

The Baffled French

Two French journalists have been kidnapped in Iraq by terrorists who are threatening to kill them if France does not repeal its new law banning Islamic headscraves (and all other conspicuous religious symbols) from state schools.

The people of France are at a loss to understand this development. They are "**baffled**"...

by the fact that the country's citizens should have been targeted by Iraqi militants, given France's vocal opposition to the US-led invasion of Iraq.

French President Jacques Chirac appealed to the kidnappers to release the journalists, using the following argument:

"France ensures equality, the respect and protection of the free practising of all religions," he said.

"These values of respect and tolerance inspire our actions everywhere in the world"

Are these the very values that also motivate the terrorists?

We guess that what's really happening is that Chirac is hoping to buy the journalists' lives with a large ransom payment, as others have done. If this succeeds, the sophisticated French will yet again become sponsors and collaborators in terrorism. They have infinite faith that by sacrificing others they will persuade the crocodile to devour them last. But shouldn't these very events be causing them to question that faith? Isn't it time for them to stop being baffled?

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