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Subject: France: statue of liberty replica & 9/11 plaque torched

Posted by [Blazer](#) on Thu, 27 Mar 2003 16:53:56 GMT

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Associated Press

French Statue of Liberty Replica Torched

Associated Press

BORDEAUX, France - Vandals in this southwest Bordeaux torched a replica of the Statue of Liberty and cracked the pedestal of a plaque honoring victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

The crowned head of the 8-foot-tall statue was blackened by fire and its eyes were marked with red paint, apparently to symbolize tears of blood, an official at the mayor's office said.

The statue and the Sept. 11 plaque are beside each other in a square near the city center.

The mayor of the southwestern city, Alain Juppe, condemned Wednesday's pre-dawn attack, saying the statue's message is especially pertinent in wartime.

"At a time when the world is living a major conflict, it is more important than ever to remain watchful of the values of peace and liberty," said Juppe, a former prime minister.

The Lady Liberty standing in New York Harbor was a gift from France to the United States commemorating freedom and friendship between the nations. It was made by Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi and dedicated in 1886.

Today, tensions between France and the United States have flared over the war in Iraq. French people overwhelmingly oppose the U.S.-led conflict and President Jacques Chirac angered many Americans by trying to slow the U.S. drive to war.

In France, vandals have ransacked McDonald's restaurants in Paris and Strasbourg, targeting the fast food chain as a symbol of American influence.

Cafeterias in the U.S. House of Representatives subsequently changed their menus to read "freedom fries" instead of French fries and "freedom toast" instead of French toast.

Lawmakers also introduced bills preventing France from participating in any postwar reconstruction projects.

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