

fighter up, ready to be built. Who around here is going to vote \$25 billion, \$30 billion or \$40 billion just to get another bomber developed? Why spend that kind of money when we have the great B-2?

Mr. DICKS. If the gentleman would yield, I told my friends in the Boeing Co. in the State of Washington that one of my colleagues has suggested a B-3; and they said, "Congressman, what we would do is, we would build a long-range, subsonic aircraft and it would look a heck of a lot like the B-2. It would be stealthy and we would have the ability to put precision-guided munitions on them."

We have got the line open and the costs are down where this thing is affordable in terms of the defense budget, and now, not to do enough of it just does not make sense. I always say to my Democratic friends, many of whom are not happy about some of the budget cuts that are being made, if we cut out the B-2, this money is not going to go to HUD or education or the environment; this money is going to go to something that is less important in the defense arena.

As I said, I look at the entire defense budget, and except for the men and women serving in the service, I cannot think of one weapons system that has anywhere near potential that this weapons system does.

The gentleman has made another important point that General Skantze, who was our former acquisitions person at the Air Force, has made as well, and that is that this plane is the most difficult plane to put together. So we finally figured it out.

Mr. Chairman, I think we should stay with it, and I appreciate my colleagues joining me here on the floor in an impromptu session to talk about one of the most important defense decisions this country will make during our time in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

DO NOT BE DETERRED: CONTINUE
B-2 PRODUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ENSIGN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. MCKEON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker I do not know exactly what you had talked about before I came in.

Mr. DICKS. Do not be deterred.

Mr. MCKEON. The B-2?

Mr. DICKS. The B-2.

Mr. MCKEON. What do you know? I think it is a very important vote, and it is a lot of money; I think that people need to understand.

I am a businessman. This is my second term in Congress. I came here to make cuts, but I also came here to carry out our constitutional responsibility which is to provide defense for this country. Defense is one of the most important things that we need to

do. It is our responsibility, as the Congress, to look out for that.

Mr. DICKS. If the gentleman would yield on that point, I have served for 17 years on defense appropriations subcommittees since the winter of 1979. We build up until 1985, but since 1985, the defense budget has been reduced by \$100 billion a year. Today's defense budget would be 350; it is 250 now in fiscal year 1995, so we have made a big cut, 37 percent in real terms.

We have a smaller Army, a smaller Navy, a smaller Air Force. Yet, here is a technology, a revolutionary technology that would help us still have an enormously effective and capable military. But we have got to have enough of it so that it can have the sortie rates, in and out, in and out, to do the job. Every expert who has looked at this and said, 20 of these is not enough; we have got to have somewhere between 40 and 60.

It is value. Sometimes we forget when it is right in front of us that some things are more important than other things. Some things can do things that no other system can do. And that is why this is so important.

The B-2 offers us a revolutionary conventional capability that nobody else has in the world. Think about it. If somebody else had the B-2, we would be in deep trouble. We would be very, very concerned about it. We would be probably cheer if they made a decision to cut it off at 20 and only have a very limited capability. We would be saying, "Thank God they made that decision, because if they had 50 or 60 of these, and we did not have a way to counter it." Think if our adversary, Russia, had developed this stealth technology. We would be deeply concerned. I think sometimes we forget things that are so obvious. They are right in front of us and we still do not see it.

It reminds me of the battleship debate where they said that battleships are not vulnerable to air power. Finally, Billy Mitchell flew over one and dropped a bag of flour and everyone had to wake up and say, "Oh, my God. These things are vulnerable." And some day they are going to say the same things about the B-52's, the B-2's and the planes coming off the carriers. They are all vulnerable to these surface-to-air missiles.

Mr. HUNTER. If the gentleman would yield briefly, Billy Mitchell did sometimes. He showed that technology had moved on and we had entered the era of air power. But he did not drop a sack of flour; he dropped enough munitions to totally sink and destroy three major ships, including one captured German battleship. He carried out his task with a little more enthusiasm than the people who have invested all their political capital in battleships or warships cared for him to do.

In a way we are doing the same thing here. We are in an era in which we can avoid radar because of the great technology that freedom has brought us in this country and we are about to forgo

that technology for some pretty silly reasons. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. MCKEON. Reclaiming my time, I think you make a good point on the technology. A lot of my friends here in the Congress have asked me, "Well, is there technology out there, or will there be in the next few years, to make it possible to see the B-2 to make it obsolete?"

I was talking to our ex-Secretary of the Air Force about a month ago, before we had the last vote, and he was going over that with us. He said that all during the development phase of the B-2, we had our best minds working to see if they could come up with a way to detect it. So that we, if the other side had it, so that we could defend against it. We have not been able to find that; it is not available.

Mr. DICKS. The gentleman makes a point too. Remember one thing, a plane can be seen. That does not mean you can vector weapons against it. That is the thing that you have to remember about stealth.

People say, "Well, I can see it. It is there on the field." But when you have that thing up in the air at 45,000 feet, and it has got that incredible design which is very hard to see, even when you are just a few miles away from it. But it is the fact that the enemy cannot vector weapons with their radars and the systems that they have to have to take a weapon to the plane. That is why it is so revolutionary. So we do not want anybody to be misled, because you can see it.

DO NOT BE DETERRED: CONTINUE
THE B-2

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington [Mr. DICKS].

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, it is that important fact, and the fact that we have not been able to figure out a way to counter it. This is a game that goes on and on. There is a struggle back and forth.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues for coming over here and joining me in an impromptu discussion of the B-2. We are going to be moving on to this issue as we get to the defense appropriations bill. As I have said, I think this is the most important defense issue that most of us will decide while we are in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that I have good bipartisan support from my colleagues are we try to oppose those who I think in a very shortsighted way are trying to cut off this program and saying that they are going to save money.

I will tell my colleagues this: We are going to save lives and money if we build the B-2. We are going to save money if we do it at the time the line is open. We are going to preserve the