

Human rights activist Davis decries military expenditures

by De Bora A. McIntosh
for the Tundra Times

Angela Y. Davis, professor, writer, lecturer and human rights activist, had something for nearly everyone in a recent talk at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

She discussed the drug crisis, AIDS, crime, violence against women, genocide, political repression and defended the rights of all minorities, including American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Davis talked about the struggles of oppression, alcoholism and maintaining Native heritage.

She spoke Oct. 18 at the Wendy Williamson Auditorium, which was severely overcrowded. Every seat in the 900-capacity auditorium was filled, and people continued to arrive.

They lined the entry ways and the aisles, and they sat on the stage and on the floor in front of the stage. People were also discovered behind the stage curtain, and more than 200 were turned away at the door.

Davis' strong convictions about the only "true Americans" being Native Americans brought cheers and resounding applause from the audience.

She blasted nuclear weapons, the arms buildup, Star Wars, military intervention and the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Davis spoke at length on past U.S. government intervention into other countries and questioned the reason for American armed forces in the Middle East.

According to Davis, the United States is having the largest military buildup since the Vietnam War. She stated that between Aug. 2 and Sept. 30, the U.S. government has spent \$2.5 billion dollars on military related expenses and is now spending \$25 million a day on military intervention. Should war break out, she said, the cost would be unimaginable.

Davis said the people who are in Saudi Arabia on behalf of the United States are not even aware of what's really going on. She also alluded to a "brain-washing" that is being done by the government — what she termed an attempt to make Americans believe that the United States is in the Middle East to protect the Democratic rights of the people of Kuwait.

She said that 1.9 million people live in Kuwait and that 60 percent of them have no citizenship rights.

"The reason the U.S. is there is because of the oil that is there and for the interest of the oil monopoly's profits," she said.

Davis said the billions of dollars that are "senselessly" consumed by the military ought to be redirected into programs designed to nurture living human beings and to help eradicate homelessness and disease and establish programs to find jobs, child care and education.

Davis talked about the elimination of racism by becoming aware of various cultures and races through an

educational system that would create courses that would be part of the academic requirements in elementary schools and college.

She said that the knowledge and contributions of other races had been left out of the history books and so people do not know enough about the contributions of African-Americans, Native Americans or Latin Americans.

Davis urged people to become more aware of the world around them and become actively involved in making the world a better place to live.

Davis, a member of the Communist Party U.S.A., started gaining attention in the late '60s because of her "Black Power" activism. She gained national attention in 1970 when she was placed on the Ten Most Wanted list and was the subject of an intense FBI hunt, leading to one of the most famous trials in U.S. history. Davis was acquitted on all charges.

Currently Davis is a professor, teaching philosophy and Women's Studies at San Francisco State University in California.