

Editorial

'Sale of the century' reduces land surplus sanely, sensibly

It seems the land of plenty has too plentiful a reserve of land.

The federal government, therefore, has launched what is being dubbed as the "land sale of the century."

The decision is economically sound: When you're short on cash and long on assets, sell the assets to raise the cash. It's done everyday in the business community.

But when the U.S. government puts land on the selling block, some take offense. Specifically, environmentalists balk. They fear the government will over-sell its land, opening the way for overgrazing of grasslands, overmining of mineral-rich lands and overdevelopment of barren lands.

Portions of a recent Time cover article on the land sale puts it in proper perspective.

By the beginning of 1983, Time reports, the Reagan administration wants to sell 307 parcels of land, equaling 60,000 acres. Within the next five years, the magazine says, the administration wants to dispose of 35 million acres, only 5 percent of all government holdings.

The sale is being arranged and supported by Secretary of Interior James Watt, who, along with Reagan, believes the United States "owns far more land than it needs or can manage." Both believe unneeded land should be sold to private owners, Time

says.

The sale of 5 percent of 740 million federally owned acres hardly is cause for alarm. The government is not aiming to sell all its open spaces to private bidders who will then erect condominiums, hotels and shopping malls. In fact, the administration's handling of the project indicates it is taking great pains to diminish alarm.

For example, Time tells us:

—Lands in the National Park and National Wildlife Refuge systems will be exempt from sale, as will be Indian Trust lands and wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, national trails and national conservation areas. These lands equal 400 million acres.

Land parcels will be offered first to federal agencies, then to state and local governments. Only then will sales be opened to the general public.

Those standards should soothe conservationists afraid that acre after acre will be pillaged to turn a profit. Before the land is offered to private enterprise, hundreds of federal, state and local agencies — fearful of land exploitation — will have the opportunity to purchase and protect it. In the private sector, groups committed to land preservation will certainly have their turn at bidding.

The land, which Time said is used little or not at all, costs the government more to maintain than it is worth. But the sale of it



will net \$17 billion during five years.

"What better way to raise some of the revenue that we so badly need than by selling some of the lands and buildings that we don't need?" Time quotes Watt as saying.

Although the profits from the sales hardly will make a dent in the national debt, Watt is right. Government has too

much land and government has too little money. The sales will relieve both situations.

And considering the built-in protection for parks and wilderness and the responsible method of selling — not to mention the desirability of purchasing land — Watt and company couldn't have planned a better business venture.

Blue-eyed blonde discovers beast within beauty

There were a lot of responses to the "Hot Legs Contest" columns, and when the young woman told me she wanted to talk about it, I thought she might have been one of the contestants. She was 21, blond, blue-eyed, and — by all objective standards — beautiful.

"The columns made me so unhappy," she said. "If the attitudes of the women you quoted in those columns really represent the way a large percentage of women feel these days, then I'm really worried."

She said that she realized she had been born lucky. She grew up in an affluent suburban family, and she said



Bob Greene

that she had been remarkably attractive since childhood. She said it without any sense of conceit; it was just a fact.

She told me she had never had a boyfriend and never wants one.

"I spent my childhood in tears because males could not resist my 'cuteness,'" she said. "My father's friends would come over, and they would put me on their laps and hug

me and breathe their stinking alcohol breath on me. Even now I remember how trapped I felt, being held by them. I grew up hating them — hating all men.

"They told me: 'By the time you reach your teens, nobody will be able to keep their hands off you.' And I believed them, literally. I went to grade school, and I had no desire to be with any of the boys in my class. I was disgusted at the very idea of males..."

"I found out very early that if you're an attractive female, you're going to get someplace. I found out that people concentrated on that above everything else. In school, I found out that if all other methods failed, I could get good grades by emphasizing my good looks. I wanted desperately to get the good grades, and I learned that my male teachers liked it if I dressed up and paid attention to them. It worked. It made me sick.

"It turned out that I was a good student on my own. The school told my parents that they wanted to put me in an accelerated program, for gifted students. For the first time in my life, I was excited about something. . . . But my parents refused to let me be part of the advanced program. They told me that 'good-looking girls shouldn't have that kind of pressure,' and that 'we don't want to

chase the boys away from you, do we?'"

"I went out for plays in high school. I knew there were other girls who were much better actresses than me. But the faculty directors looked at me and said, 'Oh, she's so cute, we'll put her in this part.' I got cast in a leading role, as a princess. . . . Everybody said I looked like a princess.

"My girlfriends thought I was a prude because I never went out on dates. But I couldn't think of anything I wanted less. I'm the only person I know among my friends who hasn't been to bed with anybody. My girlfriends say, 'What do you think is so special about you? What are you waiting for?' They don't understand that it's not a matter of principle. . . . I just don't want to be that close to any male.

"Even now, I see every day that men react primarily to a woman's looks. . . . If I'm at a party where people are drinking, all the men at the party keep refilling my drink; they think it will make me a little more receptive. And when I'm not, my girlfriends will say, 'You're 21 years old. You're supposed to be experienced. Go for it. He likes you.' They just don't understand how I feel.

Continued on Page 5

Readers respond to evacuation of PLO

Your political cartoonist had it all wrong on Monday, Aug. 23.

It was David (Israel) vanquishing Goliath (Palestine Liberation Organization). It is Israel that is small and has been facing a hostile, numerically superior enemy since its creation in 1948. It is Israel that is the victim of a double standard of morality (when the PLO kills Olympic athletes, bombs schools at Maalot or shoots tourists

Arafat? Is it because Arafat has yet to earn sympathy from anyone who remembers his calls for a holy war, his pledge to wipe the sovereign state of Israel off the map or all the atrocities he has committed?

If you want to engender sympathy for the underdog, it is Israel that needs your support — not the organization rejecting negotiations, hiding its bases and arms among civilians and then holding them hostage for months.

Murray Frost
research coordinator,
Center for Applied
Urban Research, UNO

The Daily Nebraskan article titled "Evacuation Brings Momentary Defeat" (Aug. 26) is a completely one-sided view of the Palestinian problem and a gross distortion of the events created by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

The author of the article suggests that Israel wouldn't have invaded Lebanon if the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinians weren't there. If the Palestinians are in Lebanon and all over the world, it's because they were forced from their homeland of Palestine which the Israelis have occupied since 1948.

Everybody has a dream; for the Palestinians it is to return to their homes which are now occupied by American, German, Polish, Russian or Moroccan Jews whose only link to Palestine is a religious one.

Thousands of innocent people, have been killed or left homeless by the invading Israeli forces in Lebanon. But even if the Israelis kill at the Palestinians of West Beirut they can't exterminate the 4 million or more Palestinians scattered all over the world.

The PLO is not a "terrorist organization" as was stated by the author but a legitimate representative of the Palestinians, of their aspirations and struggle for independence.

The evacuation of PLO fighters from West Beirut is the result of the perseverance and heroic resistance of the Palestinians and 500,000 civilians of West Beirut. It is also the result of outcries of anger and indignation from world leaders and organizations in reaction to the killings and atrocities committed by Israel in Lebanon.

A. Berrada,
UNL graduate agronomy student



Letters

on beaches, it is never condemned by the United Nations).

It is Israel that is economically pressured; no one is exercising a boycott against companies that trade with the Arab world, but Arab nations have a boycott against companies trading with Israel. It is Israel that is politically pressured. Does the Soviet Union or Arab block rule out any use of the weapons it supplies the PLO?

Why did your cartoonist personify Israel, calling his Sharon, but not personify the other character by calling his Yassar

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