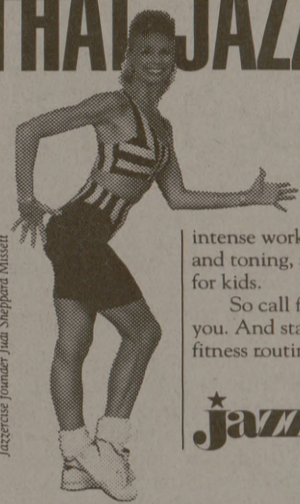


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Bush unveils emergency farm aid

President vows \$755 million in disaster relief for farmers, \$1 billion in export subsidies

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SHALLOWATER — President Bush, polishing his new image of an activist president during election-year largess, on Wednesday announced \$755 million in disaster aid for farmers and a \$1 billion package of farm export subsidies.

He unveiled the emergency assistance and the package to help U.S. wheat farmers compete against heavily subsidized European competition first in South Dakota and then later in this West Texas community. Then he headed to Fort Worth, where White House aides said he would announce the go-ahead for \$6 billion in sales of Texas-made F16 fighter jets to Taiwan.

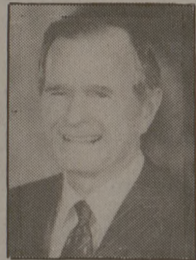
The United States will sell Taiwan 150 of the jets, the White House said. Taiwan has sought the planes, manufactured by General Dynamics at its Forth Worth plant, for the past 11 years.

Standing among bales of hay on a flatbed truck on South Dakota farm, Bush declared: "American farmers need help, and with this disaster assistance, you will get it."

He delivered a similar message during a rally at a cotton gin mill in Shallowater, near Lubbock.

Bush told his Texas audience that he saw his role as "being there to help you get back on your feet when disaster strikes."

In addition to providing assistance to farm-



Bush

ers in Florida and Louisiana whose rice and other crops were devastated by Hurricane Andrew, the new assistance would help reimburse farmers in East Texas whose cotton crops were damaged by heavy flooding last spring, Bush said.

The new aid came a day after Bush promised 100 percent federal reimbursement for Florida's recovery costs from hurricane damage.

White House aides denied political motivation, but did little to disguise the fact that Bush hoped to reap political benefits from the announcement.

In fact, deputy White House press secretary Judy Smith said that the cost of Tuesday's trip was being borne by the president's re-election campaign rather than by taxpayers.

On the export aid, Bush said he was directing subsidies to be applied to up to 1.1 billion bushels of wheat for shipment to 28 countries between now and next June.

The subsidies could mean \$3 billion in sales, Bush said.

Administration officials said the \$1 billion cost would be financed from existing agricultural appropriations but they did not provide details.

Bush said the federal aid would help U.S. farmers compete with farmers in nations that subsidize farm exports, allowing American growers to "beat their socks off."

The subsidies will help U.S. wheat farmers compete against European farmers, Bush said it was the largest quantity of U.S. wheat ever earmarked for U.S. government subsidies.

The White House denied that the announcement represented a retreat from the U.S. posi-

tion — taken repeatedly by the United States in international trade talks — to end all such subsidies.

"Absent an agreement, the president is committed to using tools at his disposal to ensure that U.S. producers are able to compete," a White House fact sheet said.

Bush was more blunt. He said he would use farm subsidies "as necessary" on other crops as well. "I'm putting foreign governments on notice right here in South Dakota," Bush said.

"This action is named at those who subsidize, not at those such as Australia and others who do not subsidize," he said.

The new move seemed bound to increase frictions between the United States and the 12 nation European Community, where agricultural subsidies are common.

After his South Dakota appearance, Bush then headed for his adopted home state of Texas, a key electoral state where he trails Clinton in the polls.

White House officials said Bush would announce approval of the sale to Taiwan of 150 F16 fighters, to be built by General Dynamics in Fort Worth.

Company officials have said an earlier administration decision to block the sale of the fighters would force the layoff of 3,000 aircraft workers.

Bush announced he was reconsidering U.S. opposition to the sale during a visit to Texas in July.

Bush was clearly using the power of incumbency in an effort to close his gap in the polls with Democrat Bill Clinton, whom he accused of protectionist tendencies.

Crop assistance: better late than never, lawmakers say

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Bush's release of \$755 million in emergency aid for farm disasters was well received on Capitol Hill Wednesday, although some lawmakers said it took months of prodding to free up the money.

"The president's decision is good news for our hard-pressed farm community and, while many of us urged him to act sooner, this action is better late than never," said Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas.

Bentsen was one of many lawmakers who urged the administration in recent months to free the \$755 million, which was part of a \$1.75 billion disaster assistance package approved by Congress last year. The money can only be spent once the president announces an emergency disaster declaration.

Bush had earlier freed \$995 million of the disaster money, but to date had turned aside requests to release the remainder.

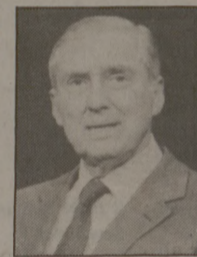
"He persisted for months in holding these funds in reserve despite my pleas and those of others," Bentsen said. "In the meantime, farmers were suffering."

"The main fact is it's being released," the Lubbock Republican said. "To those farmers by the hundreds that have been calling our office, they are not sitting back and saying, 'Gee, I wish it had been released earlier.' They're just glad it's being done."

Visiting a cotton gin near Lubbock, Bush said he saw his role as "being there to help you get back on your feet when disaster strikes."

The newly-announced aid will have to cover disasters ranging from estimated \$321 million lost to the South Plains cotton crop to catastrophes in other states caused by floods, tornadoes, frost and drought. The aid includes \$100 million specifically set aside by Congress for losses to the 1992 winter wheat crop.

And, Florida and Louisiana farmers battered by Hurricane Andrew also are expected to get a significant portion of the disaster money.



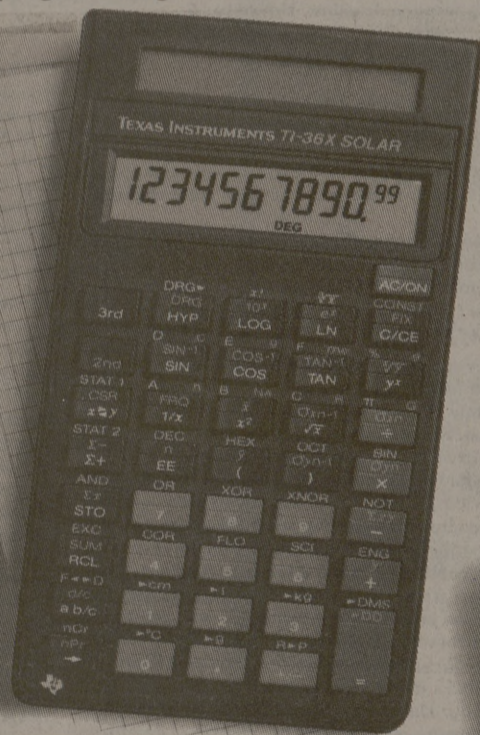
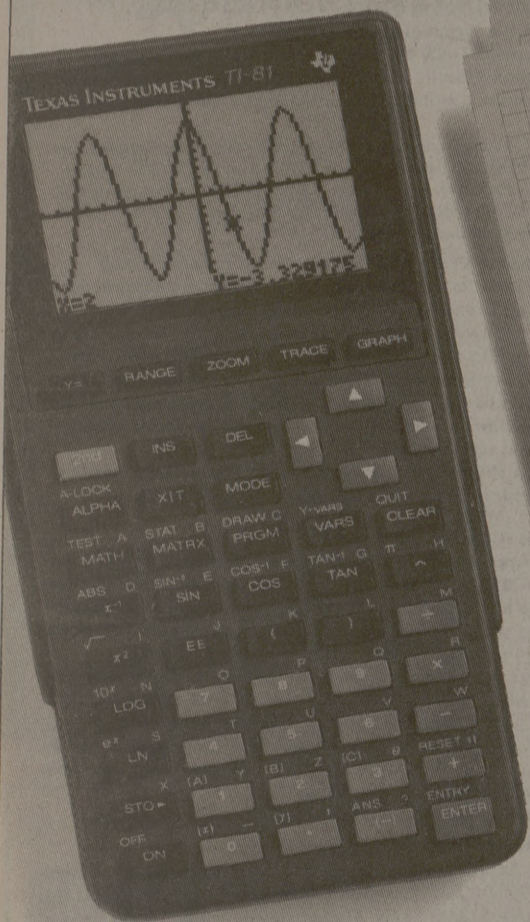
Bentsen

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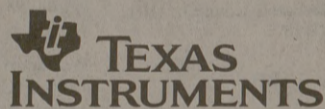
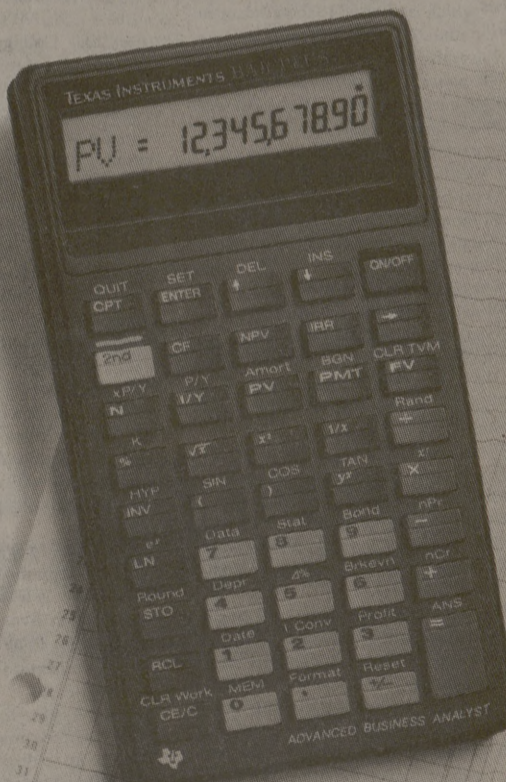
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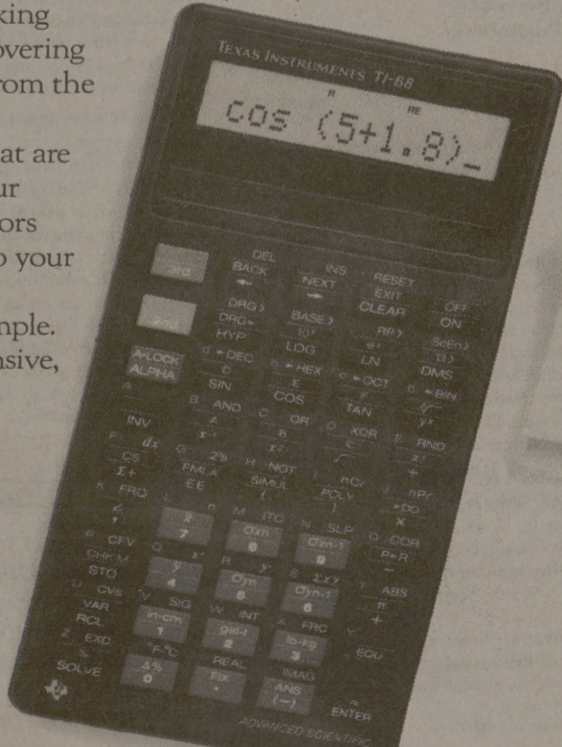
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