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LONDON BOMBINGS

“Barbaric” attacks rip through subways, bus

LONDON: At least 37 killed, as many as 700 wounded

WORLD: Security beefed up across Europe and Asia

U.S.: Terrorism alert raised for mass-transit systems

No arrests have been made, but British officials suspect Islamic extremists. A group unknown previously claims responsibility.

By Glenn Frankel
The Washington Post

London — Bombs detonated on three crowded subway trains and a double-decker bus during London's morning rush hour Thursday, killing at least 37 people and injuring up to 700 others in the deadliest terrorist attack ever on British soil.

A shaken Prime Minister Tony Blair called the series of explosions “barbaric” terrorist attacks.

The first three blasts devastated the trains in quick succession, hurling broken metal, glass shards and body parts in every direction.

Survivors fled down dark tunnels to escape flames and thick black smoke.

Thirty minutes later, a fourth explosion tore the top off a crowded red London-style bus and rained blood and flesh on the pavement below.

“One moment there was a bus there, and the next moment it peeled up like a top of sardines,” said Billy Palmer, 42, a musician who witnessed the explosion from the sidewalk. “About four or five people literally came flying out the top.”

No arrests were announced, but British officials immediately pointed to Islamic extremists as the most likely perpetrators, citing the coordinated nature of the bombings and the timing — on the first full day of a summit of leaders of the Group of Eight world powers, who had gathered in Gleneagles, Scotland, with other heads of government.

A previously unknown group calling itself The Secret Organization of al-Qaeda in Europe claimed responsibility.

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A SCENE OF HORROR

Darkness, chaos and “just carnage”

Dazed rail victims struggle out of deep tunnels while a blast on a bus wreaks shocking damage.

By Sarah Lyall
The New York Times

London — The subway had been evacuated — in the chaos of the morning, 22-year-old Jasmine Gardner did not yet know why — so she did the

next-best thing. She decided to take the bus.

It was the No. 30 bus, a double-decker. Moving slowly in the heavy rush-hour traffic, it stopped at the intersection of Upper Woburn Place and Tavistock Place, not far from the British Museum.

It was packed. Gardner began to get on.

And then it exploded.
“One minute the bus was there; the

next minute it seemed to dissolve into millions of pieces,” said Gardner, who works for a television distribution company. “I was showered with bits of metal and bits of the bus. I was shielding myself with my umbrella, and it all landed on my umbrella.”

But the explosion was only one of four to strike central London on Thursday morning. The others took place deep in-

> See **SCENE** on 12A

AN EVER-PRESENT THREAT

London viewed as overdue, inevitable target

By Warren P. Strobel
Knight Ridder Newspapers

Washington — Perhaps the biggest surprise about Thursday's deadly attacks in London is that they didn't happen sooner.

London, one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities, is home to an array of

Islamic dissidents, peaceful and otherwise, and with terrorism continuing unabated elsewhere in the world, Great Britain has long been high on the target list for al-Qaeda and related groups because of its government's staunch support for the U.S. war in Iraq.

Sir John Stevens, Britain's top police officer at the time, put it this way in

March 2004: “There is an inevitability that some sort of attack will get through.”

Thursday's bombings of three subway trains and a double-decker bus at morning rush hour illustrate one of the great frustrations of the war on terrorism: It's

> See **WARNING** on 14A



British reaction

“They will never succeed in destroying what we hold dear in this country and in other civilized nations throughout the world. We shall prevail, and they shall not.”

Prime Minister Tony Blair



Mike Partridge | Knight Ridder

A subway train damaged by the first of four terrorist bombs Thursday sits in the tunnel between Liverpool Street and Aldgate stations in London after the morning rush-hour explosions that tore through the city's subway system and demolished a double-decker bus.



U.S. and them

“We got people here who are working to alleviate poverty and to help rid the world of the pandemic of AIDS. ... And on the other hand, you've got people killing innocent people.”

President Bush at G8 summit

“Explosion and a flash of flames”

8:51 a.m.

A blast catches a subway train near Liverpool Street station, which is between Moorgate and Aldgate stations on the eastern fringe of London's financial district. Some people caught in the blast emerged from Aldgate Station, near Jack the Ripper's old haunts in Whitechapel.

8:56 a.m.

A blast hits a second train deep underground between King's Cross and Russell Square stations. King's Cross station, in one of the seediest parts of London, is the film setting for Platform 9¾ in the “Harry Potter” films. Russell Square station serves Bloomsbury, the early-20th-century literary hotbed where Virginia Woolf and other luminaries lived.

9:17 a.m.

An explosion as a train enters Edgware Road station. Edgware Road is the heart of a thriving Arab community and convenient to Hyde Park, scene of last weekend's Live 8 concert.

9:47 a.m.

A double-decker bus is torn apart by an explosion near Russell Square, an area of many modestly priced hotels popular with tourists and close to the British Museum. Also nearby is the home where Charles Dickens lived from 1837 to 1839.

93° HIGH 62° LOW Partly cloudy: Hot. A chance of afternoon thunderstorms. > 8B



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