

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

For Free Speech

In response to Fred Grimmnitz's "Mailbox" letter in the July 25 issue of the *World Tribune*, I am outraged to think that censorship is required to express one's view of Buddhism.

We live in America and I am thankful for the privilege of my freedom of speech. I don't believe it is a weakness or a shortcoming to use slang.... These words have been a part of American language for centuries, whether we like it or not, and they are not going away.

Therefore, it is the perspective of the reader who chooses to make these words bad or evil. In fact, it was quite refreshing to hear that these words were being published for the simple fact that [they conveyed] the true expression of the person's feelings.

We should not and cannot deny Americans their freedom of speech. We as Buddhists, more than anyone, should honor this amendment. Also, aside from being Buddhist, we mustn't forget we are human beings, each person very different and unique from the next....

— PHOEBE PNAIGH, Hollywood, Calif.

Another Look at NATO

Mark Anton's letter "NATO Not So Great" (Aug. 1 "Mailbox") is inaccurate and misleading. All three newly emerged democracies — the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland — are eager to join NATO and a solid majority of their people are in favor of this event. There is no understanding that they buy American armaments but NATO is a defensive military alliance and they will bring their military up to a generally acceptable NATO standard. The United States will probably sell some jet fighters, but the net cost will be somewhat negative as we absorb additional costs for training and integration of these countries in the NATO command.

There are some legitimate concerns here, though. Should the United States be guaranteeing the territorial integrity of these three countries from external invasion? Would we really go to war to defend them? Does it make sense for our foreign policy efforts to continue in such a Eurocentric vein? Last, if Russia is not currently a genuine military concern vis-a-vis Eastern Europe, then who is the enemy? What is the reason for eastern NATO expansion or could the situation change yet again?

All these questions must be seen against the backdrop of Stalin's Red Terror, which murdered more than 20 million people in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I am not an expert on these issues, but do have a double major in political science and history from the University of Maryland and served in the U.S. Air Force in Europe.

I would strongly recommend the following three books as they will show the cause-and-effect relationship between historical events and the current situation. Mr. Anton should read them, too. I would like to talk with him afterward. Anyway, the first is *Gulag Archipelago* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, which details the terror and workings of Stalin's death camps; *The Strange Death of the Soviet Empire* by David Pryce-Jones, which is interview-based (Russian politicians, KGB, military, economists, journalists, etc.); and, last, *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia* by David Remnick.

— STEVEN G. SWANSON, St. Paul, Minn.

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