

STATEMENT

By Dr. Solomon Passy

President & Founder

THE ATLANTIC CLUB OF BULGARIA

It was back in the spring of 2001, after the destruction by the Taliban of the two Buddhas of Bamiyan -- the 6th century world-known monumental statues and an UNESCO world heritage site in Afghanistan -- when our think-tank discussed the necessity of international military action against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, such international effort materialized only after the horrific events of 9/11 as late as October 2001.

Watching the recent barbarian attack carried out against another UNESCO protected cultural heritage of ancient Timbuktu in Mali, also by radical extremists, I feel no hesitation at all. I am convinced that the UN Security Council should immediately authorize all possible actions, military operation included, to stop destroying history of humanity and guarantee Mali not to fall in hands that will turn it into an entirely failed state.

The West should not remain silent or just a witness of the tragedy unfolding in Timbuktu. It would be appropriate for NATO and the EU to immediately invoke the UN Security Council, the Arab League, the African Union and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and try to jointly consider immediate and efficient reaction.

Bulgaria, in view of its traditional relations with UNESCO, and as an active member of NATO and the EU, should be among the first pro-active sponsors of all future NATO / EU actions in that respect.

Timely actions are more efficient and also turn out to be more human, faster and cheaper. It is much better if the UN acts now, rather than later!

Dr. Solomon Passy

President & Founder / Atlantic Club Bulgaria

Minister of Foreign Affairs (2001-2005)

Chairman of the UN Security Council (2002, 2003)

OSCE Chairman in Office (2004)

Chairman of Parliamentary Defence / Foreign Affairs Committee and MP (1990-1991, 2001-2009)