

Den Nena Henash - Our Land Speaks

Ut Kah neek - Informing and Reporting

Yupit Kaniautciat - The Way Eskimos Talk

Unangan Tunukun - The Aleuts Speak

Inupiat Paitot - People's Heritage

We can't turn our backs on China

To the editor:

The recent demonstrations in China and the ensuing executions should strike a nerve in every American. After all, our own democracy is the result of those dissenters who were courageous enough to fight for a different and what they deemed to be a better way of life.

Many died then and many have died since in their fight for democracy and in their fight for what they believed was right.

We Natives of Alaska value life highly. We have always had to struggle to survive under the most difficult conditions while isolated in small groups of people. If we met new people, we welcomed them and were glad to be with them. For us they were different people from outside our group with whom we could talk and exchange important information.

Reports stating that up to 3,000 people were killed by the army are difficult to grasp. This would be equivalent to wiping out the population of almost any of the Interior villages in Alaska.

Although we are far away from China, the significance of what is happening there is very close, especially for the United States and Alaska

Natives. We have always encouraged freedom of expression and have fought to preserve this right.

I am appalled by the brutality of the attack and by the ruthlessness with which individuals are now being singled out for punishment.

If a government must resort to such drastic measures to quell freedom of thought and expression among its people, then surely that government cannot be founded on solid principles and values.

We cannot afford to turn our backs on this. I think we should show our support for those people who are fighting for what they believe is right.

I urge you to publicly show your support and offer your encouragement to those people in China who are actually in the midst of that precarious situation, and also to all the people in this country who have friends and relatives in China.

As one of the oldest and largest democracies in the world, we should set an example and extend our support to those who are seeking the right to freedom of expression.

Sincerely,
Samuel S. Demientieff
Fairbanks