

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 30

Condemning the destruction of pre-Islamic statues in Afghanistan by the Taliban regime.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 30, 2001

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. WELLSTONE) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Condemning the destruction of pre-Islamic statues in Afghanistan by the Taliban regime.

Whereas many of the oldest and most significant Buddhist statues in the world have been located in Afghanistan, which, at the time that many of the statues were carved, was one of the most cosmopolitan regions in the world and hosted merchants, travelers, and artists from China, India, Central Asia, and the Roman Empire;

Whereas such statues have been part of the common heritage of mankind, and such cultural treasures must be preserved for future generations;

Whereas on February 26, 2001, the leader of the Taliban regime, Mullah Mohammad Omar, reversed his regime's previous policy and ordered the destruction of all pre-Is-

lamic statues in Afghanistan, among them a pair of 1,600-year-old 175-foot-tall and 120-foot-tall statues carved out of a mountainside at Bamiyan, one of which is believed to have been the world's largest statue of a standing Buddha;

Whereas the religion of Islam and Buddhist statues have co-existed in Afghanistan as part of the unique historical and cultural heritage of that nation for more than 1,100 years;

Whereas the destruction of the pre-Islamic statues contradicts the basic tenet of the Islamic faith that other religions should be treated with respect, a tenet encapsulated in the Qur'anic verses, "There is no compulsion in religion" and "Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion";

Whereas people of many faiths and nationalities have condemned the destruction of the statues in Afghanistan, including many Muslim theologians, communities, and governments around the world;

Whereas the Taliban regime has previously demonstrated its lack of respect for international norms by its brutal repression of women, its widespread violation of human rights, its hinderance of humanitarian relief efforts, and its support for terrorists groups throughout the world; and

Whereas the destruction of the statues violates the United Nations Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was ratified by Afghanistan on March 20, 1979: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) joins with people and governments around
4 the world in condemning the destruction of pre-Islamic
5 statues in Afghanistan by the Taliban regime;

6 (2) urges the Taliban regime to stop destroying
7 such statues; and

8 (3) calls upon the Taliban regime to grant the
9 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural
10 Organization and other international organizations
11 immediate access to Afghanistan to survey the damage
12 and facilitate international efforts to preserve
13 and safeguard the remaining statues.

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