



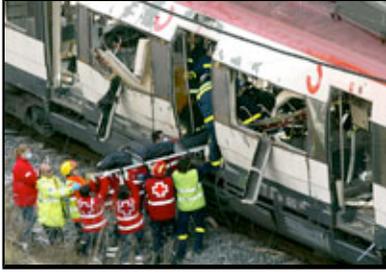
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caption: In "Al Qaeda's New Front" airing Tuesday, January 25, at 9 P.M. on PBS (check local listings), FRONTLINE investigates another battleground in the war on terror—Europe. Now home to 20 million Muslims, the continent has been rocked by deadly bombings in Madrid, *above*, and the discovery of terrorist plots in England, Germany, and Italy.

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» Al Qaeda's New Front
Tuesday, January 25, at 9pm, 60 minutes

On March 11, 2004, as four early morning commuter trains were arriving at Atocha station in Madrid, a series of bombs were detonated. Packed with commuters and students heading for work and school, the trains were blown apart. Pandemonium ensued. Fractured bodies littered the station and railway tracks, leaving 191 people dead and more than 1,400 injured.

It was the worst terrorist attack in the history of Western Europe. And it was a grim reminder that the followers of Al Qaeda were very much alive and well.

In "Al Qaeda's New Front," airing Tuesday, January 25, at 9 P.M. on PBS (check local listings) FRONTLINE, in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and *The New York Times*, investigates the alarming threat radical Salafist jihadists pose to Western Europe and its allies - including the United States.

"It might come as a surprise to many Americans," says correspondent Lowell Bergman, "But the most pressing threat to the United States is not the suspected Al Qaeda cells at home, but rather the cells operating overseas, especially in Western Europe."

Home to an estimated 18 million Muslims, Western Europe has become the new and deadly battleground in the war on terror. That's because disenfranchised Muslims - inspired by local radical imams and jihadist Web sites - are taking up the cause of jihad. And Al Qaeda, once just a loose organization on the continent, has morphed into a powerful ideological movement.

"The threat is before us, not behind us," France's top antiterror judge, Jean-Louis Bruguiere, tells FRONTLINE. "And we are quite concerned....I think that the terrorist threat today is more globalized, more scattered, and more powerful...than it was before September 11."

What's driving the terrorism threat? Many experts in counterterrorism say it's the belief that violence is justified in order to free the Muslim world from corrupt governments and the influence of the United States and Europe. And because it's difficult for jihadists to launch an attack on U.S. cities and institutions, their focus has turned to local targets in Western Europe.

FRONTLINE follows Rabei Osman El Sayed Ahmed, an Egyptian charged with 191 murders in connection with the Madrid attack. Rabei, also known as "Mohammed the Egyptian," is an example of this new generation of jihadi operatives who apparently operate independently of the old Al Qaeda network set up by Osama bin Laden. He is an example of the next generation of Islamist terrorist that Europe must now contend with.

"This country has seen terrorism since the end of the 1960s," says Sir David Veness, assistant commissioner for specialist operations with London's Metropolitan Police, "Both domestic extremism and international terrorism here on the streets of London. What is different about this form of terrorism is the unequivocal intention to cause mass murder...without warning in any form to the public."

European police have thwarted dozens of Islamist terrorist plots set to be launched following the U.S. attacks of September 11. But European counterterrorism experts say their job has become more difficult since the War in Iraq has further radicalized Salafist jihadists in Europe.

"Any observer can see that this War in Iraq is in fact a farm, a school to train graduates on acts of terrorism and fighting," says Reda Seyam, an Egyptian-born German citizen who reportedly had been under investigation in connection with the Bali bombings. "[It] revives the spirit of jihad in the Muslim nation."

"Al Qaeda's New Front" is a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation production for WGBH/FRONTLINE in association with *The New York Times*. The producer is Neil Docherty. The correspondent is Lowell Bergman.

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