

Stealth still faces 'uphill battle' for funding

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Dick Cheney is lobbying congressmen behind closed doors in his "uphill battle" to get funding for the multibillion-dollar B-2 stealth bomber.

Cheney took word of the plane's first successful test flight into the first round of meetings Tuesday with lawmakers who will debate the fate of the bomber and the overall \$305 billion Pentagon budget next week on the House and Senate floors.

He said Monday's two-hour flight

of the sinister-looking, dark flying wing boosted chances the radar-evading plane will also dodge congressional critics who want to stop funding the program.

"Having gotten it this far, it's now flying and I think we ought to proceed with it," Cheney said before meeting with a group of House Republicans. "I think it would be a serious mistake for us to turn our back on that system."

But House Speaker Thomas S. Foley, D-Wash., says Cheney faces

"an uphill battle" for the weapon in the defense authorization bill.

The bat-like bomber, whose unorthodox design and materials makes it tough to track with radar, carries a \$500 million price tag that has prompted "sticker shock" in budget-conscious lawmakers.

Cheney calls the plane "a first-class aircraft" that represents a significant advancement in technology, as well as a major investment of \$22 billion so far.

The department has proposed \$4.7

billion for the stealth bomber in the fiscal 1990 budget and wants about \$24 billion for the program during a peak three-year spending period in the mid-1990s.

Overall, the Pentagon wants to buy 132 planes for \$70 billion.

The House Armed Services Committee last month slashed \$800 million from the B-2 budget. On Friday, the Senate Armed Services Committee trimmed \$300 million from the Bush administration's request and

included a series of testing requirements before the plane could go into full production.

Williams told reporters the successful test flight should have changed some minds on Capitol Hill.

"There were many members of Congress who said they couldn't make a decision about the B-2 until it had flown," Williams said.

"It has proven it can fly and that makes a substantial difference," the spokesman said.

Quayle's ex-advisers tell all in new book

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — Just as Dan Quayle was settling comfortably into the vice presidency, several fellows who helped put him there have provoked anger in the White House by painting an unflattering portrait of his candidacy.

The old stories about Quayle being a lightweight and a neophyte not up to the job he sought are revived in a new book, "Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars? The Trivial Pursuit of the Presidency 1988," by political columnists Jules Witcover and Jack Germond.

Derisive comments about Quayle's abilities come not from Democratic critics, but from the GOP stable of advisers the Bush campaign assigned to help manage Quayle — among them political pros Stuart Spencer, Joseph Canzeri and James Lake.

Canzeri told the authors that Quayle "was like a kid. Ask him to turn off a light, and by the time he

gets to the switch, he's forgotten what he went for."

President Bush is not happy about the characterizations.

Bush noted Quayle has made two trips to Latin America for the administration, as well as heading the

Space Council and contributing to Bush's morning staff meetings.

"He's a good man and he deserves something better than a post-mortem kick in the ... ankles," Bush said.

Aside from an occasional gaffe

— he recently referred to moon-traveling astronaut Buzz Aldrin as Buz Lukens, the congressman convicted of corrupting a minor through sexual activity — Quayle has not embar-

assed the administration.

Quayle advisers acknowledge he hasn't shaken his image problem, and the new book no doubt will stall progress on that front.

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