Cain has responded more aggressively to the latest allegations than he did with the earlier claims.

ATLANTA (AP) -- Herman Cain says he must gauge the response of supporters before deciding whether his presidential candidacy can survive another allegation of inappropriate sexual behavior. He's likely to hear from backers and doubters alike over the next few days.

With a bus tour of Ohio set to begin Wednesday, Cain faced an early test of whether he could get back on track when he delivered a national security speech to nearly 1,000 people at conservative Hillsdale College in Michigan on Tuesday. He didn't address a Georgia businesswoman's accusation of a 13-year extramarital affair; he also avoided speaking to reporters and stuck to his plan to present his foreign policy vision, one in which the U.S. would stand by friendly nations such as Israel, quit giving money to countries he considered enemies and spend more on defense.

"Rather than the current philosophy of cut, cut, cut, I believe our philosophy should be invest, invest, invest," Cain said to an audience that gave him a standing ovation. "I happen to believe that we have allowed our military to get too weak."

Questions lingered over whether Cain's campaign for the Republican presidential nomination could continue. In a conference call with supporters Tuesday, he acknowledged the "firestorm" sparked by Ginger White's interview with an Atlanta TV station and admitted he was assessing whether her claims - he flatly denies them - are too much for his candidacy to go forward.

"If a decision is made, different than to plow ahead, you all will be the first to know," Cain said during the call, according to a transcript from the National Review, which listened in.

During Tuesday's call, Cain once again denied the affair.

"It was just a friendship relationship," he said, according to the transcript. "That being said, obviously, this is a cause for reassessment."

In a letter addressed to "patriots and supporters," Cain denied the allegation, calling the story "completely false."

"As you probably heard yesterday," the letter said, "a troubled Atlanta businesswoman used national media outlets to promulgate a fabricated, unsubstantiated story about a 13 year affair with me," he said.

White steadfastly stood by her assertion in an interview Wednesday on ABC's "Good Morning America" and said she was "disappointed" by his characterization of her as "troubled."

"Our relationship was on and off for the last 13, 14 years," she said. "This was not a consistent love affair that went on every day for the last 14 years, so he is correct when he made that statement."

"I'm not here to say anything negative about Mr. Cain," she said, although White added that she didn't think he should be president.

She called her relationship with Cain "a very casual affair" and said she has been "humiliated" and embarrassed that the affair has been made public.

White also said she took several trips with Cain, including a flight to Las Vegas to see a Mike Tyson-Evander Holyfield boxing match. She also said she had "consistently" received gifts and money from Cain over the past two and a half years, but said it was "not sex for cash."

White's revelation was the latest setback for a candidate who has been under scrutiny in the past month, since it was revealed that the National Restaurant Association paid settlements to two women who claimed Cain sexually harassed them while he was president of the organization. Then a third woman stepped forward to accuse Cain of groping her in a car in 1997.

In connection with the White allegation, Cain said in the conference call: "With this latest one, we have to do an assessment as to whether or not this is going to create too much of a cloud, in some people's minds, as to whether or not they would be able to support us going forth."

Some have started to defect.

New Hampshire state Rep. William Panek endorsed Cain at a news conference earlier this year. But he changed his mind Tuesday after seeing reports that Ginger White, the woman accusing Cain of the affair, showed evidence that she had traded 61 text messages and cellphone calls with the candidate. Panek has endorsed former House Speaker Newt Gingrich in the upcoming primary.

"I felt like we were being lied to," he said. "I'm putting my name in New Hampshire as a state rep behind him and I just didn't like the way it was being played out."

In Iowa, Cain's campaign has lost some precinct-level supporters in light of the new allegations, Steve Grubbs, Cain's Iowa chairman, said during an interview with CNN.

Cain was in Iowa for a day last week to film a new ad, but spending to air it was on hold pending the fundraising in the days to come, Grubbs said.

"If people make contributions, then we'll keep the campaign doors open and be able to keep paying people," Grubbs said. "Otherwise, Herman Cain will have to make a decision whether he can afford to keep moving forward."

Cain has responded more aggressively to the latest allegations than he did with the earlier claims. He issued a pre-emptive denial before the latest accuser even went public. He also sent a message to his supporters Tuesday calling the allegations of an affair "a fabricated, unsubstantiated story." He accused White of abusing their friendship.

"I am writing you today to assure you that this woman's story is completely false," Cain said in the email. "I do know Ms. White. I have helped her financially at times over the past few years, just as I have helped many friends and acquaintances throughout the years. I thought Ms. White was a friend in need of a supportive hand to better her life."

Florida state Rep. Scott Plakon, one of four chairmen for Cain's Florida campaign, described Cain as calm and deliberate when speaking to his campaign supporters. Plakon said he wanted to see more evidence before he could believe Cain's latest accuser.

"If it is true that he didn't do this, I think he should fight and kick and scratch and win," Plakon said.

But if Cain did have the affair, Plakon said, it would be unacceptable to Republican voters.

"That would be very problematic," he said. "There's the affair itself and then there's the truthful factor. He's been so outspoken in these denials."