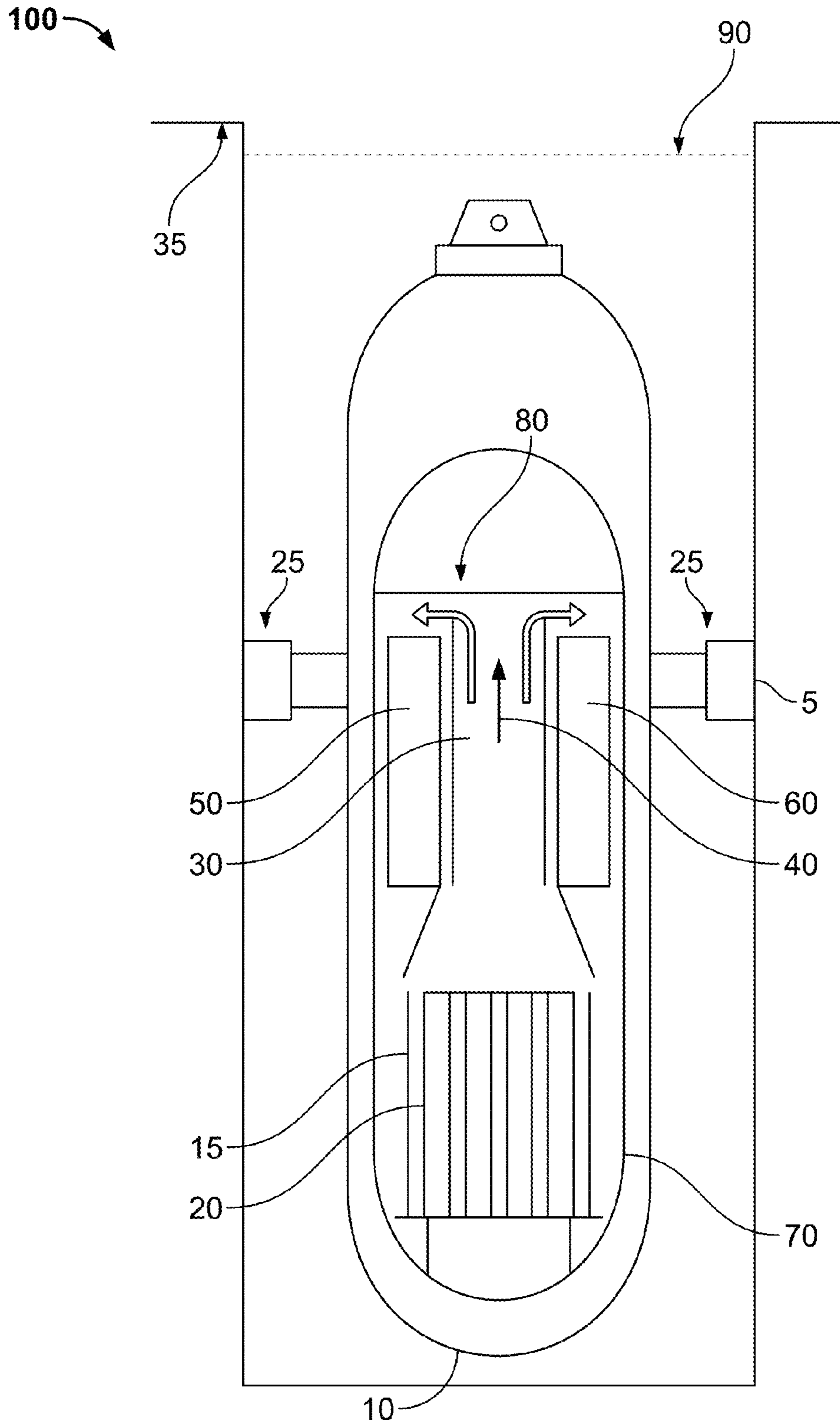


FIG. 1A

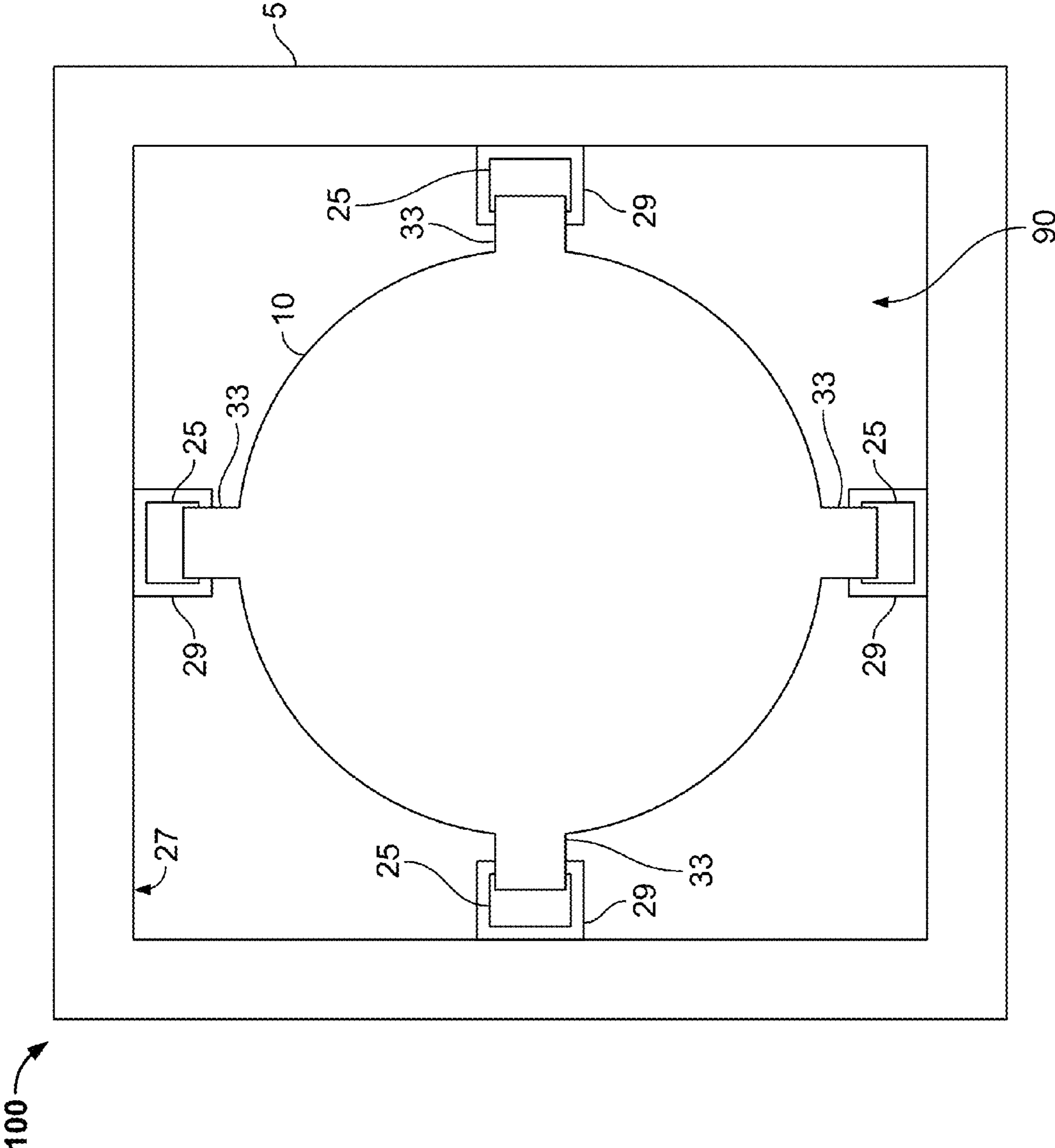


FIG. 1B

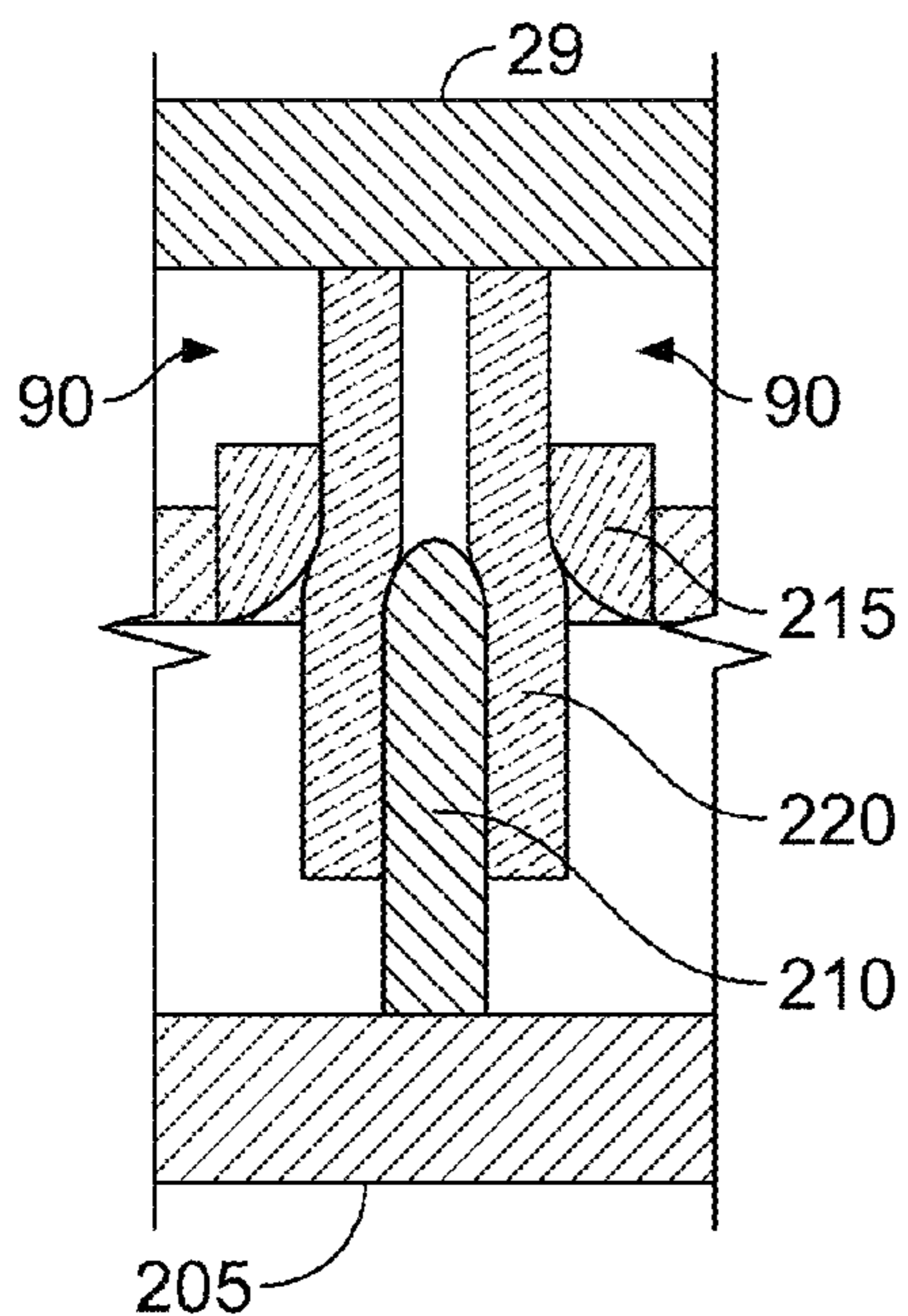


FIG. 3A

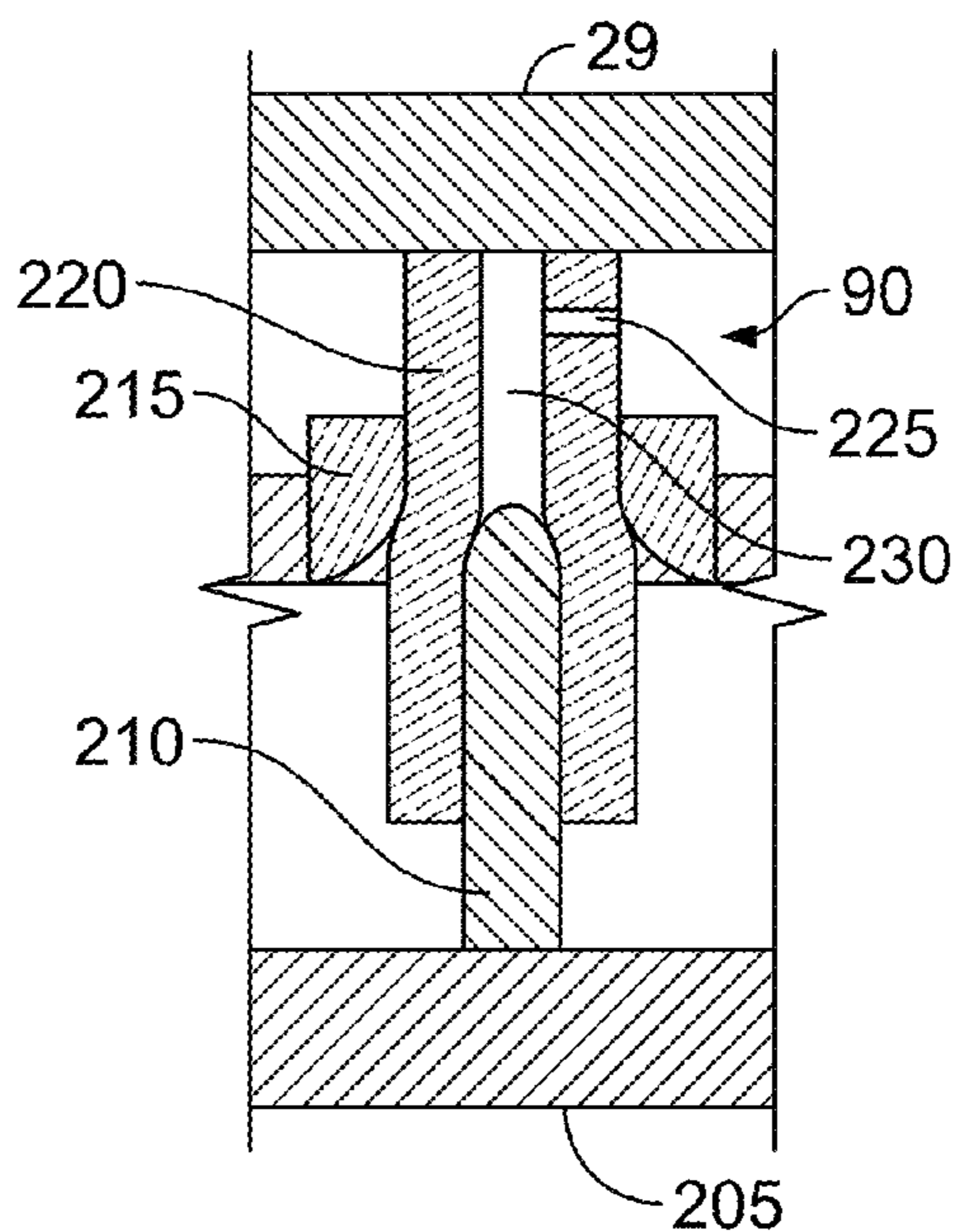


FIG. 3B

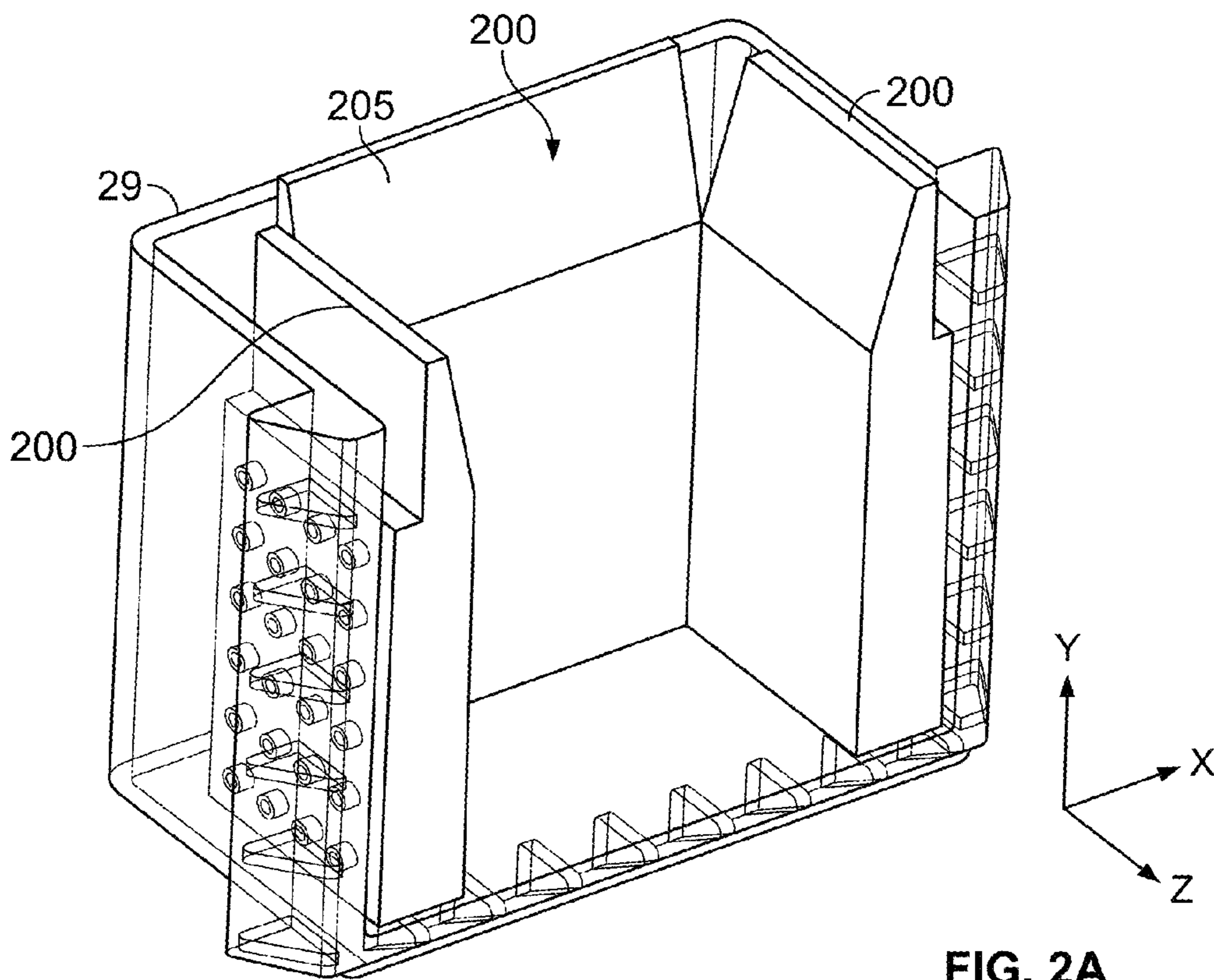


FIG. 2A

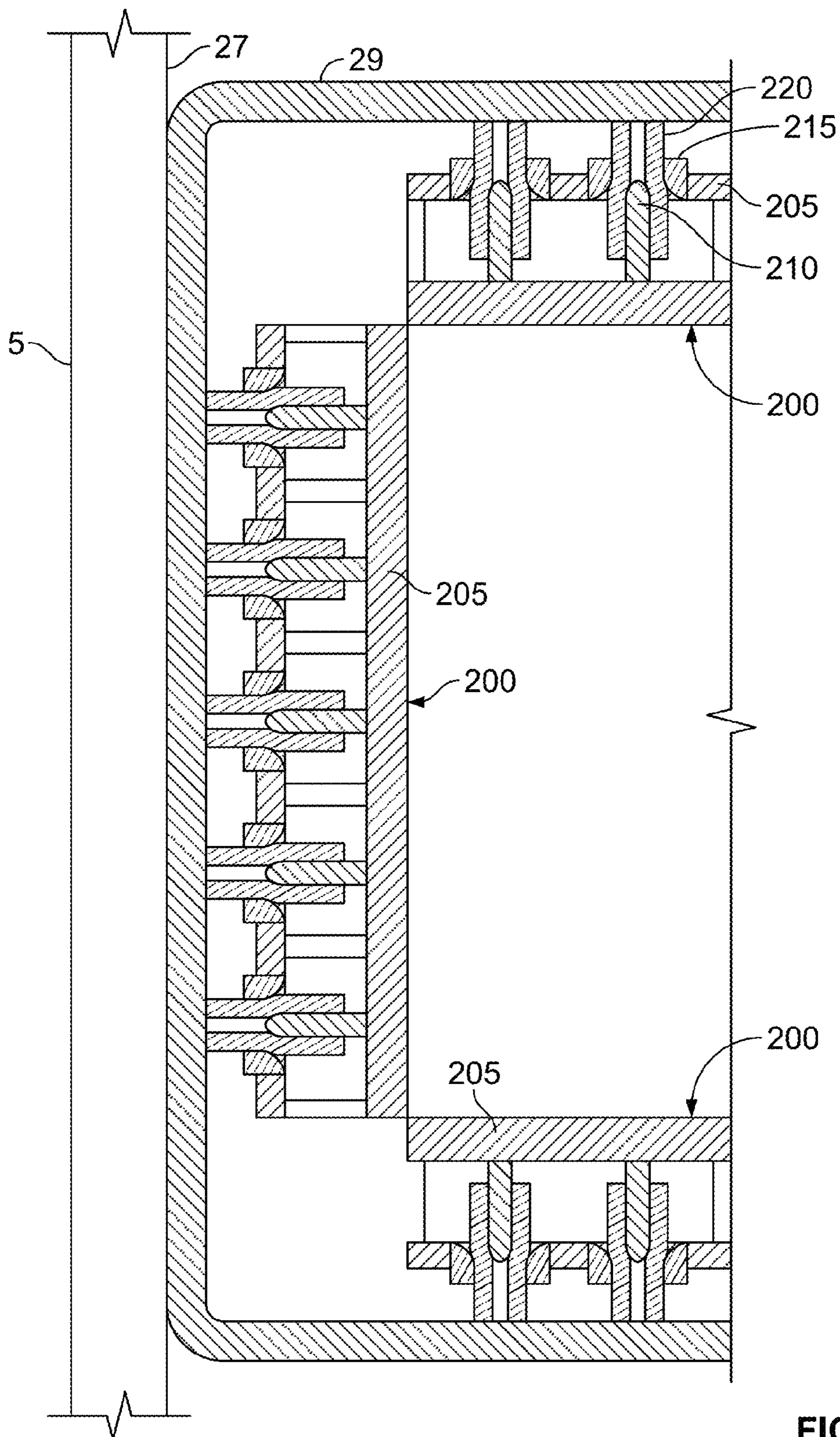


FIG. 2B

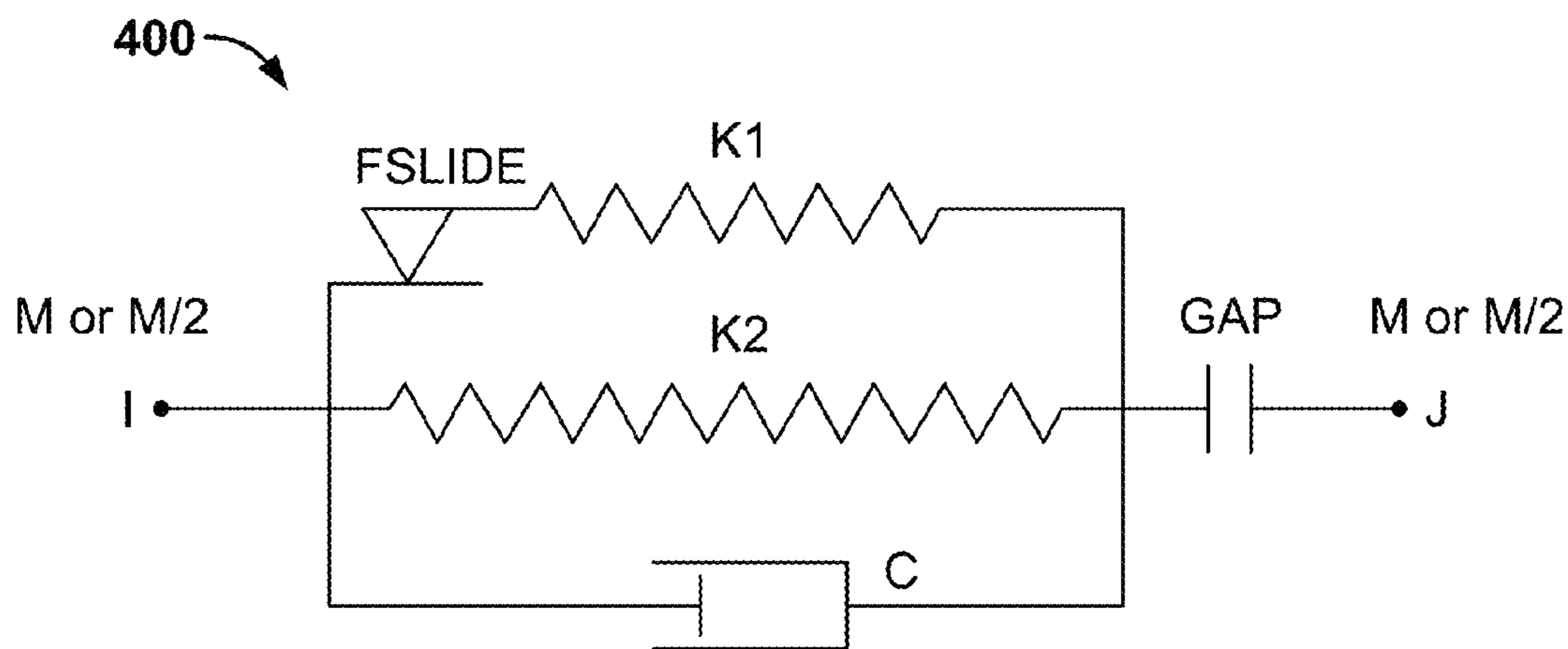


FIG. 4

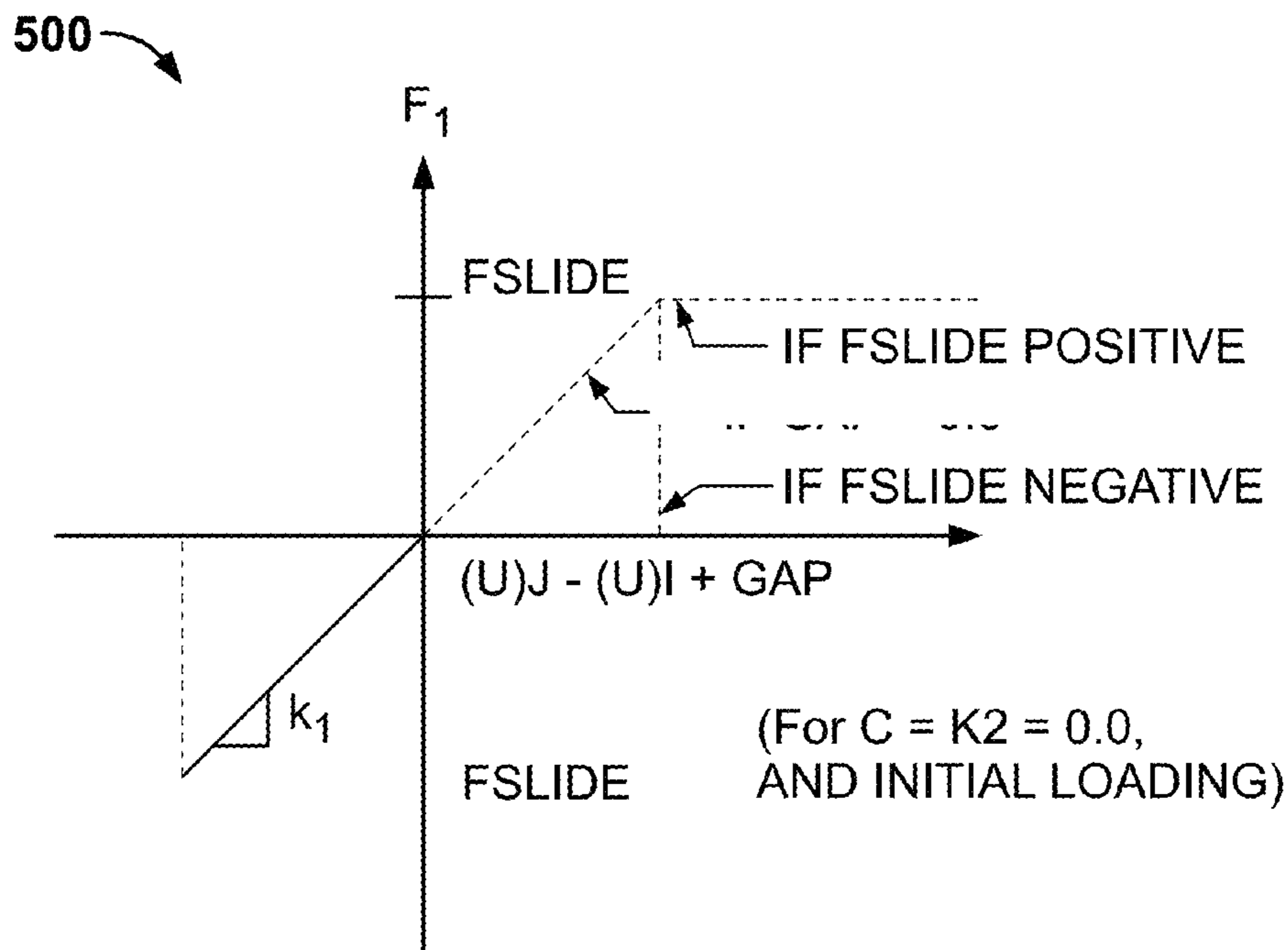


FIG. 5

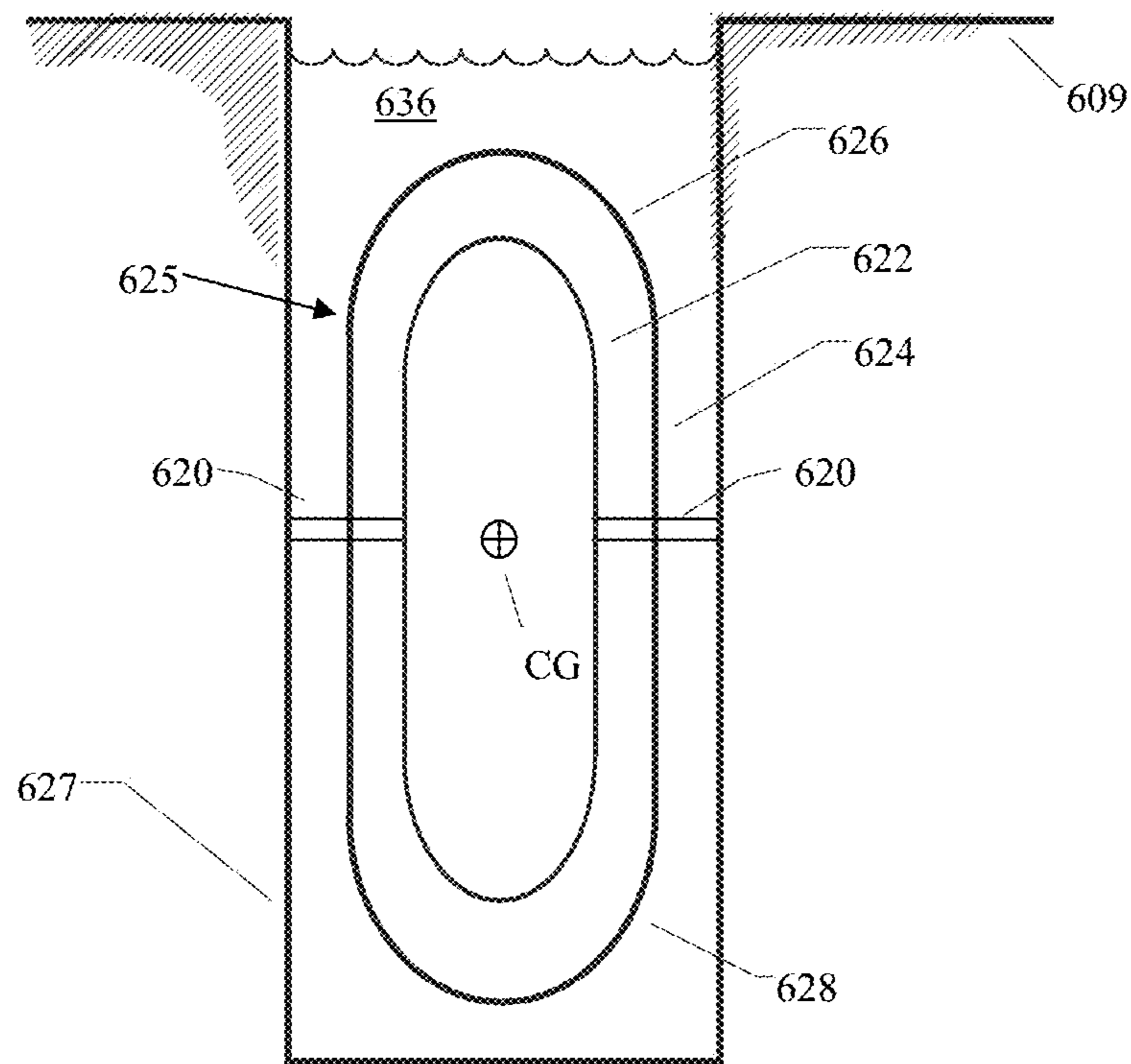


FIG. 6

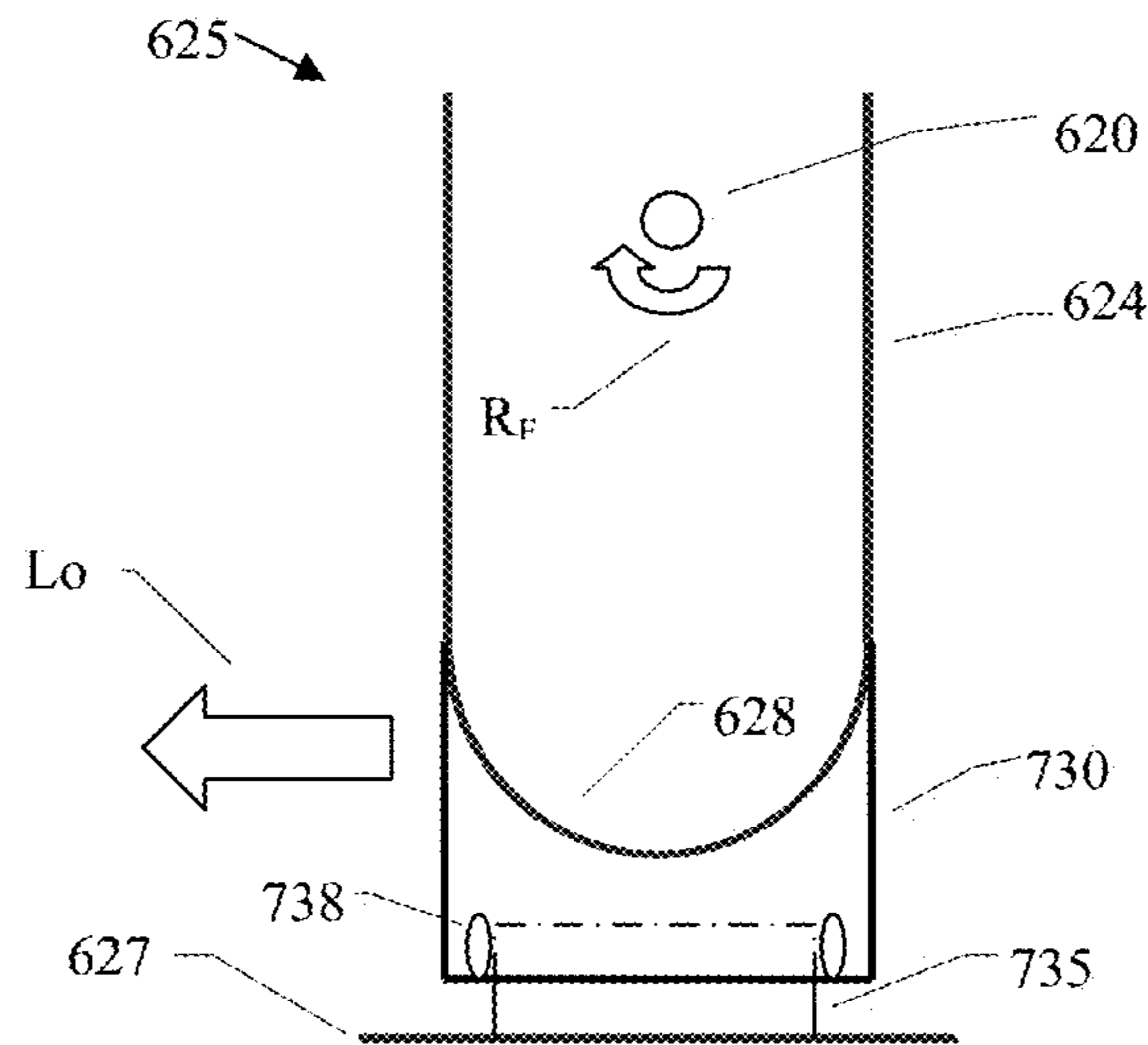


FIG. 7

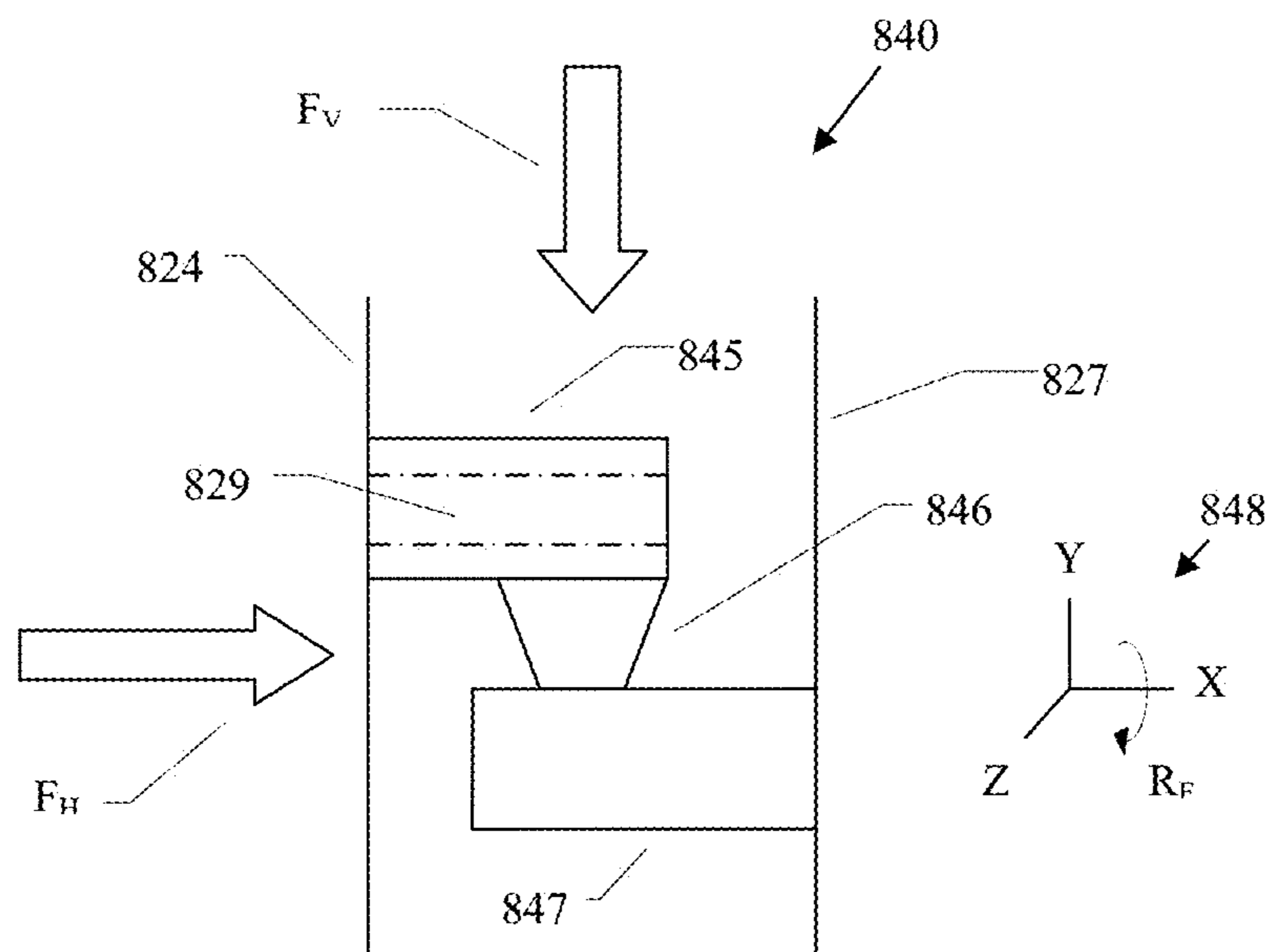


FIG. 8

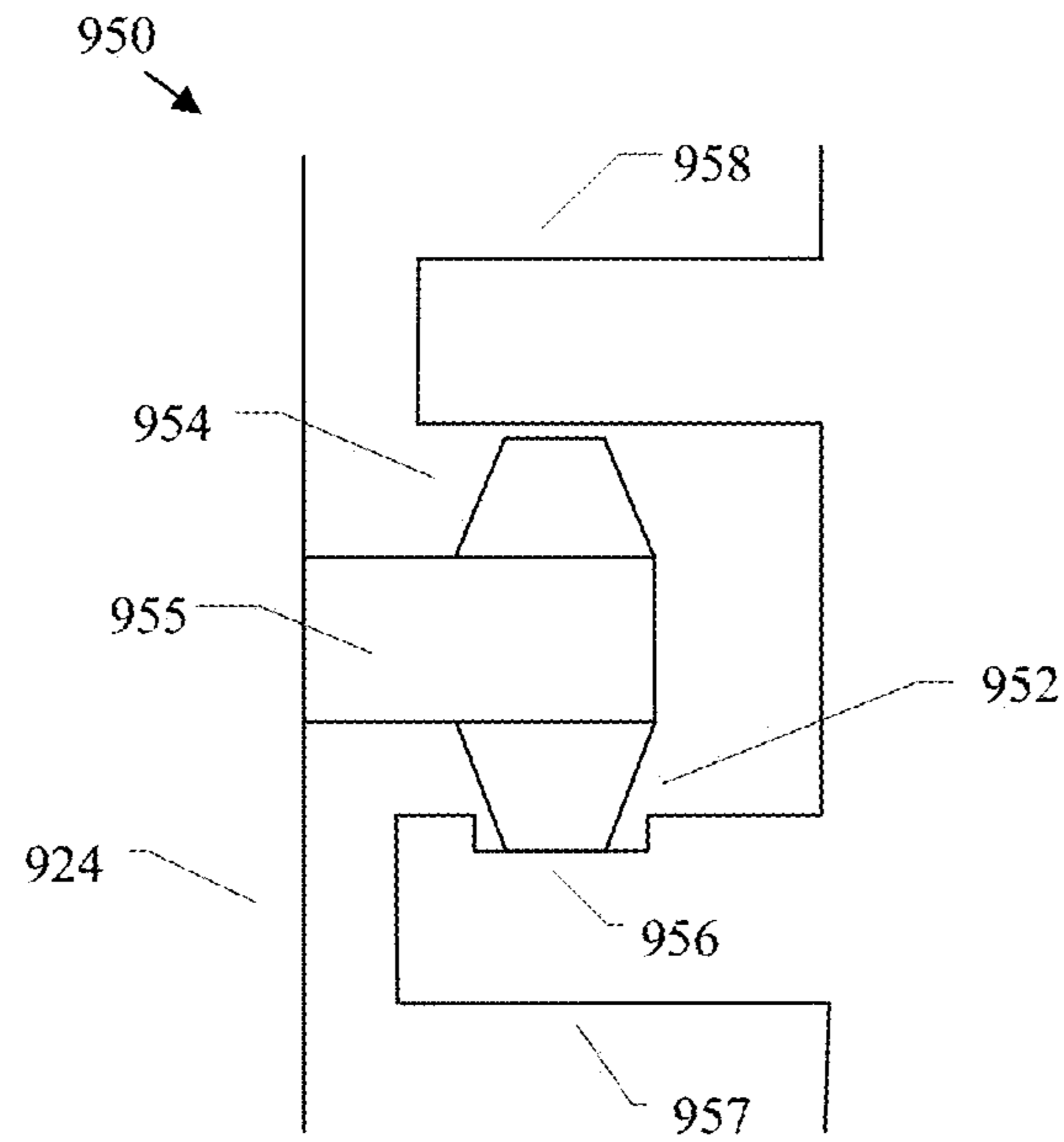


FIG. 9

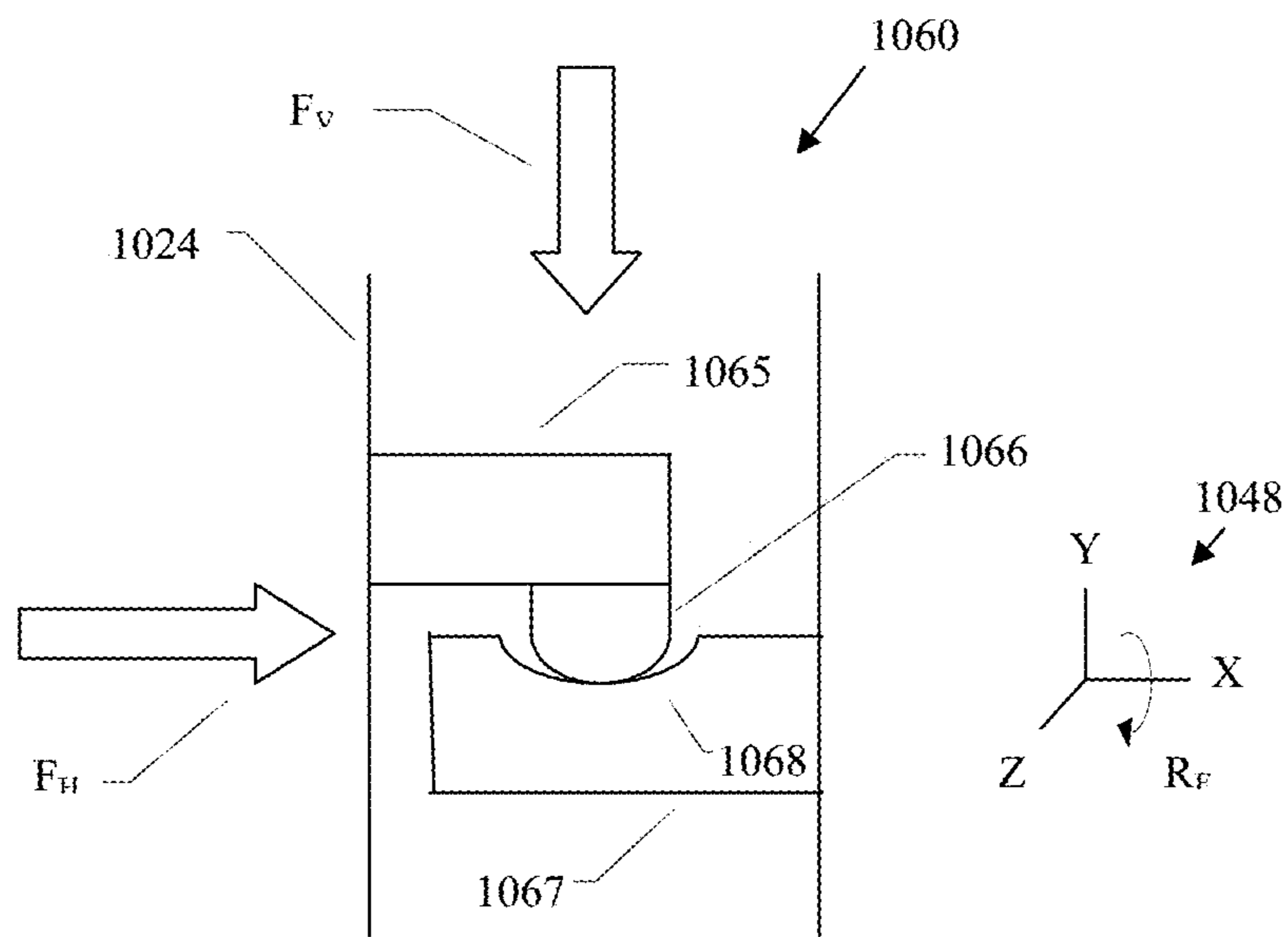


FIG. 10

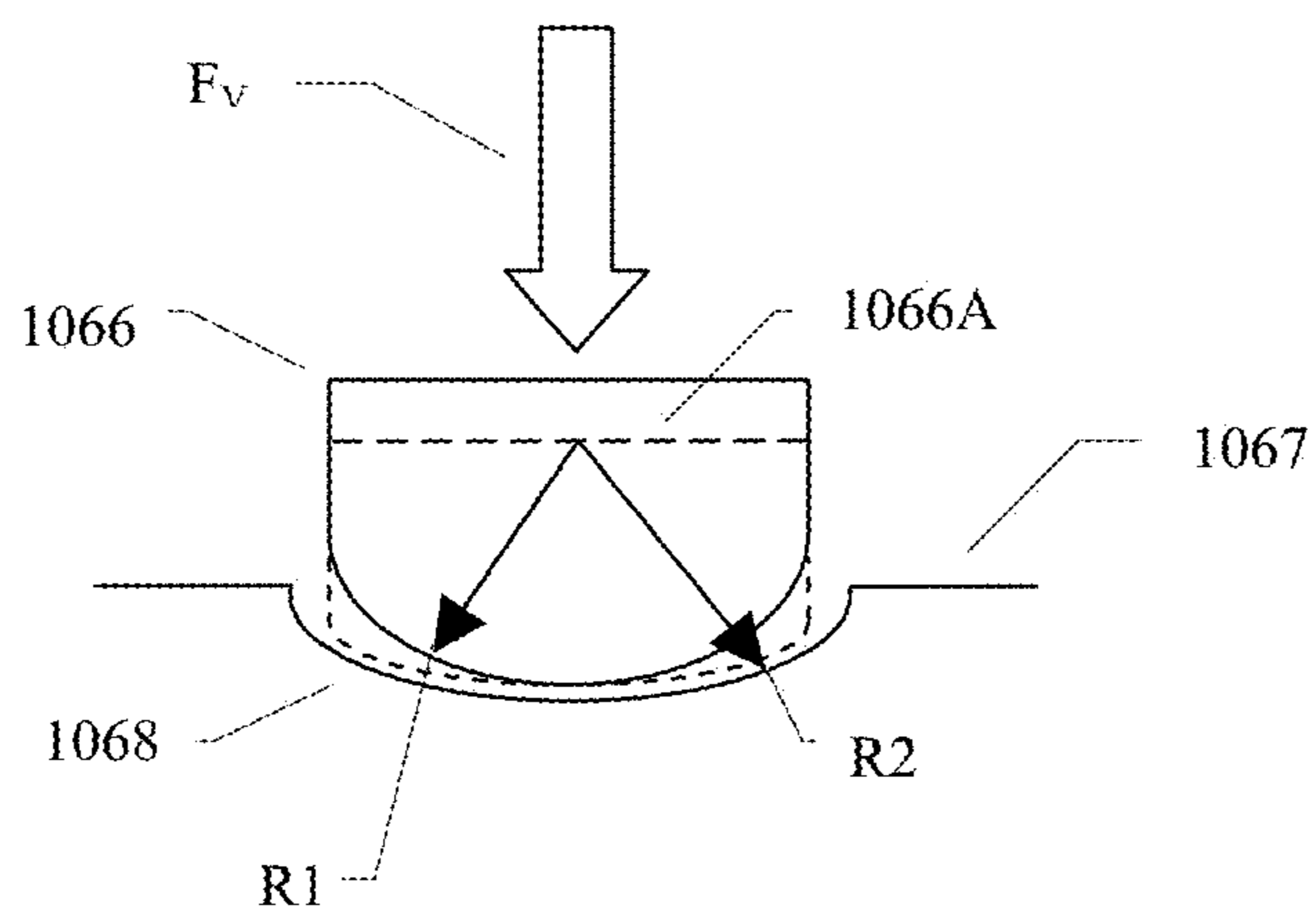


FIG. 11

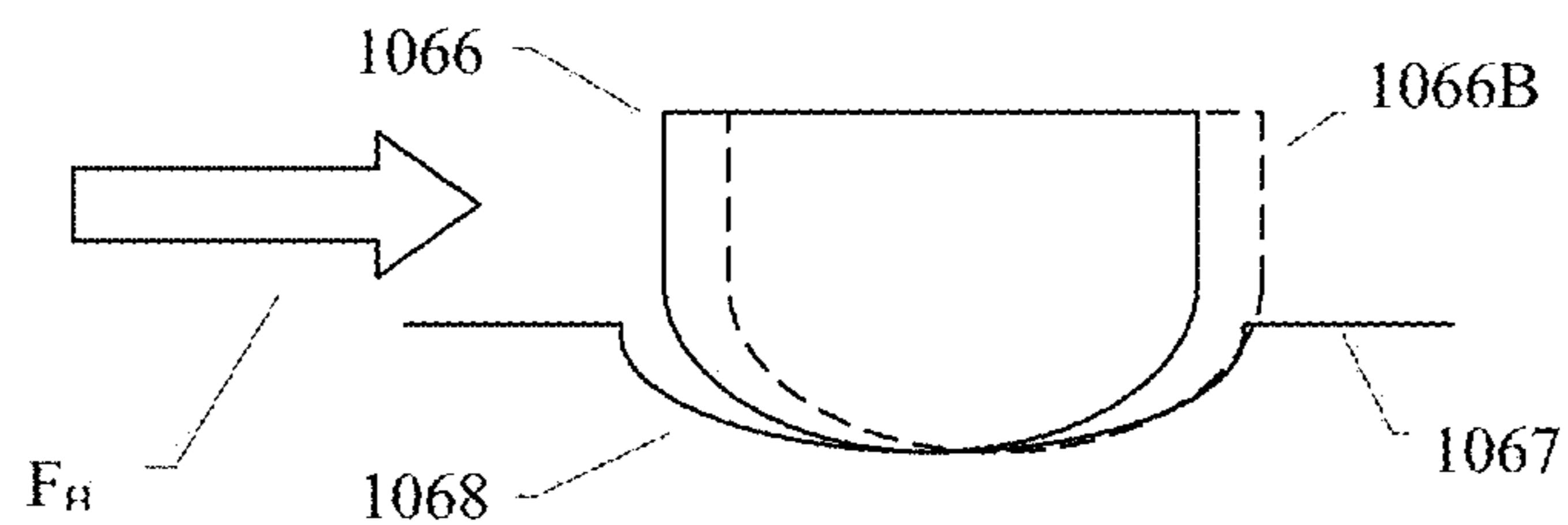


FIG. 12

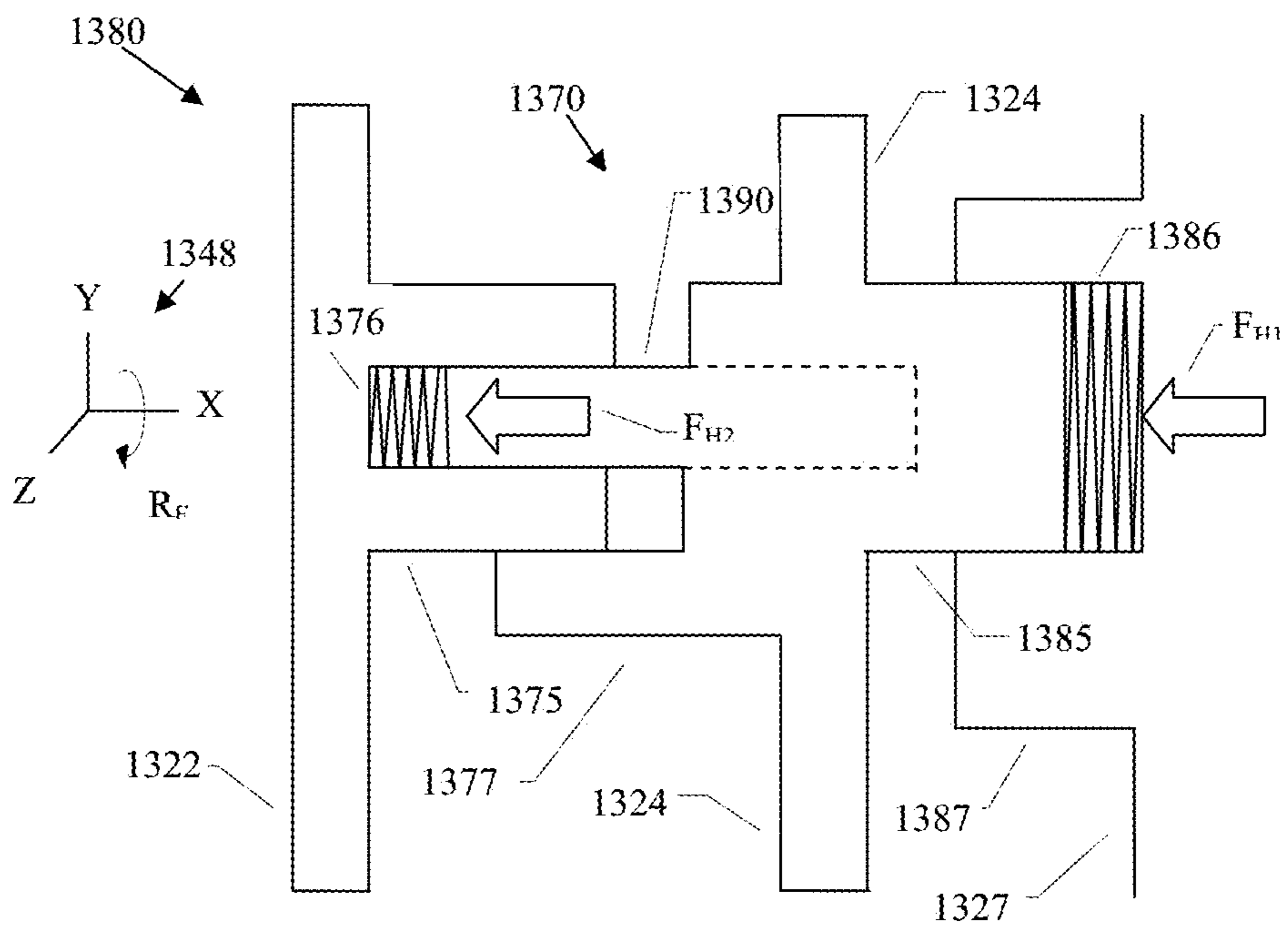


FIG. 13

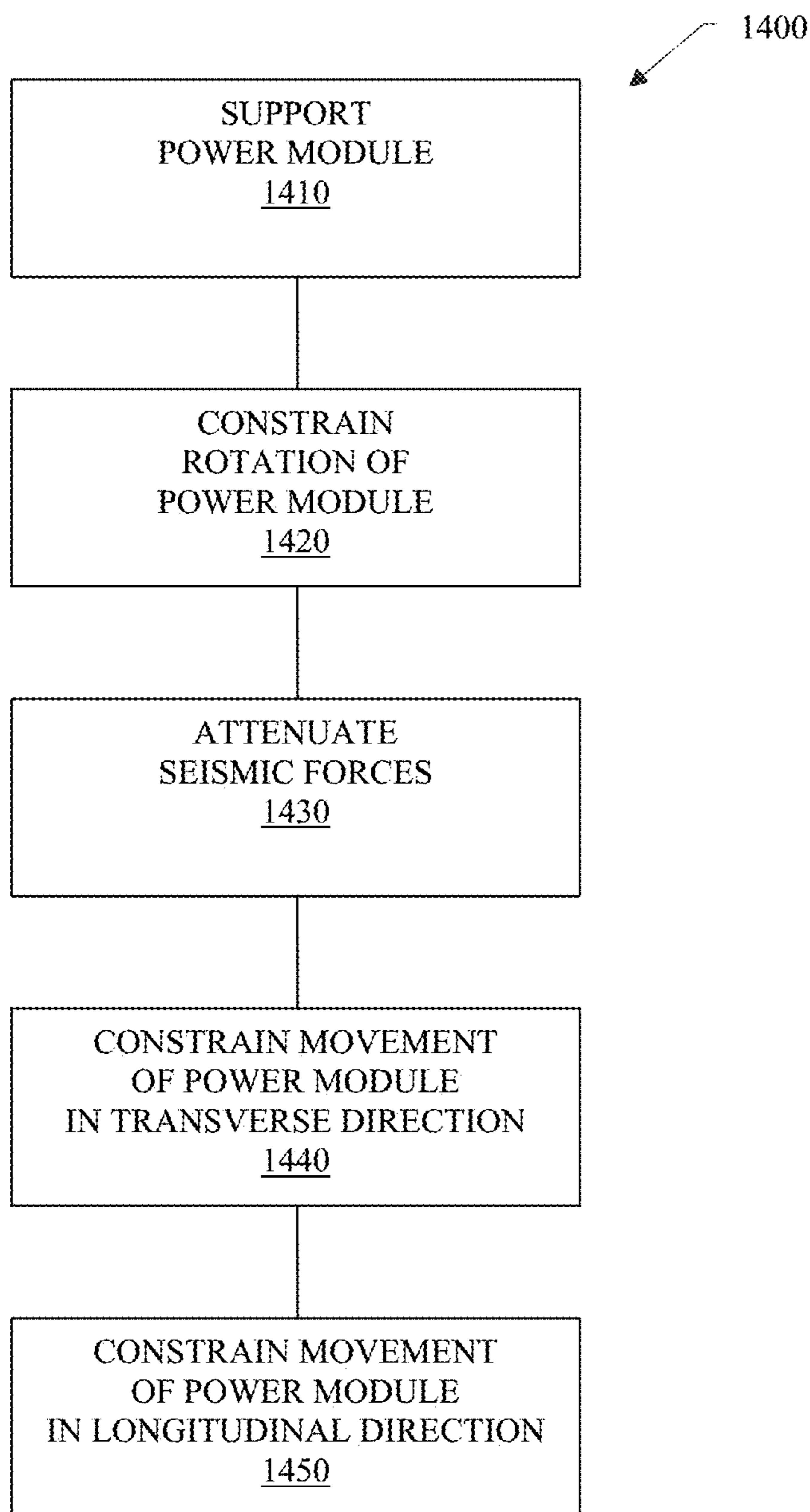


FIG. 14

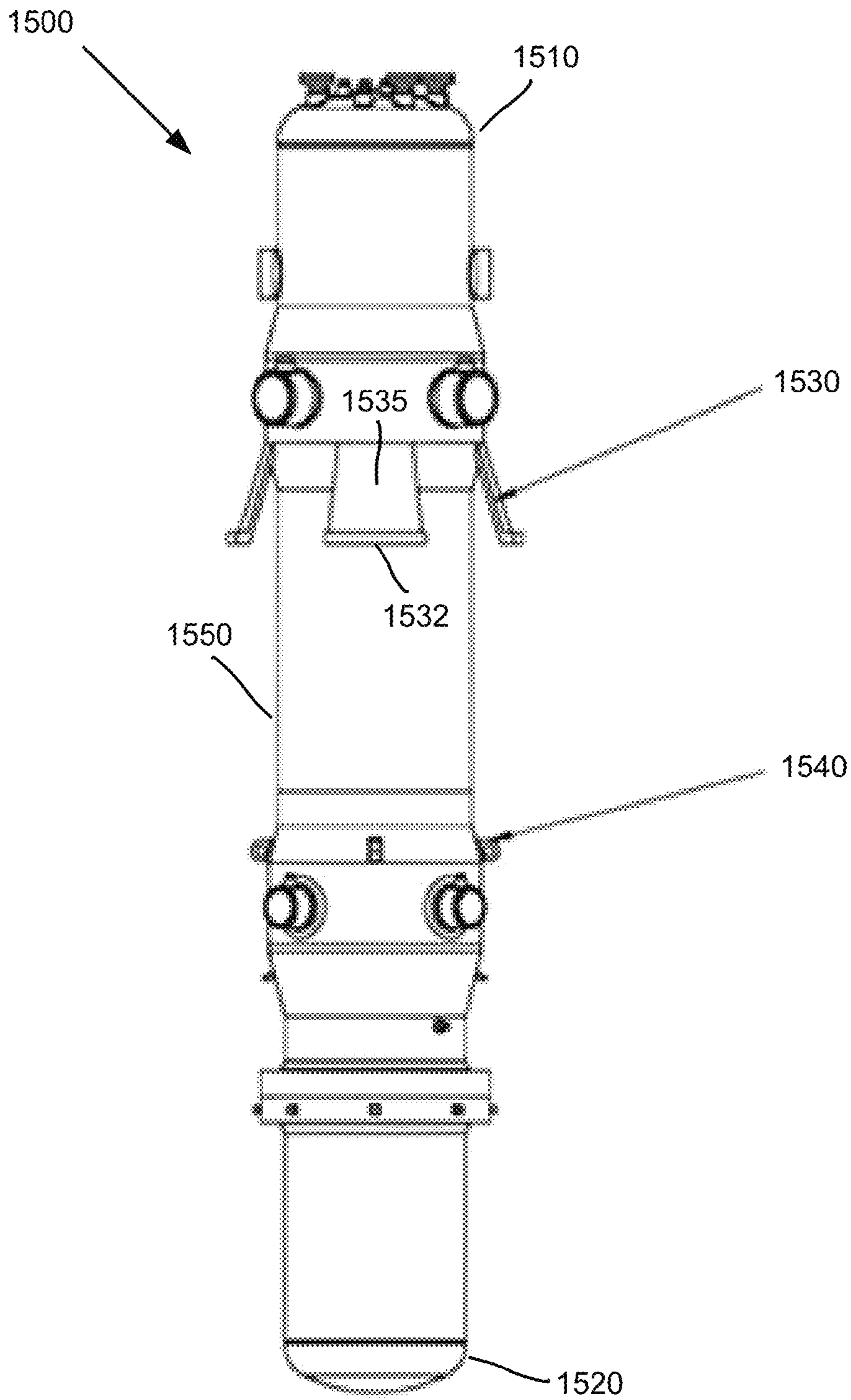


FIG. 15

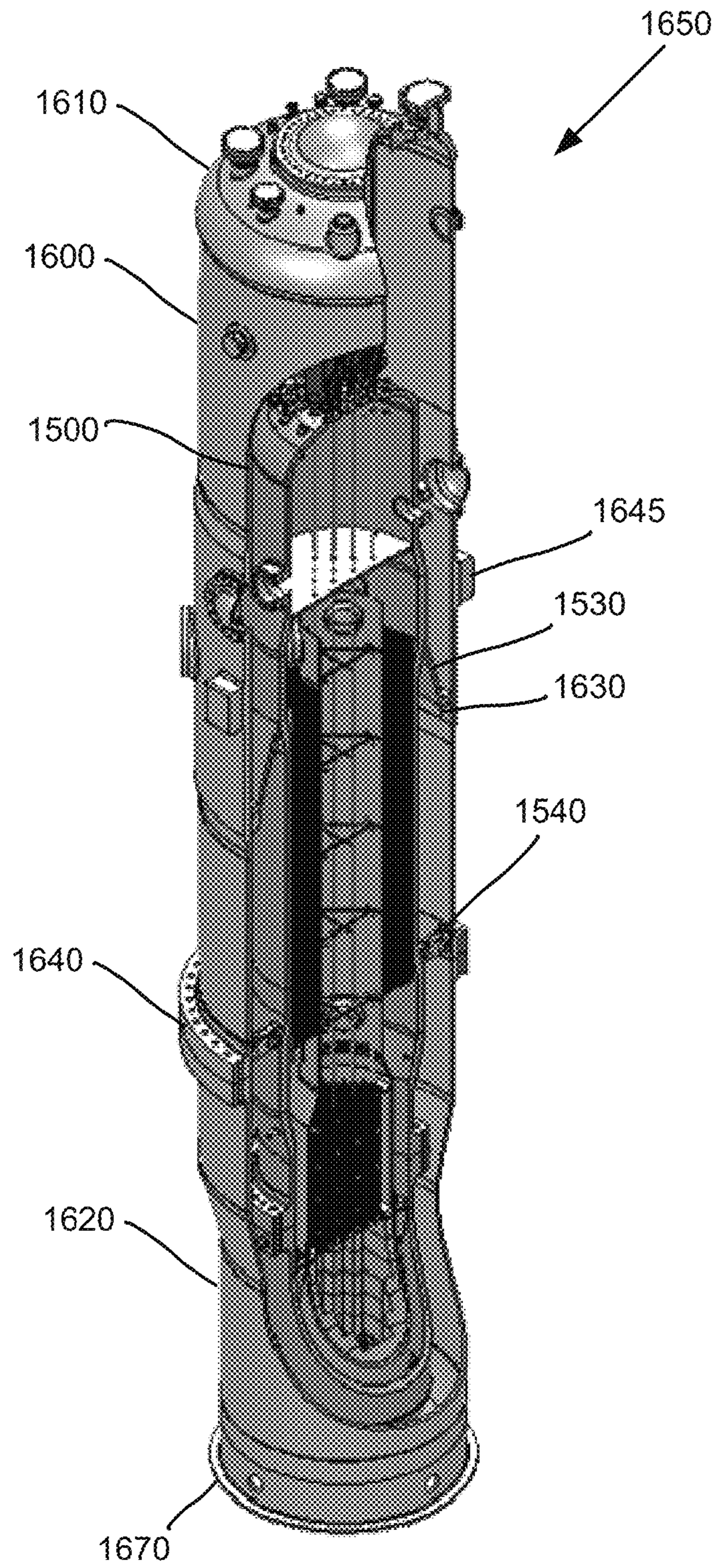


FIG. 16

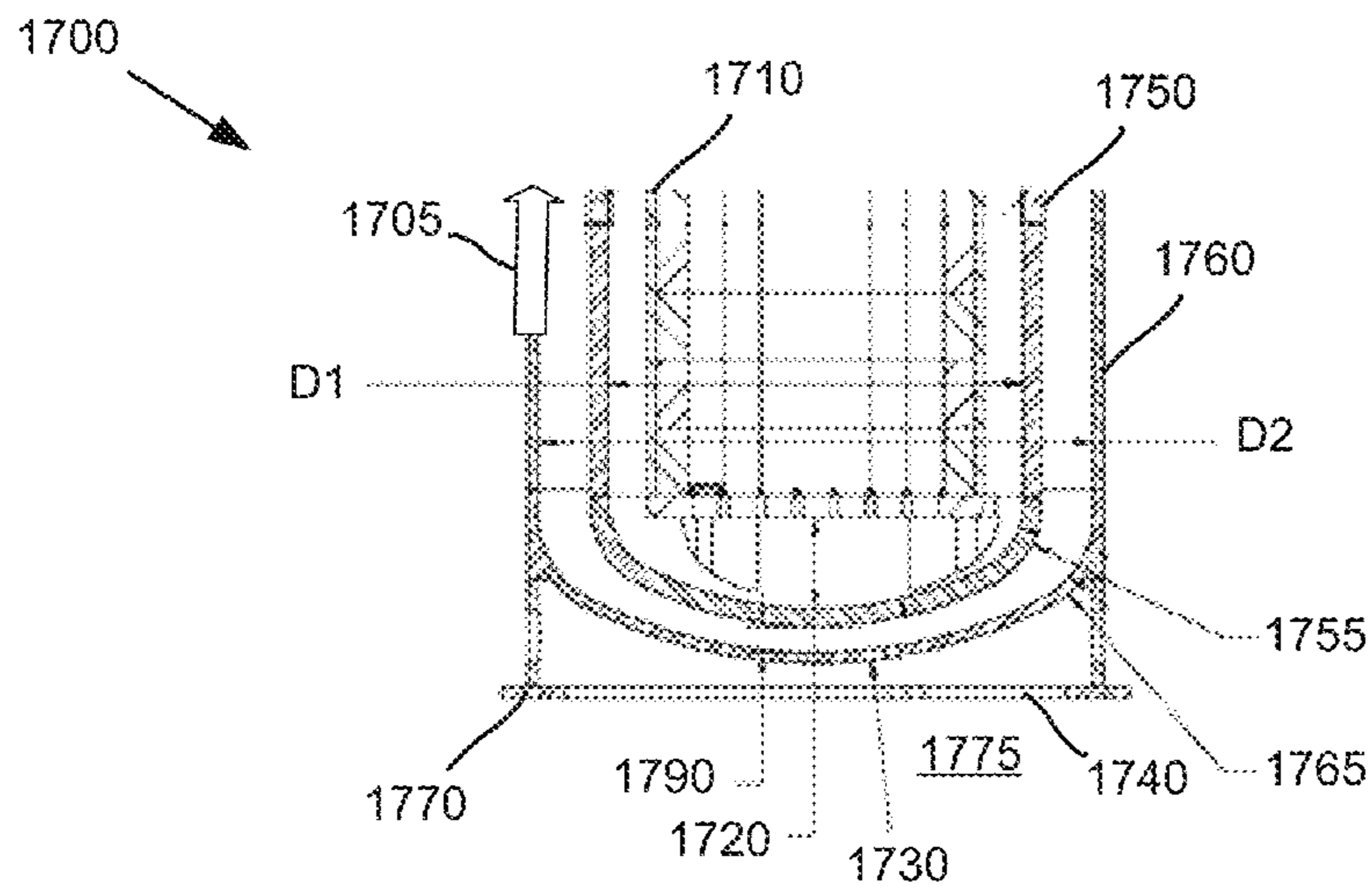


FIG. 17

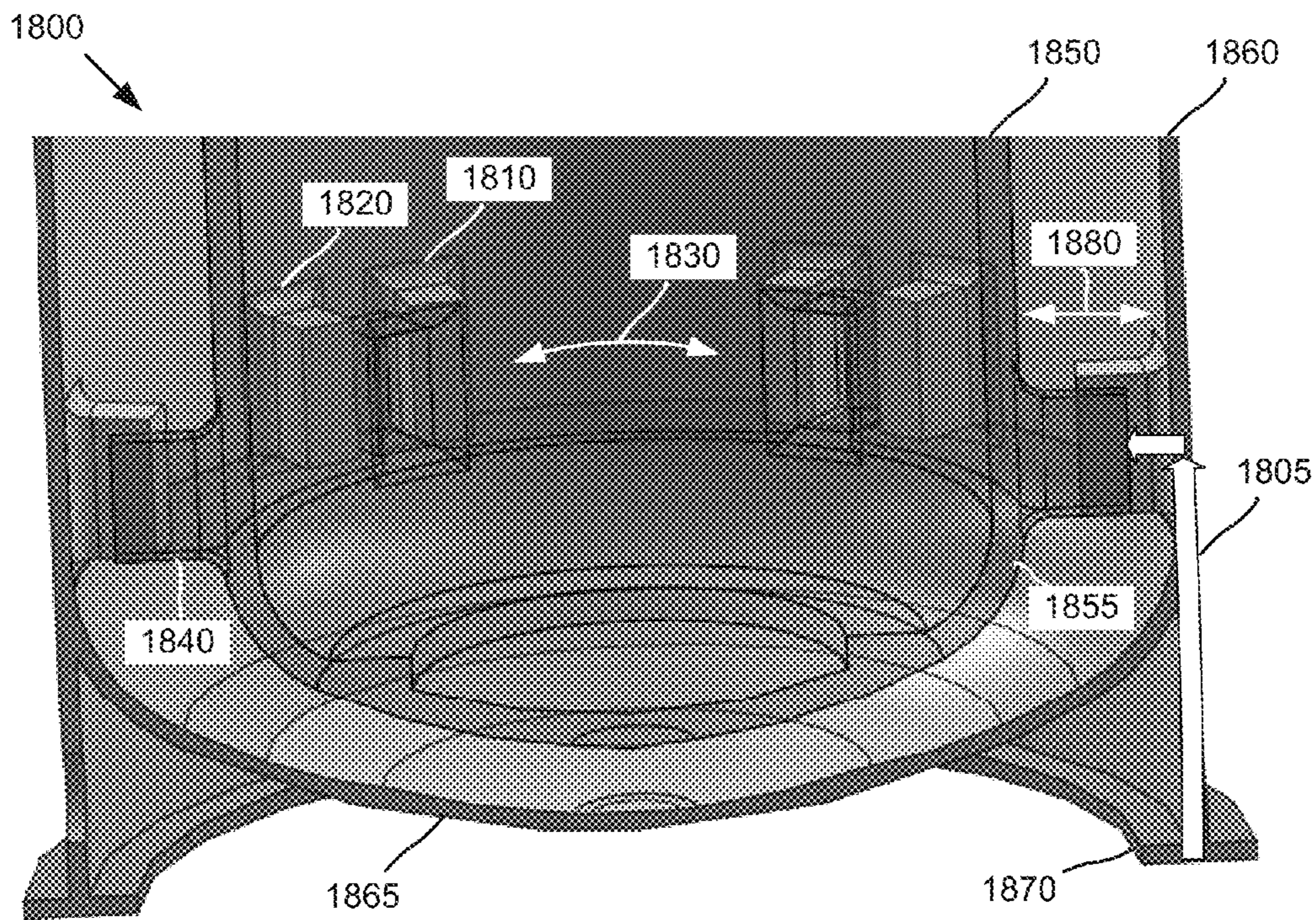


FIG. 18

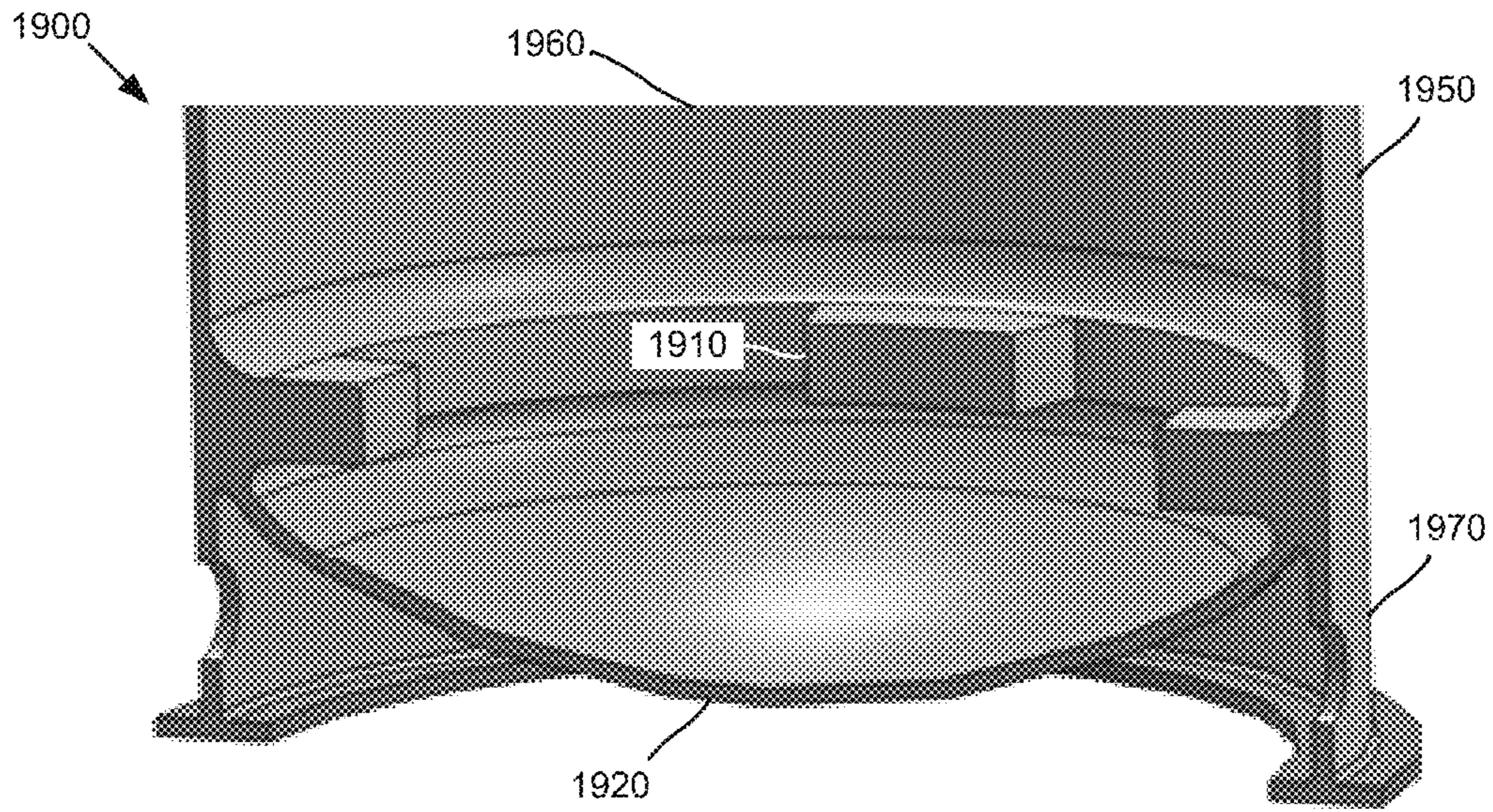


FIG. 19

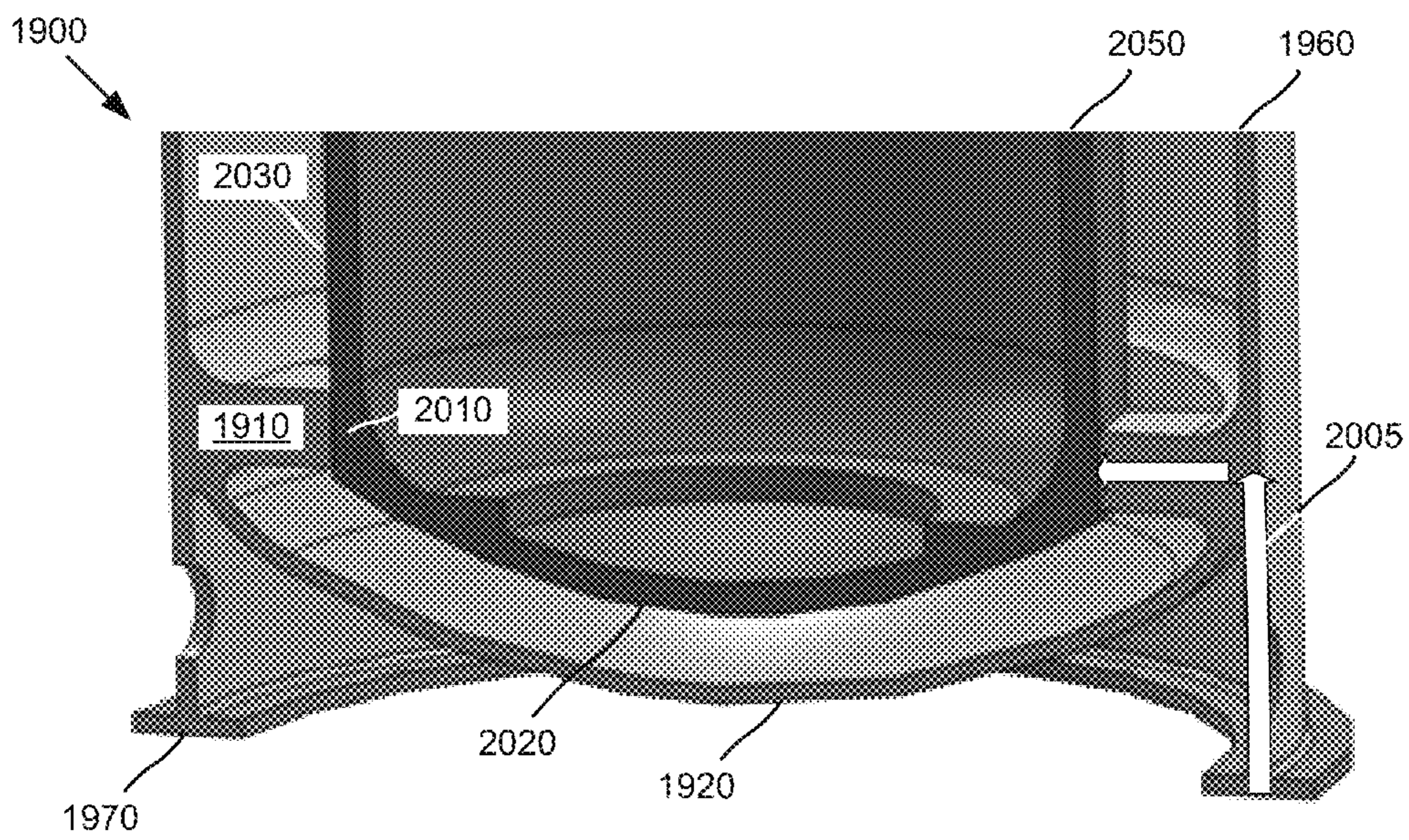


FIG. 20

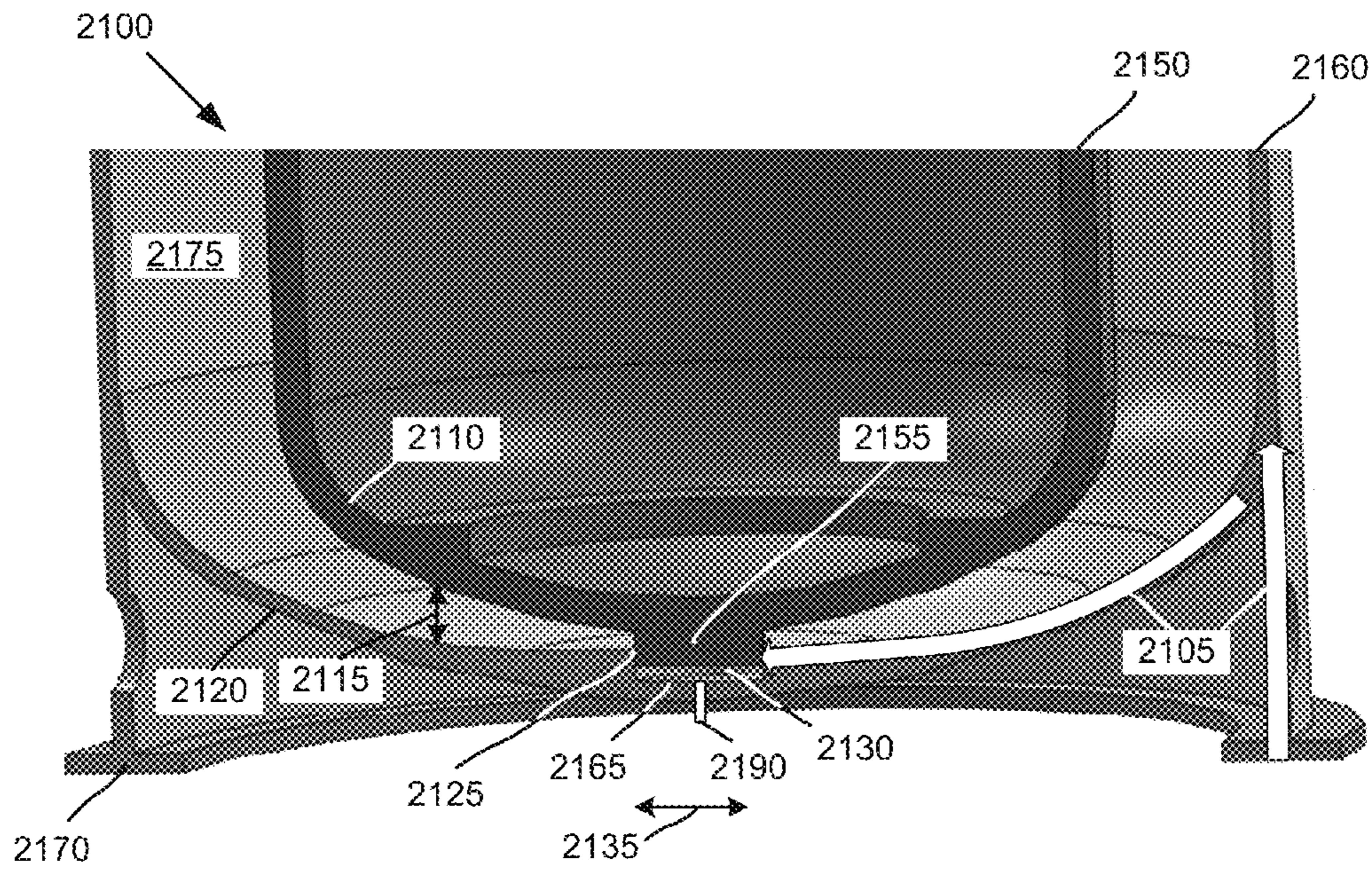


FIG. 21

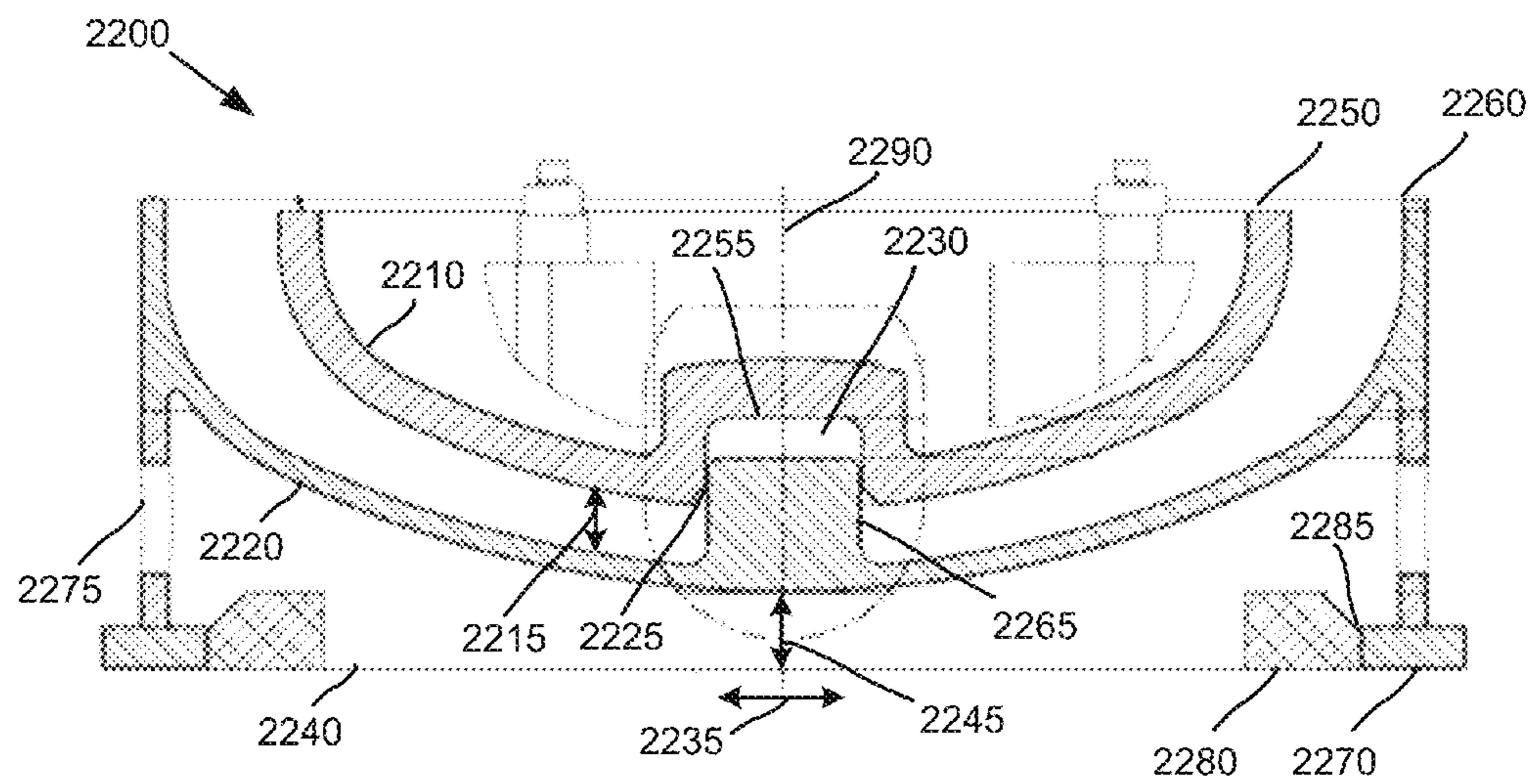


FIG. 22

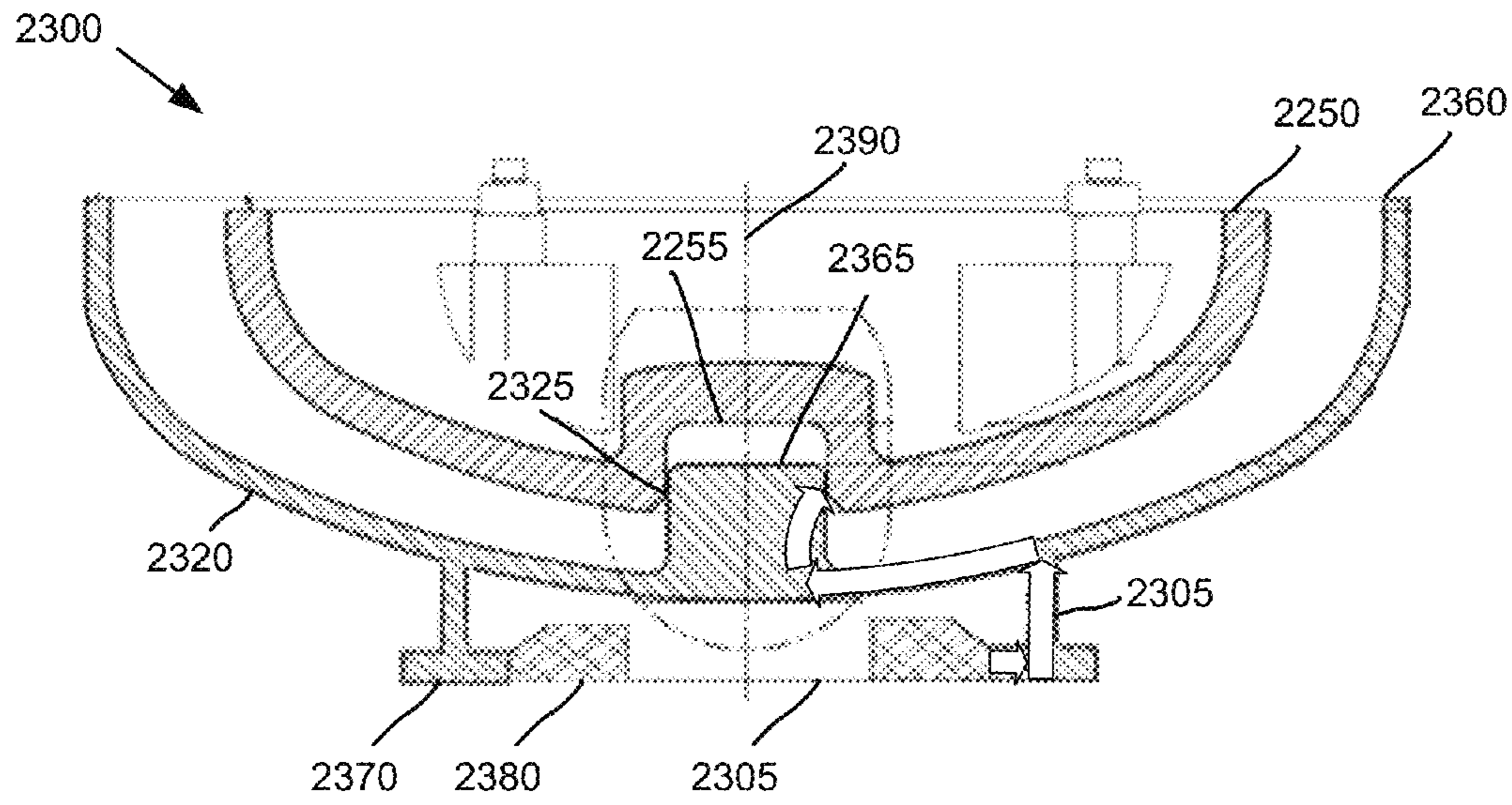


FIG. 23

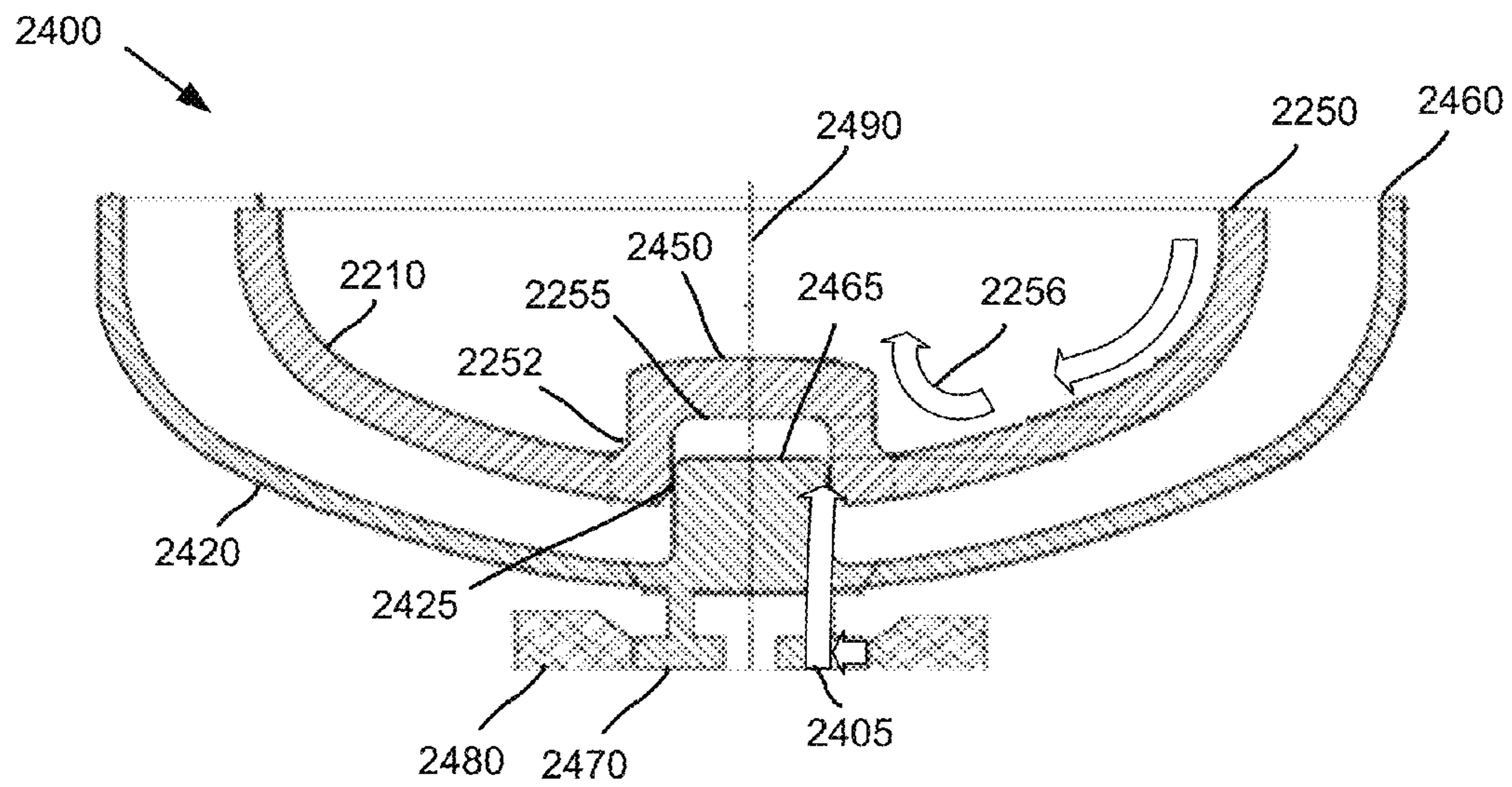


FIG. 24

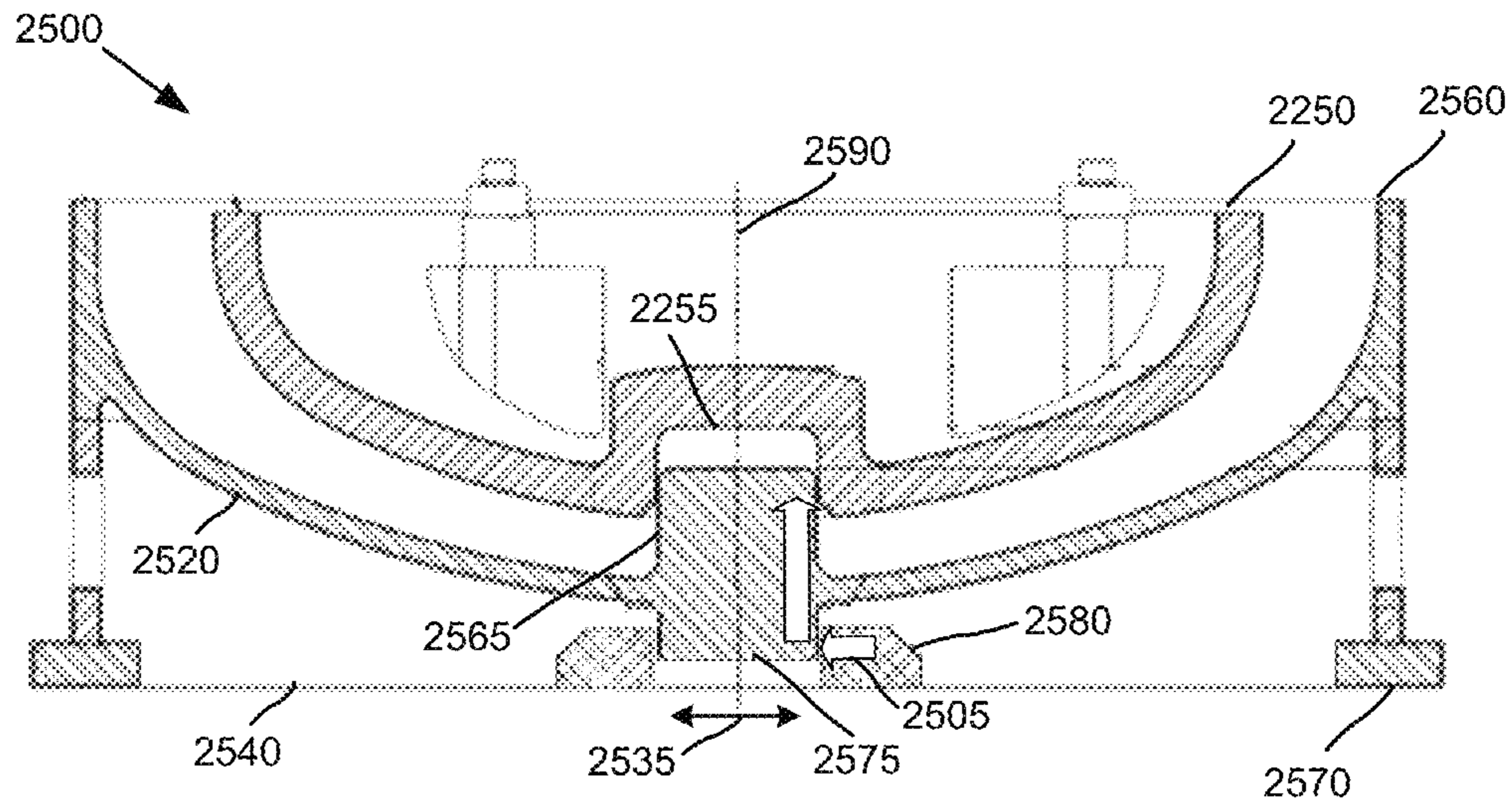


FIG. 25

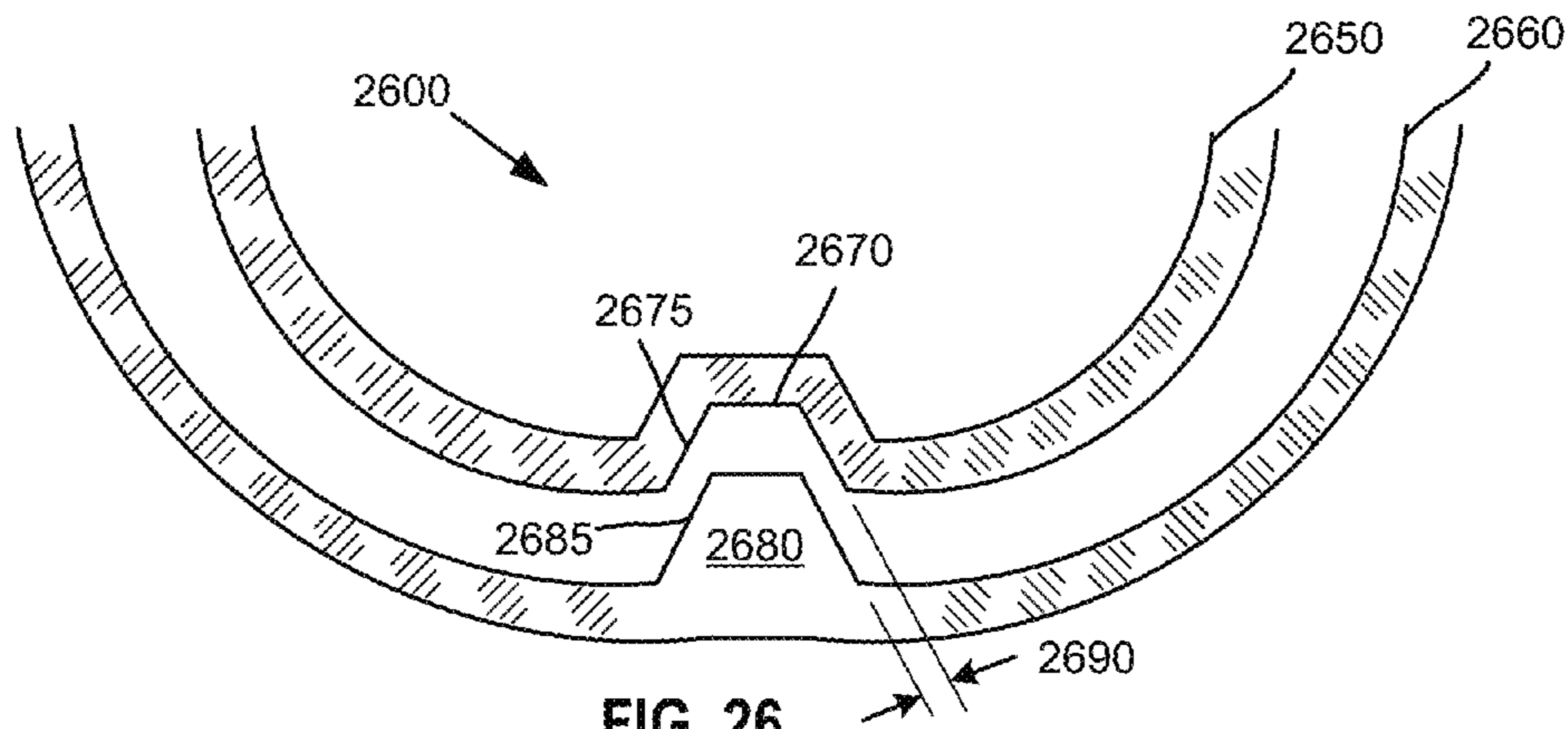


FIG. 26

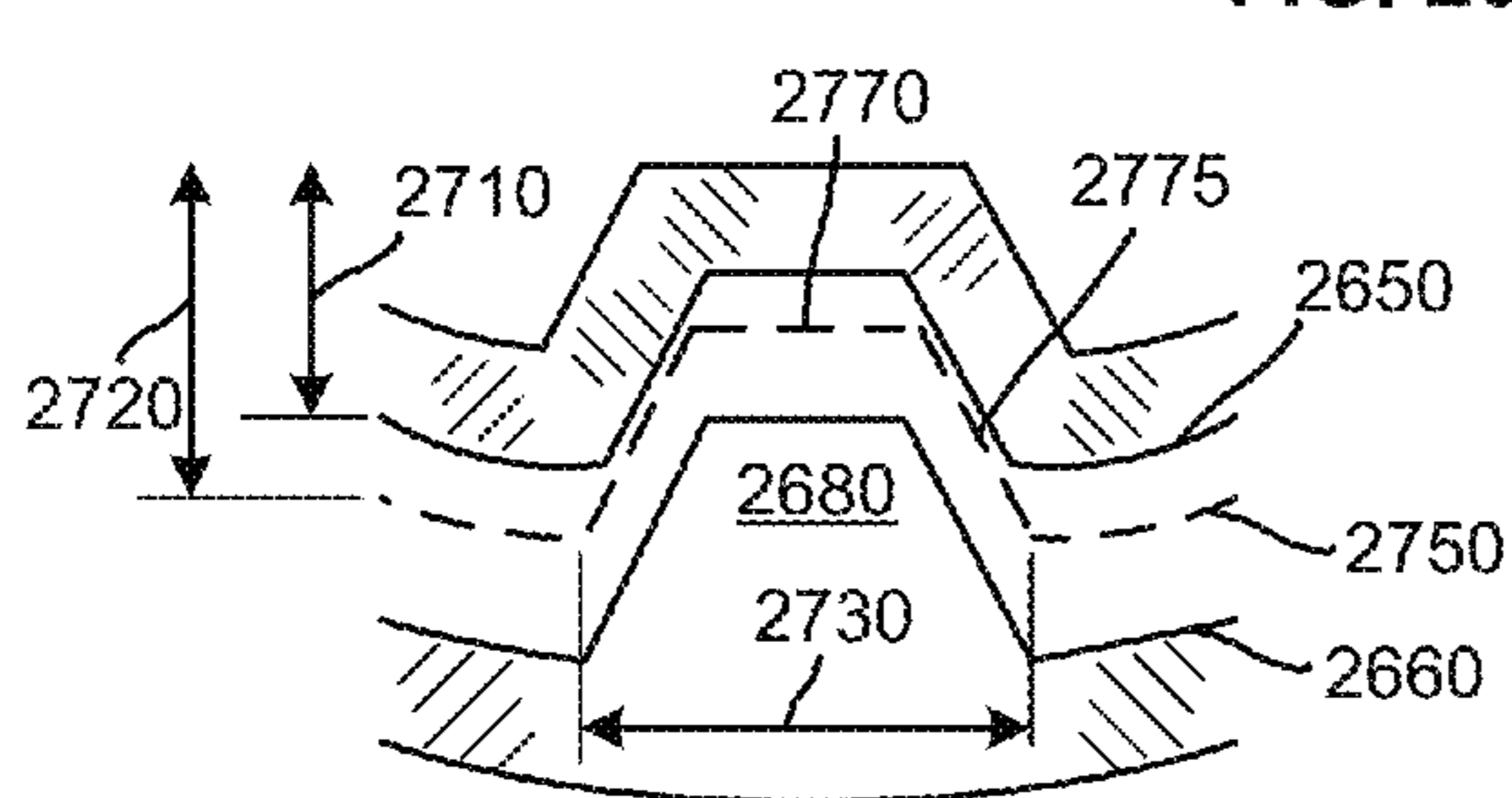


FIG. 27

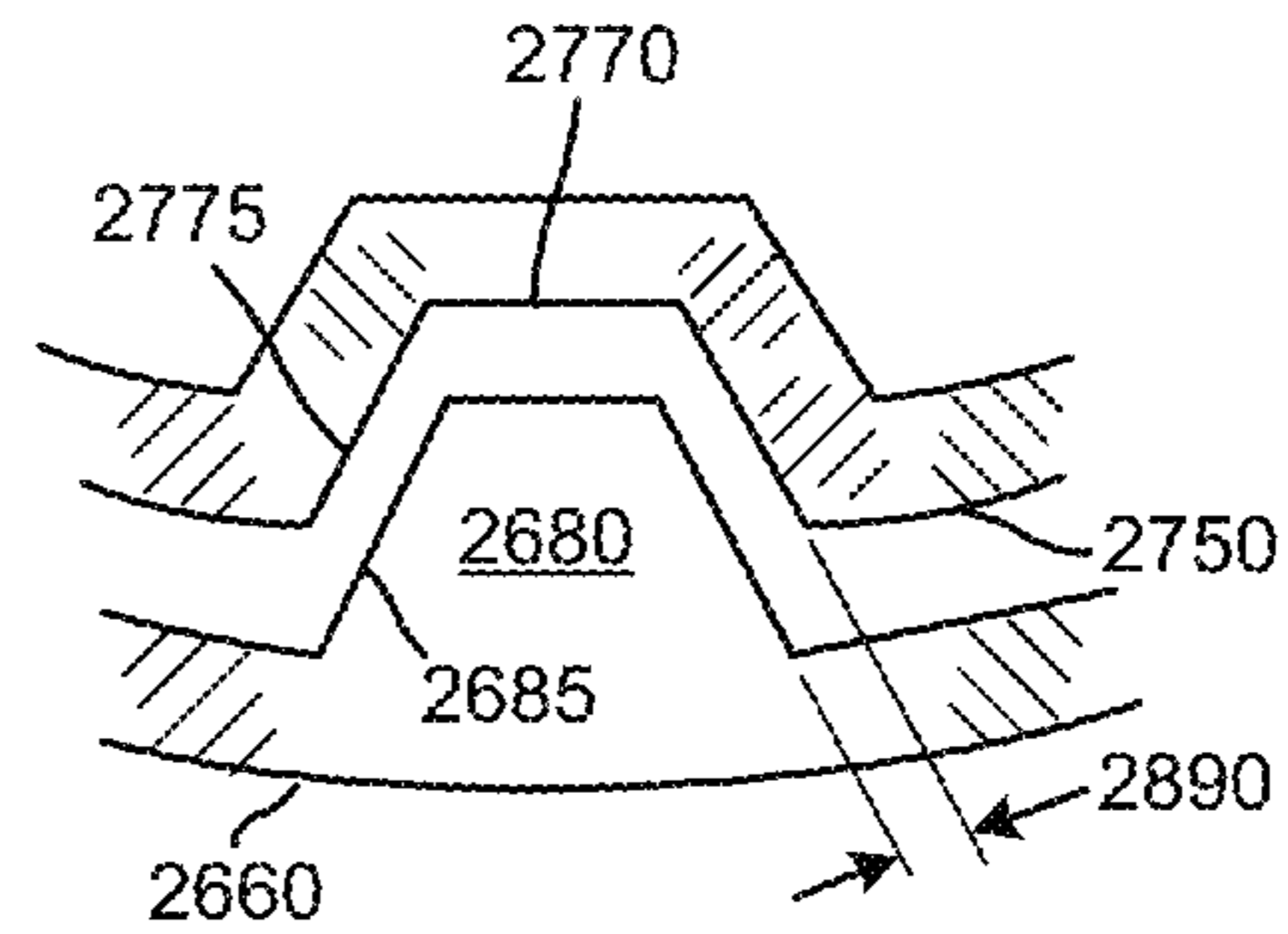


FIG. 28

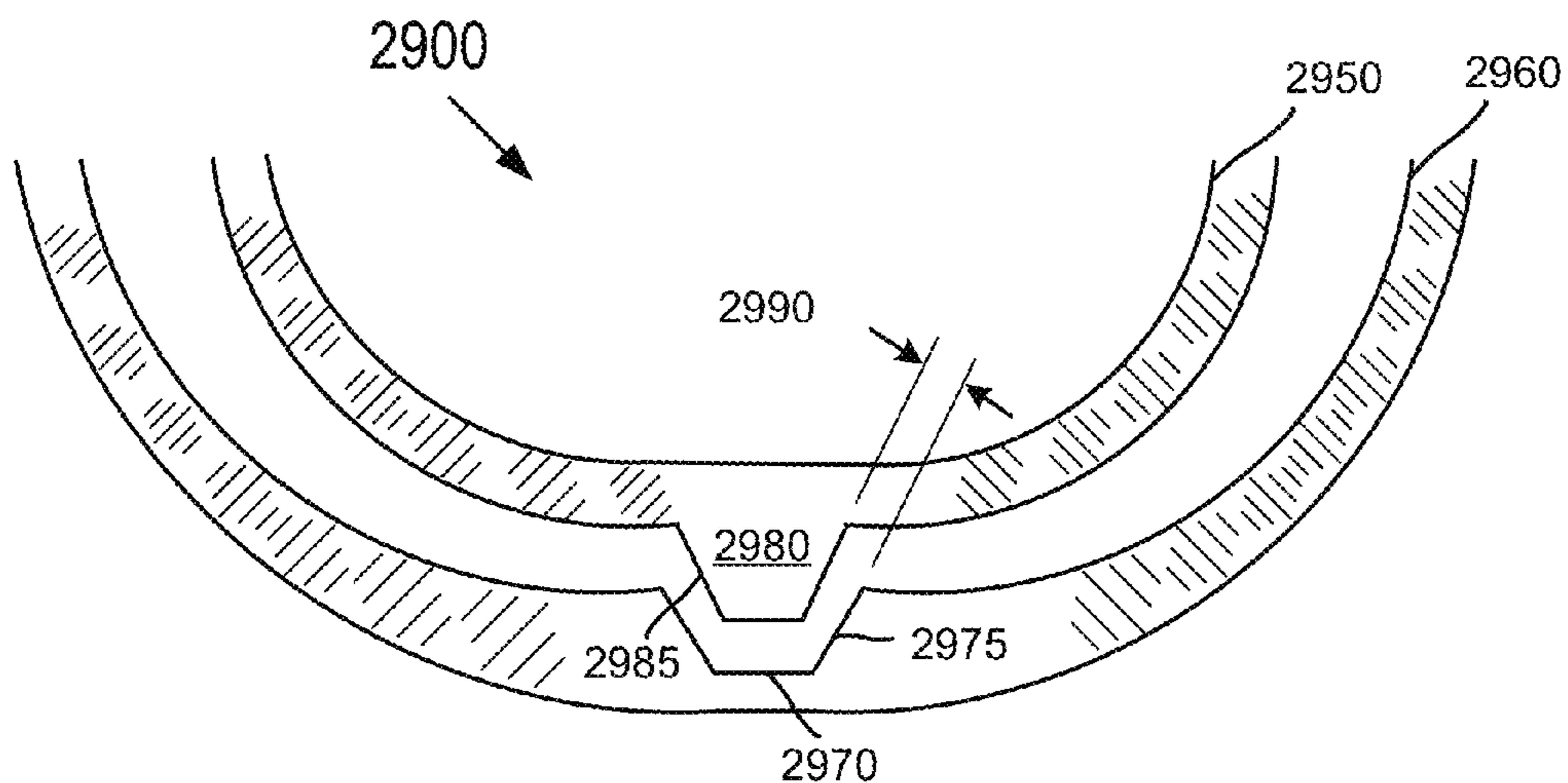


FIG. 29

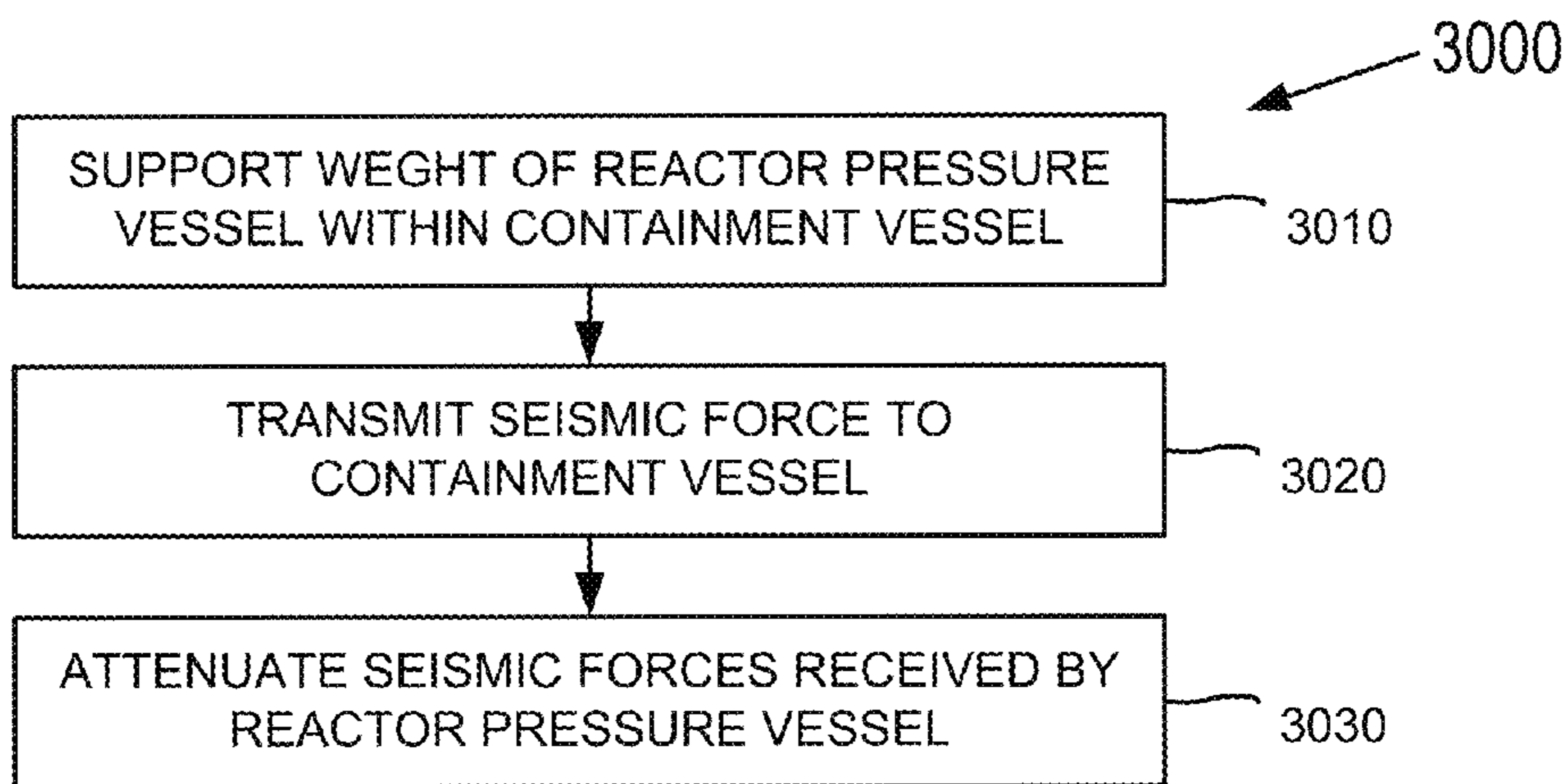


FIG. 30

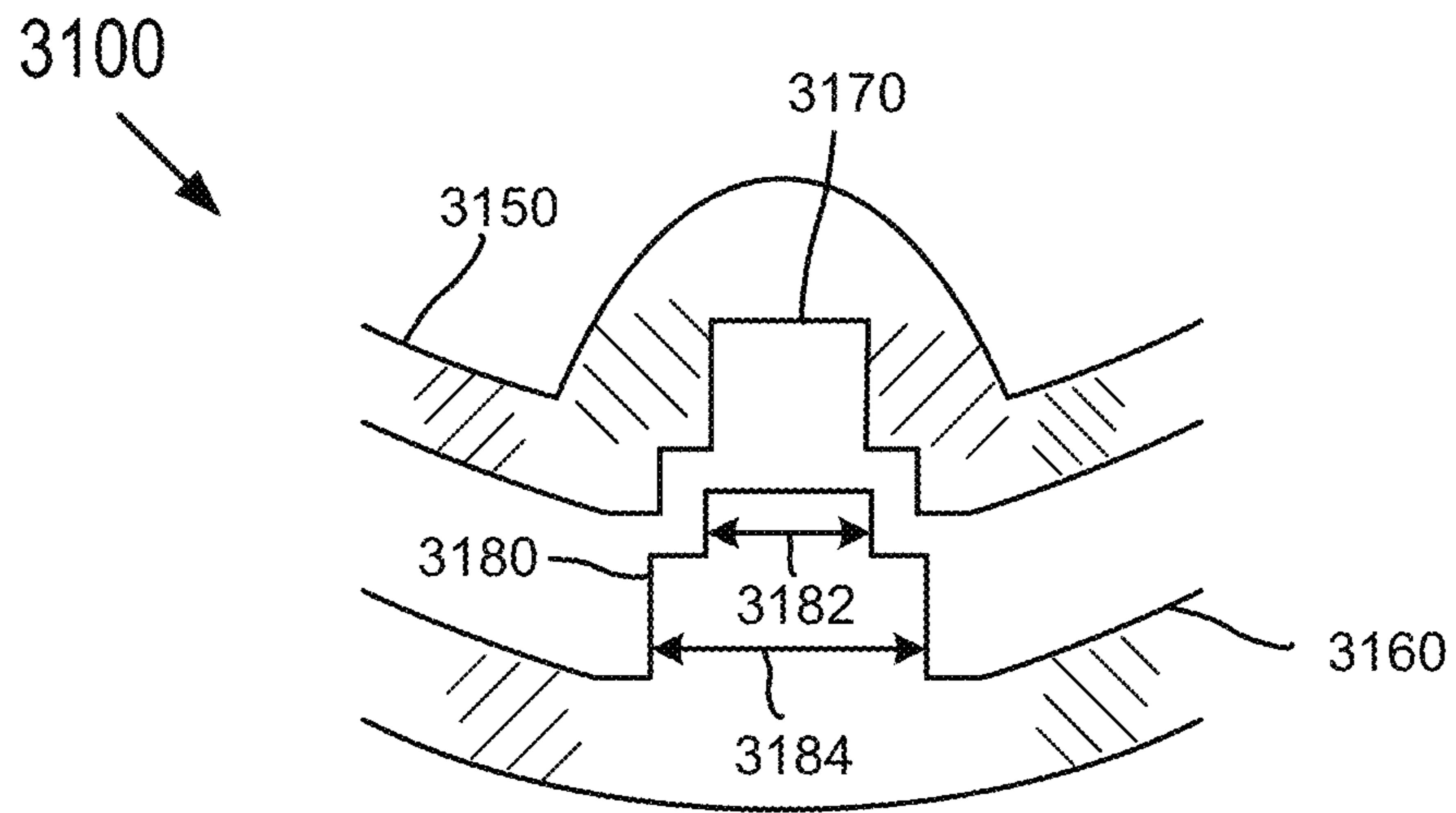


FIG. 31

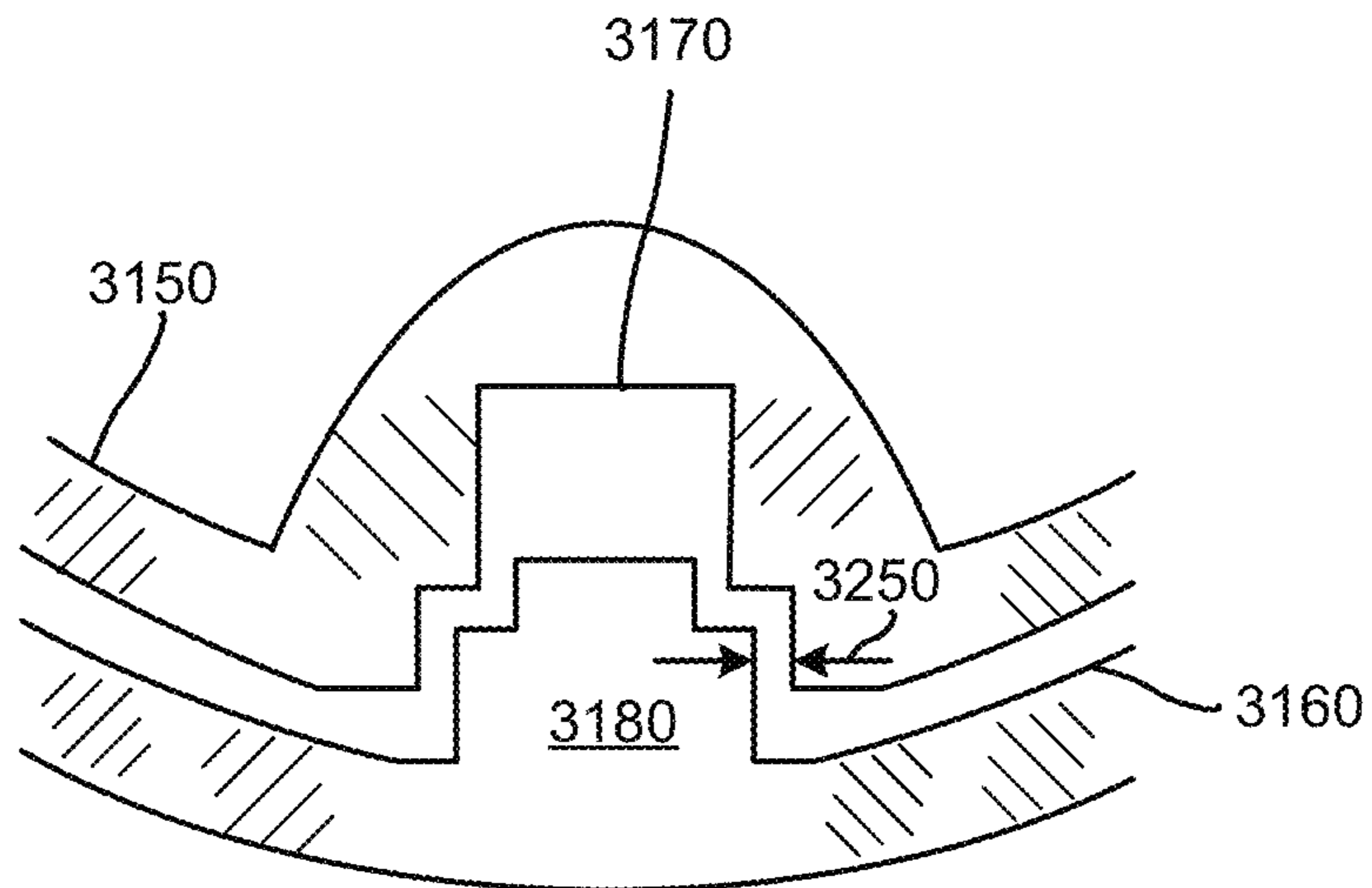


FIG. 32

SEISMIC ATTENUATION SYSTEM FOR A NUCLEAR REACTOR

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [] appears in the original patent but forms no part of this reissue specification; matter printed in italics indicates the additions made by reissue; a claim printed with strikethrough indicates that the claim was canceled, disclaimed, or held invalid by a prior post-patent action or proceeding.

GOVERNMENT INTEREST

This invention was made with Government support under Contract No. DE-NE0000633 awarded by the Department of Energy. The Government has certain rights in this invention.

STATEMENT OF RELATED MATTERS

[This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/922,541 entitled MANAGING DYNAMIC FORCES ON A NUCLEAR REACTOR SYSTEM and filed on Dec. 31, 2013, which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.]

The present application is a reissue application of U.S. Pat. No. 9,881,703, issued Jan. 30, 2018, entitled: SEISMIC ATTENUATION SYSTEM FOR A NUCLEAR REACTOR; which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/922,541 entitled MANAGING DYNAMIC FORCES ON A NUCLEAR REACTOR SYSTEM and filed on Dec. 31, 2013, which are all herein incorporated by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

This disclosure generally relates to systems, devices and methods for attenuating dynamic forces and/or seismic forces on a nuclear reactor system or other structure.

BACKGROUND

Seismic isolation may be utilized to control or reduce the response of a component or structure to vertical and horizontal ground-input motions or accelerations. Seismic isolation may accomplish this by decoupling the motion of the component/structure from the driving motion of the substructure. In some instances, hardware (e.g., springs) may be positioned between the substructure and superstructure. Use of such hardware may minimize the dynamic response of the structure by increasing the fundamental period of vibration for the component or structure, resulting in lower in-structure accelerations and forces. To further reduce spectral response amplitudes (e.g., deflections, forces, etc.), other mechanisms may be employed that effectively reduce the peak amplitude to manageable levels.

Piping and other connections may be provided between a nuclear reactor and a secondary cooling system or other systems in the power generation facility. In the event of an earthquake or other seismic activity, significant forces or vibration may be transferred to, or by, the connections, which can place great stress on the connections. Forces resulting from thermal expansion also place stress on the connections. Maintaining integrity of these connections helps discourage the inadvertent release of radioactive or other materials from the various systems, and reduces maintenance or damage that might otherwise occur if one or more of the connections fail.

During a seismic event, dynamic and/or seismic forces may be transmitted from the ground, support surface, or surrounding containment building to a reactor module. The seismic forces which are transferred to the reactor module may experience a cumulative increase and/or amplification in amplitude and/or frequency depending on the number and/or length of intervening structures and/or systems that the seismic forces travel in reaching the reactor module. If the seismic forces become large enough, the reactor core and/or fuel elements may be damaged.

The present invention addresses these and other problems.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1A-1B provide a side view and top view, respectively, of a block diagram illustrating an example nuclear reactor system that includes one or more seismic isolation assemblies.

FIGS. 2A-2B illustrate an example implementation of a seismic isolation assembly.

FIGS. 3A-3B illustrate portions of example implementations of a seismic isolation assembly.

FIG. 4 illustrates an example implementation of a seismic isolation assembly.

FIG. 5 illustrates a force-deflection diagram for an example implementation of a seismic isolation assembly.

FIG. 6 illustrates an example power module assembly comprising a support structure.

FIG. 7 illustrates a side view of the power module assembly of FIG. 6.

FIG. 8 illustrates a partial view of an example support structure for a power module assembly comprising a seismically isolated containment vessel.

FIG. 9 illustrates a partial view of an example support structure for a seismically isolated containment vessel comprising multiple elastic damping devices.

FIG. 10 illustrates a partial view of an example elastic damping and retaining structure.

FIG. 11 illustrates a partial view of the elastic damping and retaining structure of FIG. 10 responsive to a longitudinal force.

FIG. 12 illustrates a partial view of the elastic damping and retaining structure of FIG. 10 responsive to a transverse force.

FIG. 13 illustrates a partial view of an example elastic damping and retaining structure for a seismically isolated power module.

FIG. 14 illustrates an example system for seismically isolating a power module.

FIG. 15 illustrates an example reactor pressure vessel.

FIG. 16 illustrates a partial cut-away view of an example reactor module comprising a containment vessel and a reactor pressure vessel assembly.

FIG. 17 illustrates a cross-sectional view of an example reactor module comprising a reactor pressure vessel and a containment vessel.

FIG. 18 illustrates an example system comprising radial keys.

FIG. 19 illustrates an example system comprising radial bumpers.

FIG. 20 illustrates the example system of FIG. 19 together with a reactor pressure vessel.

FIG. 21 illustrates an example system comprising a vertical key.

FIG. 22 illustrates a further example system comprising a vertical key.

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FIG. 23 illustrates an example system comprising a vertical key with an alternative force transmission path.

FIG. 24 illustrates a further example system comprising a vertical key with an alternative force transmission path.

FIG. 25 illustrates an example system comprising an integrated vertical key and lateral support.

FIG. 26 illustrates an example system comprising a conical shaped key.

FIG. 27 illustrates an enlarged partial view of the example system of FIG. 26 with the RPV undergoing thermal expansion.

FIG. 28 illustrates an enlarged partial view of the example system of FIG. 26 in an expanded state.

FIG. 29 illustrates a further example system comprising a conical shaped key.

FIG. 30 illustrates an example operation of the transmission of dynamic or seismic force through a reactor module structure.

FIG. 31 illustrates an example system comprising a stair-step shaped key.

FIG. 32 illustrates the example system of FIG. 31 in an expanded state.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a nuclear reactor system 100 (e.g., a nuclear reactor) that includes one or more seismic isolation assemblies 25. In some aspects, the nuclear reactor system 100 is a commercial power pressurized water reactor that utilizes natural circulation of a primary coolant to cool a nuclear core and transfer heat from the core to a secondary coolant through one or more heat exchangers. The secondary coolant (e.g., water), once heated (e.g., to steam, superheated steam or otherwise), can drive power generation equipment, such as steam turbines or otherwise, before being condensed and returned to the one or more heat exchangers.

With respect to the nuclear reactor system 100, a reactor core 20 is positioned at a bottom portion of a cylinder-shaped or capsule-shaped reactor vessel 70. Reactor core 20 includes a quantity of nuclear fuel assemblies, or rods (e.g., fissile material that produces, in combination with control rods, a controlled nuclear reaction), and optionally one or more control rods (not shown). As noted above, in some implementations, nuclear reactor system 100 is designed with passive operating systems (e.g., without a circulation pump for the primary coolant) employing the laws of physics to ensure that safe operation of the nuclear reactor 100 is maintained during normal operation or even in an emergency condition without operator intervention or supervision, at least for some predefined period of time.

A cylinder-shaped or capsule-shaped containment vessel 10 surrounds reactor vessel 70 and may be partially or completely submerged in a reactor pool, such as below waterline 90 (which may be at or just below a top surface 35 of the bay 5), within reactor bay 5. The volume between reactor vessel 70 and containment vessel 10 may be partially or completely evacuated to reduce heat transfer from reactor vessel 70 to the reactor pool. However, in other implementations, the volume between reactor vessel 70 and containment vessel 10 may be at least partially filled with a gas and/or a liquid that increases heat transfer between the reactor and containment vessels.

In the illustrated implementation, reactor core 20 is submerged within a liquid, such as water, which may include boron or other additives, which rises into channel 30 after making contact with a surface of the reactor core. The

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upward motion of heated coolant is represented by arrows 40 (e.g., primary coolant 40) within channel 30 (e.g., riser 30). The coolant travels over the top of heat exchangers 50 and 60 and is drawn downward by density difference along the inner walls of reactor vessel 70 thus allowing the coolant to impart heat to heat exchangers 50 and 60. After reaching a bottom portion of the reactor vessel 70, contact with reactor core 20 results in heating the coolant, which again rises through channel 30. Although heat exchangers 50 and 60 are shown as two distinct elements in FIG. 1, heat exchangers 50 and 60 may represent any number of helical (or other shape) coils that wrap around at least a portion of channel 30.

Normal operation of the nuclear reactor module proceeds in a manner wherein heated coolant rises through channel 30 and makes contact with heat exchangers 50 and 60. After contacting heat exchangers 50 and 60, the coolant sinks towards the bottom of reactor vessel 70 in a manner that coolant within reactor vessel 70 remains at a pressure above atmospheric pressure, thus allowing the coolant to maintain a high temperature without vaporizing (e.g., boiling).

As coolant within heat exchangers 50 and 60 increases in temperature, the coolant may begin to boil. As the coolant within heat exchangers 50 and 60 begins to boil, vaporized coolant, such as steam, may be used to drive one or more turbines that convert the thermal potential energy of steam into electrical energy. After condensing, coolant is returned to locations near the base of heat exchangers 50 and 60.

In the illustrated implementation, a downcomer region between the reflector 15 and the reactor vessel 70 provides a fluid path for the primary coolant 40 flowing in an annulus between the riser 30 and the reactor vessel 70 from a top end of the vessel 70 (e.g., after passing over the heat exchangers 50, 60) and a bottom end of the vessel 70 (e.g., below the core 20). The fluid path channels primary coolant 40 that has yet to be recirculated through the core 20 into convective contact with at least one surface of the reflector 15 in order to cool the reflector 15.

As illustrated, the containment vessel 10 may be coupled to the reactor bay 10 through one or more seismic isolation assemblies 25. As shown in FIG. 1B, each seismic isolation assembly 25 may be mounted in or on an embedment 29 that extends from an interior surface 27 of the reactor bay 5. Although four seismic isolation assemblies 25 are shown in FIG. 1B (one per wall of the interior surface 27 of the bay 5), there may be more or fewer seismic isolation assemblies 25 to support the containment vessel 10, as necessary. The containment vessel 10, in this implementation, includes support lugs 33 that rest on the embedments 29 adjacent the seismic isolation assemblies 25.

In some implementations, the seismic isolation assemblies 25, embedments 29, and support lugs 33 may be positioned at or near an axis through the containment vessel 10 that intersects an approximate center of gravity (CG), or slightly above the CG, of the vessel 10. The containment vessel 10 (and components therein) may be supported by the seismic isolation assemblies 25, embedments 29, and support lugs 33 in combination with a buoyancy force of the pool of liquid 90 acting on the containment vessel 10.

Generally, the illustrated seismic isolation assemblies 25 (shown in more detail in FIGS. 2A-2B and 3A-3B) may include one or more components that experience plastic deformation in response to a seismic event (or other motion-causing event) that results in a force on the containment vessel 10. For example, in the case of a seismic event, seismic energy may be dissipated through one or more portions of the assemblies 25 (e.g., a series of conical, or

other shapes bounded by convex surfaces, elements) by penetrating and contracting such portions to plastically deform the one or more portions of assemblies **25**. Energy may be absorbed by plastic deformation and friction between moving elements of the assemblies **25**.

In some implementations, stiffness of the assembly **25** may be controlled by sizing the plastically deformable elements. For example, a multiple of cones, dies, and cylinders (as the plastically deformable elements) can be arranged in an enclosure as shown in more detail in FIGS. **3A-3B**. The enclosure of the assembly **25** may move relative to the support lugs **29** (or other reactor bay embedment). In the case of a seismic event such as an earthquake, the seismic isolation assemblies **25** may contribute to a safe shut down of the nuclear reactor system **100**, while maintaining coolable geometry. In some implementations, the seismic isolation assemblies **25** may be sized for a sliding force above forces associated with an operating basis earthquake (OBE). An OBE may be typically one third to one half of forces associated with a safe shutdown earthquake (SSE). The SSE event is classified as a faulted condition, service Level D. The OBE event is classified as an Upset condition, service Level B.

When the reactor system **100** is subject to an earthquake below the intensity of an OBE, operations may resume shortly after the event without any major repairs or inspections. As a result, during an OBE, the seismic isolation assemblies **25** may not undergo any plastic deformation. For instance, if the seismic isolation assemblies **25** may remain linear (e.g., experience no or negligible plastic deformation) during an OBE, replacement of the isolation assemblies **25** may not be necessary. When the reactor system **100** is subject to an SSE, the isolation assemblies **25** may be plastically exercised and may be removed and/or replaced. Replacement of the seismic isolation assemblies **25**, may be much less costly, however, than replacement of other components (e.g., of the reactor system **100**).

FIGS. **2A-2B** illustrate an example implementation of a seismic isolation assembly **200**. In some aspects, the seismic isolation assembly **200** may be used as the seismic isolation assembly **25** shown in FIGS. **1A-1B**. FIG. **2A** shows an isometric view of several seismic isolation assemblies **200** mounted in an embedment **29**, while FIG. **2B** shows a top view of the seismic isolation assemblies **200** mounted in the embedment **29**, with several internal components exposed for detail.

As shown in FIG. **2A**, several (e.g., three) seismic isolation assemblies **200** may be mounted against vertical surfaces of the embedment **29**, thereby defining a pocket (e.g., for receiving a support lug of the containment vessel **10**). Each seismic isolation assembly **200** may be affixed to one of the vertical surfaces or may simply rest in the embedment **29** in contact with the vertical surface. In this example implementation, an enclosure **205** of the seismic isolation assembly **200** includes a rectangular cuboid portion that has a tapered, or ramped, top portion. Other shapes are contemplated by the present disclosure however. In some aspects, one or more plastically deformable elements may be mounted and/or contained, at least partially, within the cuboid portion **201**.

FIG. **2B** illustrates one or more internal components of each seismic isolation assembly **200**. As shown, each seismic isolation assembly **200** may include a conical stretching element **210**, a contracting die **215**, and a cylindrical plasticity element **220**. In some aspects, as illustrated in FIG. **2B**, there may be several (e.g., between two and five) sets of the conical stretching element **210**, contracting die **215**, and

cylindrical plasticity element **220**. Other numbers of sets are also contemplated by the present disclosure and may depend, at least in part, on a size (e.g., dimension in the x or z direction shown in FIG. **2A**) of the particular seismic isolation assembly **200**.

In the illustrated implementation, a portion of the cylindrical plasticity element **220** may extend from the enclosure **205** and attach (e.g., rigidly or semi-rigidly, for example, by welding) to the embedment **29** (and by extension to the reactor bay **5**). Thus, in some aspects, dynamic forces (e.g., seismic forces) that transmit through the reactor bay **5** may be borne by the seismic isolation assembly **200**, through the cylindrical plasticity element **220**.

In some aspects, an overall stiffness of each seismic isolation assembly **200** may be based, at least in part on the number of sets of the conical stretching element **210**, contracting die **215**, and cylindrical plasticity element **220**, as well as the relative size of one or more of the conical stretching element **210**, contracting die **215**, and cylindrical plasticity element **220** within the enclosure **205**. For example, turning briefly to FIG. **4**, an example idealized representation **400** of the example implementation of the seismic isolation assembly **200**.

As shown in FIG. **4**, a spring-slider and damper are positioned in parallel. Representation **400** includes an "I" node that represents a reactor building wall embedment (e.g., the embedment **29**) and a "J" node that represents the enclosure **205** of the seismic isolation assembly **200**. The stiffness of the plasticity elements (e.g., the conical stretching element **210**, contracting die **215**, and cylindrical plasticity element **220**) is represented by K1 (shown as a resistance element).

In some aspects, other "resistant" elements may also be accounted for, as shown in FIG. **4**. For example, a hydraulic damping feature is represented by the damping coefficient, C. Additional stiffness elements (e.g., springs, Belleville washers, or otherwise) may also be used in the nuclear reactor system **100** (e.g., mounted within the enclosures **205** or mounted between the enclosures **205** and the embedments **29**) to dissipate seismic forces (e.g., in parallel with the seismic isolation assembly **200**) and are generally represented by K2.

A gap is also shown that represents a space (e.g., filled with a gas or fluid) between the seismic isolation assembly **200** and the embedment **29** (e.g., between nodes J and I). The FSLIDE value, as shown, represents an absolute value of a spring force that must be exceeded before sliding occurs. This sliding force may result from plastic deformation (e.g., of one or more of the conical stretching element **210**, contracting die **215**, and cylindrical plasticity element **220**) and friction forces.

In some aspects, K1 may be chosen, and in some cases chosen in parallel with K2 and/or C, to attain a particular FSLIDE. The particular FSLIDE may be large enough so that seismic forces acting at node I from an event (e.g., an OBE or SSE event, or other event) do not exceed FSLIDE and, therefore, are completely or mostly borne by the elastic deformation that occurs in K1 (as well as, in some examples, spring and dampening of K2 and C, respectively).

Turning briefly to FIG. **5**, a force-deflection diagram **500** illustrates the relationship (without effects of K2 and C) between seismic force on the seismic isolation assembly **200** and deflection. As illustrated, below the FSLIDE force, the system is linear (assuming that there is no gap between the seismic isolation assembly **200** and the embedment **29**). When sliding occurs, the absorbed energy is proportional to the sliding force times the sliding distance.

In this illustration, the K1 and K2 springs are shown as linear (proportional) springs, but it can be generalized to any type of non-linear (inelastic, non-proportional) spring. For example, in other representations, the number of spring-damper-slider elements can be in any number and combination.

Returning to FIG. 2A, the illustrated seismic isolation assemblies 200 are attached to the embedment 29 through the cylindrical plasticity elements 220. As illustrated, there may be multiple sets of the conical stretching element 210, contracting die 215, and cylindrical plasticity element 220 arranged vertically within the enclosures 205. Contact between the embedment 29 and the cylindrical plasticity elements 220 may drive the relative movement of the enclosures 205 with respect to the bay 5 (and thus any structure that contains and is in contact with the bay 5).

The number of plasticity mechanisms inside each enclosure 205 (e.g., sets of the conical stretching element 210, contracting die 215, and cylindrical plasticity element 220) may be a function of an amount of dissipative energy needed to achieve adequate damping of the structure (e.g., the bay 5 or other structure) during a seismic event. The size of the enclosure 205 may be determined by an allowable relative displacement of the nuclear reactor system 100 with respect to the structure (e.g., about 4 inches as a maximum allowable displacement). The size of each isolation assembly 200 can be rather compact.

In some aspects, the conical stretching elements 210 and the cylindrical plasticity elements 220 may work together to dissipate forces in the X and Z directions as shown in FIG. 2A. For example, the conical stretching elements 210 may dissipate energy by plastically deforming the cylindrical plasticity elements 220 (e.g., by moving into the elements 210 toward the embedment 29) in response to forces in the X and Z directions. In some aspects, the contracting dies 215 may move with the movement of the conical stretching elements 210. In other aspects, the contracting dies 215 may simply be bores in the enclosures 205 through which the cylindrical plasticity elements 220 extend to contact the embedment 29, rather than separate components.

Based on a sufficient seismic force, movement of the conical stretching elements 210 into the cylindrical plasticity elements 220 (e.g., into the bores 230 as shown in FIG. 3A) may result in semi-permanent or permanent plastic deformation of the cylindrical plasticity elements 220. Further, during (and after) plastic deformation of the cylindrical plasticity elements 220, seismic forces may also be dissipated through friction, and associated heat, between the conical stretching elements 210 and the cylindrical plasticity elements 220.

FIGS. 3A-3B illustrate portions of example implementations of the seismic isolation assembly 200. FIG. 3A shows a close-up view of the plastically deformable elements mounted in the enclosure 205. As further shown in FIG. 3A, portions of the enclosure 205 and the plastically deformable elements may be surrounded by the pool of liquid 90 (e.g., water or other fluid). As described above, the liquid 90 may be a hydraulic damping feature (e.g., represented by the damping coefficient, C, in FIG. 4) that helps dissipate seismic forces, as well as heat generated by frictional forces of the plastically deformable elements as they slide/deform in response to the seismic forces.

In some aspects, a bore 230 of the cylindrical plasticity element 220 may enclose a working fluid (e.g., a gas such as air, or a liquid such as water). The working fluid may provide further dissipative affects for any seismic forces received by the seismic isolation assembly 200. For

example, the working fluid may dissipate some of the energy of the seismic event by compressing within the bore 230 as the conical stretching element 210 is forced into the bore 230 of the cylindrical plasticity element 220.

Turning to FIG. 3B, another implementation is shown that includes a fluid orifice 225 that fluidly connects the bore 230 and the reactor pool 90. In this aspect, the working fluid may be a portion of the pool 90. The working fluid, in both implementations shown in FIGS. 3A-3B, may provide further hydraulic damping to dissipate the seismic forces and movement due to such forces. For example, expelling the working fluid from the bore 230 during movement of the conical stretching element 210 into the bore 230 of the cylindrical plasticity element 220 may further dissipate seismic energy through hydraulic damping.

A number of implementations related to FIGS. 1-5 have been described. Nevertheless, it will be understood that various modifications may be made. For example, the steps of the disclosed techniques may be performed in a different sequence, components in the disclosed systems may be combined in a different manner, and/or the components may be replaced or supplemented by other components. Accordingly, other implementations are within the scope of the following examples.

A nuclear reactor seismic isolation assembly may include one or more deformable elements that, in response to energy generated by a seismic event and transmitted to the assembly through a structure that houses a nuclear reactor containment vessel, plastically deform to at least partially dissipate the seismic energy. In some aspects, portions of the energy are dissipated through the plastic deformation while other portions of the energy are dissipated through friction between two or more components of the assembly. In still other aspects, a working fluid may be compressed within the assembly to dissipate some of the seismic energy.

A nuclear reactor system may include one or more seismic isolation assemblies according to the present disclosure may limit a reaction force (or forces) on a structure (e.g., a containment pool structure or building structure) to a sliding force. The disclosed seismic isolation assemblies may be geographically neutral and thus be used world-wide in nuclear reactor systems. As another example, the seismic isolation assemblies may be passive isolators rather than active isolators, thereby reducing maintenance and inspection complexities (e.g., by limiting to visual inspection or otherwise). As another example, the disclosed seismic isolation assemblies may accommodate or promote a modular building design for nuclear reactor system structures.

A nuclear reactor seismic isolation assembly may comprise an enclosure that defines a volume and a plastically-deformable member mounted, at least in part, within the volume. A stretching member may be moveable within the enclosure to plastically-deform the plastically deformable member in response to a dynamic force exerted on the enclosure. The enclosure may be attachable to a portion of a nuclear reactor containment vessel. The dynamic force may comprise a seismically generated force.

In some examples, the plastically deformable member may comprise a first portion mounted within the enclosure and a second portion that extends through a die member to an exterior of the enclosure. The second portion may comprise a weldable portion. Additionally, the die member may be moveable with the stretching member in response to the dynamic force exerted on the enclosure.

The stretching member may be mounted within a portion of a bore that extends through the plastically-deformable member. The portion of the bore may comprise a first

diameter approximately equal to an outer dimension of the stretching member, the bore comprising another portion that comprises a second diameter smaller than the first diameter. Additionally, the second diameter may be stretched to approximately equal the first diameter based on movement of the stretching element through the bore in response to the dynamic force exerted on the enclosure.

In some examples, the bore may at least partially enclose a working fluid that dissipates at least a portion of energy generated by the dynamic force exerted on the enclosure based on movement of the stretching element through the bore in response to the dynamic force exerted on the enclosure. The working fluid may comprise a portion of a fluid enclosed in a nuclear reactor bay.

A method for managing dynamic forces and/or for attenuating seismic forces may comprise receiving a force on a seismic isolation assembly in contact with a nuclear reactor pressure vessel, wherein the force may be generated at least in part by a seismic event. The received force may be transmitted through an enclosure of the seismic isolation assembly to a stretching member, and the stretching member may be moved within the enclosure based on the received force.

The method may further comprise plastically deforming a deformable member, that is at least partially enclosed in the enclosure, with the stretching member, and dissipating at least a portion of the received force based on plastically deforming the deformable member.

Additionally, the method may comprise generating friction between the deformable member and the stretching member based on repeated movement of the stretching member into the deformable member based on the received force, and dissipating another portion of the received force based on the generated friction.

In some examples, a working fluid enclosed in a chamber of the deformable element may be compressed based on movement of the stretching member into the deformable member based on the received force, and another portion of the received force may be dissipated based on the compression of the working fluid. The working fluid may be expelled to a reactor bay that encloses a liquid, through a fluid passageway that fluidly couples the chamber and the reactor bay. Additionally, another portion of the received force may be dissipated through the liquid enclosed in the reactor bay.

One or more spring members may be compressed based on movement of the stretching member into the deformable member based on the received force, and another portion of the received force may be dissipated based on the compression of the one or more spring members. In some examples, the received force may be transmitted through the deformable member that is in contact with a structure that houses the nuclear reactor pressure vessel.

A nuclear reactor system may comprise a reactor bay that encloses a liquid and a nuclear reactor containment vessel that is mounted within the reactor bay with lugs positioned in embedments of the reactor bay. Additionally, the system may comprise seismic isolation assemblies mounted in the embedments and between the lugs and walls of the embedments. Each of the seismic isolation assemblies may comprise an enclosure that defines a volume, a plastically-deformable member mounted, at least in part, within the volume, and a stretching member moveable within the enclosure to plastically-deform the plastically-deformable member in response to a dynamic force exerted on the reactor bay.

The plastically-deformable member may comprise a first portion mounted within the enclosure and a second portion

that extends through a die member to a wall of one of the embedments. The second portion may be anchored to the wall. In some examples, the die member may be moveable with the stretching member in response to the dynamic force exerted on the reactor bay.

Additionally, the stretching member may be mounted within a portion of a bore that extends through the plastically deformable member. The portion of the bore may comprise a first diameter approximately equal to an outer dimension of the stretching member, and another portion that comprises a second diameter smaller than the first diameter. In some examples, the second diameter may be stretched to approximately equal the first diameter based on movement of the stretching element through the bore in response to the dynamic force exerted on the reactor bay.

The bore may at least partially enclose a working fluid that dissipates at least a portion of energy generated by the dynamic force exerted on the enclosure based on movement of the stretching element through the bore in response to the dynamic force exerted on the reactor bay. The nuclear reactor system may further comprise a passage that fluidly couples the bore to a volume defined by the reactor bay. The working fluid may comprise a portion of a fluid enclosed in the volume.

FIG. 6 illustrates an example power module assembly comprising a containment vessel 624, reactor vessel 622 and a support structure 620. The containment vessel 624 may be cylindrical in shape, and may have ellipsoidal, domed or hemispherical upper and lower ends 626, 628. The entire power module assembly 625 may be submerged in a pool of liquid 636 (for example, water) which serves as an effective heat sink. In other examples, the power module assembly 625 may be partially submerged in the pool of liquid 636. The pool of liquid 636 is retained in reactor bay 627. The reactor bay 627 may be comprised of reinforced concrete or other conventional materials. The pool of liquid 636 and the containment vessel 624 may further be located below ground 609. In some examples, the upper end 626 of the containment vessel 624 may be located completely below the surface of the pool of liquid 636. The containment vessel 624 may be welded or otherwise sealed to the environment, such that liquids and gas do not escape from, or enter, the power module assembly 625.

The containment vessel 624 is shown suspended in the pool of liquid 636 by one or more support structures 620, above a lower surface of the reactor bay 627. The containment vessel 624 may be made of stainless steel or carbon steel, and may include cladding. The power module assembly 625 may be sized so that it can be transported on a rail car. For example, the containment vessel 624 may be constructed to be approximately 4.3 meters in diameter and 17.7 meters in height (length). Refueling of a reactor core may be performed by transporting the entire power module assembly 625 by rail car or overseas, for example, and replacing it with a new or refurbished power module assembly which has a fresh supply of fuel rods.

The containment vessel 624 encapsulates and, in some conditions, cools the reactor core. The containment vessel 624 is relatively small, has a high strength and may be capable of withstanding six or seven times the pressure of conventional containment designs in part due to its smaller overall volume. Given a break in the primary cooling system of the power module assembly 625 no fission products are released into the environment.

The power module assembly 625 and containment vessel 624 are illustrated as being completely submerged in the pool of liquid 636. All sides, including the top and bottom,

of the containment vessel **624** are shown as being in contact with, and surrounded by, the liquid **636**. However in some examples, only a portion of containment vessel **624** may be submerged in the pool of liquid **636**. The one or more support structures **620** are located at an approximate mid-point of the containment vessel **624**. In some examples, the one or more support structures **620** are located at an approximate center of gravity (CG), or slightly above the CG, of the power module **625**. The power module **625** is supported by the support structure **620** in combination with a buoyancy force of the pool of liquid **636** acting on the containment vessel **624**. In some examples, the power module assembly **625** is supported by two support structures **620**. The first support structure may be located on a side of the power module assembly **625** opposite the second support structure.

The one or more support structures **620** may be configured to support both the containment vessel **624** and the reactor vessel **622**. In some examples, the one or more support structures **620** are located at an approximate CG, or slightly above the CG, of the reactor vessel **622**.

FIG. 7 illustrates a side view of the power module assembly **625** of FIG. 6. The containment vessel **624** as well as the reactor vessel **622**, may be configured to pivot about the support structure **620**, due to a rotational force RF acting on the power module **625**. In some examples, the support structure **620** is located slightly above the CG of the power module **625**, so that the lower end **628** tends to return to a bottom facing position within the reactor bay **627** due to gravity after the rotational force RF has subsided. The rotation of the containment vessel **624** also allows for greater maneuverability during installation or removal of the power module assembly **625** from the reactor bay **627**. In some examples, the containment vessel **624** may be rotated between a vertical and a horizontal orientation or position of the power module assembly **625**.

The power module **625** is further illustrated as comprising a base support, such as a base skirt **730**, located at the lower end **628** of the containment vessel **624**. The base skirt **730** may be rigidly mounted to, welded on, and/or form an integral part of, the containment vessel **624**. In some examples, the base skirt **730** may be designed to support the weight of the power module **625** if the base skirt **730** is placed on the ground, on a transport device, or in a refueling station, for example. During normal operation (e.g. power operation) of the power module **625**, the base skirt **730** may be suspended off the ground or positioned above the bottom of the reactor bay **627**, such that the base skirt **730** is not in contact with any exterior component or surface.

When the power module **625** rotates about the support structure **620**, the lower end **628** of the containment vessel **625** tends to move in a lateral or transverse direction Lo. The base skirt **730** may be configured to contact an alignment device **735** located in the pool of liquid **636** when the containment vessel **624** pivots a predetermined amount about the support structure **620**. For example, the alignment device **735** may be sized so that the power module **625** is free to rotate within a range of motion or particular angle of rotation.

The alignment device **735** may comprise an exterior diameter that is smaller than an interior diameter of the base skirt **730**. The alignment device **735** may be sized to fit within the base skirt **730**, such that the base skirt **730** does not contact the alignment device **735** when the power module **625** is at rest. In some examples, the base skirt **730** may be configured to contact the alignment device **735** when the containment vessel **624** pivots about the support structure **620**. The base skirt **730** may not inhibit a vertical range

of motion of the containment vessel **623**, in the event that a vertical force acts upon the power module **625**. The alignment device **735** may be rigidly mounted (e.g. bolted, welded or otherwise attached) to the bottom of the reactor bay **627**. In some examples, one or more dampeners **638** are located between the base skirt **730** and the alignment device **735** to attenuate a contact force between the base skirt **730** and the alignment device **735** when the power module **625** pivots or rotates. The one or more dampeners **738** may be mounted to or otherwise attached to either the alignment device **735** (as illustrated) or the base skirt **730**.

FIG. 8 illustrates a partial view of an example support structure **840** for a power module assembly comprising a seismically isolated containment vessel **824**. The support structure **840** comprises a support arm **845** and a mounting structure **847**. The support arm **845** may be located at an approximate midpoint of the containment vessel **824**. The mounting structure **847** may be submerged in liquid (for example water). Additionally, the mounting structure **847** may be an extension of, mounted to, recessed in, or integral with, the wall of the reactor bay **627** (FIG. 6).

A damping device **846** may be disposed between the support arm **845** and the mounting structure **847**. At least a portion of the weight of the containment vessel **824** may be transferred to the support structure **847** through the damping device **846**. Damping device **846** may be elastic, resilient or deformable, and may comprise a spring, pneumatic or hydraulic shock absorber, or other vibration or force attenuating device known in the art. In some examples, the damping device **846** comprises natural or synthetic rubber. The damping device **846** may comprise an elastic material that is manufactured from petroleum or other chemical compounds and that is resistant to material breakdown when exposed to radiation or humidity. In yet another example, the damping device **846** comprises soft deformable metal or corrugated metal.

The damping device **846** may be configured to attenuate dynamic or seismic forces transferred by and between the support arm **845** and the mounting structure **847**. For example, a vertical or longitudinal force FV, acting along a longitudinal or lengthwise direction of the containment vessel **824**, may act through the damping device **846**. Additionally, a horizontal or transverse force FH may be exerted on the damping device **846** in any direction perpendicular to the longitudinal force FV. Transverse force FH may be understood to include a direction vector located in the plane defined by the X and Z coordinates of illustrative coordinate system **48**, whereas the longitudinal force FV may be understood to include a direction vector oriented in the Y coordinate, the Y coordinate being perpendicular to the X-Z plane of the illustrative coordinate system **848**.

In some examples, by placing the support arm **845** at an approximate center of gravity of the containment vessel **824**, a transverse force FH acting on the power module **625** tends to cause the containment vessel **824** to slide rather than rotate. Locating the support arm **845** on the containment vessel **824** at a particular height or position provides for controllability for how the containment vessel **824** will behave when it is subjected to one or more forces FH, FV, or RF.

The damping device **846** may compress in a vertical direction to absorb or attenuate the longitudinal force FV. In some examples, the damping device **846** may be configured to compress or flex in a horizontal direction to attenuate the transverse force FH. Additionally, the damping device **846** may be configured to slide along the mounting structure **847** within the X-Z plane during a seismic activity, such as an

earthquake or explosion. Forces FV and FH may also be understood to result from thermal expansion of one or more components of the power module 625, including containment vessel 824, in any or all of the three dimensions X, Y, Z.

As a result of the compression or movement of the damping device 846, less of the forces FV and FH are transferred from the mounting structure 847 to the containment vessel 824, or from the containment vessel 824 to the mounting structure 847. The containment vessel 824 experiences less severe shock than what might otherwise be transferred if the support arm 845 were rigidly mounted to, or in direct contact with, the mounting structure 847. The containment vessel 824 may be configured to rotate about the horizontal axis X, due to a rotational force RF acting on the power module 625 (FIG. 7).

Support arm 845 may be rigidly attached to the containment vessel 824. The one or more elastic damping devices 846 may be located between, and in contact with, both the support arm 845 and the mounting structure 847 located in the liquid 636 (FIG. 6). The elastic damping device 846 may provide a pivot point between the support arm 845 and the support structure 847, wherein the containment vessel 24 pivots or rotates about the elastic damping device 846, similar to that illustrated by FIG. 7. The weight of the containment vessel 824 may be supported, in part, by a buoyancy force of the liquid 636. The surrounding liquid 636 (FIG. 6) also serves to attenuate any of the transverse force FH, longitudinal force FV, and rotational force RF acting on the containment vessel 824.

In some examples, the support arm 845 comprises a hollow shaft 829. The hollow shaft 829 may be configured to provide a through-passage for an auxiliary or secondary cooling system. For example, piping may exit the containment vessel 824 via the hollow shaft 829.

FIG. 9 illustrates a partial view of a support structure 950 for a seismically isolated containment vessel 924 comprising a support arm 955 and multiple elastic damping devices 952, 954. The first elastic damping device 952 may be located between the support arm 955 and a lower mounting structure 957. The second elastic damping device 954 may be located between the support arm 955 and an upper mounting structure 958. In some examples, the first and second elastic damping devices 952, 954 are mounted to or otherwise attached to the support arm 955. In other examples, one or both of the first and second elastic damping devices 952, 954 are mounted to the lower and upper mounting structures 957, 958, respectively.

At least a portion of the weight of the containment vessel 924 may be transferred to the lower support structure 957 through the first elastic damping device 952. The first elastic damping device 952 may be under compression when the containment vessel 924 is at rest. The first elastic damping device 952 may be understood to attenuate longitudinal force acting between the support arm 955 and the lower mounting structure 957. The second elastic damping device 952 may also be understood to attenuate longitudinal force acting between the support arm 955 and the upper mounting structure 958. A longitudinal or vertical movement of the containment vessel 924 may be constrained by the lower and upper mounting structures 957, 958 as they come into contact with, or cause a compression of, the first and second elastic damping devices 952, 954, respectively. First and second elastic damping devices 952, 954 may provide similar functionality as a snubber or pair of snubbers in a conventional shock absorber.

In some examples, the lower mounting structure 957 comprises a recess 956. The recess 956 may be sized such that it has an interior dimension or diameter that is larger than an exterior dimension or diameter of the first elastic damping device 952. The first elastic damping device 952 is illustrated as being seated or located in the recess 956. The recess 956 may operate to constrain a movement of the containment vessel 924 in one or more lateral or transverse directions. The first elastic damping device 952 may be configured to compress or flex when it presses up against a wall of the recess 956. In some examples, the recess 956 may restrict an amount or distance that the first elastic damping device 952 is allowed to slide on the lower mounting structure 957 when the containment vessel 924 experiences lateral or transverse force.

FIG. 10 illustrates a partial view of an elastic damping and retaining structure 1060 for a seismically isolated containment vessel 1024. The damping and retaining structure 1060 comprises a deformable portion 1066. The deformable portion 1066 may be dome shaped, elliptical or hemispherical in shape. Mounting structure 1067 may comprise a recess 1068, and the deformable portion 1066 may be seated or located in the recess 1068. The deformable portion 1066 and recess 1068 may be understood to function similarly as a ball joint, wherein the deformable portion 1066 rotates or pivots within the recess 1068.

The recess 1068 is illustrated as being concave in shape. The mounting structure 1067 may be configured to constrain a movement of the containment vessel 1024 as a result of transverse force FH being applied in a lateral plane identified as the X-Z plane in the illustrative coordinate system 1048. Additionally, the mounting structure 1067 may be configured to constrain a longitudinal movement of the containment vessel 1024 as a result of a longitudinal force FV being applied in a direction Y perpendicular to the X-Z plane. The containment vessel 1024 may be configured to rotate about the horizontal axis X, due to a rotational force RF acting on the power module 625 (FIG. 7). In some examples, the recess 1068 forms a hemispherical, domed or elliptical bowl. A base support, such as base skirt 630 (FIG. 6), located at the bottom end of the containment vessel 1024 may be configured to constrain a rotation of the containment vessel 1024 as the deformable portion 1066 pivots or rotates in the recess 1068.

The mounting structure 1067 may be configured to support some or all of the weight of the power module. In some examples, a buoyancy force of the liquid 636 supports substantially all of the weight of the power module, such that the recess 1068 of the mounting structure 1067 may primarily operate to center or maintain a desired position of the power module.

FIG. 11 illustrates a partial view of the elastic damping and retaining structure 1060 of FIG. 10 responsive to a longitudinal force FV. The recess 1068 in the mounting structure 1067 may comprise a radius of curvature R2 that is greater than a radius of curvature R1 of the deformable portion 1066 of the damping and retaining structure 1060 when the containment vessel 1024 is at rest. Longitudinal force FV may be applied to support arm 1065 (FIG. 10) as a result of vertical movement of the containment vessel 1024, or as a result of force transmitted from the mounting structure 1067 to the containment vessel 1024. The longitudinal force may result from an earthquake or explosion for example.

When a dynamic longitudinal force FV is applied to the support arm 1065, the damping device may be configured to compress from a static condition illustrated in solid lines by

reference number **1066**, to a dynamic condition illustrated in dashed lines by reference number **1066A**. The radius of curvature of the deformable portion **1066** temporarily approximates the radius of curvature **R2** of the recess **1068** in the dynamic condition **1066A**. As the effective radius of the deformable portion **1066** increases, this results in an increased contact surface to form between the deformable portion **1066** and the recess **1068**. As the contact surface increases, this acts to resist or decrease additional compression of the deformable hemispherical portion **1066**, and attenuates the longitudinal force **FV**. In some examples, the effective radius of curvature of the deformable hemispherical portion **1066** increases with an increase in longitudinal force **FV**. When the dynamic longitudinal force **FV** has attenuated, the deformable portion **1066** may be configured to retain its original radius of curvature **R1**.

FIG. **12** illustrates a partial view of the elastic damping and retaining structure **1060** of FIG. **10** responsive to a transverse force **FH**. The recess **1068** may be configured to constrain a movement of the deformable portion **1066** in at least two degrees of freedom. For example, the movement of the deformable portion **1066** may be constrained in the **X** and **Z** directions of the illustrative coordinate system **1048** of FIG. **10**. The deformable portion **1066** may be configured to compress or flex when it presses up against a wall of the recess **1068**. The compression or deformation of the deformable portion **1066** attenuates the horizontal force **FH**. In some examples, the recess **1068** may restrict an amount or distance that the deformable portion **1066** is allowed to slide on the mounting structure **1067** when the containment vessel **1024** experiences transverse force **FH**. When a transverse force **FH** is applied to the support arm **1065**, the damping device moves or slides from the static condition illustrated in solid lines by reference number **1066**, to the dynamic condition illustrated in dashed lines by reference number **1066B**.

Whereas the recess **956**, **1068** are illustrated in FIGS. **9** and **10** as being formed in the mounting structure **957**, **1067**, other examples may include where the recess **956**, **1068** is formed in the support arm **955**, **1065**, and wherein the damping device **952**, **1066** is mounted to the mounting structure **957**, **1067**. These alternate examples may otherwise operate similarly as the examples illustrated in FIG. **9** or **10**, to constrain movement of the containment vessel **924**, **1024** in one or both of the transverse and longitudinal directions.

FIG. **13** illustrates a partial view of an elastic damping and retaining structure **1370** for a seismically isolated power module **1380**. The power module **1380** comprises a reactor vessel **1322** and a containment vessel **1324**. The elastic damping and retaining structure **1370** comprises one or more support arms, or trunnions, and one or more mounting structures. A first trunnion **1375**, protrudes or extends from the reactor vessel **1322**. The reactor vessel trunnion **1375** provides similar functionality as one or more of the support arms described above with respect to FIGS. **6-10**. A second trunnion **1385** protrudes or extends from the containment vessel **1324**. The reactor vessel trunnion **1375** lies along the same, single axis of rotation as the containment vessel trunnion **1385**. The axis of rotation **X** is shown in illustrative coordinate system **1348**. One or both of the reactor vessel **1322** and containment vessel **1324** may rotate about the axis of rotation **X** when a rotational force **RF** acts on the power module **1325**. The reactor vessel **1322** and containment vessel **1324** may rotate in the same or in opposite rotational directions from each other.

Reactor vessel trunnion **1375** is shown supported on a first mounting structure **1377**. The mounting structure **1377** protrudes or extends from the containment vessel **1324**. The reactor vessel trunnion **1375** may be configured to move or slide along the mounting structure **1377** when horizontal force **FH1** or **FH2** acts on the power module **1380**. A first damping element **1376** may be configured to attenuate or reduce the impact of horizontal force **FH2** transmitted by or between the reactor vessel **1322** and containment vessel **1324**. The first damping element **1376** also helps to center or maintain a respective position or distance between the reactor vessel **1322** and containment vessel **1324** when the power module **1380** is at rest or in a static condition.

Containment vessel trunnion **1385** is shown supported on a second mounting structure **1387**. In some examples, the mounting structure **1387** protrudes or extends from a reactor bay wall **1327**. The containment vessel trunnion **1385** may move or slide along the mounting structure **1387** when horizontal force **FH1** or **FH2** acts on the power module **1380**. A second damping element **1386** may be configured to attenuate or reduce the impact of horizontal force **FH1** transmitted by or between the containment vessel **1324** and the reactor bay wall **1327**. The second damping element **1386** also helps to center or maintain a respective position or distance between the containment vessel **1324** and the reactor bay wall **1327** when the power module **1380** is at rest or in a static condition.

The first damping element **1376** is shown housed in the reactor vessel trunnion **1375**. A reactor vessel retaining pin **1390** is located in the reactor vessel trunnion **1375** to provide a contact surface for the first damping element **1376**. The reactor vessel retaining pin **1390** may be an extension of the containment vessel **1324** or the containment vessel trunnion **1385**, for example. In some examples, the reactor vessel retaining pin **1390** is rigidly connected to the containment vessel **1324**. The reactor vessel retaining pin **1390** may extend through both sides of the containment vessel **1324**.

Horizontal force **FH2** may be transmitted by or between the reactor vessel **1322** and the containment vessel **1324** via the reactor vessel retaining pin **1390** and the first damping element **1376**. Vertical movement of the reactor vessel **1322** and containment vessel may be constrained by the interaction between the reactor vessel trunnion **1375**, reactor vessel retaining pin **90**, and the mounting structure **1377**. Vertical movement of the reactor vessel **1322** and containment vessel **1324** may be further constrained by the interaction between the containment vessel trunnion **1385** and the mounting structure **1387**.

The elastic damping and retaining structure **1370** may further be configured to provide a thermal buffer for the power module **1380**. In addition to attenuating, damping, or otherwise reducing dynamic and seismic forces from being transferred to or between the components of the power module **1380**, the elastic damping and retaining structure **1370** may reduce the thermal heat transfer between the reactor vessel **1322** and the containment vessel **1324**. For example, one or both of the first and second mounting structures **1377**, **1387** may be lined with thermal insulation.

FIG. **14** illustrates an example process **1400** for seismically isolating a power module. The system **1400** may be understood to operate with, but not limited by, means illustrated or described with respect to the various examples illustrated herein as FIGS. **1-13**.

At operation **1410**, a power module is supported on a support structure. The support structure may be located at or slightly above an approximate midpoint, or an approximate center of gravity, of the power module.

At operation **1420**, rotation of the power module is constrained. The support structure may serve as a pivot for the rotation.

At operation **1430**, seismic forces transmitted through the support structure to the power module are damped or attenuated. In some examples, the seismic forces are attenuated by a damping device comprising an elastic material.

At operation **1440**, movement of the power module in one or more transverse directions is constrained within a fixed range of motion. Upon an attenuation of a transverse force, the power module returns to its original at-rest position. In some examples, the damping device comprises a rounded surface, and the support structure comprises a rounded recess configured to house the rounded surface.

At operation **1450**, movement of the power module in a longitudinal direction is constrained within a fixed range of motion. Upon an attenuation of a longitudinal force, the power module returns to its original at-rest position. The longitudinal directional is perpendicular to the one or more transverse directions of operation **1440**.

A number of examples related to FIGS. **1-14** have been described. Nevertheless, it will be understood that various modifications may be made. For example, the steps of the disclosed techniques may be performed in a different sequence, components in the disclosed systems may be combined in a different manner, and/or the components may be replaced or supplemented by other components. Accordingly, other implementations are within the scope of the following examples.

A power module may comprise a containment vessel completely submerged in a pool of liquid, a reactor vessel housed in the containment vessel, and a support structure that comprises support arms coupled to opposed sides of the containment vessel. The pool of liquid may be disposed below a terranean surface, i.e., the pool may be subterranean. Additionally, the containment vessel may be configured to slide in a substantially lateral direction in response to a lateral force acting on the containment vessel.

The support structure may be located at an approximate midpoint of the containment vessel and configured to rotate at least one of the reactor vessel or the containment vessel about an axis that extends between the support arms and through the approximate midpoint of the containment vessel. Additionally, the power module may be supported by the support structure in combination with a buoyancy force of the pool of liquid acting on the containment vessel.

The support structure may comprise a first support structure disposed on a first side of the containment vessel, and the power module may further comprise a second support structure disposed on a second side of the containment vessel opposite the first side.

In some examples, the support structure may be located at or slightly above the approximate center of gravity of the power module. In some examples, the support structure may comprise an elastic damping device. The support arms may be rigidly attached to the containment vessel. Additionally, the elastic damping device may be located between and in contact with one of the support arms and a mounting structure in the pool of liquid.

The elastic damping device may be configured to compress in response to the support arm and the mounting structure being pressed together. Additionally, the elastic damping device may be configured to exert a reactionary force against at least one of the support arm and the mounting structure in response to the support arm and the mounting structure being pressed together

In some examples, the mounting structure may be rigidly coupled to a reactor bay at least partially enclosing the pool of liquid, and the mounting structure may extend from a substantially vertical wall of the reactor bay to a location in the pool of liquid between the substantially vertical wall and the containment vessel. The support arm may comprise a hollow shaft. Additionally, the mounting structure may comprise a recess configured to receive a portion of the elastic damping device.

A pivot may be located at an interface between the support structure and the mounting structure. For example, the pivot may be located at or near the elastic damping device, and the containment vessel may be configured to rotate about the pivot in response to a rotational force acting on the containment vessel.

The power module may further comprise a base support or a base skirt located at a lower end of the containment vessel. The containment vessel may be configured to pivot about the support arm, and the base support may be configured to contact an alignment device in the pool of liquid if the containment vessel pivots about the support arm.

The base support may be rigidly coupled to the lower end of the containment vessel around a circumference of an outer surface of the containment vessel. The alignment device may extend into the pool of liquid from a bottom surface of a reactor bay at least partially enclosing the pool of liquid, and a top portion of the alignment devices may be disposed within a volume defined by the base support. Additionally, the power module may comprise at least one dampener disposed between the top portion of the alignment device and the base support, and within the volume of the base support.

The dampener may be configured to compress in response to contact between the alignment device and the base support, and the dampener may be configured exert a reactionary force against at least one of the alignment device or the base support, in response to the contact.

The power module may further comprise a first damping device interposed between the reactor vessel and the containment vessel, and a second damping device interposed between the containment vessel and a pool wall. The first and second damping devices may be configured to attenuate a dynamic force and/or seismic force acting on the power module.

FIG. **15** illustrates an example reactor pressure vessel (RPV) **1500** comprising a top head **1510** and a bottom head **1520** mounted on either end of a substantially cylindrical shaped body **1550**. Bottom head **1520** may be removably attached to body **1550** during assembly, installation, refueling, and/or other modes of operation of RPV **1500**. Bottom head **1520** may be attached to body **1550** by a bolted flange. Additionally, RPV **1500** may comprise one or more support structures **1530** located about a circumference of body **1550**. In some examples, RPV **1500** comprises four support structures **1530** located at ninety degree increments around body **1550**.

Support structures **1530** may comprise a support member **1535** attached to RPV **1500** and one or more mounting bases **1532**. Support member **1535** may be configured to extend away from body **1550** at an angle in order to provide a clearance between body **1550** and the one or more mounting bases **1532**. For example, the one or more mounting bases **1532** may be positioned so that they are radially located farther away from body **1550** than any other component of RPV **1500**. Support structures **1530** may be configured to support RPV **1500** in a generally vertical, or longitudinal direction. In some examples, support structure **1530** may also be

configured to support RPV 1500 in a generally horizontal direction, transverse direction, radial direction, and/or lateral direction.

Support structure 1530 may be configured to provide a thermal "anchor" for RPV 1500. For example, during thermal expansion of RPV 1500, there may be assumed to be no thermal expansion at the portion of RPV 1500 adjacent to support structure 1530, at least in a vertical or longitudinal direction. Rather, RPV 1500 may be understood to expand in a generally longitudinal direction as a function of the distance from support structure 1530. A top head of RPV 1500 may move upwards and a bottom head of RPV 1500 may move downwards, with respect to support structure 1530.

One or more radial mounts 1540 may also be mounted to body 1550. In some examples, RPV 1500 may comprise four radial mounts 1540 located at ninety degree increments around body 1550. Radial mounts 1540 may be configured to provide lateral and/or rotational support of RPV 1500. In some examples, radial mounts 1540 may be configured as radial links or lugs that project from body 1550. Radial mounts 1540 may be made operable with one or more of the seismic isolation and/or damping systems illustrated in FIGS. 1-14.

FIG. 16 illustrates a partial cut-away view of an example reactor module 1650 comprising a containment vessel (CNV) 1600 and an RPV assembly, such as RPV 1500 of FIG. 15. CNV 1600 may be configured to support RPV 1500 at one or both of support structures 1530 and radial mounts 1540. CNV 1600 may comprise a platform 1630 which projects inward toward RPV 1500 and serves as a base for support structures 1530 to rest on. Support structures 1530 may be constrained in the vertical direction by platform 1630 and in the transverse or radial direction by the inner wall of CNV 1600. In other examples, a bolted interface may be used to transfer lateral loads from support structure 1530 to platform 1630. CNV 1600 may be configured to support the support structures 1530 of RPV 1500 at a steam generator plenum level of CNV 1600.

CNV 1600 may comprise a top head 1610 and a bottom head 1620. In some examples, bottom head 1620 may be removably attached to CNV 1600 at a bolted flange 1640. CNV 1600 may be configured to support radial mounts 1540 of RPV 1500 near flange 1640. Radial mounts 1540 may be constrained in a longitudinal direction, a radial direction, and/or a circumferential direction within CNV 1600. Radial mounts 1540 may be configured to allow for thermal expansion between RPV 1500 and CNV 1600. In some examples, radial mounts 1540 may be horizontally pinned between RPV 1500 and CNV 1600, at the bottom half of RPV 1500.

The seismic and/or dynamic loadings experienced by reactor module 1650 may result in fuel acceleration and/or fuel impact loads. Fuel accelerations in particular may be significantly decreased by the provision of supports, such as radial mounts 1540, located at or near the bottom half of RPV 1500.

CNV 1600 may be configured to contain and support RPV 1500. Additionally, CNV 1600 may house a reactor cooling system, internal piping, internal valves, and other components of reactor module 1650. Support structures 1530, in combination with radial mounts 1540, may be configured within reactor module 1650 to withstand loads due to thermal transients and expansion and to support lateral loads due to seismic and other dynamic loadings. For example, reactor module 1650 may be configured to withstand and/or respond to at least two types of seismic conditions, including

a Safe Shutdown Earthquake (SSE) event and an Operating Basis Earthquake (OBE) event, as previously discussed.

Bottom head 1620 may comprise and/or be attached to a base support, such as a base skirt 1670. The base skirt 1670 may be rigidly mounted to, welded on, and/or form an integral part of, the CNV 1600. Base skirt 1670 may be configured to rest on the ground and/or on a lower surface of a reactor bay. In some examples, substantially all of the weight of reactor module 1650 may be supported by base skirt 1670.

One or more radial mounts 1645 may be mounted to CNV 1600. In some examples, CNV 1600 may comprise four radial mounts 1645 located at ninety degree increments. Radial mounts 1645 may be configured to primarily provide lateral and/or rotational support of CNV 1600. In some examples, radial mounts 1645 may be configured as radial links or lugs that project from CNV 1600. Radial mounts 1645 may be made operable with one or more of the seismic isolation and/or damping systems illustrated in FIGS. 1-14.

FIG. 17 illustrates a cross-sectional view of an example reactor module 1700 comprising an RPV 1750 and a CNV 1760. RPV 1750 may be associated with a first diameter D1 and similarly CNV 1760 may be associated with a second diameter D2 larger than first diameter D1. A bottom head 1755 of RPV 1750 may be separated or spaced apart from bottom head 1765 of CNV by a distance 1790. Distance 790 may provide space for a thermal insulation to substantially envelop RPV 1750. In some examples, the thermal insulation may comprise a partial vacuum.

The space provided by distance 1790 may further be configured to provide for thermal expansion and/or thermal transients of RPV 1750 within CNV 1760. CNV 1760 may be at least partially submerged in water, and the amount of thermal expansion of RPV 1750 may be considerably larger than that of CNV 1760 based on the differences in operating temperature. Additionally, distance 1790 may provide clearance between RPV 1750 and CNV 1760 during a seismic event to keep the vessels from contacting each other.

A reactor core 1710 may be housed within RPV 1750. Reactor core 1710 may be spaced apart from RPV 1750 by a distance 1720. The space formed by distance 1720 may be configured to promote circulation of coolant within RPV 1750 to pass through reactor core 1710. Additionally, distance 1720 may provide clearance between RPV 1750 and reactor core 1710 during a dynamic event or a seismic event or to account for thermal expansion and/or thermal transients.

During a seismic event, seismic forces generated from within the ground 1775 and/or from below a support surface 1740, such as a floor of a surrounding containment building, may be transmitted to a base support, such as a base skirt 1770 of CNV 1760. The seismic forces may follow up through the container wall of CNV 1760 through a transmission path 1705 which may be transferred to RPV 1750 via one or more points of attachment, such as support structures 1530 and/or radial mounts 1540 (FIG. 15). Transmission path 1705 may represent at least a portion of an overall example path through which the seismic forces are transmitted, beginning with the source of the seismic forces and ultimately continuing on to the fuel assemblies located within RPV 1750. Other components may experience different example transmission paths.

A bottom surface 1730 of CNV 1760 may be located some distance above the ground 1775 and/or support surface 1740. In some examples, the space located between CNV 1760 and the support surface 1740 may provide room for surrounding water to cool the exterior surface of CNV 1760.

FIG. 18 illustrates an example system 1800 comprising seismic attenuation devices configured as radial keys 1840. Radial keys 1840 may comprise one or more posts that extend outwardly from an RPV 1850 about its radius and engage one or more brackets, such as a first bracket 1810 and a second bracket 1820. The brackets may extend inwardly from a surrounding CNV 1860. Radial keys 1840 may be located at or near a bottom head 1855 of RPV 1850. Each of the radial keys 1840 may be inserted between a pair of brackets, such as first bracket 1810 and second bracket 1820. The brackets may be located at or near a bottom head 1865 of CNV 1860. In some examples, three or more radial keys may be spaced about the circumference of RPV 1850 to engage a corresponding number of bracket pairs located within the periphery of CNV 1860.

Radial keys 1840 may be configured to stabilize, dampen, attenuate, reduce, or otherwise mitigate any dynamic or seismic force experienced by RPV 1850. During a seismic event, radial keys 1840 may be configured to contact one or both of first bracket 1810 and second bracket 1820, to limit or prohibit movement/rotation of RPV 1850 in a circumferential direction 1830. Contact with one or more of the brackets may also impart friction force to resist or dampen movement of RPV 1650 in a transverse or radial direction 1880, e.g., towards the inner wall of CNV 1860. In some examples, the inner wall of CNV 1860 may inhibit the movement of RPV 1850 in the radial direction 1880.

A base support, such as a base skirt 1870 attached to the bottom of CNV 1860, may be configured to support the weight of the reactor module comprising CNV 1860 and RPV 850. During a seismic event, seismic forces may be transmitted from base skirt 1870 up through the container wall of CNV 1860 through a transmission path 1805 which may transfer the seismic forces to the radial keys 1840 of RPV 1850 via the one or more brackets, such as first bracket 1810 and/or second bracket 1820. Transmission path 1805 may represent at least a portion of an overall example path through which the seismic forces are transmitted, beginning with the source of the seismic forces and ultimately continuing on to the fuel assemblies located within RPV 1850.

By transmitting seismic forces to the RPV 1850 near the bottom head, transmission path 1805 may be considerably shorter than transmission path 1705 (FIG. 17). In some examples, decreasing the transmission path may result in a smaller amount of dynamic and/or seismic force that would otherwise be imparted to RPV 1750 and to any internal components, such as the reactor core and/or fuel rods. The amplitude and/or size of the dynamic/seismic forces may be amplified as a function of the length of the transmission path as the forces are transmitted from the ground or support surface to an RPV via one or more intermediate structures.

FIG. 19 illustrates an example system 1900 comprising seismic attenuation devices configured as radial bumpers 1910. Radial bumpers 1910 may extend from an inner wall of a CNV 1960. A base support, such as a base skirt 1970 attached to the bottom of CNV 1960, may be configured to support the weight of the reactor module comprising CNV 1960. Radial bumpers 1910 may be attached to CNV 1960 at or near a bottom head 1920 of CNV 1960. In some examples, radial bumpers 1910 may be attached to a cylindrical wall 1950 of CNV 1960 located above base skirt 1970.

FIG. 20 illustrates the example system 1900 of FIG. 19 together with an RPV 2050. Radial bumpers 1910 may be configured to stabilize, dampen, attenuate, reduce, or otherwise mitigate any dynamic or seismic force experienced by RPV 1950. During a seismic event, radial bumpers 1910 may be configured to contact the outer surface of RPV 1950,

and to limit or prohibit movement of RPV 1950 in a transverse or radial direction. Contact with one or more of the bumpers 1910 may also impart friction force to resist or dampen movement/rotation of RPV 1950 in a circumferential direction.

During a seismic event, seismic forces may be transmitted from base skirt 1970 up through the container wall of CNV 1960 through a transmission path 2005 which may transfer the seismic forces to RPV 2050 via the one of more radial bumpers 1910. In some examples, radial bumpers 1910 and/or radial keys 1840 (FIG. 18) may be configured to operate with and/or to comprise one or more of the seismic isolation and/or damping systems illustrated in one or more of FIGS. 1-14.

FIG. 21 illustrates an example system 2100 comprising a seismic attenuation device configured as a vertical key 2155. In some examples, vertical key 2155 may be configured as a round or conical post located on the bottom head 2110 of an RPV 2150. Vertical key 2155 may be configured to fit into a recess 2165 located at the bottom head 2120 of a CNV 2160. Recess 2165 may comprise a round hole sized to receive vertical key 2155.

Vertical key 2155 may be configured to provide lateral support of RPV 2150 in a transverse or radial direction 2135. Additionally, a gap 2130 may be provided between vertical key 2155 and recess 2165 to allow for thermal expansion of RPV 2150 in a longitudinal direction 2115. In some examples, gap 2130 may be approximately four to six inches in the longitudinal direction. During thermal expansion of RPV 2150, a larger portion of vertical key 2155 may be inserted into recess 2165, and effectively decrease gap 2130 by two or more inches. In some examples, RPV 2150 may expand due to an increase in internal pressure. Vertical key 2155 may remain at least partially inserted within recess 2165 when RPV 150 is at ambient temperature, e.g., at some nominal operation condition or at a minimum amount of thermal expansion.

The diameter associated with vertical key 2155 may be sufficiently less than the diameter of recess 2165 to provide for a clearance and/or tolerance during fit-up. In some examples, the diameter of vertical key 2155 may be between one and two feet and the clearance between vertical key 2155 and a contact point 2125 within recess 2165 may be approximately one eighth of an inch, one sixteenth of an inch, or less. In still other examples, the relative diameters may be only slightly different such that vertical key 2155 may be pressure-fit into recess 2165 with virtually no clearance.

The reactor module assembly may experience varying differential thermal growth depending if the reactor module is in shut down (i.e., cold) operating conditions, or in full power (i.e., hot) operating conditions. Accordingly, one or more of the seismic attenuation devices described above may be configured to stabilize, dampen, attenuate, reduce, or otherwise mitigate any dynamic or seismic force experienced by the RPV and/or the reactor core in both the hot and cold operating conditions. A radial gap and/or spacing between the one or more seismic attenuation devices and the adjacent vessel surface may be provided to accommodate the differential radial growth. In some examples, the radial gap between vertical key 2155 and contact point 2125 may be provided to allow for thermal expansion of vertical key 2155 in the radial direction 2135. The distance of the radial gap may vary according to the diameter of the vertical key.

Vertical key 2155 may be inserted and/or removed from recess 2165 during assembly, installation, refueling, and/or other modes of operation. The system 2100 illustrated in

FIG. 21 may be configured to assemble RPV 2150 together with CNV 2160 independently of circumferential alignment. For example, vertical key 2155 may be configured to be installed into recess 2165 regardless of the rotational orientation of RPV 2150. Additionally, the lower corner(s) of vertical key 2155 may be tapered to facilitate alignment and/or entry into recess 2165.

Vertical key 2155 may be configured to stabilize, dampen, attenuate, reduce, or otherwise mitigate any dynamic or seismic force experienced by RPV 2150. During a seismic event, vertical key 2155 may be configured to contact recess 2165 at one or more lateral contact points 2125, to limit or prohibit movement/rotation of RPV 2150 in the radial direction 2135. In some examples, contact between vertical key 2155 and recess 2165 may also impart friction force to resist rotational movement of RPV 2150 within CNV 2160 and/or to resist vertical movement of RPV 2150 in the longitudinal direction 2115.

A base support, such as a base skirt 2170 attached to the bottom of CNV 2160, may be configured to support the weight of the reactor module comprising CNV 2160 and RPV 2150. During a seismic event, seismic forces may be transmitted from base skirt 2170 through a transmission path 2105 which may transfer the seismic forces to the vertical key 2155 of RPV 2150 via the one or more lateral contact points 2125 within recess 2165.

Vertical key 2155 may extend downward from the RPV 2150 at the longitudinal centerline of the bottom head 2110. The bottom head 2120 of CNV 2160 may be reinforced, such as by adding material or increasing the thickness of the wall of bottom head 2120. In some examples, recess 2165 may be machined out of the inner surface of the bottom head 2120 of CNV 2160.

Locating a seismic attenuation device, such as vertical key 2155, at the bottom head 2110 of RPV 2150 may significantly reduce the seismic acceleration and impact load on the fuel assemblies (e.g. by six times or more) as compared to using radial mounts 1540 as illustrated in FIG. 15. A relatively shorter transmission path may effectively eliminate or lower the transmissibility of forces as compared to a transmission path which passes through one or more sub-systems that are located between the source (ground motion) and the fuel assemblies.

In some examples, vertical key 2155 may be forged as an integral part of the bottom head 2110 of RPV 2150. In examples where vertical key 2155 is attached, e.g., welded, to bottom head 2110, vertical key 2155 may be made out of the same material as bottom head 2110. For example, RPV 2150, bottom head 2110, and/or vertical key 2155 may be made from SA-508, Grade 3, Class 1 steel forgings or other suitable materials.

A suction line 2190 may be configured to remove fluid located within recess 2165. In some examples, an annular space 2175 between RPV 2150 and CNV 2160 may be evacuated during operation of the reactor module. The removal of fluid and/or gases through suction line 2190 may facilitate creating and/or maintaining an evacuation chamber which substantially surrounds RPV 2150.

FIG. 22 illustrates a further example system 2200 comprising a seismic attenuation device configured as a vertical key or post 2265. In some examples, vertical key 2265 may be configured as a round or conical post located on the bottom head 2220 of a CNV 2260. Vertical key 2265 may be configured to fit into a recess 2255 located at the bottom head 2210 of an adjacent RPV 2250. Recess 2255 may comprise a round hole sized to receive vertical key 2265.

Vertical key 2265 may be configured to provide lateral support of RPV 2250 in a transverse or radial direction 2235. Additionally, a gap 2230 may be provided between vertical key 2265 and recess 2255 to allow for thermal expansion of RPV 2250 in a longitudinal direction 2215. The diameter associated with vertical key 2265 may be sufficiently less than the diameter of recess 2255 to provide for a clearance and/or tolerance during fit-up. In some examples, the clearance may be approximately one sixteenth of an inch or less. In still other examples, the relative diameters may be only slightly different such that vertical key 2265 may be pressure-fit into recess 2255 with virtually no clearance.

Vertical key 2265 may be inserted and/or removed from recess 2255 during assembly, installation, refueling, and/or other modes of operation. The system 2200 illustrated in FIG. 22 may be configured to assemble RPV 2250 together with CNV 2260 independently of circumferential alignment. For example, vertical key 2265 may be configured to be installed into recess 2255 regardless of the rotational orientation of RPV 2250. Additionally, the lower corner(s) of vertical key 2265 may be tapered to facilitate alignment and/or entry into recess 2255.

Vertical key 2265 may be configured to stabilize, dampen, attenuate, reduce, or otherwise mitigate any dynamic or seismic force experienced by RPV 2250. During a seismic event, vertical key 2265 may be configured to contact recess 2255 at one or more lateral contact points 2225, to limit or prohibit movement/rotation of RPV 2250 in the radial direction 2235. In some examples, contact between vertical key 2265 and recess 2255 may also impart friction force to resist rotational movement of RPV 2250 within CNV 2260 and/or to resist vertical movement of RPV 2250 in the longitudinal direction 2215.

Vertical key 2230 may extend upward from CNV 2260 at a longitudinal centerline 2290 of the bottom head 2220. The bottom head 2210 of RPV 2250 may be reinforced, such as by adding material or increasing the thickness of the wall of bottom head 2210. In some examples, recess 2255 may be machined out of the outer surface of the bottom head 2220 of RPV 2250.

A base support, such as a base skirt 2270 attached to the bottom of CNV 2260, may be configured to support the weight of the reactor module comprising CNV 2260 and RPV 2250. During a seismic event, seismic forces may be transmitted from base skirt 2270 through bottom head 2220 to RPV 2250 via the transmission of forces from vertical key 2230 to one or more lateral contact points 2225 within recess 2255.

Base skirt 2270 may rest on a floor 2240 comprising reinforced concrete. Additionally, base skirt 2270 may comprise an annular shaped structure connected to the circumference of bottom head 2220. Base skirt 2270 may be configured to be placed next to one or more stops 2280. In some examples, the one or more stops 2280 may comprise an annular ring-shaped structure attached to the floor 2240. The one or more stops 2280 may be configured to align RPV 2250 when it is placed on the floor 2240. Additionally, the one or more stops 2280 may be configured to restrict and/or prohibit lateral movement of CNV 2260 in the radial direction 2235.

The bottom head 2220 of CNV 2260 may be located some distance 2245 above the floor 2240 upon which base skirt 2270 is placed on. In some examples, distance 2245 may be between six inches and one foot. The space located between CNV 2260 and the floor 2240 may provide room for surrounding water to cool the exterior surface of CNV 2260. Additionally, base skirt 2270 may comprise one or more

through holes **2275** to allow the water to enter the space within base skirt **2270** in order to cool bottom head **2220**.

In some examples, vertical key **2265** may be forged as an integral part of the bottom head **2220** of CNV **2260**. In examples where vertical key **2265** is attached, e.g., welded, to bottom head **2220**, vertical key **2265** may be made out of the same material as bottom head **2220**. For example, CNV **2260**, bottom head **2220**, and/or vertical key **2255** may be made from SA-508, Grade 3, Class 1 steel forgings, or other suitable materials.

Providing radial spacing and/or clearance about vertical key **2265** may provide for some slight lateral movement of RPV **2250** within CNV **2260** to provide a flexible, or non-rigid stability system. While RPV **2250** may be allowed to move, it may nevertheless be constrained by recess **2255** to limit the amount of lateral movement. A flexible stability system may impart and/or transmit less force than a rigidly connected system.

One or more of the a seismic attenuation devices described above may be configured to stabilize, dampen, attenuate, reduce, or otherwise mitigate any dynamic or seismic forces, such as in the lateral or radial direction, without restraining the differential thermal growth between the RPV and the CNV. For example, the thermal growth of the RPV, such as RPV **2250**, may be based on a temperature change between ambient conditions and the design temperature of the reactor module, which in some examples may be approximately 650° F. On the other hand, the thermal growth of the CNV, such as CNV **2260** may be essentially nonexistent when the CNV is submerged in, or at least partially surrounded by, a pool of water that is near ambient temperature.

By attaching vertical key **2265** to CNV **2260**, the thermal expansion of RPV **2250** may result in the internal diameter of recess **2230** increasing, whereas the external diameter of vertical key **2265** may remain essentially constant, independent of operating temperatures within RPV **2250**. Accordingly, the lateral clearance between vertical key **2265** and recess **2230** could be made just large enough to facilitate assembly and/or fit-up, but would not necessarily need to account for thermal expansion of RPV **2250** and/or vertical key **2265** in the radial direction **2235**. In some examples, RPV **2250** and CNV **2260** may be considered essentially thermally isolated from each other, regardless of any incidental contact between vertical key **2265** and recess **2230**.

FIG. **23** illustrates an example system **2300** comprising a seismic attenuation device configured as a vertical key or post **2365** with an alternative force transmission path **2305**. During a seismic event, seismic forces may be transmitted from one or more stops **2380** and/or the ground **2305** to a base support such as a base skirt **2370**. Laterally transmitted forces from the one or more stops **2305** to base skirt **2370** may travel through transmission path **2305** and continue along a bottom head **2320** of a CNV **2360** before being transferred to RPV **2250** via the one or more lateral contact points **2325** between recess **2255** of RPV **2250** and the radial surface of vertical key **2365**.

By locating base skirt **2370** closer to a longitudinal centerline **2390** of RPV **2250** and/or CNV **2360**, where vertical key **2365** and or recess **2255** may be aligned, the transmission path **2305** between the one or more stops **2380** and RPV **2250** may be made shorter as compared to a transmission path associated with system **2200** (FIG. **22**).

FIG. **24** illustrates a further example system **2400** comprising a seismic attenuation device configured as a vertical key or post **2465** with an alternative force transmission path **2405**. During a seismic event, lateral forces may be trans-

mitted from one or more stops **2470** to a base support such as a base skirt **2470**. Transmission path **2405** may continue from base skirt **2470** in a substantially linear direction both through a bottom head **2420** of CNV **2460** and through vertical key **2465** before being transferred to RPV **2250** via the one or more lateral contact points **2425** between recess **2255** of RPV **2250** and the radial surface of vertical key **2465**.

By locating base skirt **2470** closer to a longitudinal centerline **2490** of RPV **2250** and/or CNV **2460**, the transmission path **2405** associated with system **2400** may be made shorter as compared to the transmission path **2305** associated with system **2300** (FIG. **23**). In some examples, base skirt **2470** may be located directly below at least a portion of radial key **2465**. In other examples, base skirt **2470** may be located directly below at least a portion of recess **2255**. Transmission path **2405** may be understood to provide an essentially direct, linear path from the ground, or support surface, to RPV **2250**.

In some examples, recess **2255** may be formed in a boss **2450** which extends from bottom head **2210** into the interior of RPV **2250**. Boss **2450** may comprise one or more curved or sloped surfaces **2252** which are configured to direct coolant flow **2256** in an upward direction to facilitate uniform mass flow distribution of coolant entering the reactor core. In some examples, boss **2450** may be configured to direct at least a portion of coolant flow **2256** to a periphery of the reactor core.

FIG. **25** illustrates an example system **2500** comprising a seismic attenuation device configured as an integrated vertical key **2565** and lateral support **2575**. Vertical key **2565** may extend upward in a substantially vertical direction from the inner surface of a CNV **2560** into the adjacent recess **2255** of RPV **2250** contained within CNV **2560**. Lateral support **2575** may extend downward in a substantially vertical direction from the outer surface of CNV **2560** towards a support surface **2540**. In some examples, both vertical key **2565** and lateral support **2575** may be vertically aligned along a longitudinal centerline **2590** of one of both of CNV **2560** and RPV **2250**.

The weight of RPV **2250** may be primarily supported by a base support such as base skirt **2570**, similar to base skirt **1970** of FIG. **19**. System **2500** may comprise a force transmission path **2505**. During a seismic event, lateral forces may be transmitted from one or more stops **2580** to lateral support **2575**. Transmission path **2505** may continue from lateral support **2575** in a substantially linear direction both through a bottom head **2520** of CNV **2560** and through vertical key **2565** before being transferred to RPV **2250** via one or more lateral contact points between recess **2255** of RPV **2250** and a radial surface of vertical key **2565**.

In some examples, lateral support **2575** may be located directly below at least a portion of radial key **2565** and/or recess **2255**. Transmission path **2505** may be understood to provide an essentially direct, linear path from support surface **2540** to RPV **2250**. Lateral support **2575** may be configured to contact the one or more stops **2580** without directly contacting support surface **2540**. In some examples, neither vertical key **2565** nor lateral support **2575** are configured to support any of the weight of RPV **2250** or CNV **2560**.

FIG. **26** illustrates an example system **2600** comprising an attenuation device configured as a vertical key **2680** having a conical shaped surface **2685**. Key **2680** may be configured to fit within a recess **2670** having a complimentary shaped conical inner surface **2675**. The sloped or angled contour of conical surfaces **2675**, **2685** may provide for a lateral

clearance **2690** between key **2680** and recess **2670**. Additionally, the conical surfaces **2675**, **2685** may facilitate fit-up and/or assembly of a reactor module comprising an RPV **2650** and a surrounding CNV **2660**. In some examples, FIG. **26** may be considered as illustrating a reactor module comprising RPV **2650** and/or CNV **2660** in a nominal or non-expanded state.

FIG. **27** illustrates an enlarged partial view of the example system **2600** of FIG. **26** with RPV **2650** undergoing thermal expansion. The thermally expanding RPV **2750** is shown in dashed lines, indicating thermal expansion in both a longitudinal direction and radial direction. For example, a first length **2710** associated with RPV **2650** may increase to a second length **2720** associated with thermally expanding RPV **2750**. Similarly, RPV **2650** may expand in the radial direction as illustrated by the enlarged diameter **2730** associated with a thermally expanded recess **2770** including an enlarged conical shaped surface **2775**.

FIG. **28** illustrates an enlarged partial view of the example system **2600** of FIG. **26** in an expanded state. The sloped or angled contour of conical surfaces **2685**, **2775** may provide for a lateral clearance **2890** between key **2680** of CNV **2660** and thermally expanded recess **2770**. The lateral clearance **2890** associated with a thermally expanded RPV **2750** may be approximately equal to the lateral clearance **2690** associated with RPV **2650** (FIG. **26**) in the nominal or non-expanded state. In some examples, lateral clearance **2890** may be approximately one sixteenth of an inch or less. In other examples, lateral clearance **2890** may be approximately one eighth of an inch or less. Other and/or larger dimensions are also contemplated herein. Maintaining a lateral clearance at less than some predetermined dimension may effectively make any lateral movement between key **2680** and recess **2670** negligible with respect to determining dynamic impact forces between RPV **2650** and CNV **2660**.

FIG. **29** illustrates a further example system **2900** comprising an attenuation device configured as a conical shaped key **2980** having a conical shaped surface **2985**. Key **2980** may be configured to fit within a recess **2970** having a complimentary shaped conical inner surface **2975**. Key **2980** may extend downward in a substantially vertical direction from the outer surface of an RPV **2950** into the adjacent recess **2970** of a surrounding CNV **2960**. The sloped or angled contour of conical surfaces **2975**, **2985** may provide for a lateral clearance **2990** between key **2980** and recess **2970**. Additionally, the conical surfaces **2975**, **2985** may facilitate fit-up and/or assembly of a reactor module comprising RPV **2950** and CNV **2960**.

FIG. **30** illustrates an example operation **3000** for transmitting dynamic or seismic forces through a reactor module structure. The reactor module structure may comprise a containment vessel that houses a reactor pressure vessel. The reactor vessel may be spaced apart from the containment vessel by an annular containment volume. In some examples, the annular containment volume may be evacuated to provide thermal insulation between the containment vessel and the reactor pressure vessel.

At operation **3010**, some or substantially all of the weight of the reactor pressure vessel within the containment vessel may be supported by a support structure. The support structure may pass through the annular containment volume.

At operation **3020**, a seismic force may be transmitted to the containment vessel. The containment vessel may be supported by a base support located near a bottom head of the containment vessel. In some examples, the base support may comprise a base skirt.

At operation **3030**, the seismic force that is received by the reactor pressure vessel may be attenuated by an attenuation device. In some examples, the attenuation device may not be configured to support any of the weight of the reactor pressure vessel. The attenuation device may pass through the annular containment volume. In some examples, the attenuation device may be located along a longitudinal centerline of the reactor pressure vessel and/or a longitudinal centerline of the containment vessel. The attenuation device may be configured to attenuate the seismic force in a direction transverse to the longitudinal centerline(s).

Additionally, the attenuation device may form part of a seismic force attenuation path which transfers the seismic force from the containment vessel to the reactor pressure vessel. The seismic force attenuation path may comprise a vertical portion that passes through a base support located near the bottom head of the containment vessel. The attenuation device may be configured to attenuate the seismic force in direction that is substantially transverse to the vertical portion of the seismic force attenuation path.

FIG. **31** illustrates an example system **3100** comprising an attenuation device configured as a stair-step shaped key **3180**. Key **3180** may be configured to fit within a recess **3170** having a complimentary shaped stair-step inner surface. Key **3180** may extend upward in a substantially vertical direction from the inner surface of a CNV **3160** into the adjacent recess **3170** of an RPV **3150**. The stair-step shape of key **3180** may comprise a first step **3182** having a first diameter and a second larger step **3184** having a second diameter. In some examples, FIG. **31** may be considered as illustrating a reactor module comprising RPV **3150** and/or CNV **3160** in a nominal or non-expanded state, in which a lateral clearance is provided between first step **3182** and recess **3170**.

FIG. **32** illustrates an enlarged partial view of the example system **3100** of FIG. **31** with RPV **3150** in an enlarged or expanded state. A lateral clearance **3250** between key **3180** and recess **3170** in the expanded state may be approximately equal to the lateral clearance associated with RPV **3150** in the nominal or non-expanded state, as illustrated in FIG. **31**.

Although at least some of the examples provided herein have primarily described a pressurized water reactor and/or a light water reactor, it should be apparent to one skilled in the art that the examples may be applied to other types of power systems. For example, one or more of the examples or variations thereof may also be made operable with a boiling water reactor, sodium liquid metal reactor, gas cooled reactor, pebble-bed reactor, and/or other types of reactor designs.

It should be noted that examples are not limited to any particular type of fuel employed to produce heat within or associated with a nuclear reaction. Any rates and values described herein are provided by way of example only. Other rates and values may be determined through experimentation such as by construction of full scale or scaled models of a nuclear reactor system.

Having described and illustrated various examples herein, it should be apparent that other examples may be modified in arrangement and detail. We claim all modifications and variations coming within the spirit and scope of the following claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A system for attenuating seismic forces in a nuclear reactor assembly comprising:

[a containment vessel configured located above a support surface;]

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a reactor pressure vessel [mounted within the containment vessel] to house a nuclear reactor core;

a containment vessel encapsulating and suspending the reactor pressure vessel within an inner chamber, the containment vessel including a top head extending over a top end of the reactor pressure vessel and a bottom head extending underneath a bottom end of the reactor pressure vessel;

a support skirt located on a floor of a reactor bay and integrally coupled to the bottom head of the containment vessel, the support skirt supporting substantially the entire weight of the reactor pressure vessel and suspending the bottom head of the containment vessel above the floor of the reactor bay; and

an attenuation device integrally [operatively] coupled to the containment vessel and located along a longitudinal centerline of the reactor pressure vessel to attenuate seismic forces transmitted from the support surface to the reactor pressure vessel via the containment vessel in a substantially transverse direction to the longitudinal centerline;

wherein the attenuation device includes an integrated vertical key portion and an integrated lateral support portion, the integrated vertical key portion extending upwardly in a substantially vertical direction from an inner surface of the *lower head of the* containment vessel and the integrated lateral support portion extending downwardly in a substantially vertical direction from an outer surface of the containment vessel;

wherein the integrated vertical key portion [is to engage] *inserts into a recess integrally formed and extending vertically up into the lower head of the reactor pressure vessel to provide lateral support to the reactor pressure vessel; and*

wherein the integrated lateral support portion is to engage between at least a pair of stops extending upwardly from the support surface to receive the seismic forces transmitted from the support surface.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the attenuation device is configured to provide for a thermal expansion of the reactor pressure vessel within the containment vessel.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the integrated vertical key *portion* comprises a substantially vertical protrusion; and wherein the recess comprises a vertical clearance to account for a thermal expansion of the reactor pressure vessel along the longitudinal centerline.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the vertical protrusion comprises a diameter; and wherein the vessel recess further comprises an annular-shaped clearance to account for the thermal expansion of the diameter of the vertical protrusion.

[5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a support structure located in an upper half of the containment vessel and configured to support the reactor pressure vessel within the containment vessel; wherein the attenuation device is located in the bottom half of the containment vessel.]

[6. The system of claim 5, wherein a majority of a weight of the reactor pressure vessel is supported by the support structure; and wherein substantially none of the weight of the reactor pressure vessel is supported by the attenuation device.]

7. The system of claim 1, [wherein the containment vessel comprises a cylindrical-shaped support skirt that contacts the support surface;

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wherein a bottom head of the containment vessel is located some distance above the support surface; and] wherein the support skirt comprises through-holes configured to allow coolant to flow through the support skirt and contact the bottom head.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the integrated vertical key comprises a vertical post located along the longitudinal centerline of the containment vessel; and wherein the vertical post is inserted into the recess of the reactor pressure vessel.

9. The system of claim 8, [wherein the containment vessel comprises a bottom head; and] wherein the vertical post extends upward from the bottom head of the containment vessel into the recess associated with the reactor pressure vessel.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the integrated lateral support [may be] *portion is* configured to contact [the at least the] a pair of stops without directly contacting [the] a support surface.

11. *A system for attenuating seismic forces in a nuclear reactor assembly comprising:*

a reactor pressure vessel retaining a nuclear reactor core;

a containment vessel encapsulating and suspending the reactor pressure vessel within an inner chamber, the containment vessel including a top head extending over a top end of the reactor pressure vessel and a bottom head extending underneath a bottom end of the reactor pressure vessel;

a support base located on a floor of a reactor bay and integrally coupled to the bottom head of the containment vessel, the support base supporting substantially the entire weight of the reactor pressure vessel and suspending the bottom head of the containment vessel above the floor of the reactor bay; and

an attenuation device integrally coupled to the reactor pressure vessel and located along a longitudinal centerline of the reactor pressure vessel to attenuate seismic forces transmitted from the support surface to the reactor pressure vessel via the containment vessel in a substantially transverse direction to the longitudinal centerline;

wherein the attenuation device includes an integrated vertical key portion extending downwardly in a substantially vertical direction from an outer surface of the reactor pressure vessel and a recess formed in an inside surface of the bottom head of the containment vessel to receive the integrated vertical key portion and provide lateral support to the reactor pressure vessel.

12. *The system of claim 11, wherein a wall forming the bottom head of the containment vessel has an increasing thickness from lateral sides of the containment vessel towards the longitudinal centerline of the reactor pressure vessel, and the recess extends into the wall from the inside surface of the bottom head and has a depth less than the thickness of the wall.*

13. *The system of claim 12, wherein the recess comprises a vertical clearance from a bottom end of the integrated vertical key portion to account for a thermal expansion of the reactor pressure vessel along the longitudinal centerline.*

14. *The system of claim 13, wherein:*

the integrated vertical key portion comprises a diameter; and

the vessel recess further comprises an annular-shaped clearance to account for the thermal expansion of the diameter of the integrated vertical key portion.

15. The system of claim 11, wherein:
the integrated vertical key portion comprises a vertical
post located along the longitudinal centerline of the
reactor pressure vessel; and
the vertical post is inserted into the recess formed in the 5
containment vessel.

16. The system of claim 11, wherein the attenuation device
is configured to provide for a thermal expansion of the
reactor pressure vessel within the containment vessel.

17. The system of claim 11, further comprising a suction 10
line that extends from the recess to an outside surface of the
bottom head of the containment vessel.

18. The system of claim 11, wherein the integrated vertical
key portion includes a conical shaped surface and the recess
includes a complimentary shaped conical inner surface. 15

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : RE47,965 E
APPLICATION NO. : 15/961804
DATED : April 28, 2020
INVENTOR(S) : Tamas Liskai et al.

Page 1 of 2

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

On the Title Page

On the Page 2, in Column 2, item (56) under “Other Publications”, Lines 12-13, after “pages.” delete “for PCT/US2014/063127; dated Jul. 14, 2016; 10 pages.”.

On the Page 2, in Column 2, item (56) under “Other Publications”, Line 34, delete “http://ww.” and insert -- http://www. --, therefor.

On the Page 2, in Column 2, item (56) under “Other Publications”, Lines 34-35, delete “reapp.sub._mtg.sub._072.” and insert -- reapp_mtg_072. --, therefor.

In the Drawings

On the Sheet 18 of 19, in Figure 30, in reference numeral 3010, Line 1, delete “WEGHT” and insert -- WEIGHT --, therefor.

In the Specification

In Column 7, Line 11, delete “ontracting” and insert -- contracting --, therefor.

In Column 8, Line 23, delete “Accordngly,” and insert -- Accordingly, --, therefor.

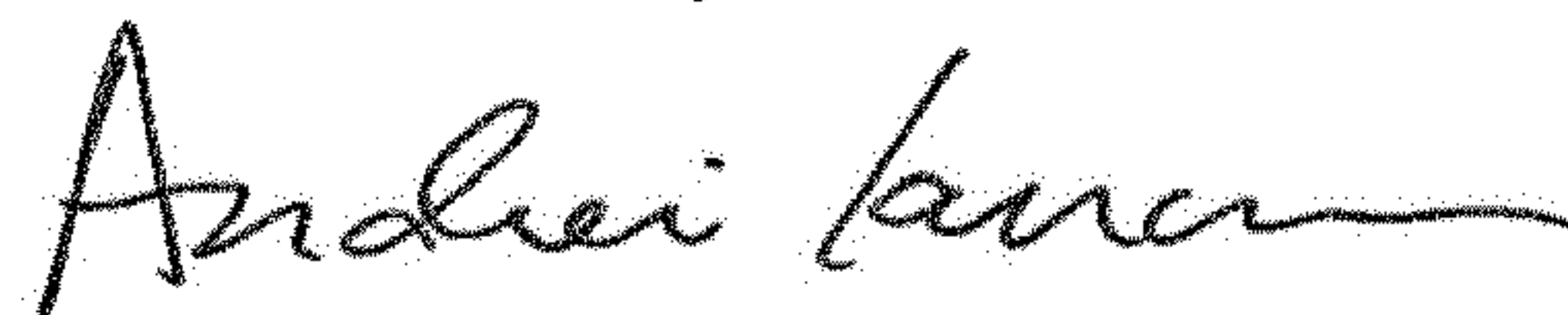
In Column 17, Line 67, delete “together” and insert -- together. --, therefor.

In Column 18, Line 26, delete “urface” and insert -- surface --, therefor.

In Column 20, Line 26, delete “790” and insert -- 1790 --, therefor.

In Column 25, Line 19, delete “the a” and insert -- the --, therefor.

Signed and Sealed this
Twentieth Day of October, 2020



Andrei Iancu
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

In Column 25, Lines 29-30, delete “nonexistent” and insert -- non-existent --, therefor.

In Column 25, Line 60, delete “and or” and insert -- and/or --, therefor.

In Column 27, Lines 27-28, delete “nonexpanded” and insert -- non-expanded --, therefor.

In the Claims

In Column 29, Line 46, in Claim 3, delete “reactyor” and insert -- reactor --, therefor.