

You are in: [World: South Asia](#)[Front Page](#) Monday, 12 March, 2001, 18:21 GMT[World](#)**Outcry as Buddhas are destroyed**[Africa](#)[Americas](#)[Asia-Pacific](#)[Europe](#)[Middle East](#)[South Asia](#)[From Our Own Correspondent](#)[Letter From](#)[America](#)[UK](#)[UK Politics](#)[Business](#)[Sci/Tech](#)[Health](#)[Education](#)[Entertainment](#)[Talking Point](#)[In Depth](#)[AudioVideo](#)

Global protests did nothing to dent the Taliban's resolve

India and Pakistan have led global condemnation of the Taliban's destruction of two ancient statues of the Buddha in Afghanistan, which was confirmed on Monday.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee described the demolition of the Buddhas in central Bamiyan province as "an act of barbarism".

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, who has accused the international community of doing too little, said it was "a tragic disaster".

In Bangladesh, a rally was held in the capital, Dhaka, to protest against the destruction, as Muslim nations from Malaysia to the Middle East queued up to stress the attacks on the statues had nothing to do with Islam.

Earlier Unesco Director-general Koichiro Matsuura said in a statement that the demolition of the relics was complete.

"I was distressed to learn from my special envoy, Pierre LaFrance, that the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas has been confirmed," he said.

Mr LaFrance has visited Afghanistan twice in an attempt to save the artefacts, but to no avail.

The Taliban Foreign Minister Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil, in Islamabad to meet with UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan,

“  
The whole world  
community remained a  
passive spectator to the  
disaster  
”

Pakistan Foreign  
Minister Abdul Sattar

Search BBC News Online

[Advanced search options](#)[Launch console for latest audio/video](#) [BBC RADIO NEWS](#)[BBC ONE TV NEWS](#)[WORLD NEWS SUMMARY](#)[BBC NEWS 24 BULLETIN](#)[PROGRAMMES GUIDE](#)**Afghanistan's Buddhas lost forever****Key stories**[Why now?](#)[Protests in pictures](#)[Reaction in quotes](#)[Focus on the Taliban](#)**History**[Wonder of the world](#)[Visiting the Buddhas](#)[Smashing icons](#)**See also:**[09 Mar 01 | South Asia  
UN condemns Taliban on statues](#)**Internet links:**[Islamic Movement of Afghanistan](#)[Afghanistan Online](#)[Afghanistan Cultural Association](#)

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

confirmed that the two giant statues had indeed been destroyed, along with all moveable artefacts.

"We do admit all these statues were the cultural heritage of Afghanistan, but we will not leave the part which is contrary to our belief." Mr Mutawakil said.

### Explosives

Even a delegation of senior Muslim scholars from the 55-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) had been unable to dent the Taleban's resolve to annihilate the country's pre-Islamic heritage.

Journalists are barred from the region, but international aid workers have confirmed that the militia used explosives to bring down the soaring statues.

"The destruction work is not as easy as people would think," Taleban Information Minister Qudratullah Jamal told Reuters.

The statues are now said to lie in ruins at the foot of the cliff where they have stood since the second and fifth century.

### Intolerance

Standing at 51 and 36 metres high, the statues were once a symbol of the religious tolerance that pervaded the region but today Bamiyan is a war zone.

Islamic leaders around the world have stressed that the Taleban's iconoclasm has no justification in Islam.

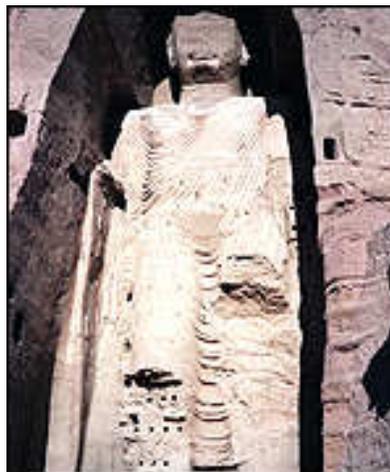
Only Sudan and Saudi Arabia, one of only three countries to recognise the Taleban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, have remained quiet.

Kofi Annan, in Pakistan on a tour of the region, described the Taleban's acts as a "disservice" to themselves and to Islam.

Some analysts believe the demolition of the statues may have come in retaliation for UN sanctions imposed for the Taleban's refusal to hand over Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.



The Taleban Foreign Minister confirmed the destruction



The statues were among Asia's great archaeological treasures

### Top South Asia stories now:

[Party boss quits after web sting](#)

[Scandal rattles India's investors](#)

[Bangladesh kidnap contacts 'resumed'](#)

[Kashmir separatists hope to meet Annan](#)

[Gunmen attack Pakistan mosque](#)

[India show fighting spirit](#)

[Y2K 'bomb plot' trial opens](#)

[Afghans face famine in opposition areas](#)

Links to more South Asia stories are at the foot of the page.

---

**Links to more South Asia stories**



^^ [Back to top](#)

[News Front Page](#) | [World](#) | [UK](#) | [UK Politics](#) | [Business](#) | [Sci/Tech](#) | [Health](#) | [Education](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Talking Point](#) | [In Depth](#) | [AudioVideo](#)

-----  
[To BBC Sport>>](#)

[News Sources](#)