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# Algerian Groupe Salafiste de la Predication et le Combat (Salafi Group for Call and Combat, GSPC): An Operational Analysis; Strategic Insights, v. 5, issue 8 November 2006



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## Algerian Groupe Salafiste de la Predication et le Combat (Salafi Group for Call and Combat, GSPC): An Operational Analysis

### *Strategic Insights*, Volume V, Issue 8 (November 2006)

by [Maj Cliff Gyves, USAF](#) and [Maj Chris Wyckoff, USAF](#)

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### Introduction

The Salafist Group for Call (or Preaching) and Combat (GSPC), was born out of Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA) which threatened Algeria and its inhabitants after the country outlawed and imprisoned members of Algeria's largest Islamic party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), following the legislative elections in 1992. GSPC, a splinter group of GIA, formed to offer an alternative to the murderous tactics of its parent organization. For years following the voided election in 1992, GIA "engaged in frequent attacks against civilians (especially journalists, intellectuals and secular schools) and government workers, sometimes wiping out entire villages in its area of operation. From 1993 to 1998, about 70,000 civilians were killed in surprise raids throughout the country. Also in 1993, GIA announced a campaign against foreigners living in Algeria, and subsequently killed more than 100 expatriates, predominantly Europeans. The group uses assassinations and bombings, including car bombs, and it is known to favor kidnapping victims and slitting their throats."<sup>[1]</sup> While both GSPC and GIA espouse Islamizing the government of Algeria, their respective tactics helped to create the divide. According to both militants within GSPC and western experts, "GSPC pledged to avoid inflicting civilian casualties in Algeria. While the group has in fact killed civilians, the numbers are significantly less than the casualties of the GIA. Instead, GSPC concentrates on targeting Algerian government and security forces, especially those in rural areas. The group has also pledged to attack Western targets and has been linked to several foiled attacks against U.S. and European targets in Western Europe."<sup>[2]</sup> This message was again reiterated by the Media Wing of GSPC in January 2005 when they stated during an interview with *Al-Faath*, "It was announced that the GSPC was a continuation of what the jihad had been built on. It was agreed to change the name of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) to the GSPC because the first name had become a slogan of advocates of Takfir wal-Hijra [Excommunication and Exile]. Many operations were attributed to those who had adopted this path. It is a continuation of GIA ... before it went astray ... [GSPC] was to denounce the massacres that had been committed against the people and also the truce of the dictatorship."<sup>[3]</sup> These differences are important, but more so is the apparent evolution and potential digression of GSPC operations as it devolves and changes over time.

According to regional literature and Western experts, GSPC is in a state of decline as a result of the successful capture and killing of group leaders, state amnesty programs (specifically the Civil Concord Restoration Act and Algeria's Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation), and

Saharan state military crackdown under Western guidance and assistance.<sup>[4]</sup> As the organization declines, the original political and ideological bases for the group's formation may be devolving from the original intent of the GSPC and its advocates. Likewise, its strategy and operations may exhibit an attendant shift. As this ideological and operational devolution continues, and as al Qaeda and the GSPC leadership publicly announce an alliance, questions regarding the group's future operational and strategic outlook emerge. What impact will the remaining GSPC members and supporters within the African and European region have on U.S. interests? Faced with the potentially obsolete or unattainable goal of Islamizing the government in Algiers, will GSPC and its diaspora redirect their operations, attention, and resources from France and West Africa toward the United States and its interests around the world?

GSPC's international impact has been relatively small and has been limited to infrequent resource generating operations leading to arrests of GSPC and al Qaeda members and diaspora affiliates in a number European and Middle Eastern countries. In 2001, seven men, along with Abu Qatada, a suspected high-level al-Qaeda operative, were arrested on suspicion of involvement in GSPC's "English cell." Also during that year, Spanish police dismantled a six-man cell that had sent high-tech equipment and intelligence to operatives in Algeria. According to President Jose Maria Aznar Lopez, the cell had "financial connections to the terrorist organization led by bin Laden." In September 2002, two Algerians believed to be members of GSPC were arrested in Pakistan with false passports and forgery equipment. In April 2003, Dutch authorities arrested several Algerians "accused of supporting terrorist activities" carried out by GSPC. Finally, the Italian government definitively linked a high-ranking GSPC member in Milan to cadres of Ansar al-Islam, the al-Qaeda affiliate that continues to attack U.S. soldiers in Iraq. As GSPC's relationship with al Qaeda matures, GSPC's operations in Algeria and throughout Europe may become a more serious concern in the war on terror. Noting this concern "some intelligence experts fear the group is moving towards a global objective, along the lines of al-Qaeda. However, GSPC still appears dedicated to its primary objective, the establishment of an Islamist state in Algeria."<sup>[5]</sup> Despite the ambiguity of GSPC's internationalization, clearly, even this relatively obscure group, which has historically conducted operations only in Algeria, has the potential for greater global reach with connections to its international sponsor, al Qaeda. For historical reasons, the United States has largely left this problem in the hands of France.<sup>[6]</sup>

The uncertainty regarding GSPC operations creates a need for further review. Current literature and analysis is scarce and, as will be shown, potentially inaccurate. As a result, this research paper will provide a descriptive analysis of GSPC operations in an attempt to show patterns and potential direction of GSPC future operations.

A brief review of the paper's objective, environmental inputs and behavioral outputs will set the stage prior to reviewing the research methodology and assumptions, hypothesis analysis and observation, and areas for future research.

## Objective

The objective of this research is to devise a descriptive analysis of GSPC operations. Such analysis should help to identify GSPC behavioral trends and vulnerabilities.

## Environmental Inputs

Numerous environmental factors influence GSPC operations. Significant events outside of GSPC control, such as the September 11, 2001 attacks against the United States, the Civil Concord Restoration Act, and other Algerian amnesty initiatives shape the greater environment in which GSPC operates. These factors may directly affect GSPC's Algerian constituency, its prospective members, or actual members. They may also draw external powers into play, such as the United

States with its Global War on Terror (GWOT), or al-Qaeda with its campaign to co-opt various regional Islamist conflicts into its wider global jihad.

Other significant events fall within GSPC control, such as voluntary leadership changeover. Additional operating environment factors like weather, population density, or natural disasters (e.g., the 2003 earthquake in Bourmerdes) probably shape GSPC behavior to an observable degree.

## Behavioral Outputs

The two primary behavioral outputs that are observable are GSPC's rhetoric (what they announce to various audiences) and their operations (what they do). As is often the case, the operations a group undertakes will not always correlate with their public pronouncements. In such circumstances, one might call the public statements "blustering" or idle rhetoric, but presenting a public face nonetheless gives clues as to the organization's values, beliefs and intentions. When operational behavior does not follow rhetoric—particularly manifest in threats that the group fails to make good on—it may indicate a lack of capability. One might expect operations to exhibit closer congruence to public rhetoric if the group enhances its operational capacity. In other cases, the group may simply broadcast public statements to appeal to a constituency from which the group requires positive support, or wishes to keep placated so as to deter active interference; all the while, the group follows an operational strategy that does not follow its rhetorical tack.

## Methodology and Assumptions

For the purpose of this research unclassified sources were utilized to analyze GSPC's operations descriptively. The original intent was to utilize RAND and the Oklahoma City National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) database<sup>[7]</sup> to filter and identify GSPC operational data from time of organizational inception to May 25, 2006. According to the MIPT summary for GSPC, "The organization has operated since 1996 and is now the most significant terrorist movement in Algeria. The Salafist Group for Call and Combat broke off from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which was the primary terrorist entity during the 1992-2000 insurgency in Algeria."<sup>[8]</sup> As a result, our GSPC research utilized the date, January 1, 1996, as the initial search timeframe for source material. Initial review of the MIPT database identified 16 incidents attributable to GSPC from January 1, 1996 through December 31, 2006 (last day of the search was May 25, 2006). In an attempt to verify the data located in the MIPT database, internet searches were performed using Google and Yahoo search engines. The search results from these two avenues proved lacking and incomplete. A subsequent search utilizing the Open Source Center (OSC, formerly named the Foreign Broadcast Information Service)<sup>[9]</sup> was conducted. Search criteria included:

1. Search variable = "GSPC"
2. Search time frame = 1 Jan 96 through 31 Dec 2006

The OSC search resulted in 2,430 hits or articles with GSPC mentioned within the text. Sorting the articles by year reveals the following breakout:

1. 0 = GSPC hits for 1996 (1 January through 31 December 1996)
2. 1 = 1997 - unrelated group in Libya, General Social Popular Command
3. 3 = 1998
4. 68 = 1999
5. 215 = 2000

6. 322 = 2001
7. 398 = 2002
8. 363 = 2003
9. 443 = 2004
10. 406 = 2005
11. 211 = 2006 (end date of May 25, 2006)

Interestingly, according to OSC article FTS19981207001 641 Algiers *La Tribune* (Internet version) in French December 7, 1998, GSPC was established in 1998 with its first communiqué. This appears to have been validated by Abu Omar Abdul Bir, chief representative of the Media Wing of the GSPC who remarked during an interview with *Al-Faath Magazine*, “The GSPC was first established at the end of 1419 Hijri [1998].”<sup>[10]</sup> This information and the deficit of OSC regional GSPC articles in 1996 and 1997 refute several sources, to include MIPT, which place the initial inception of the group sometime in 1996.

Although the veracity of the information and sources contained within the articles received from the OSC search may be questioned, our research was buttressed by OSC’s mission: to provide “foreign media reporting and analysis to policymakers, government institutions and strategic partners. We deliver targeted, timely and authoritative open source intelligence for analysis, operations and policymaking.”<sup>[11]</sup> As such, OSC should prove credible and provide the raw data needed to gather the initial data about GSPC operations from 1996-2006.

While reviewing the 2,430 articles, several quality control measures were adopted to ensure sound data collection.

1. As stated earlier, the original intention for searching out other sources of GSPC operations was to verify the data contained within the MIPT database of the group’s incidents. This goal was maintained and broadened. To validate MIPT’s GSPC incidents and classify specifically what incidents they were attributing to GSPC, we attempted to validate the verbiage from MIPT within articles from OSC. This proved a very useful tool, as 8 of 16 incidents were found within articles that the OSC search yielded. Additionally, the criteria that MIPT was inferentially counting as incidents (targets = government, civilians, police, tourists, etc. and tactics = assassination, kidnapping, armed attack, bombing, etc.) were the same that we utilized during our review of the OSC articles.

2. A complete review of every article was not possible. As a result, the title and two line review of each article provided by OSC was proofed to determine operational GSPC content. When operational content or mention of a GSPC-specific mission was noted, a complete reading of the article was conducted to gather pertinent information. Note: By not reviewing every article in its entirety, operational data will not be 100% accurate—there are other operations that are not reflected because they were embedded in other non-operations-related articles that were not readily obvious during the review noted above. Some operations may not have been reported, and the veracity of the data presented in the translated articles may be questionable. While we tried to catch all the data, the time constraints and large number of articles were a detractor. Sources being referenced in the OSC articles may have been incorrect as well.

3. A distinction was made between GSPC operations and GSPC counterattacks and skirmishes with security forces. Only GSPC operations were considered. Counterattacks and skirmishes against security forces were not considered GSPC operations because they did not entail what we considered a terrorist attack or show initiative on their part for the incident.

4. While reviewing each article, we noted that although the article may allude to an operation, further study of its content revealed an operation which was attributable to no group. GSPC was

mentioned in the article as an aside and reminder to the reading public of past actions the group may have conducted or just as a reminder of their presence in the region where the unattributed operation occurred. Only operations which could be directly attributable to GSPC, its affiliates, or group members (for example, some articles state that Hattab and his following conducted the attack—Hattab was a GSPC zone Emir and later head of GSPC) were considered and coded as “GSPC”; all others were coded as “Unnamed.”

5. In order to maintain continuity of GSPC's operational tactic, the actual tactic specified by each article was used. Although some tactics appear to be something else (incursion appears to be an armed attack), the article's specification was used versus our interpretation of the operation. In addition, for any operation which utilized two or more tactics, the originating tactic was recorded.

6. Any operations in Europe or Algeria that were not consummated or at the very least begun prior to government intervention were not counted. Many times arrests were made in Europe prior to the start of an operation. Because we don't know if the operation would have occurred, it is not counted as a completed or in-progress operation (example, the GSPC-proposed operation against the U.S. Embassy in Paris—the operation was stopped at the planning stages [reference OSC article—GMP20020721000009 Algiers Le Mat Version-WWW in Internet 21 Jul 02]).

7. When operations were conducted with multiple “Devices,” the device that inflicted the initial damage (for example, explosion at a roadblock then assassination of those left using a knife), was recorded as the device (explosion) used.

8. Duplicate entries from different sources within OSC were eliminated checking location, situational data, and timeframe. Numerous articles referred to GSPC operations that occurred days, weeks, months or years in the past. These operations were noted and then double-checked when the appropriate time was reviewed. If the original course material could be found to confirm the operation, it was recorded with both the original and future text source line. If no operation could be found in the past, the future reference was used and recorded.

9. A review of the 2,430 articles was conducted in its entirety twice. The first review was chronological; the second was reverse chronological.

While reviewing the articles and noting the massive amounts of data that could be pulled from each article, an Excel tracking database (available through [Dr. Tom Johnson](#), NPS) was created to log in the operational information and compile the results in tables and charts (using Excel's pivot tables and charts). The original database fields/column headings that were utilized to log information pulled from the OSC articles were:

1. Date = Date of operation
2. Location = Location of operation
3. Operation = Exact verbiage from the OSC article about the operation and its attribution
4. Tactic = GSPC operation tactic to inflict harm or obtain resources
5. Device = GSPC primary device used during operation (knife, firearms, explosives, etc.)
6. Target = primary target of GSPC operation
7. Country = country where operation occurred
8. Ideological phrases at the time
9. Number of Members in GSPC
10. Source = text source line from OSC or other sources used to easily identify the actual article from which the material came

## 11. Database = where the “source” was located—MIPT, OSC, etc.

During the initial review and data capture from the OSC articles, several additional fields were added to the database to provide for greater continuity, information visibility and future data compilation. The additional fields include:

1. Day, Month, Year, Quarter breakout – Quarters are calendar year
2. GSPC or Unnamed = as discussed earlier, operations mentioned in articles may not have been attributable to GSPC. During the second review of the 2,430 articles it was determined to include all operations found when OSC search “GSPC” was conducted. The need to differentiate between GSPC and unattributable or “unnamed” operations emerged.
3. Weather (temperature), Temperature Range, Weather (rain), Rain Range = fields identifying environmental conditions during operation. These fields were used to test hypotheses about operational constraints attributable to weather.
4. Region = Algeria is a country made up of hundreds if not thousands of villages, communes and cities. The original “location” attribution proved to be too broad and unmanageable with over 100 villages and cities cited as the location of the operations. OSC articles many times not only cited cities but also the region or wilaya (province of administrative jurisdiction) within which the city falls. (Algeria is made up of 48 wilayas—most are densely located in the northern portion of the country—see [Appendix 1](#).) Region was added to assist in compiling operational data of the hundreds of cities and villages.
5. Coordinates, GEO Coord precision, Distance from Epicenter (km), Ranged Distance from Epicenter (km) = If the location associated with the geographic coordinates (GEO COORD) had a different spelling from the location in OSC, the geographic coordinates of the operational location were included to aid in building graphical and events-driven representations of the operations. Geographic coordinates were determined based on the “Location” data. Additionally, for those locations without precise geographic coordinates, an approximation was taken from closest city, region, or other information obtained from the OSC article. Epicenter data was created to assist in validating the geographic coordinates and proofing the data with the location, and with hypothesis validation of distance from the attack epicenter. Finally, many times the location data contained within OSC was incongruous with the spellings used in the geographic coordinate websites or other in country sites used to validate names of cities and villages and match them with region or wilaya. Sites to determine geographic coordinates, epicenter, and city/wilaya validation included:
  - a. GEO Coords: Multimap located [here](#).
  - b. GEO Coords: Falling rain located at: <http://www.fallingrain.com/world/AG/index.html>
  - c. Epicenter data: Distance from Epicenter was found by using GEO coords 36 42 26N and 003 46 25E (in the middle of the majority of operations) and then using GEO coord for the incident location: <http://www.movable-type.co.uk/scripts/LatLong.html>
  - d. City/wilaya validation: <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alg%C3%A9rie>
6. Tactic Outcome = Grouping created to assist in data compilation and hypothesis validation. Labeling of operations tactic outcome was done subjectively by reviewing the main target and specific operational data contained within each article.

7. Tactic Outcome Grouping = Created to provide an easier sorting and data analysis of the operations. Those operations that garnered resources (except when harm against the government was a byproduct), preaching, and kidnapping were grouped as a Resources operation, regardless of any dual purpose as annotated in Tactic Outcome, i.e. resource/preaching. Government resource tactic outcome was grouped under "Government Resources." Those operations that resulted in destruction, bombings, and resource/harm (government) were grouped under Harm. Civilian harm tactic was grouped "Civilian Harm." A review of the Resources/Harm data for both civilian and government targets reveals that the majority of the time this double grouping falls in line with the hypothesis: if aimed at civilians, the operation started as resource (grouping) and ended with resource and harm; harm was the byproduct of some additional circumstance. Likewise, government operations shown as resources/harm began as harm.

8. Civilian or "Government" Grouping = Grouping created to assist in data compilation and hypothesis validation. Civilian is defined as any noncombatant not associated with the local, regional, or federal government of Algeria or affiliated, either past or present, with GSPC. "Government" is everyone else. Specifically, Government includes:

- a. Militia = Municipal Guard, "Armed Civilians," Legitimate Defense Group (GLD), Patriots
- b. Army, Soldiers, National People Army (NAP)
- c. Government officials = Mayor, customs agents, etc.
- d. "Repentants" = GSPC members that surrendered during one of the two amnesty periods offered by the Algerian government
- e. Police

9. Civilian Injured, Killed, Abducted and "Government" Injured, Killed, Abducted = Created to capture the total human toll of the operation and to assist in data compilation and hypothesis validation.

After all relevant articles were reviewed and pertinent data extracted and logged into the database, tables and graphs were constructed to represent the data pictorially and begin hypothesis validation. Contained within the database are a series of graphs and tables that were initially used to provide insight into the operations of GSPC. All graphs are tabbed red. While these represent many of the hypotheses we will be testing, they are not all inclusive. Additional data and hypotheses can and should be tested. These areas will be reviewed at the end of the paper.

Finally, in an attempt to extract as much information as possible from the OSC articles, additional spreadsheets were created to compile data that either is useful for this current project but not applicable for the main spreadsheet, or has no current application for the project but is helpful information that can be used for future research. These spreadsheets include:

1. U.S. Interest Data = GSPC verbiage and information from OSC articles aimed at U.S. interests
2. European GSPC Rhetoric Data = GSPC Rhetoric obtained from European sources either aimed at U.S. or European interests
3. European Arrest/Failed Ops Data = GSPC arrests within Europe or failed GSPC operations aimed directly at but not operationalized within Europe



4. GSPC Statements = General helpful GSPC rhetoric
5. Key Dates and Articles = Additional dates and articles containing GSPC-specific information that might be helpful for future research

## Additional Analytical Considerations

Certain variables may correlate, but their causal relationship may be direct or second-order relationships. For example, if the data suggest roadblocks occur during the day rather than at night, it may be the direct result of the GSPC's inability to operate at night, or it may be because tourists/civilian (shakedown targets) travel predominantly during the day (an indirect, second order causal relationship, where the daylight directly affects the tourists, whose resultant behavior then affects the GSPC's behavior). In this case, the data was unrefined to determine time of day.

Sources may be biased or misleading, but in the absence of evidence to suggest a given piece of data was erroneous, we treated it as true. GSPC statements, though framed as rhetoric and propaganda, were taken at face value. If the GSPC claimed to have participated in an attack, it was taken at its word, even though there was the possibility the GSPC was merely "jumping on the bandwagon" *ex post facto* of a successful attack perpetrated by an allied terrorist group. Likewise, government statements were also taken as factual, even though the Government of Algeria has an incentive to characterize skirmishes as engagements with GSPC. (David Gutelius from Stanford University has asserted in general the government of Algeria has labeled skirmishes with bandits as encounters with GSPC to inflate the level of GSPC presence, activity and threat;[12](#) however, without contradictory data concerning a specific incident, individual reports of GSPC activity were treated as accurate. The general assertion that government of Algeria reports might be inflated could only serve to lower the confidence of the overall data set, and thus could not be used to eliminate any individual report.)

One should note that GSPC operations are sometimes staged with branching options to harm or provide resources (e.g., road blocks set up for dual purpose to take advantage of targets of opportunity: government forces that encounter the roadblock are ambushed [harm], while civilian travelers are shaken down for money or kidnapped for ransom [resources]). Logistical operations, such as materiel movement, arms purchases, or smuggling did not fit the category of actual operations used in this study. Criminal enterprises (like fraud, narcotics trafficking, etc.) that did not involve direct coercive actions against victims (like roadblocks, shakedowns or ransom kidnappings) also did not fit the category.

Operations were examined in two contexts. They were either domestic operations within Algeria or external (cross-border or transnational) operations into neighboring Northwest African countries or Europe. Unfortunately, most of the data available credited the GSPC for attacks within Algeria. Sources attributed a few external attacks in neighboring countries to GSPC, but they were limited. Furthermore, it appears the GSPC-linked Algerians arrested in European counterterrorism operations were involved in external support activities, such as document forgery or personnel smuggling; none of their activities fit the operational categories used in this study. Incursions into population areas were considered operations against civilians unless specific statements pointed to a government target.

Rhetoric was derived from public statements. These included GSPC communiqués (normally posted on their website) and statements made by GSPC officials in media interviews. Rhetoric was qualified as primarily for external or internal (GSPC member) audiences. (Though statements may be intended for both internal and external consumption, the primary audience was the qualifying factor.) Statements linked directly to an operation, such as claims of responsibility or warning of specific upcoming attack, were so earmarked.

## Anticipated Analytical Outcomes and Hypotheses

### Operations versus Population Density

- *Hypothesis:* Sustainment (resources) and attack (harm) operations will correlate with population density.

### Operations versus Distance from Epicenter

- *Hypothesis:* GSPC operates in areas of reduced government control, where they may capitalize on rugged, inhospitable terrain to develop a home-court advantage. Such areas include the Sahel region that cuts across southern Algeria. Roadblocks will occur within an identifiable range from population centers—far enough away from areas of government control, but close enough to catch targeted traffic of sufficient frequency (“lions at the watering hole” effect).

### Locations versus Operations over Time

- *Hypothesis:* A shift in regional activity is expected over time, i.e., the concentration of GSPC operations would shift geographically as GSPC ceded capability in some areas while gaining more capability and interest in others.

### Operations and Tactics versus Month and Quarter

- *Hypothesis:* GSPC operations and tactics are influenced by social, political, and environmental occurrences. Examples include: Ramadan, political elections, etc.

### Correlate Rhetoric with Victim Type by Using Percentage of Civilian versus Government Victims

- *Hypothesis:* According to rhetoric GSPC split from GIA because the former targeted civilians for death/injury. GSPC is not inclined to kill/injure civilians.

### Correlate Sustainment Operations to Algerian Amnesty Programs (1999 Civil Concord Restoration Act, 2005 Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation Act)

- *Hypothesis:* According to rhetoric from articles on GSPC, as amnesty programs were expiring there was an increase in the number of money-making (resource) operations targeting civilians (roadblocks, kidnappings, incursions) to raise funds before members opted for amnesty.
- *Hypothesis:* According to rhetoric from articles on GSPC, announcement of amnesty programs spurred an increase in the number of attacks (harm) on “government” entities.

### Weather versus Operations and Tactics

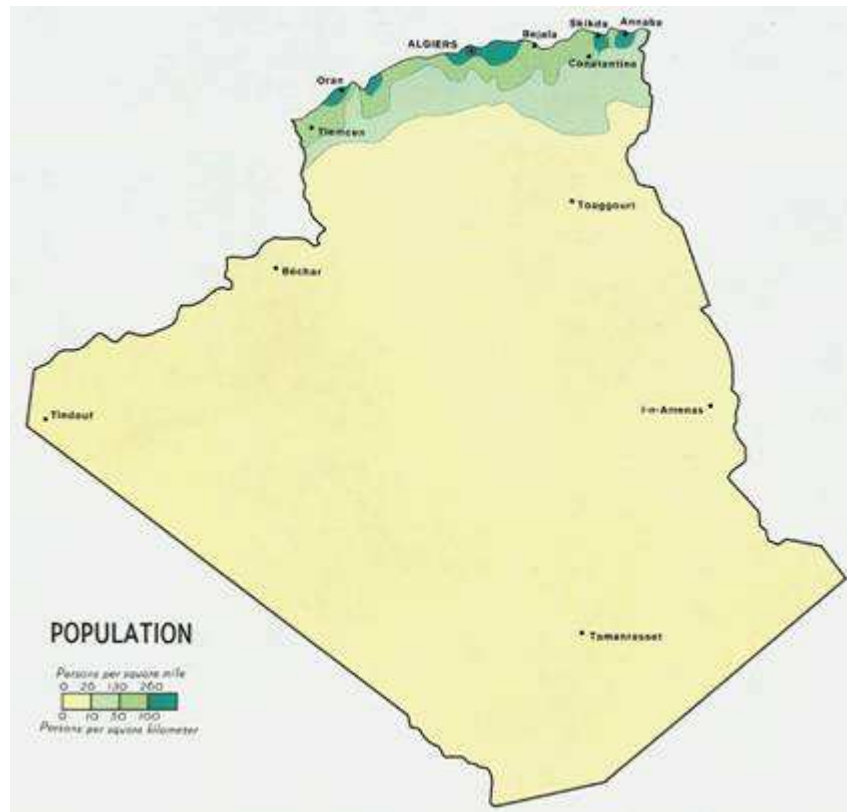
- *Hypothesis:* Operations occur more frequently during periods of temperate weather.

## Descriptive Analysis of Hypotheses

### Operations versus Population Density

One might expect GSPC operations to be more frequent in areas where there is a greater concentration of potential victims. Since most Algerians reside in the fertile band along the northern coast, it comes as no surprise the attacks predominate in the north (see [Figure IV-A1](#)). [Table IV-A1](#) shows the geographic surface area,<sup>[13]</sup> population<sup>[14]</sup> and population density for the wilayas in the study.<sup>[15]</sup>

**Figure IV-A1: Population Distribution (1971)**



Source: [University of Texas-Austin](#)

**Table IV-A1: Wilaya Surface Area, Population, and Population Density**

Region (wilaya)	Surface Area (sq km)	Population (June 1998 Census)	Population Density	Population Density (rounded)
Adrar	464900	311615	0.670283932	0.67
Algiers	273	2562428	9386.18315	9386

Annaba	1412	557818	395.0552408	395
Batna	12028	962623	80.03184237	80
Bejaia	3329	856840	257.3866026	257
Biskra	21671	575858	26.57274699	26.6
Blida	1541	784283	508.9441921	508.9
Bouira	4517	629560	139.3756918	139
Boumerdes	1558	647389	415.5256739	415.5
Constantine	2288	810914	354.4204545	354
Djelfa	29035	797706	27.47394524	27.5
Jijel	2399	573208	238.9362234	238.9
Medea	8700	802078	92.19287356	92.2
M'sila	18447	805519	43.66666667	43.7
Relizane	4840	642205	132.6869835	132.6
Setif	6504	1311413	201.6317651	201.6
Skikda	4137	786154	190.0299734	190
Tamanrasset	556000	137175	0.246717626	0.25
Tebessa	13878	549066	39.56377	39.6
Tissemsilt	3151	264240	83.85909235	83.9
Tizi Ouzou	2993	1108708	370.4336786	370

The attack concentration roughly follows the population density in so much as it settles in this band, but it does not correlate precisely with numerical population density by wilaya. [Figures IV-A2](#) and [IV-A3](#) compare the population density with the cumulative attacks between 1998-2006. (For attack data by Region, see section C. *Locations versus Operations over Time*, [Table IV-C1](#).) The data for Algiers (population density 9386 people/sq km) skews the graph in [Figure IV-A2](#), as its density far exceeds that of any other city—making the capital province 18 times denser than the second-densest wilaya, Blida. [Figure IV-A3](#) excludes the Algiers data, thereby opening up the distribution along the x-axis for easier viewing.

## Algiers

### Figure IV-A2: Attacks vs. Population Density

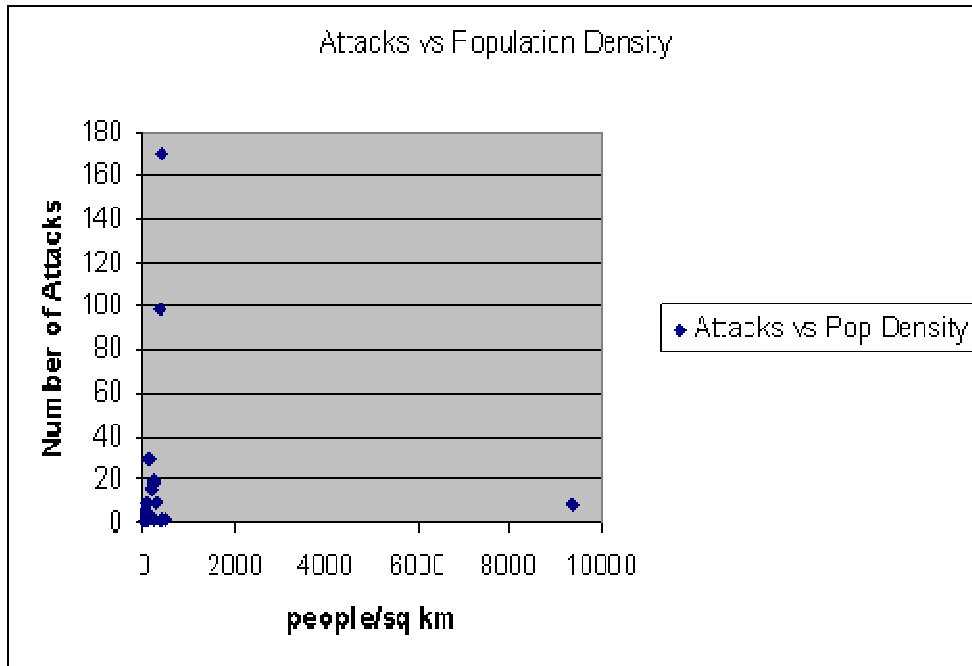


Figure IV-A3: Attacks vs. Population Density

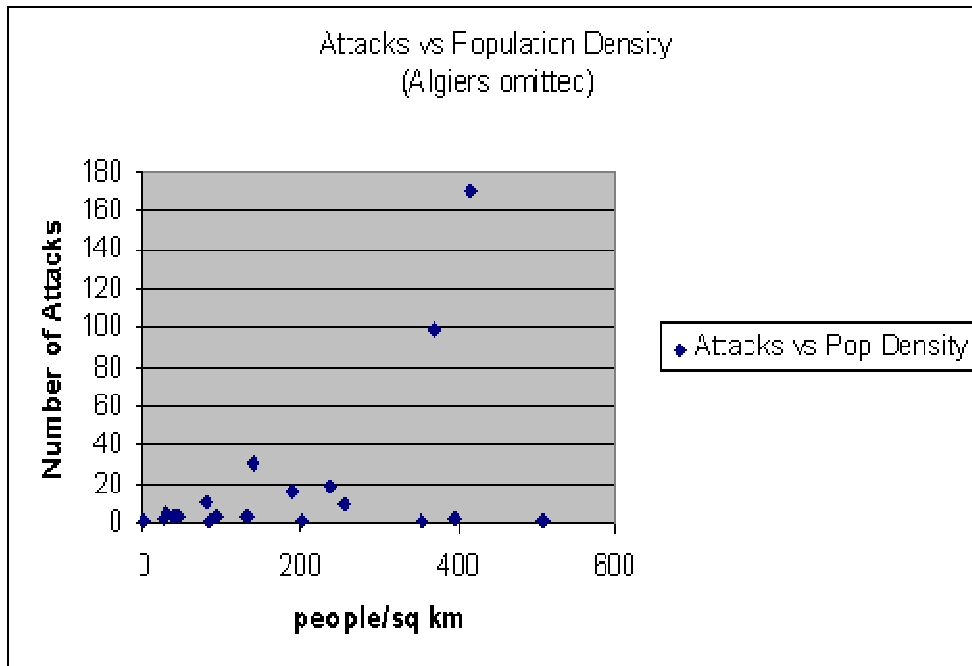


Table IV-A2: Population Density and Cumulative Attacks

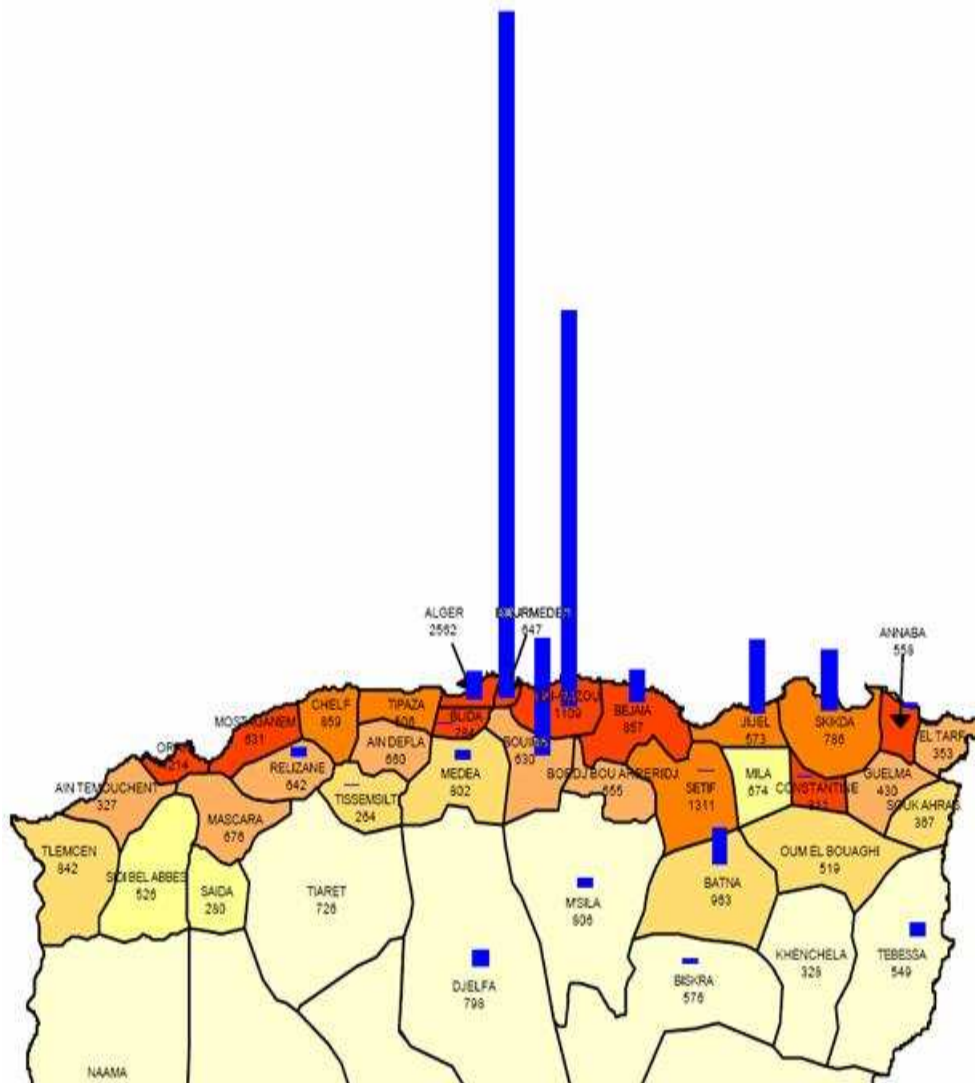
Region (wilaya)	Population Density	Total Attacks 1998-2006
Adrar	0.67	1
Algiers	9386	8
Annaba	395	2
Batna	80	10
Bejaia	257	9
Biskra	26.6	2
Blida	508.9	1
Bouira	139	30
Boumerdes	415.5	171
Constantine	354	1
Djelfa	27.5	5
Jijel	238.9	19
Medea	92.2	3
M'sila	43.7	3
Relizane	132.6	3
Setif	201.6	1
Skikda	190	16
Tamanrasset	0.25	1
Tebessa	39.6	4
Tissemsilt	83.9	1
Tizi Ouzou	370	99

**Table IV-A2.** Attacks vs. Population Density

[Table-IVA2](#) depicts the raw data for population density and cumulative attacks between 1998 and May 2006. The concentration of GSPC attacks roughly follows the population density, but the correlation does not appear to be strong. Absent rigorous statistical analysis, the precise degree (coefficient) of correlation cannot be ascertained.

Figure [IV-A4](#) depicts the 1998-2006 (through May) cumulative total of attacks on a population density map.

**Figure IV-A4: Cumulative Attacks (1998-2006) vs. Population Density (Map View)**



Base map source: [CETMO](#)

### Operations versus Distance from Epicenter

The clustering of attacks around Boumerdes and Tizi Ouzou could be attributed to a number of factors, of which little data are available in this specific study. The two wilayas may simply offer a greater number of attractive targets, based on population density, degree of government security forces control (or lack thereof), or proximity to GSPC bases of operations (like the one in the mountains near Beni Amrane, just over 20 km east of the city of Boumerdes). Regardless of the reasons, the clustering invites examination of the concentration of attacks as a function of distance from some central point.

The simplest method to designate an “epicenter” for the attack distribution was to bisect the line connecting the cities of Boumerdes and Tizi Ouzou. This served as an arbitrary anchor point between the two cities and equidistant to them both. (The epicenter is not the same as the

geographic center of all attacks, which would take into account attacks and their geographic locations to determine the weighted average on a planar space.) The epicenter was fixed at 36° 42' 26" N, 003° 46' 25" E, on the northern coast approximately 60 km east of the capital Algiers. Attacks were then charted based on their linear distance from this epicenter, without regard to their direction from the epicenter. Thus, an attack 50 km east of the epicenter would be grouped with another attack 50 km west of the epicenter.

When sources gave precise geographic coordinates for an attack location, they were used to determine distance from the epicenter; otherwise, the coordinates for the closest city were employed. Attacks without good location information were excluded from the distance evaluation. Each incident thus was associated with two pieces of data: (1) its region (wilaya) and (2) its distance from the epicenter, or "epidistance." [Table IV-B1](#) categorizes the attacks in each wilaya according to their epidistance. For example, of the seven attacks in Algiers wilaya (Wilaya d'Alger), one was between 20 and 40 km from the epicenter, two were between 40 and 60 km, and four were between 60 and 80 km from the epicenter.

**Table IV-B1: Attack Epidistance**

Ranged Distance from Epicenter (km)	Algiers	Annaba	Batna	Bejaia	Biskra	Blida	Bouira	Boumerdes	Constantine	Djelfa	Jijel	Medea	M'sila	Relizane	Setif	Skikda	Tamanrasset	Tabessa	Tissemsilt	Tizi Ouzou	Unknown	Grand Total
0-20								91												14		105
20-40	1						23	74												68	1	167
40-60	2					1	7	3				2								9	1	25
60-80	4			1																2		7
80-100				2								1								1		4
100-120				1																1		2
120-140				4									1									5
140-160				1											1							2
160-180											11											11
180-200											1											1
200-250			1						1	4	7		2	1		1				1		18
250-300			9		2					1				2		14						28
350-400		2																				2
400-450																			4			4
500-2000																	1					1
Grand Total	7	2	10	9	2	1	30	168	1	5	19	3	3	3	1	15	1	4	1	95	2	382

[Figure IV-B1a](#) charts the number of attacks by region and as a function of linear distance from the epicenter (epidistance). [Figure IV-B1b](#) plots the epidistance distribution on a line graph.

**Figure IV-B1a: Accumulation of Attacks by Epidistance and Region**



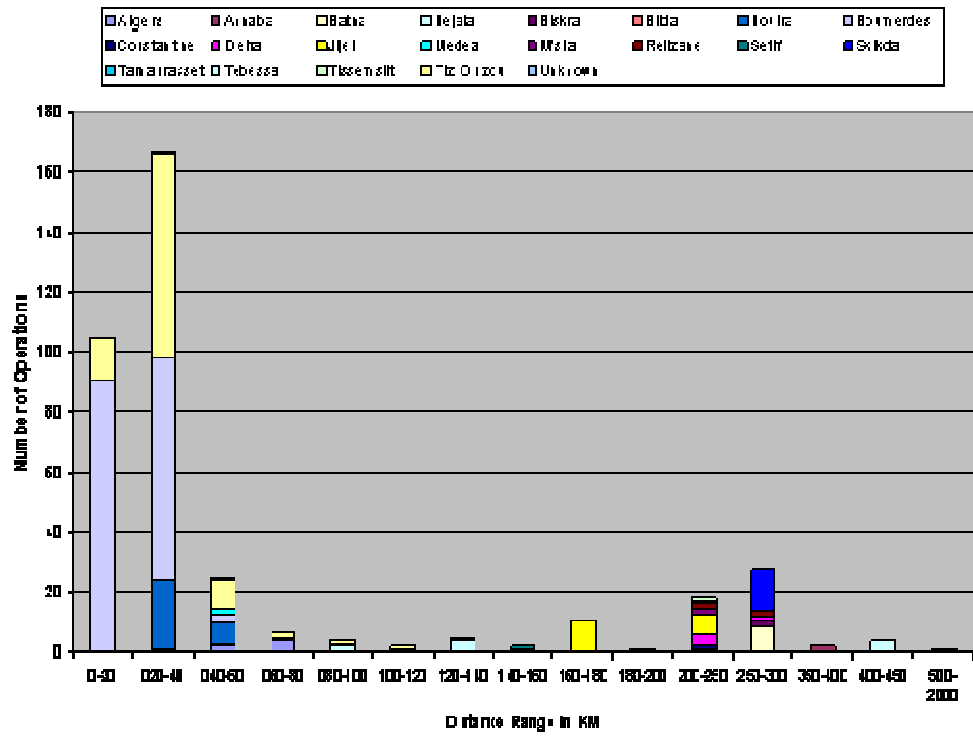
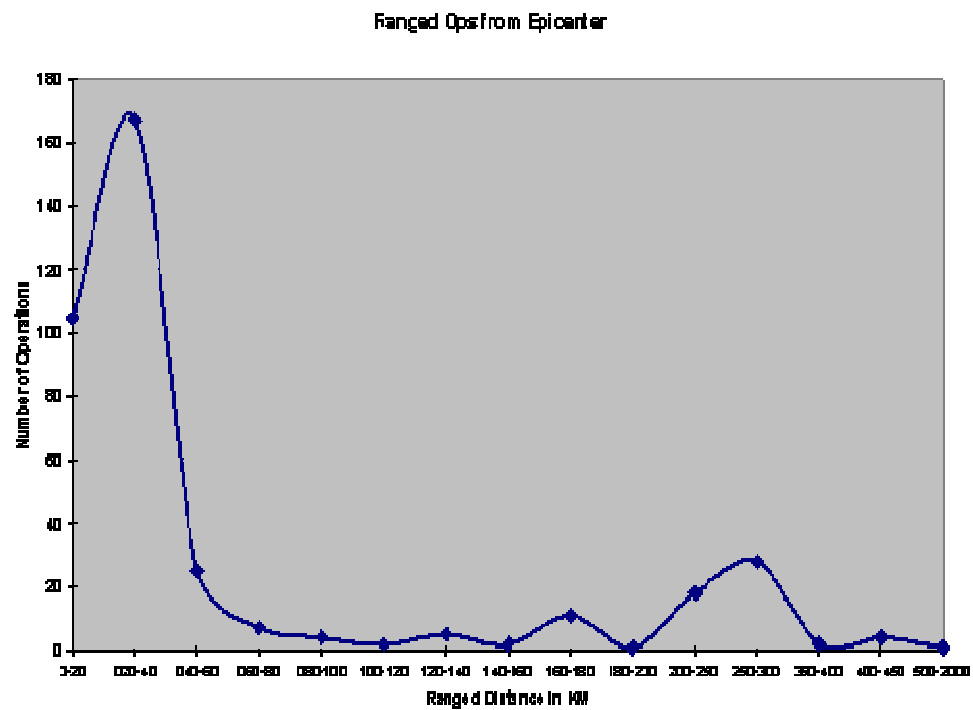


Figure IV-B1b: Distribution of Attacks by Epicenter



The distribution shows that most attacks occur within 80 km of the epicenter, with a smaller clustering in the 200-350 km range. Overall, the general trend shows a decline in GSPC attacks as distance increases from the epicenter. Possible contributing factors are merely a matter of conjecture at this point. The location of GSPC sub-element bases of operation, the population density, or degree of control by government security forces may each contribute in some fashion to the aggregation of attacks. Further research and analysis may be able to uncover possible independent or intervening variables that engender such clustering.

## Locations versus Operations over Time

Tizi Ouzou Wilaya suffered the first attack attributed to GSPC in 1998. This was the only attack GSPC perpetrated that year, introducing Tizi Ouzou as the GSPC's "leading victim." Boumerdes joined the list of victims in 1999 with 7 attacks, while Tizi Ouzou saw another 13 that year. The two regions together led the country for GSPC incidents from that point forward. From the very beginning, no other wilaya ever came close to matching Boumerdes or Tizi Ouzou in reported GSPC incidents. Most of the incidents were concentrated in the northern portion of Algeria. [Figure IV-C1](#) shows the region. [Table IV-C1](#) lists the incidents by wilaya per year.

## GSPC Operations

Figure IV-C1: Northern Algeria

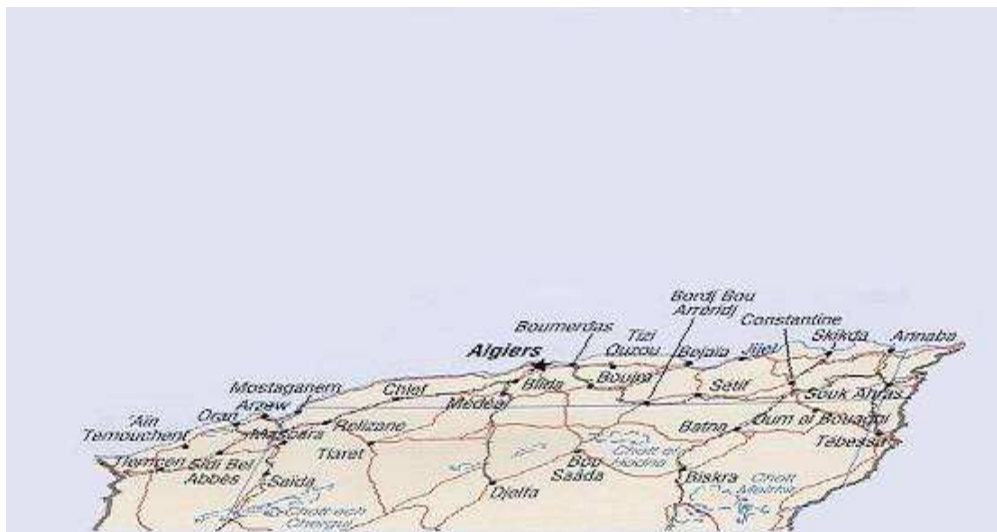


Table IV-C1: Attacks by Wilaya per Year

Region	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Grand Total
Adrar	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Algiers	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	2	0	8
Annaba	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Batna	0	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	0	10
Bejaia	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	3	0	9
Biskra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Blida	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

Bouira	0	1	2	11	6	3	4	3	0	30
Boumerdes	0	7	11	21	32	24	32	26	18	171
Constantine	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Djelfa	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	5
Foreign	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Jijel	0	0	3	2	3	2	1	8	0	19
Medea	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
M'sila	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
Relizane	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Setif	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Skikda	0	0	3	2	1	3	3	3	1	16
Tamanrasset	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tebessa	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
Tissemsilt	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tizi Ouzou	1	13	10	13	35	14	7	5	1	99
Unknown	0	0	1	3	2	1	2	3	1	13
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>405</b>

[Figures IV-C2](#) through [IV-C10](#) show the accumulation of incidents by location, year-by-year, in both bar graph format and on the map:

**Figure IV-C2a and IV-C2b: GSPC Cumulative Attacks, 1998**

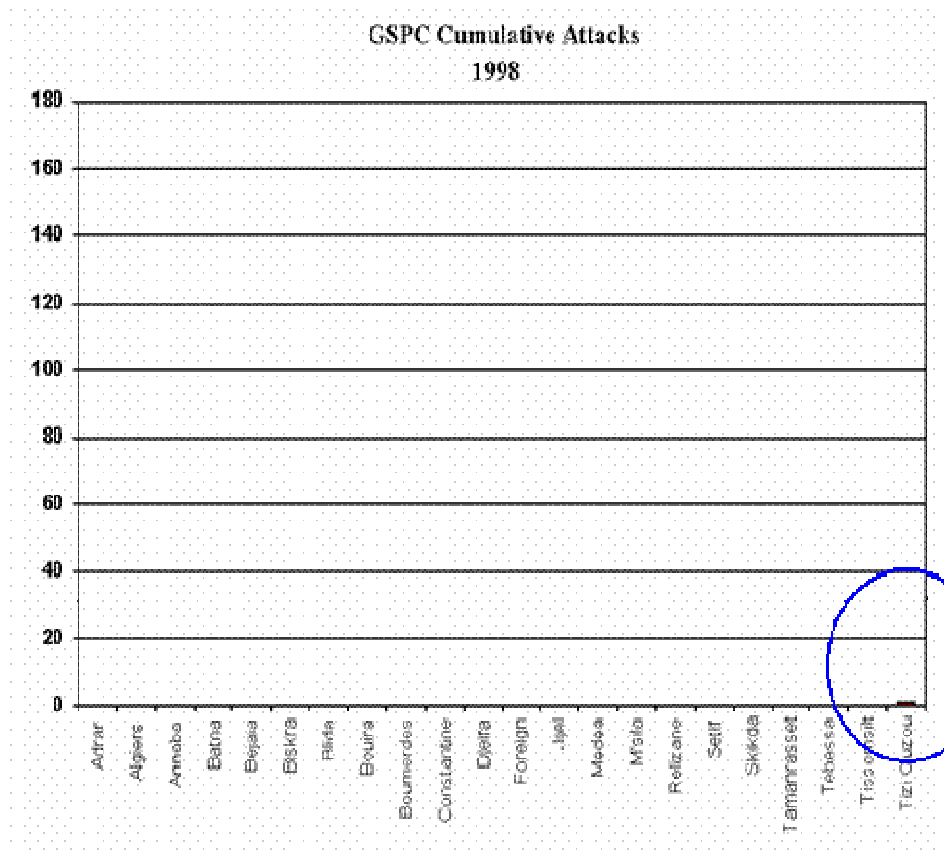


Figure IV-C2a. Cumulative Attacks, 1998

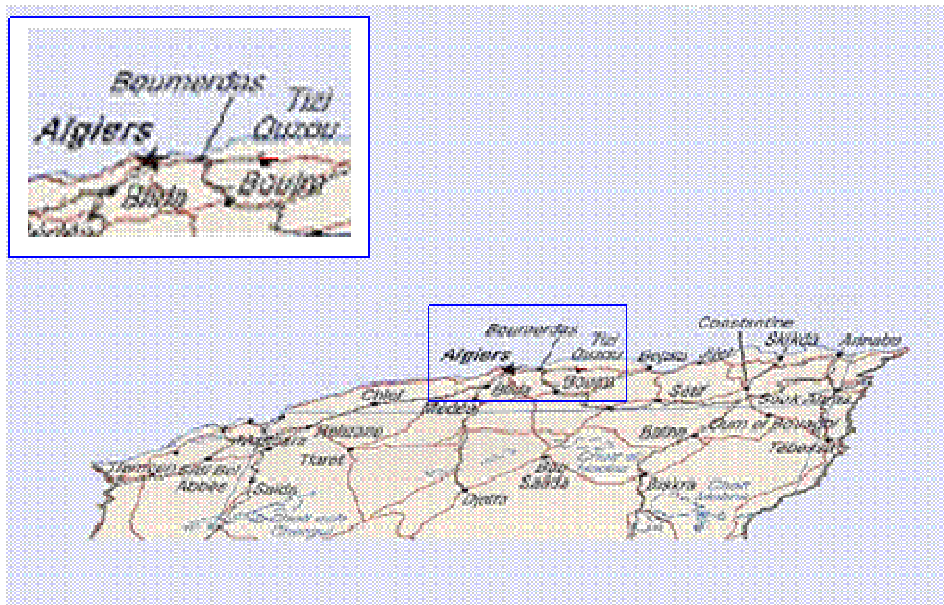


Figure IV-C2b. Cumulative Attacks, 1998 (Map View)

Figure IV-C3a: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-1999

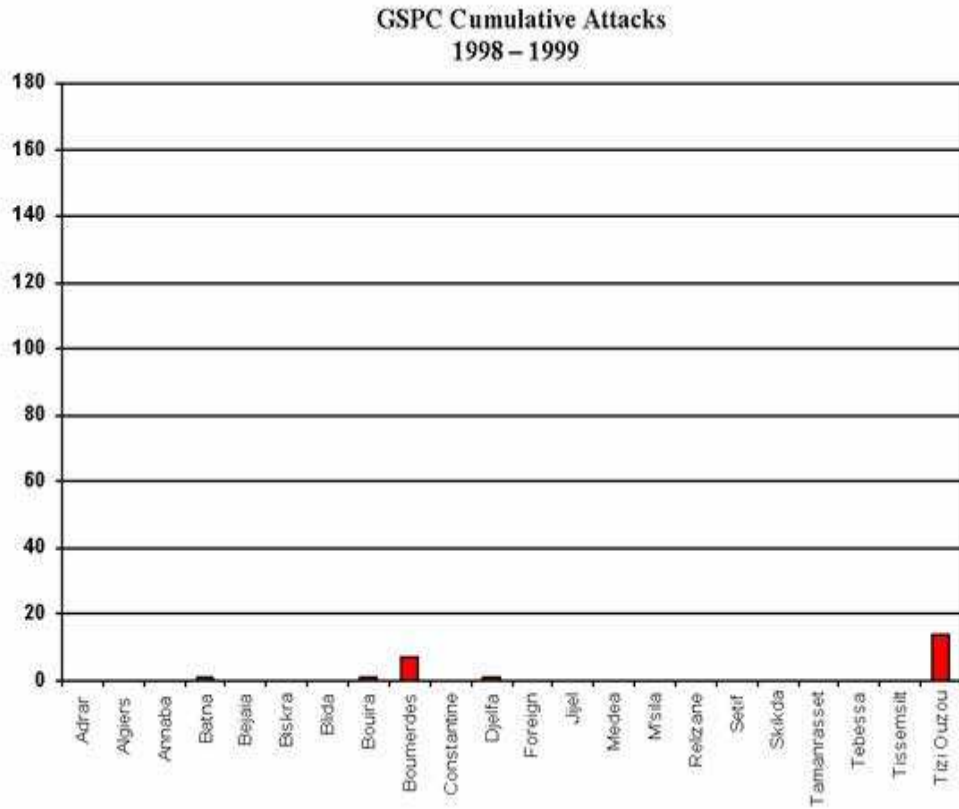


Figure IV-C3b: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-1999 (Map View)



Figure IV-C4a: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2000

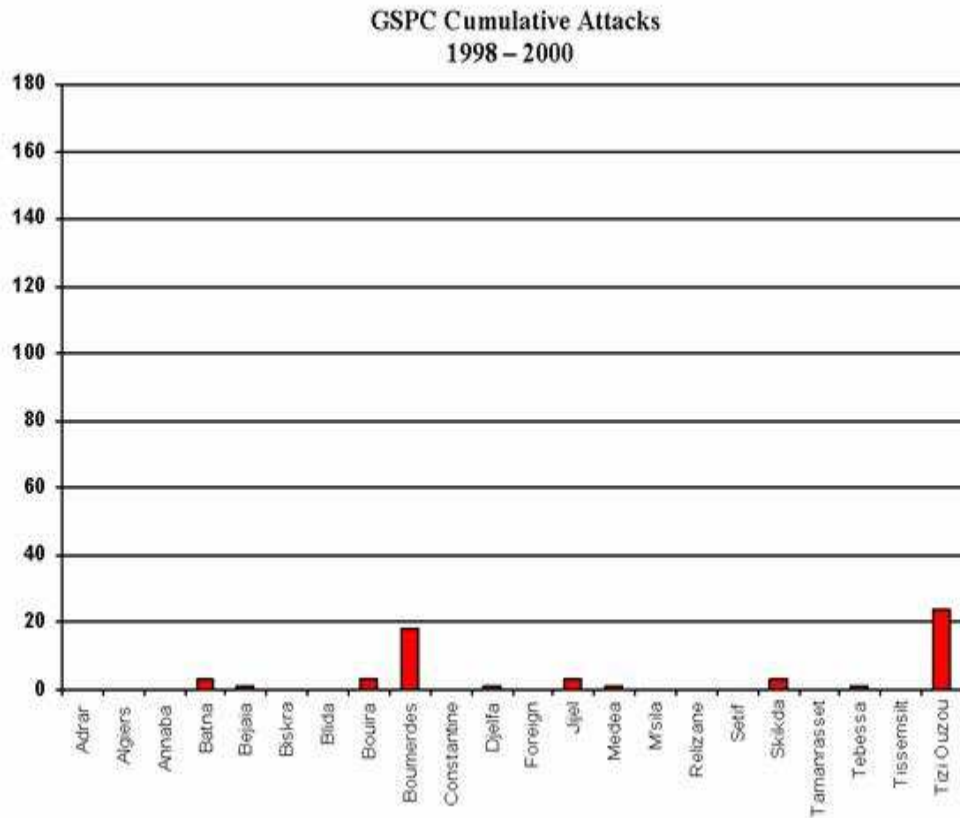


Figure IV-C4b: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2000 (Map View)



Figure IV-C5a: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2001

GSPC Cumulative Attacks  
1998 – 2001

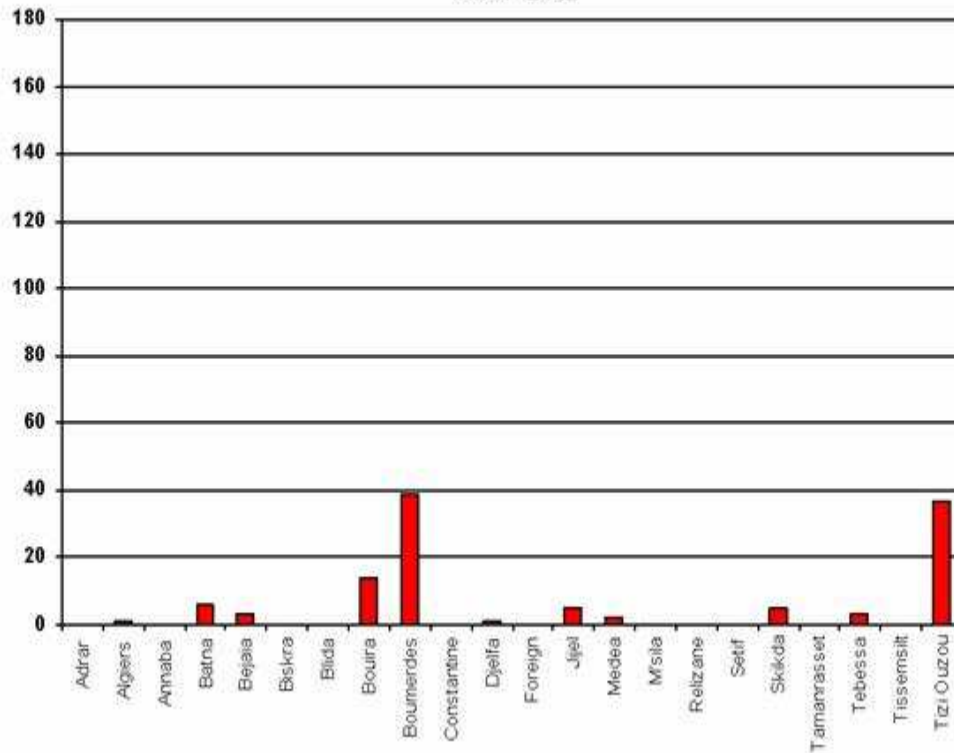


Figure IV-C5b: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2001 (Map View)

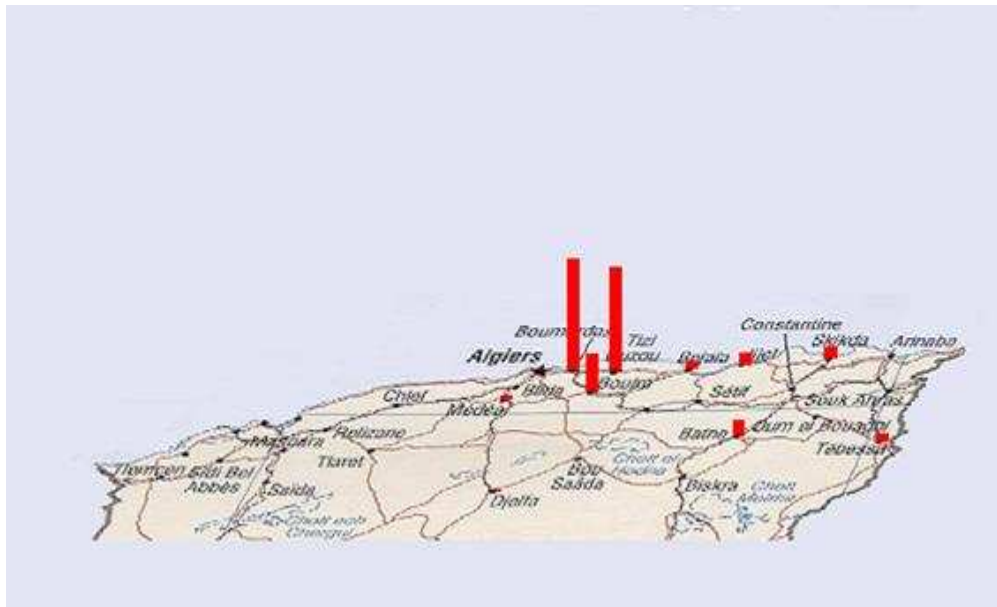
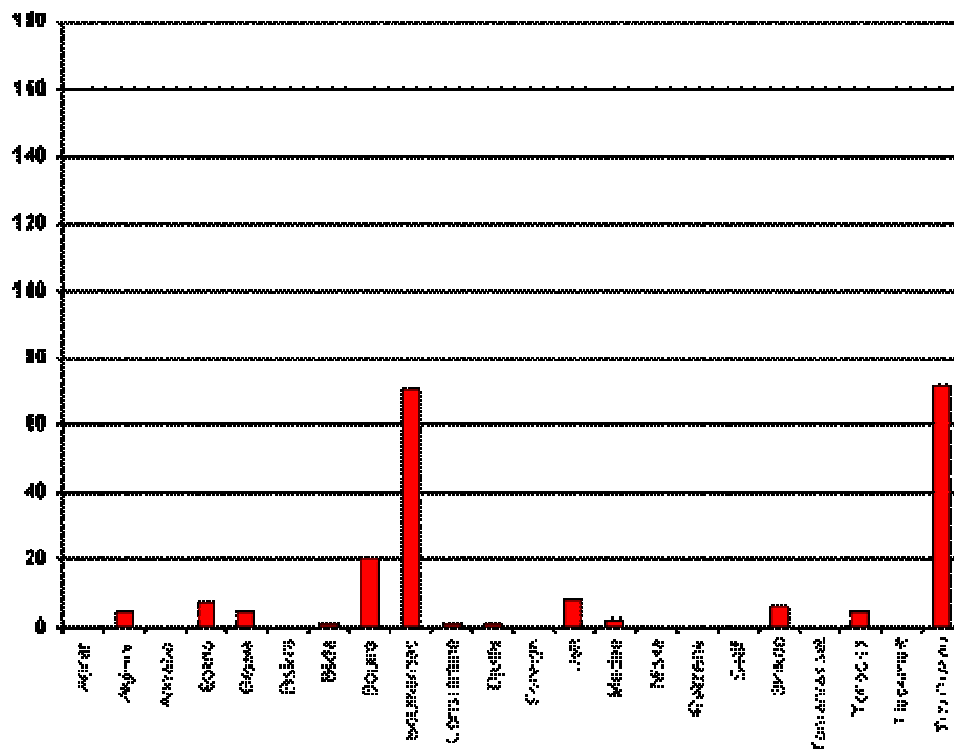
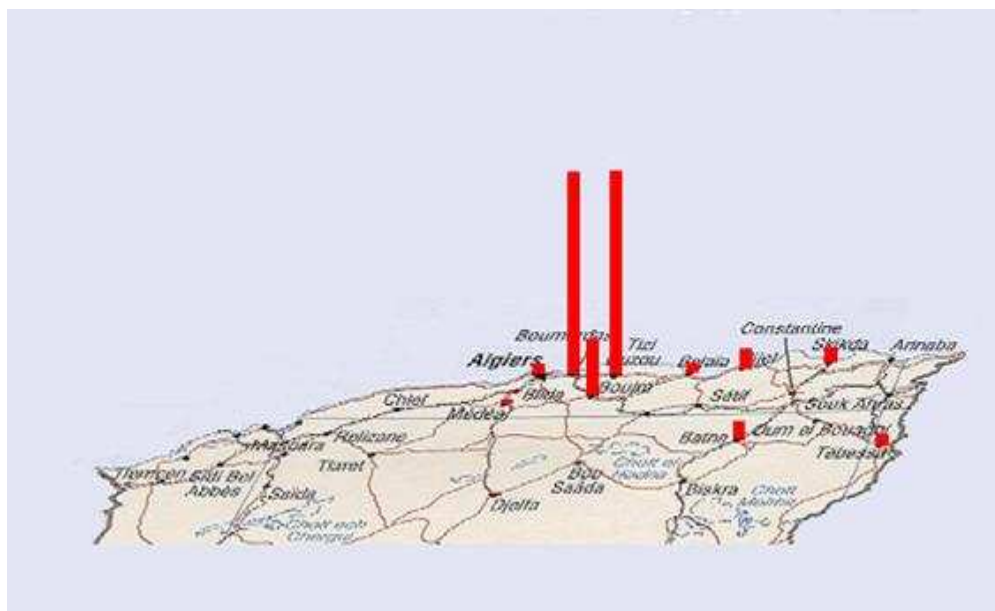


Figure IV-C6a: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2002

**GSPC Cumulative Attacks  
1998-2002**



**Figure IV-C6b: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2002 (Map View)**



**Figure IV-C7a: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2003**



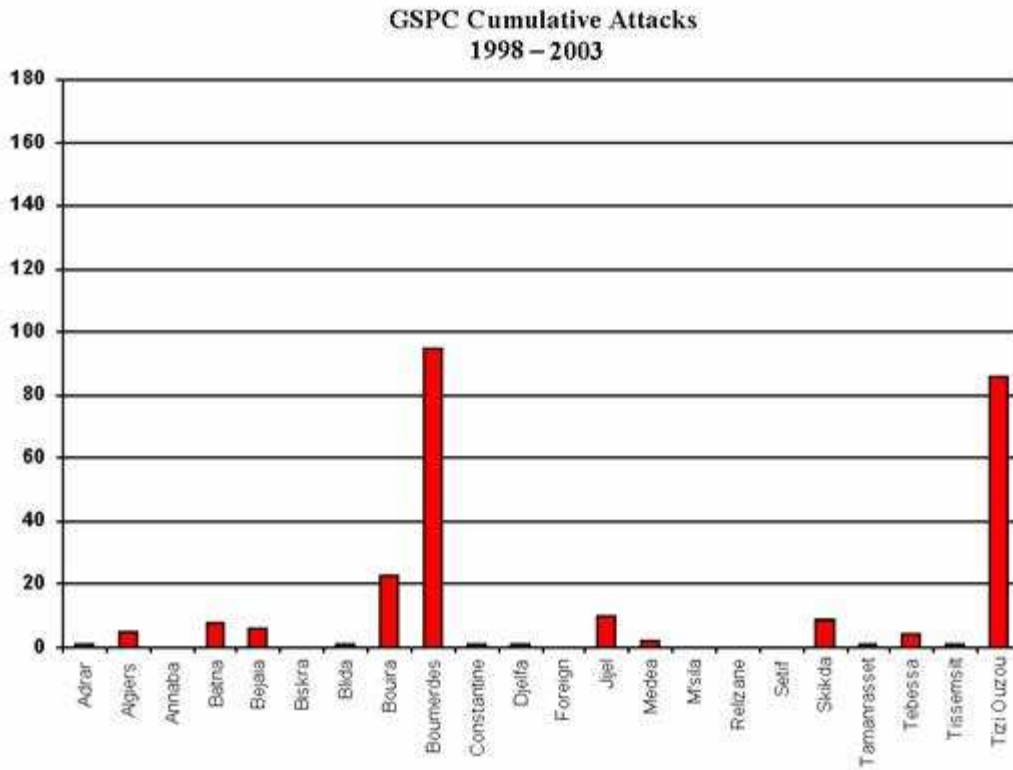


Figure IV-C7b: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2003 (Map View)



Figure IV-C8a: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2004

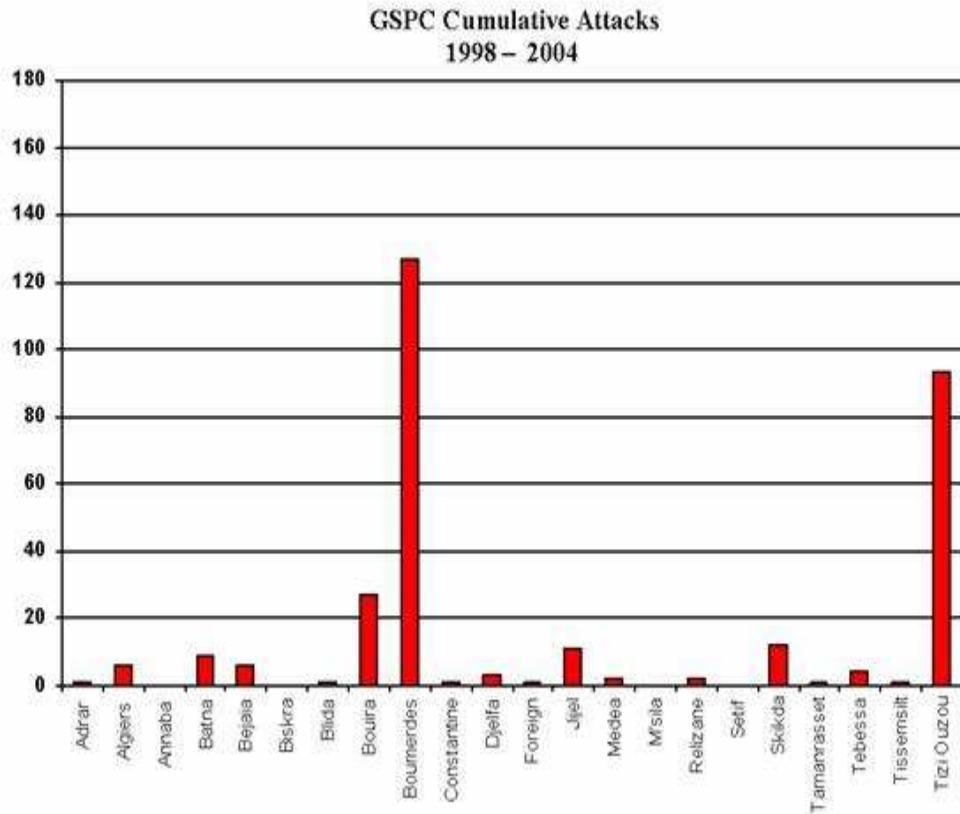


Figure IV-C8b: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2004 (Map View)

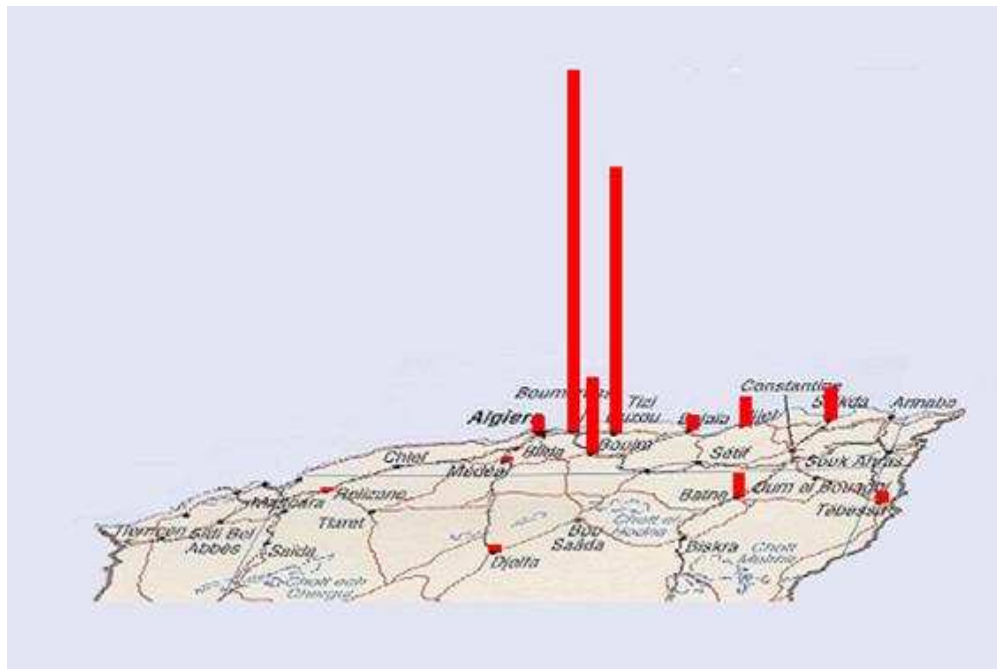


Figure IV-C9a: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2005

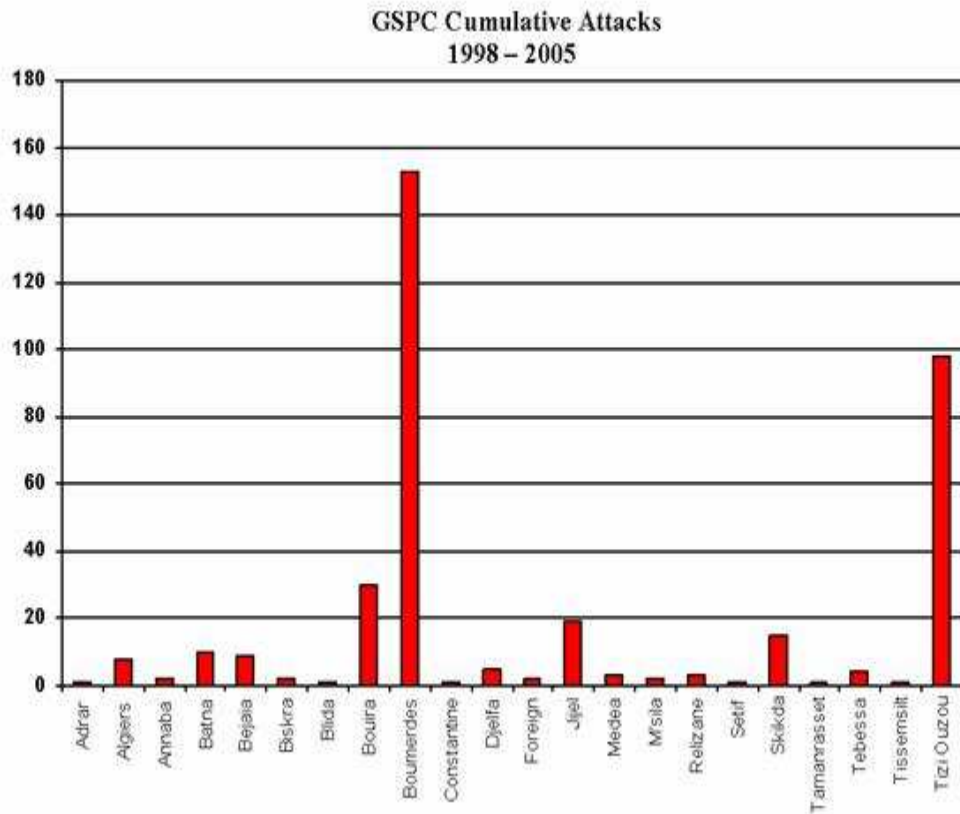
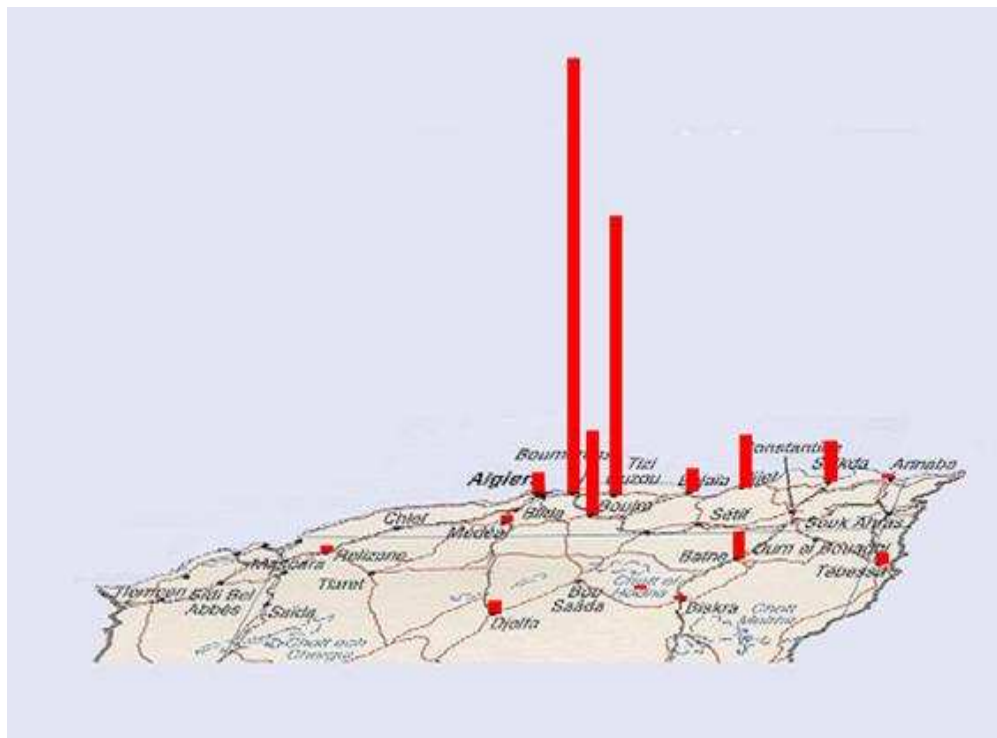
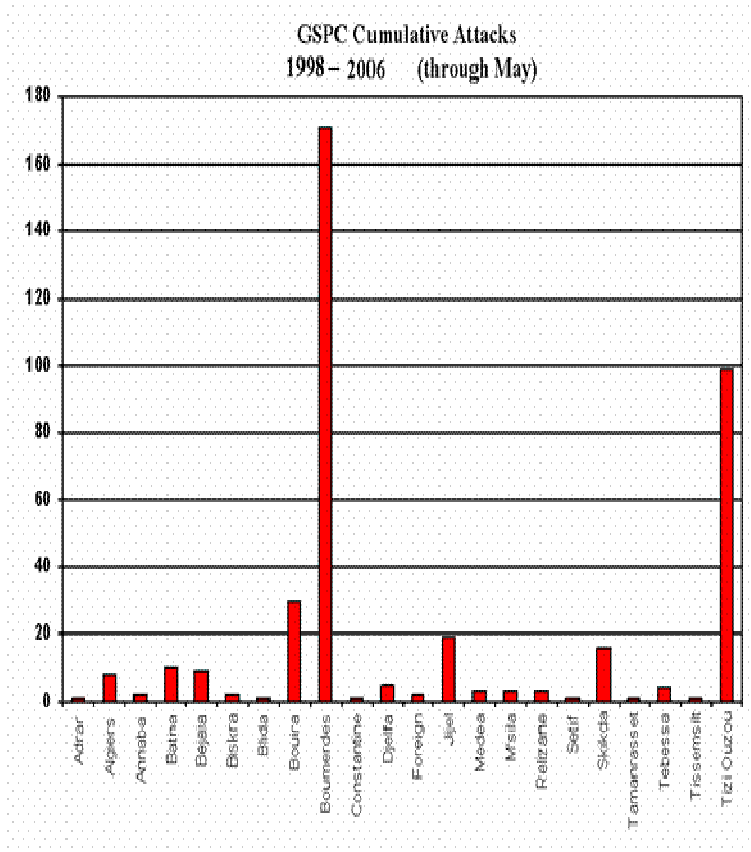


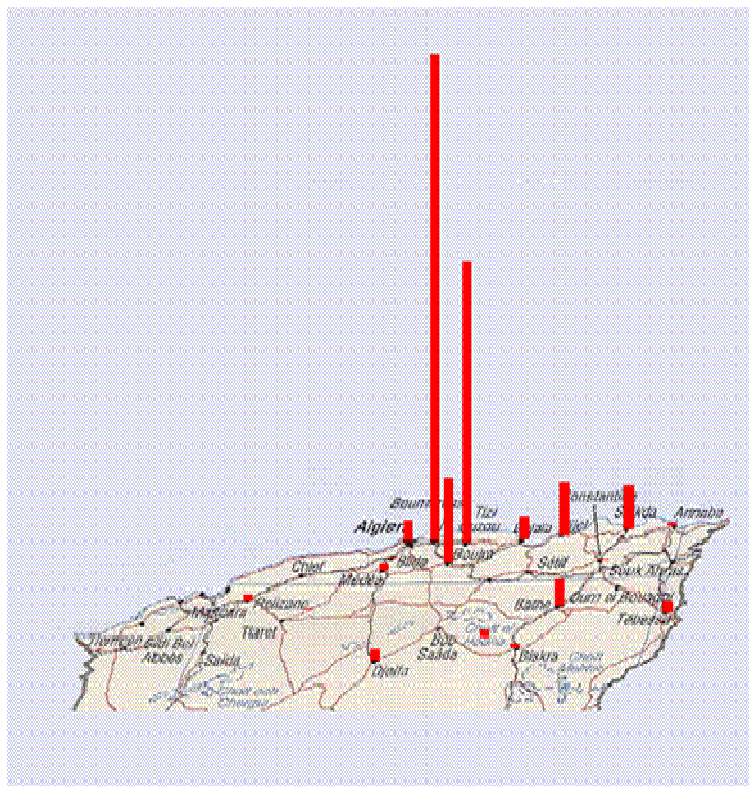
Figure IV-C9b: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2005 (Map View)



**Figure IV-C10b: Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2006 (Map View)**



**Figure IV-C10a.** Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2006



**Figure IV-C10b.**

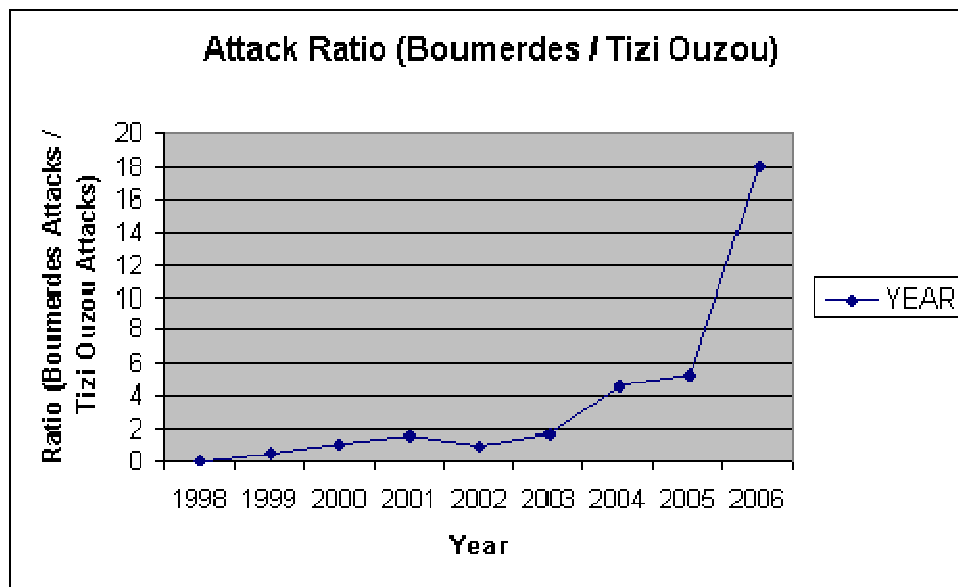
Cumulative Attacks, 1998-2006 (Map View)



										<b>Total</b>
Boumerdes	0	7	11	21	32	24	32	26	18	171
Tizi Ouzou	1	13	10	13	35	14	7	5	1	99
Boumerdes ----- ----- Tizi Ouzou  ( )										
	0	0.538462	1.1	1.615385	0.914286	1.714286	4.571429	5.2	18	1.7272727

The ratio of the number of attacks in Boumerdes to the number of attacks in Tizi Ouzou is reflected for each year, as well as for the cumulative total as of May 2006. The chart graphically depicts the annual ratio change over time in [Figure IV-C12](#).

**Figure IV-C12: Ratio (Attacks in Boumerdes / Attacks in Tizi Ouzou) by Year**



Attacks in Boumerdes began increasingly to overtake those in Tizi Ouzou in 2003 (following a slight dip in 2002 when Tizi Ouzou endured more attacks). The reason for the increasing shift to targets in Boumerdes cannot be conclusively determined from the available data, but one might

conjecture about the contribution of the May 2003 earthquake in Boumerdes. A magnitude 6.8 earthquake, epicentered in Boumerdes Wilaya, struck on 21 May 2003. The cities most affected were Boumerdes, the provincial capital; Zenmouri; Thenia; Belouizdad; Rouiba; and Reghaia. Eastern parts of the national capital, Algiers, also sustained damage. The urban damage was described as severe, and of note, the police headquarters facility in Boumerdes was destroyed and listed as irreparable.[16] The first post-quake GSPC attack in Boumerdes occurred a week later, on 27 May. Apparently “[t]aking advantage of the situation of panic and anarchy triggered by the strong [earthquake] aftershock that had been recorded a half-hour previously in that region,” GSPC combatants assassinated a police officer on the outskirts of Zenmouri (16 km east of Boumerdes).[17] A cursory glance at the frequency of incidents before and after the quake does not suggest an increasing frequency immediately following the disaster. The long-term effects of the quake may have contributed to the greater incidence of attacks in the later months and years, since the police forces could expectedly have a reduced effectiveness resulting from (1) the loss of their facilities and (2) an anticipated shift in priorities to maintaining domestic order amidst the post-event chaos and reconstruction period (i.e., search and rescue, crowd and traffic control, looting suppression, etc.).

## Operations and Tactic versus Month and Quarter

Operations data were sorted by month, quarter and year to highlight any patterns or trends. [Table IV-D1](#) breaks-down the operations by year and month.

**Table IV-D1: Operations by Month, 1998-2006**

YEAR	MONTH	Total	YEAR	MONTH	Total	YEAR	MONTH	Total
1998			1999	January	0	2000	January	3
				February	0		February	4
				March	0		March	2
				April	0		April	6
				May	0		May	1
				June	0		June	2
				July	1		July	3
				August	7		August	2
				September	5		September	1
				October	0		October	4
				November	3		November	2
		December	1		December	6		December
Total		1	Total		23	Total		35
2001	January	4	2002	January	6	2003	January	5
	February	1		February	5		February	1
	March	3		March	3		March	7
	April	8		April	7		April	2
	May	1		May	6		May	5
	June	3		June	4		June	7
	July	0		July	4		July	6
	August	2		August	6		August	1



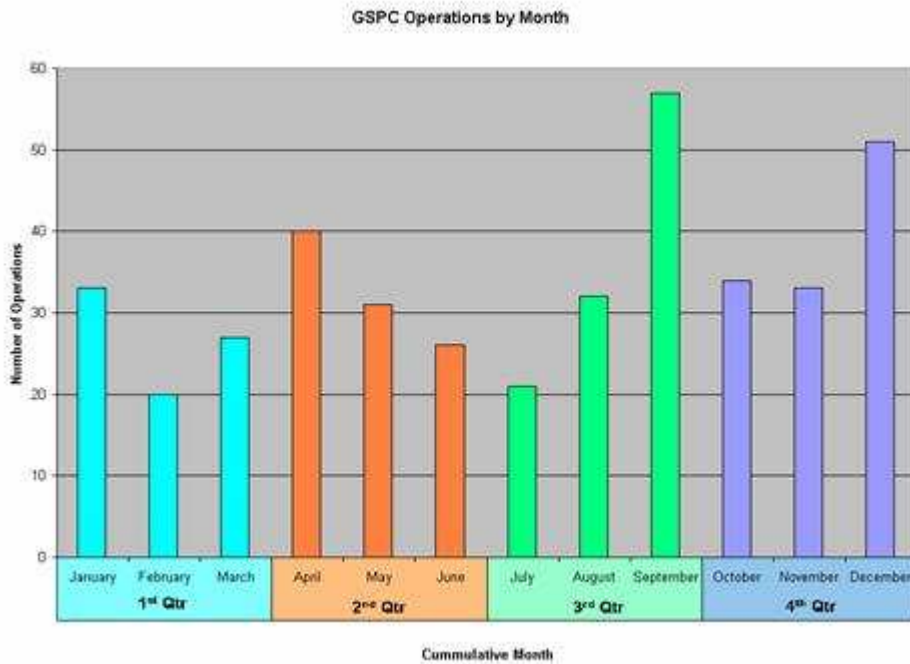
	September	9		September	14		September	13
	October	8		October	11		October	2
	November	11		November	10		November	1
	December	11		December	11		December	4
Total		61	Total		87	Total		54
2004	January	4	2005	January	6	2006	January	5
	February	4		February	2		February	3
	March	6		March	3		March	3
	April	9		April	2		April	6
	May	8		May	4		May	5
	June	4		June	6	2006 Total		22
	July	3		July	4	Grand Total		405
	August	9		August	5			
	September	2		September	13			
	October	2		October	7			
	November	2		November	4			
	December	3		December	10			
Total		56	Total		66			

[Table IV-D2](#) groups operations by month across all years, i.e., all attacks within a given calendar month each year were categorized in that month. [Figure IV-D1](#) depicts the data as a bar graph.

**Table IV-D2: GSPC Operations by Calendar Month, Quarter**

Quarter	Month	Month	Qtr Total
		Total	
1	January	33	80
	February	20	
	March	27	
2	April	40	97
	May	31	
	June	26	
3	July	21	110
	August	32	
	September	57	
4	October	34	118
	November	33	
	December	51	
Grand Total		405	405

**Figure IV-D1: GSPC Operations by Calendar Month, Quarter**

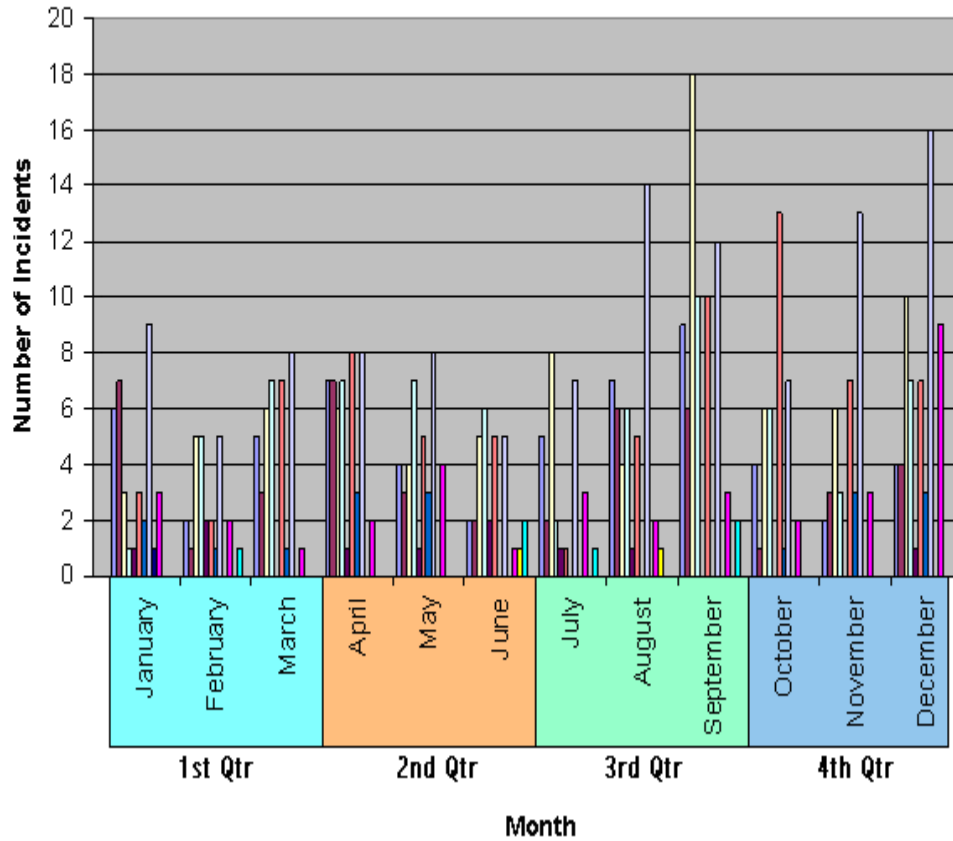


Greater refinement shows the specific tactic used in each operation, against calendar month, as in [Figure IV-D2](#).



**Figure IV-D2: Tactics by Calendar Month**

## Tactics by Calendar Month



The graph shows a slightly higher incidence of GSPC operations during the last two quarters of each calendar year. Refining the criteria further, GSPC tactics are segregated into *attack (harm)* and *sustainment (resource)* operations.[18] [Figure IV-D3a](#) graphs attack operations by tactic, while [Figure X3b](#) depicts sustainment tactics.

**Figure IV-D3a: Attack Tactics by Calendar Month**

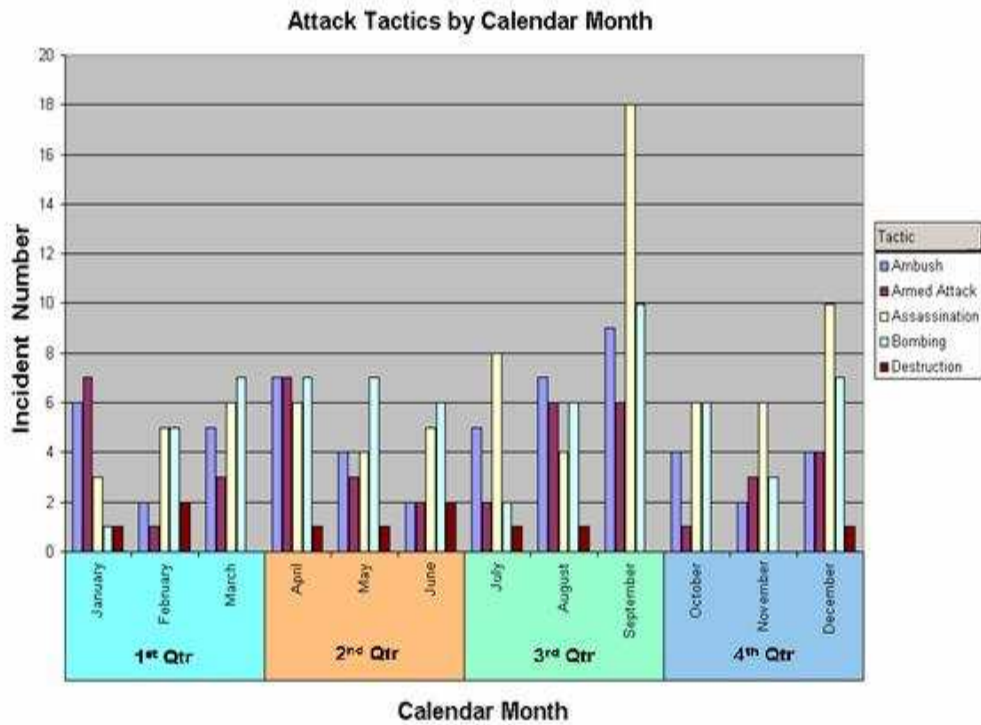
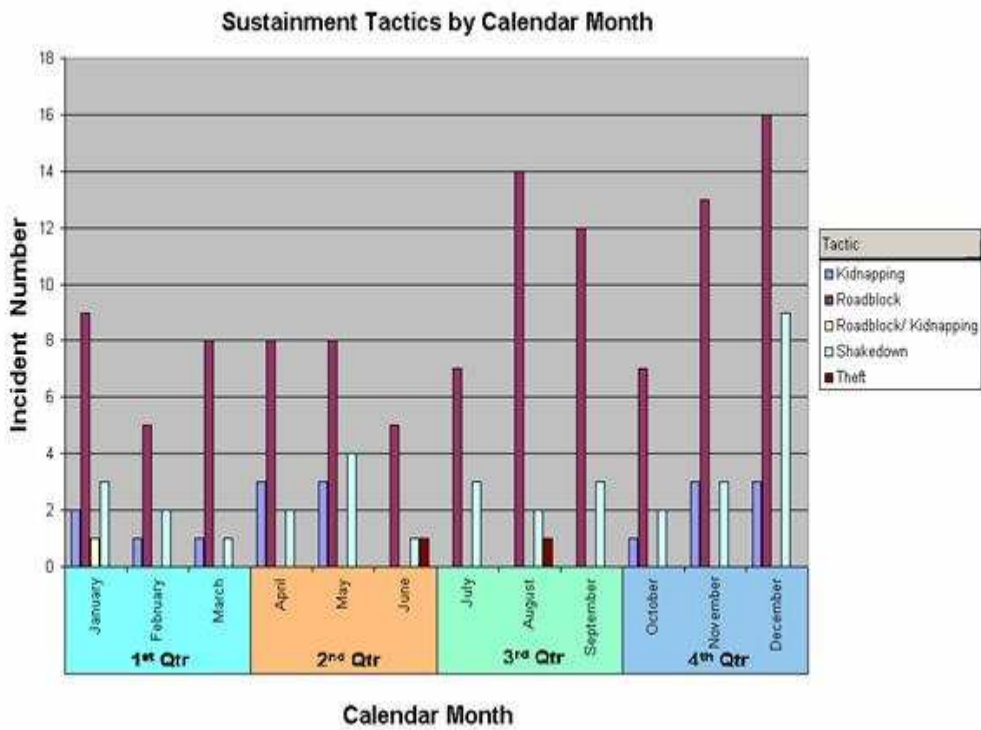


Figure IV-D3b: Sustainment Tactics by Calendar Month

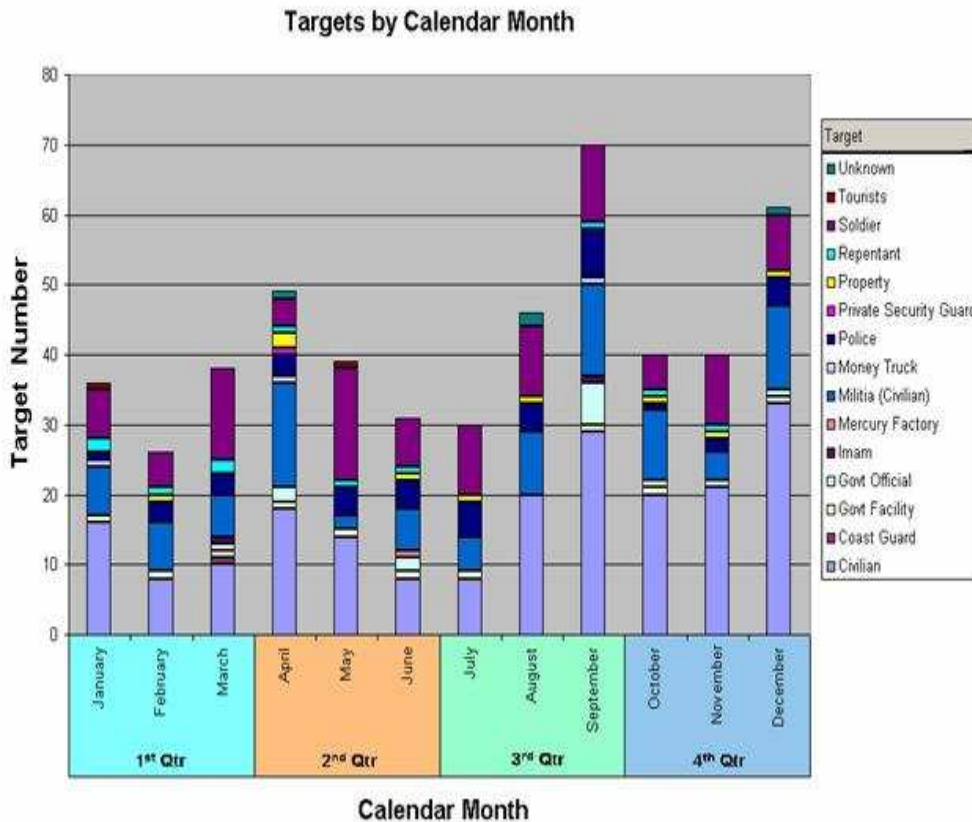


The data suggest GSPC conducts more roadblocks in the latter half of the calendar year, and that roadblocks appear to be the most common tactic. This is not surprising, since roadblocks are easy to set up and can serve a dual purpose. They primarily serve to acquire money and supplies (sustainment/resource), but in the event government personnel, such as off-duty militia or police officers, come across the roadblock, the GSPC can murder them (attack/harm). The high incidence of shakedowns in December is notable, but its significance cannot be determined from the data. (One might speculate as to whether the GSPC ties shakedowns to “alms” collections around Ramadan.)

## Target by Month

Specific target types can be examined against the calendar year, as shown in [Figure IV-D4](#). It becomes readily apparent that civilians are the primary target, followed by the military and civil militia. What is noteworthy is very few tourists were targeted (although tourists may be grouped with generic civilians if news reports do not identify them specifically as tourists). Operations against civilians<sup>[19]</sup> appear to rise during the latter third of the calendar year, while attacks on soldiers and militia appear relatively consistent throughout the year.

**Figure IV-D4: Targets by Calendar Month**



[Figures IV-D5a](#) and [IV-D5b](#) graph attacks against soldiers specifically and against security forces in general (excluding coast guard).

**Figure IV-D5a: Soldiers Targeted by Calendar Month**

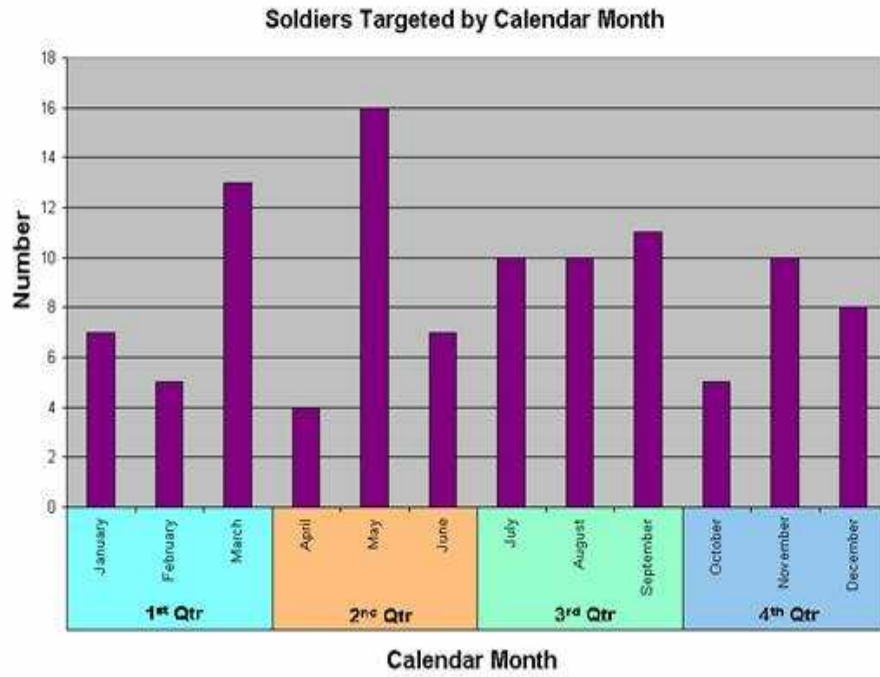
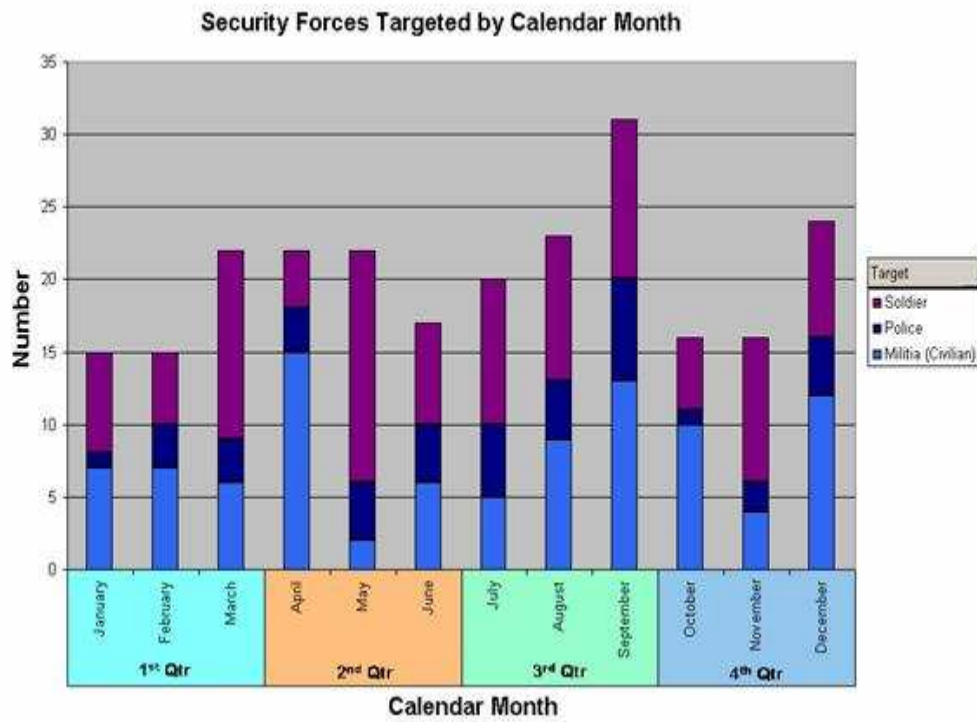


Figure IV-D5b: Security Forces Targeted by Calendar Month



## Correlate Rhetoric with Victim Type by Using Percentage of Civilian versus Government Victims

GSPC and expert opinion attempt to correlate GSPC rhetoric with attacks against civilians and government resources. Since the inception of GSPC, the group espoused a desire to conduct operations against government assets and eschewed attacks which brought the death of innocent civilians. Is this the case?

From the outset, the number of operations against civilians, while not significantly less than those against the government, was less per year.

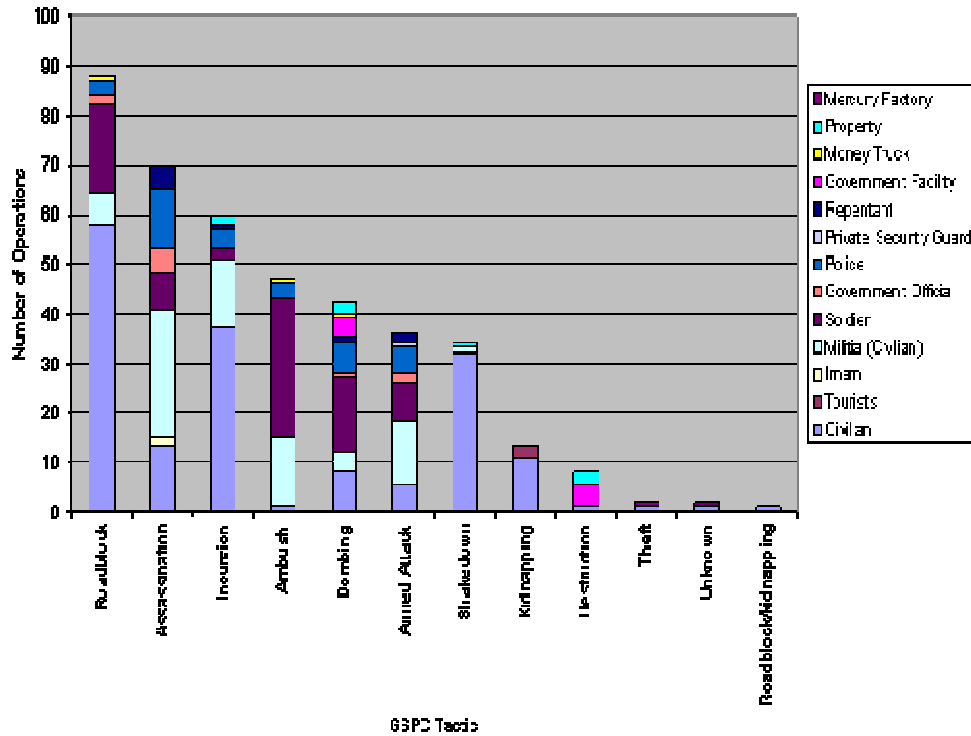
**Table IV-E1: Comparison of GSPC Operations Between Government and Civilian Groupings**

Civilian or "Government" Grouping	YEAR	Count of Civilian or "Government" Grouping
<b>Civilian</b>		<b>173</b>
	1999	7
	2000	9
	2001	24
	2002	50
	2003	24
	2004	18
	2005	29
	2006	12
<b>Government</b>		<b>231</b>
	1999	16
	2000	26
	2001	37
	2002	37
	2003	30
	2004	38
	2005	37
	2006	10
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>404</b>

At first glance this paints an incomplete picture and provides for the assumption that the group targets civilians with similar effort to that of government officials. This would be incorrect. A review of the rhetoric does not preclude the group from conducting operations against civilians. The primary stricture is the wanton killing of civilians. A review of the operational tactic breakout provides some additional insight into the exact nature and division of operations GSPC conducts against civilian versus government targets.

**Figure IV-E1: GSPC Operational Tactic versus Target**

**GSPC Tactic Versus Target**



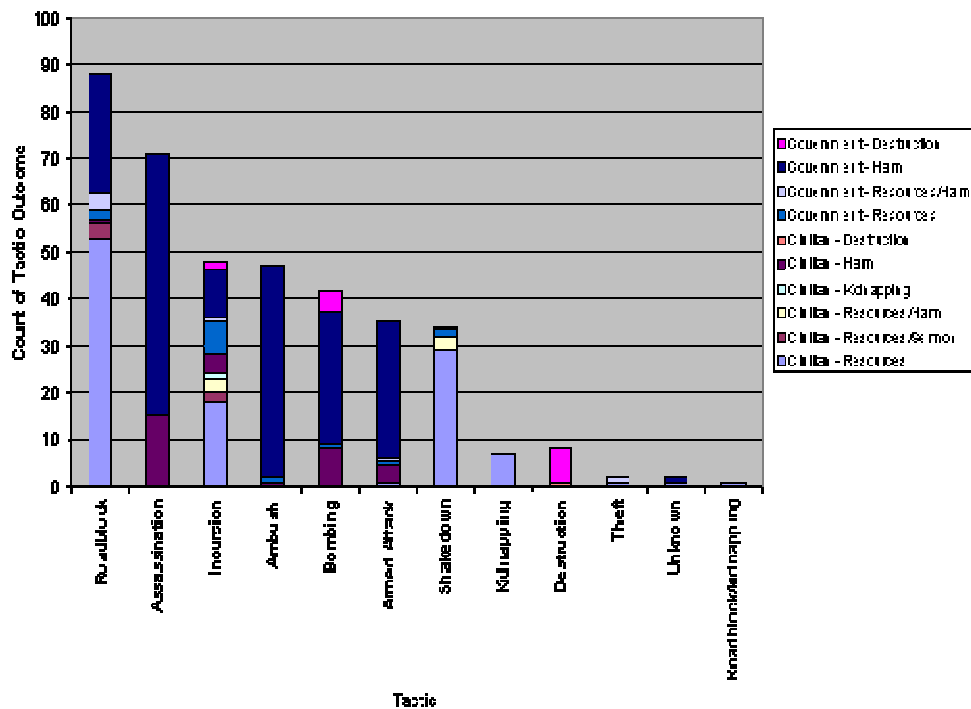
A quick glance at the tactic versus target data quickly reveals that while operationally the numbers of incidents against civilians and government are close, the natures of the tactics are quite different.

Civilians (civilian, tourists, and imams) are targeted for resource-specific missions (money, firearms, food, and other supplies). Roadblocks, incursions, shakedowns, and kidnappings are all predominantly money and resource generating activities. The government (all other designations) on the other hand is targeted for harm and destruction types of operations. Assassinations, ambushes, bombings, and destruction all result in harm to government officials or damage to their property.

**Figure IV-E2: GSPC Operational Tactic Outcome and Target Type**



**Civilian and Government  
Tactic versus Tactic Outcome**



To prove this point, the following chart (Figure IV-E2) illustrates the tactic outcome against government and civilian targets. Note the inverse proportionality of harm versus resource for both civilian and government operations. Where operations against civilians generate more resources, those against the government generate more harm. The ability to show this partially explains and validates GSPC's contentions that they would conduct operations in a manner counter to GIA; they would concentrate on the avoidance of civilian casualties.

With an operational understanding of GSPC regarding civilian and government targets, the next question to be explored to assist in validating this hypothesis and GSPC origination rhetoric is to link operations with actual casualties. The following table defines the number of civilian and government entities injured, killed, or abducted from 1998-2006.

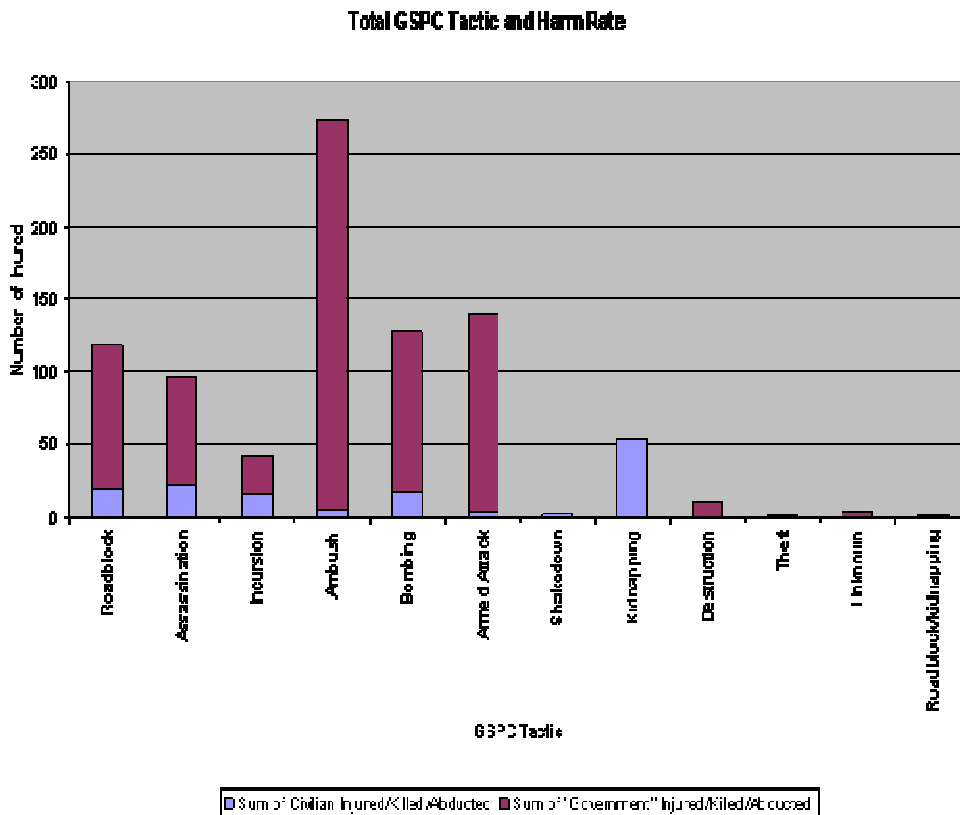
**Table IV-E2: Comparison of GSPC Tactics versus Harm between Government and Civilian Groups**

Tactic	Civilian Injured/Killed/Abducted	"Government" Injured/Killed/Abducted
Roadblock	19	99
Assassination	22	74
Incursion	15	28
Ambush	5	269
Bombing	16	112
Armed Attack	4	136

Shakedown	2	0
Kidnapping	54	0
Destruction	0	11
Theft	0	1
Unknown	0	4
Roadblock/kidnapping	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>734</b>

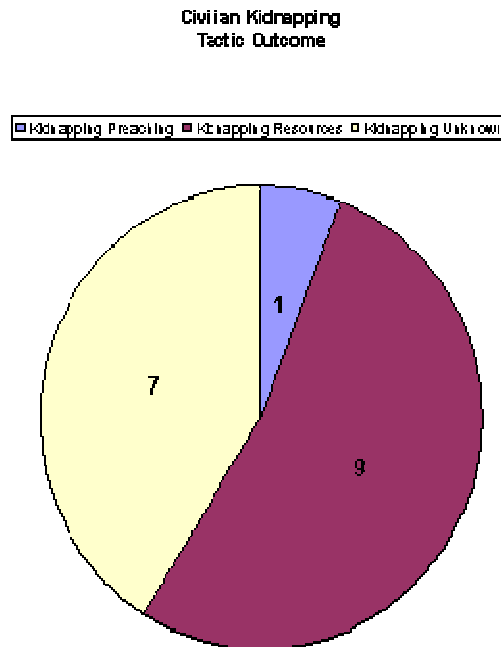
Over the past eight years, GSPC has conducted operations that have resulted in the death or injury of civilians. Interestingly, when sorting within the database, 31 civilian deaths were the result of operations aimed at government forces. While reviewing the articles within OSC, another anomaly was identified. Many times while conducting incursions and roadblocks, GSPC would search the identity papers of the citizens they came into contact with. If it was discovered that the plain clothed civilian was in fact a military member or had served in any government service, they were summarily executed (OSC source = GMP20030707000010, Algiers *Le Matin* [Internet Version-WWW] in French 07 Jul 03 and GMP20050709380006, Algiers *El Watan* [Internet Version-WWW] in French 09 Jul 05). Many times members of the civilian population became entangled in an execution-style operation against the government and were killed as an ancillary incident (OSC source = GMP20020526000006, Algiers *Le Mat* Version-WWW) in [Internet 25 May 02] and GMP20011105000014, Algiers *Le Mat* Version-WWW) in [Internet 05 Nov 01]). Graphically, these numbers are represented below.

**Figure IV-E3: GSPC Operational Tactic versus Harm**



From the data above, a misperception may arise concerning kidnappings. All of the kidnappings involve civilians, but very few resulted in injury or death. The breakout we utilized was to aggregate the operational data for each incident by injured, killed, and abducted. This grouping creates a skewed perception that civilians were killed and injured the most during kidnappings. This is incorrect. A drill down into kidnapping reveals the following:

**Figure IV-E4: GSPC Operational Tactic Outcome and Target Type**



The pie chart shows the number of operations (17) that led to the 54 civilians being kidnapped. A review of those 17 operations and 54 civilians reveals one person (tourist) dying of heat stroke while a captive of GSPC. The seven unknown kidnappings did not have any follow-up report or additional information that would expound on whether or not the individual was returned. In sum, the number of civilian casualties up to this point has been limited.

In order to finalize this hypothesis, a more succinct view of the harm data is required. Utilizing the pie charts below, a comparison is drawn between government and civilian tactical outcome by the GSPC. The side-by-side comparison ([Figures IV-E5](#) and [IV-E6](#)) shows that the emphasis on resources against civilian targets validates the hypothesis expressing the desire to maintain low civilian casualty numbers while exacting a greater toll on government entities.

**Figure IV-E5: Civilian Harm Data**

GSPC Operations Against Civilian and the End Result

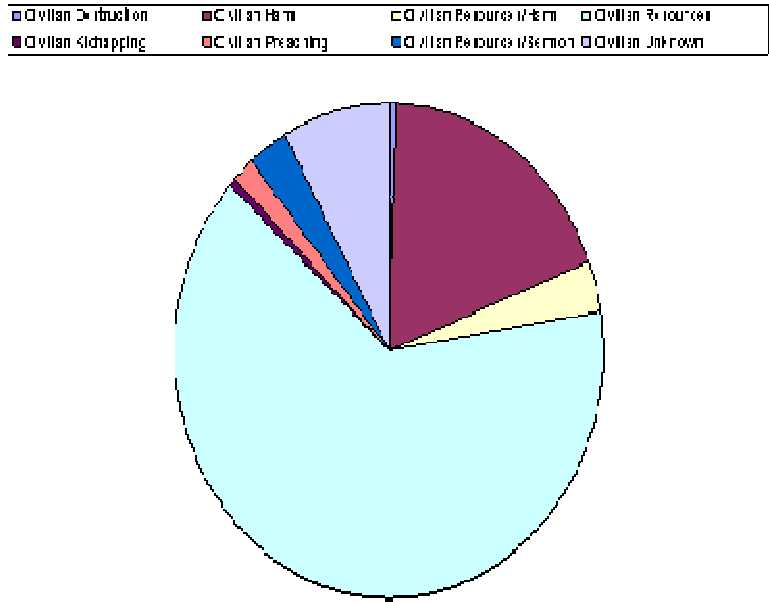
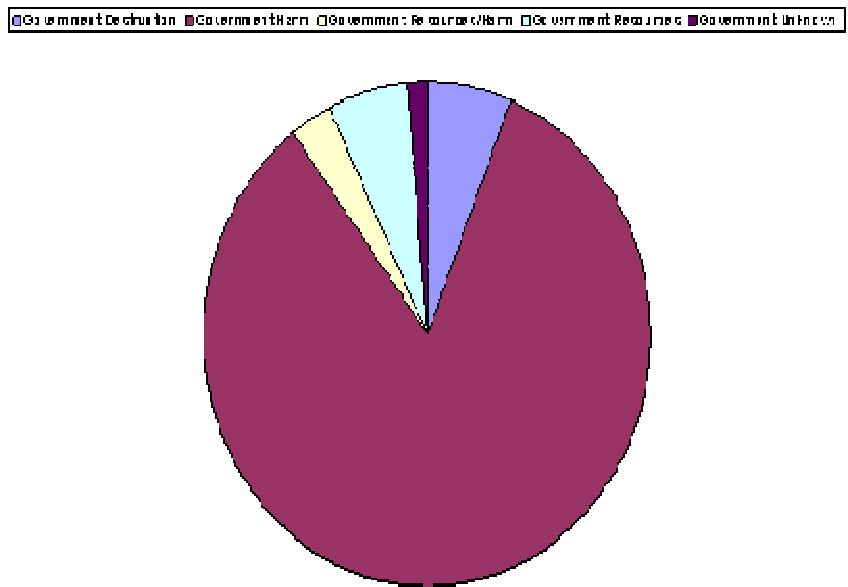


Figure IV-E6: Government Harm Data

GSPC Operations Against "Government" and the End Result



## Correlate Sustainment Operations to Algerian Amnesty Programs (1999 Civil Concord Restoration Act, 2005 Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation Act)

The Algerian government has implemented a number of amnesty programs over the years to entice GSPC members to lay down their arms and reenter society. A brief overview of these two programs is included below:

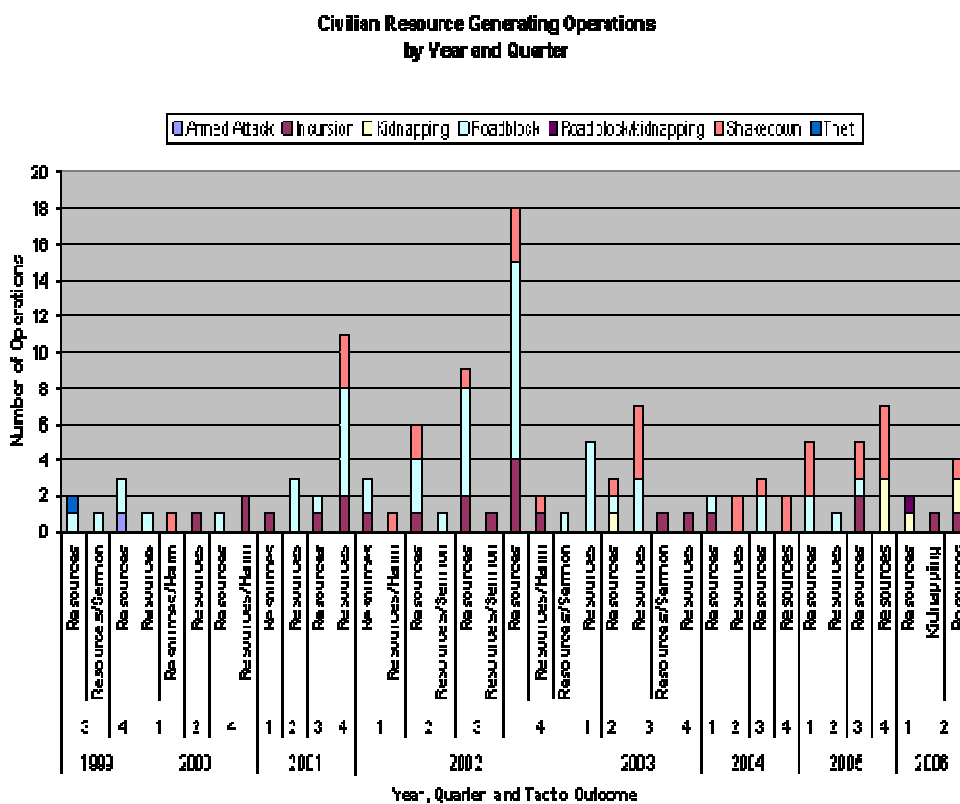
1999 Civil Concord Restoration Act = "Section 1 of the Civil Concord Restoration Act (Loi no 99 08 du 29 Rabie el aouel 1420 correspondant au 13 juillet 1999 relative au rétablissement de la concorde civile) states that persons involved in terrorist actions who wish to end their criminal activities can expect to return to civilian life (Mission permanente n.d.b). Section 2 of the Act provides for three measures applicable to the individuals referred to in Section 1: exemption from prosecution, probation and reduction of sentences (Ibid.). Section 3 of the Act states that individuals who wish to avail themselves of this measure must surrender to the authorities by 13 January 2000, that is within six months of the promulgation of the Act (Mission permanente n.d.b, s. 3). They must then notify the authorities that they are putting an end to their terrorist or subversive activities (Ibid.). Exemption from prosecution is accorded to persons who, although they have belonged to a terrorist organization referred to in the Criminal Code, have not [translation] 'committed an offence [...] causing death or permanent disability of a human being or rape, and have not used explosives in public places or places frequented by the public' (Ibid.), and to persons who have [translation] 'held arms, explosives or other material means and have of their own free will surrendered them to the authorities' (Ibid., s. 4). The second measure is probation for three to ten years (Mission permanente n.d.b, s. 12). Individuals are not eligible for probation if they [translation] 'have committed, or have participated in the commission of, crimes involving the death of human beings, collective massacres, attacks with explosives in public places or places frequented by the public, or rape' (Ibid., s. 7). Those who wish to avail themselves of this measure must surrender to the government within six months of the promulgation of the Act, and they must be prepared to join the struggle against terrorism (Mission permanente n.d.b, s. 27). The third measure provided for by the Act is a reduction of sentences for persons who [translation] 'have reported of their own free will to the appropriate authorities within a period of three months from the date of promulgation of this Act, who have not been admitted to the probation plan and have not committed collective massacres or used explosives in public places or places frequented by the public [...]' (Ibid., s. 27)."[\[20\]](#)

2005 Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation Act = "Extinction of legal proceedings for all the people who put an end to their armed activities and report themselves to the authorities. Withdrawal of legal proceedings against people wanted in Algeria or abroad or sentenced in absentia and who will decide to report themselves voluntarily to the authorities. Grant of pardon for people who have been sentenced or detained for terrorist actions other than collective slaughters, rapes and attacks with explosives in public places. Commutations or reduction in sentences for all other individuals who are definitively sentenced, detained or wanted for terrorist actions and who are not covered by the above mentioned grant of pardon and extinction of penal proceedings. The charter project provides for prohibition of exercise of all political activity whatsoever for people responsible of this kind of instrumentation of religion. Prohibition of any political activity for anyone who had a part of responsibility in conception and implementation of the policy that advocated the pseudo 'dijihad' against the nation and the institutions of the Republic. The State will act as a substitute in responsibility for the lot of all the people who disappeared in the framework of the national tragedy. The State will take the right measures in order to allow the beneficiaries of the disappeared people to transcend this great hardship with dignity. The disappeared will be considered as victims of the national tragedy et [sic] their beneficiaries will have a right of compensation."[\[21\]](#)

GSPC does not support Algerian amnesty programs and have called for the increased attacks on government forces in opposition to the programs. Additionally, Algerian rhetoric promotes the assumption that as amnesty programs expire, GSPC operations turn more towards sustainment and resource collection activities. The concept promotes the idea that, prior to ending their terrorist career, GSPC members attempt to amass as many resources as possible. (GMP20060502380001, Algiers *El Watan* [Internet Version-WWW] in French, 02 May 06.)

The following chart displays by calendar year and quarter GSPC operations targeted at civilians to raise resources. Other operations such as assassinations, destruction, and preaching have been removed as they are not resource generating and do not apply to this hypothesis. A similar government chart is not shown, because as discussed in *Section E*, civilians were the main target for resource generating operations.

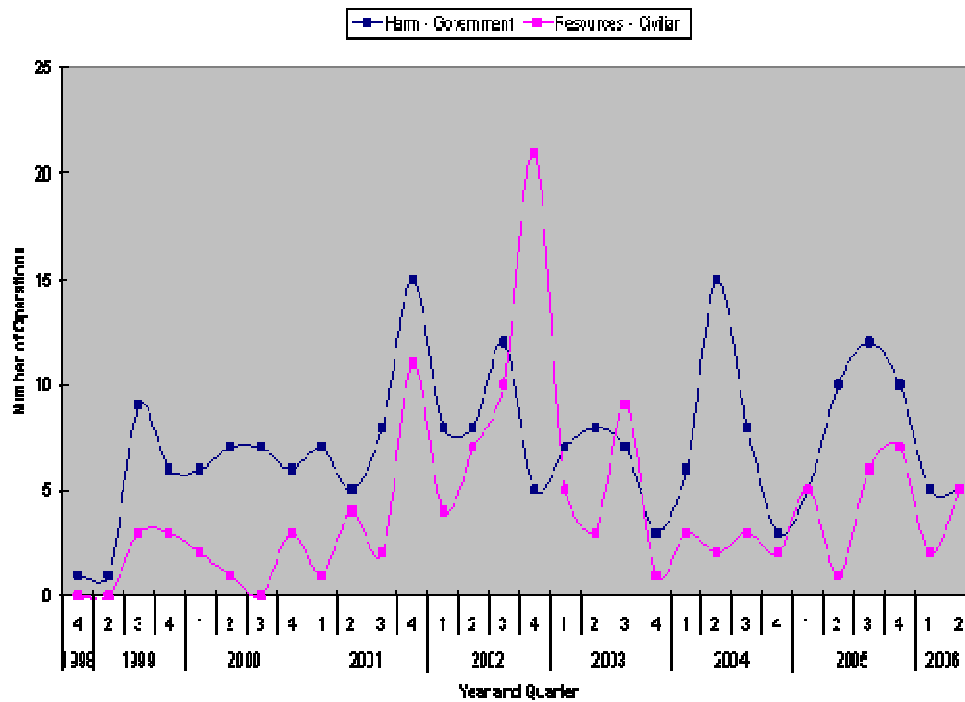
**Figure IV-F1: Civilian Resource Generating Operations**



Noting that the 1999 Civil Concord Restoration Act expired on 13 January 2000 and the 2005 Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation may expire February, March or June 2006[22], there is little evidence to conclude that GSPC operations increased toward resource generating activities. In order to show more conclusively a shift in operations, a review of civilian resources versus government harm operations over time needs to be conducted to determine if GSPC moved away from harm activities to resource operations. The following chart (Figure IV-F2) provides the data concerning both operations.

**Figure IV-F2: Civilian Resource versus Government Harm Operations**

### Civilian Resource versus Government Harm Comparison



Reviewing the time period leading up to and including January 1999 and February, March, and June 2006, the validation of the hypothesis describing increased sustainment and resource generating activities as the expiration date of the amnesty programs approached is not achievable. Understanding that GSPC has finite manpower to conduct operations, orchestrating both resource generating and harm operations isn't likely. As a result, if the hypothesis were correct, the data should reveal an increase in resource operations in and leading up to the expiration months, and a decrease in harm operations.

The data in [Figure IV-F2](#) shows the opposite for the 1999 Act with resource operations declining and harm operations decreasing in the months approaching January 1999 then increasing shortly thereafter. The decrease, then increase, in government harm operations provide some insight into possible effects of the amnesty program close to the expiration date: GSPC members were taking amnesty under the program, thus reducing manpower and the will to conduct operations by members, but it does not conclusively validate the hypothesis for resource operations.

Depending on the actual start and expiration dates for the 2006 Act, the data from 2006 more closely support the hypothesis than the data from the 1999 amnesty period. Government harm and civilian resource operations decrease through the first quarter of CY06 with resource operations increasing in the second quarter. Neither action successfully validates the hypothesis, however.

Equally, the second hypothesis expecting an increase in government harm operations (conducted by GSPC in retaliation to the amnesty programs) is disproved by the same chart, [Figure IV-F2](#). The months from the initial announcement (July 1999 and August 2005) until the expiration dates did not see an overall increase in operations. The opposite occurred.

Although the first and second hypotheses are both invalidated, a counter-hypothesis can be posed. Interestingly, during the months from initial announcement of the amnesty programs (July 1999 and August 2005), actual resource and harm operations decreased. It would appear that the amnesty programs may have had the opposite affect. Rather than increasing operations targeting government harm and civilian resources, operations decreased.

## Weather versus Operations and Tactics

Table IV-G1: Tactics vs. Temperature (°C)

Calendar Year QUARTER	Weather (Temp) [°C]	Tactic							Grand Total
		Ambush	Armed Attack	Assassination	Bombing	Incursion	Roadblock	Shutdown	
1 (Jan-Mar)	6.3	1							1
	8.6						1		1
	11.8		1						1
	13.2			1					1
	15.8		1						1
2 (Apr-Jun)	17.8			1					1
	21.4	1							1
	37.4						1		1
3 (Jul-Sep)	21.9				1				1
	24.9						1		1
	25			1					1
	25.5			1					1
	25.6						1		1
	25.8						1		1
	28.4			1					1
	29.4						1		1
4 (Oct-Dec)	6.6				1				1
	13		1						1
	13.4							1	1
	15.6	1							1
	17					1			1
	17.4				1				1
	18.3					1			1
22.2						1		1	
<b>Grand Total</b>		3	3	5	3	2	7	1	24

Table IV-G1. Tactics vs. Temperature (°C)

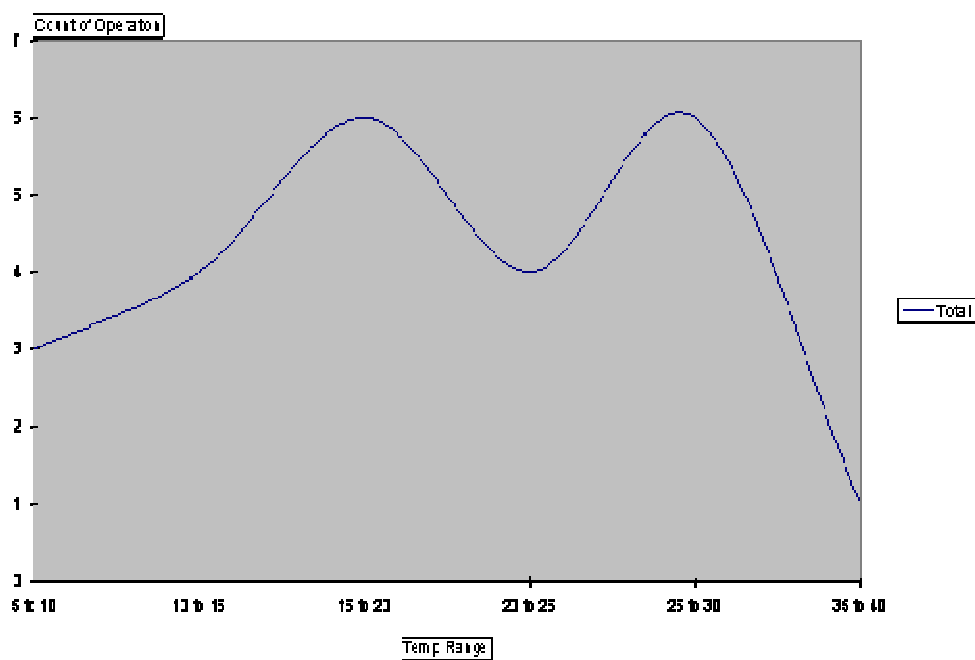
Weather can expectedly impact GSPC operations. A terrorist group's predilection for operating in certain types of weather conditions may lend insight into that organization's capabilities or levels of "professionalization" as a paramilitary force. Elements that routinely operate in adverse weather conditions may demonstrate a robust military capability. Elements that appear to avoid operating in poor weather either (1) do not have the ability to function in adverse conditions or (2)



do not have the desire to endure the discomfort. The first option points to capability, while the second reflects force professionalization. The precise temperature data can be grouped into temperature ranges, giving a better picture of GSPC operational patterns with respect to temperature. These patterns are depicted in [Figure IV-G1](#). (Operations are not broken out by tactic in [Figure IV-G1](#); all tactics are combined into total operations in the graph.)

Weather information was sparse for the locations and dates of the specific operations. Therefore, the sampled data set was very small. Few definitive findings, if any, can be drawn from the data; but if one were to assume (a bold presumption) the inclusive data represent general GSPC operations, one might conclude GSPC operations tend to concentrate in two general temperature ranges as shown in [Figure IV-G1](#): 15 to 20 degrees and 25 to 30 degrees Centigrade.

**Figure IV-G1: Distribution of Operations with Respect to Temperature (°C)**



## Observations and Conclusions

### *Hypothesis Validation*

#### Attacks versus Population Density

- *Hypothesis:* Sustainment (resources) and attack (harm) operations will correlate with population density.
- *Conclusion:* The data roughly supported this hypothesis, as operations generally concentrated in regions of higher population density. However, a difference in population density between two well populated regions within the northern coastal “population band” did not suggest the one with greater density would necessarily attract more GSPC attention. Nevertheless, both could expect greater

GSPC activity than less populous regions in the southern three-quarters of the country.

#### Attacks versus Distance from Epicenter

- *Hypothesis:* GSPC operates in areas of reduced government control, where they may capitalize on rugged, inhospitable terrain to develop a home-court advantage. Such areas include the Sahel region that cuts across southern Algeria. Roadblocks will occur within an identifiable range from population centers—far enough away from areas of government control, but close enough to catch targeted traffic of sufficient frequency (“lions at the watering hole” effect).
- *Conclusion:* The results were partially inconclusive. While the data did invalidate the assumption that the operations occurred in regions consistent with the Sahel, the data was not precise enough to determine how far individual operations were from areas of strong government control. For example, roadblocks could not be pinpointed to specific locations on isolated highways between urban centers. At best, the data showed a gradual decline in GSPC activity as a function of distance from the area of highest operational concentration (i.e., the Boumerdes-Tizi Ouzou corridor). The data did show that operations occurred primarily in the northern, more populous dense region.

#### Locations versus Operations over Time

- *Hypothesis:* A shift in regional activity is expected over time, i.e., the concentration of GSPC operations would shift geographically as GSPC ceded capability in some areas while gaining more capability and interest in others.
- *Conclusion:* The data did not sustain this hypothesis. While certain areas saw increased GSPC activity over time, the initial areas of interest (Tizi Ouzou and Boumerdes) during the group’s formative years continued to receive the lion’s share of GSPC attention. At best, a subtle shift was observed as Boumerdes gradually wrested prominence from Tizi Ouzou as the GSPC’s favored area of operations; Boumerdes’ prominence increased dramatically after 2003.

#### Operations and Tactic versus Month and Quarter

- *Hypothesis:* GSPC operations and tactics are influenced by social, political, and environmental occurrences. Examples include: Ramadan, political elections, etc.
- *Conclusion:* The data were inconclusive in correlating GSPC activity and external events. No appreciable increase in activity surrounded the national elections of April 1999 or April 2004. However, autumn showed heavier activity across the years, with noticeable spikes in September and December each year. At best, the heightened activity in December might be attributable to GSPC shakedowns and incursions to collect “alms” around Ramadan.

### Correlate Rhetoric with Victim Type by Using Percentage of Civilian versus Government Victims

- *Hypothesis:* According to its own rhetoric, GSPC split from GIA because the former targeted civilians for death or injury. GSPC is not inclined to kill or injure civilians.
- *Conclusion:* The data generally support a conclusion that Government targets comprised the bulk of casualties from GSPC operations (*attack* operations for *harm*), rather than civilians. Civilians were statistically more often victims of activities perpetrated for financial gain (*sustainment* operations for *resources*). However, specific GSPC rhetoric and statements did not correlate directly with operations with respect to target types. The GSPC issued a few claims of responsibility for attacks, and issued a few threats, but the data were too limited to foster solid conclusions.

### Correlate Sustainment Operations to Algerian Amnesty Programs (1999 Civil Concord Restoration Act, 2005 Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation Act)

- *Hypothesis:* According to anti-GSPC rhetoric in articles on GSPC, as amnesty programs were expiring there was an increase in the number of money-making operations targeting civilians (roadblocks, kidnappings, incursions) to raise funds before members opted for amnesty.
- *Conclusion:* See below.
- *Hypothesis:* According to rhetoric from articles on GSPC, announcement of amnesty programs spurred an increase in the number of attacks on “government” entities.
- *Conclusion:* The data generally did not support this hypothesis. As amnesty periods drew to a close, one did not observe the expected rise in attacks (to dissuade defection or to punish repentants) and sustainment activities (to amass a nest egg prior to taking amnesty). Rather, both types of operations declined as the amnesty periods ran out.

### Weather versus Operations and Tactics

- *Hypothesis:* Operations occur more frequently during periods of temperate weather.
- *Conclusion:* The data was sparse and did not engender any firm conclusions. Activities concentrated in two temperature ranges, but the reason for the clustering is unknown. A full climatological study might offer further insight.

### General Observations

1. Within OSC, often one article will discuss multiple operations. These incidents were split out as best as possible as separate operations.
2. Operations may be complex. For example, GSPC implements a roadblock to shakedown civilians, but the operation is also a ploy (bait) to attract police or soldiers who are then ambushed when they respond to the roadblock (dual purpose operation). Thus, the incident consists of two distinct classes of operation; they are recorded as two separate operations because two they reflect separate intentions and targets.
3. Roadblocks were used extensively to shakedown private citizens or assassinate/execute police, militia, patriots, guards and soldiers (dual purpose operation).
4. It seems that GSPC generally regarded civilians as civilians, but if they have been tied in the past to the military, militia or government, then the person retains that distinction. A number of incursions, roadblocks and shakedowns involved identification checks. Once a member's affiliation to a "government" group was established, GSPC assassinated the individual.
5. GSPC, as it is currently (based on their operations), does not appear to be a "terrorist" group as much as an internal insurgency against the government, one that is trying to stay alive through shakedowns, roadblocks, and incursions to raise cash and other resources. There are a number of references and articles about GSPC's ties to al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden; in fact, a number of sources suggest bin Laden created GSPC. GSPC may be trying to tie itself to al-Qaeda to survive the decline and "death" phase the group appears to be in. The implication is that this may broaden GSPC's operations from regional, colonial, Algerian government-based targets to international targets. GSPC members have already used Afghan training camps.
6. While there are civilian deaths, many times they are accompanied by the death of a "government" entity. There are times that civilians have been assassinated, but the majority of the time the "civilian" incidents are incursions, roadblocks, and shakedowns where the GSPC members take money and equipment while they preach their cause to the people.
7. Shakedowns for money may be in response to the need to raise capital (i.e., amass a nest egg) before surrendering under amnesty provisions, though this appears to be conjecture and cannot be verified conclusively by the data. See GMP20060502380001, Algiers *El Watan* (Internet Version-WWW) in French, 02 May 06.
8. Civilian total for Death, Injury, and Abductions was skewed because 32 tourists were kidnapped at one time and 11 more during another incident.
9. "Elements" in the operational data from the OSC seem to represent 1 person, so 30 elements are 30 people.
10. Many Civilian deaths were the result of walking into an improvised explosive device (IED) that may have been meant for a "Government" asset.

## Future Research

The focus of this research paper was to descriptively analyze the operational information received from open source materials, namely the OSC. As a result, we encountered information shortfalls due to limited resources and data to verify and delve into many of the questions the data raised. Future research projects are possible. Some topics to consider:

1. Maintain the database and GSPC review of OSC and other venues to provide a continual events log of GSPC operations. The aggregate data will be extremely beneficial for future study.
2. Obtain complete weather data per date - Rainfall was originally to be considered as a possible variable affecting operations. However, rainfall was recorded by calendar date, not precise enough a measure to be useful. To wit, GSPC could conduct an operation such as a roadblock during dry conditions, and then terminate the operation at the first sign of imminent rain. Unfortunately, the imprecise data would mislead the analysis, suggesting that GSPC, having conducted an operation on the same date as recorded rainfall, actually operated in the rain. Such would be a false conclusion.
3. Plot out by event the progress of the incidents by region, city - attempt to see migration of operations over time.
4. Conduct a rigorous statistical analysis of the data obtained through the database.
5. Research the various questions that arise from the charts, tables and data within the database. Peaks and valleys in operations appear in relation to time, location, tactic, etc. The data and time needed to research fully the "why's" was too enormous for this paper, but could provide real insight into the tactics, abilities and hindrances GSPC associates with operations.
6. Lay the data over the terrorist group lifecycle to see the four phases; determine if they are applicable to operational rise and decline.
7. Lay in ideological phrases with the event log to see if there is a connection between rhetoric, affiliation with al Qaeda and group operations and survival.
8. Conduct a similar review within OSC of government operations against GSPC. Lay results over this and future GSPC data to see if there is a correlation.
9. Continually monitor and conduct a study into the amnesty period and acts conducted by the Algerian government to see if amnesty is an effective policy.
10. Greater fidelity can be achieved in hypothesis validation if data is reviewed by cultural experts. Also, further insights into causal relationships between operational timeline and cultural activities can be identified if database construction follows specific cultural periods (i.e. Muslim calendar does not follow normal Western cycle, holiday calendar and summer vacation months are different and may impact operations).

## About the Authors

Maj Clifford M. Gyves joined the USAF Special Investigations Academy at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia in the summer of 2002, where he took a position with the planning and resources branch. Maj Gyves entered the Air Force through the United States Air Force Academy in 1991. Maj Gyves was born in New York City and raised in Ohio. His wife, Suzanne Sabin, was born and raised in Arizona. They have a son, Grant, and a daughter, Paxton.

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2. [MIPT Group Profile](http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=3777): <http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=3777>.
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18. Methodological note: tactics categorized as *incursions* by the sources reflect a mix of attacks, proselytizing and shakedowns for money, and could not be refined into attack or sustainment activities; therefore, incursions as a category were excluded.

19. Operations against civilians are not necessarily attacks. Many of them are activities taken for financial gain.

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22. No good evidence could be found to show the expiration date for the *Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation*. The beginning date could be August 2005, when the government initially announced the referendum, September 2005 when the public voted the Act into existence or January 2006 when the Algerian government authorized the directive. Each expiration date, February, March, and June 2006 will be reviewed. The six month window was used to correlate with the 1999 Act.