

Title: Ticking Time Bomb: The effects of Terrorism on Cultural Heritage Sites
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The deterioration and preservation of global artifacts is a prevalent topic of concern and discussion, and now terrorism along with climate change have become concerning threats. Located in the Bamiyan Valley of central Afghanistan once stood the Bamiyan Buddha. It had remained a religious and cultural icon for more than 1,000 years, representing the spread of Buddhism along the Silk Road and the cultural heritage of Central Afghanistan. The Taliban was on a mission to destroy the “false idols” in the surrounding communities, and the Bamiyan Buddha is just one example of their destruction.

In 2001, this once 175-foot-tall statue was destroyed under orders of the Taliban forces. The Bamiyan Buddhas were once considered to be the largest statues in the world, but after recent destruction all that is left is the niche that once held this icon's place. Over a 25 day period in March of 2001 the Taliban, shot rockets and bullets at the Buddha. Their first attempts at destruction failed; eventually the Taliban sent air-force rockets, and imprisoned the native Hazar people, forcing them to place dynamite at the feet of the Buddha, leaving behind only the remnants of what once was there.

While climate change is predictable and research has been conducted in order to preserve global artifacts, acts of terrorism are unpredictable and have consequences that are far worse. Is there an equal emphasis being placed on the effects of terrorism on cultural sites as there is with climate change?

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