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**The Emerging Strike Patterns
In the
Air War in Afghanistan**

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OCTOBER 20, 2001

The Department of Defense has released only limited data on the air war to date, indicating that the US flew about 7-15 bomber and 7-15 strike/attack aircraft per day during the first week, and the some returned not having used their munitions. These numbers crept up towards the 100 aircraft per day level towards the end of the second week (most of them carrier), and AC-130s and F-15s were introduced into the air battle. In contrast, the Coalition flew an average of 1,500 sorties per day.

Target Complexes Struck

Table One, and Charts One and Two, show the patterns in terms of target complexes struck per day. It should be stressed that most target complex involve several point targets, and that a complex may have several aim points and that the US often uses a wide variety of munitions to strike either on a given day or time.

There is still a tendency to report in the media as if most targets were in the cities and particularly those with some kind of TV coverage. In fact, most are military facilities outside concentrations of civilian populations.

It is clear from the data provided by the Department of Defense that the strikes on Taliban major air defense facilities like air bases and SA-2/SA-3 sties accomplished much of their mission by the third day. The US struck at less than 20% of the number of the air defense target complexes on the second day that it struck on the first day. The number of strikes on airfields dropped sharply by day three and the number of strikes on surface to air missile sites dropped to minimal levels after day one. There were virtually no strikes on major air defense facilities after October 9th. Nevertheless, the Tables show that the US does return to strike at air bases on given days and that Taliban air defenses are suppressed and not eliminated.

The number of strikes dedicated to major command and communications sites dropped to zero after the first two days, although some leadership targets were hit as part of land force garrisons.

The number of strikes against land forces targets such as Al Qaida bases, Taliban garrisons, maintenance and logistic facilities, etc. did not increase strikingly after day one but continued at roughly the same level through out the first week. As a result, land force targets started dominating the air war by day three. Even so, so many strikes hit at air defense targets early in the campaign that 40 target complexes were hit in week one versus only 22 “land force” target complexes.

This situation changed strikingly in week two when the air battle shifted heavily to larger numbers of strikes, most of which were concentrated on garrisons, and must heavily in the Kabul-Jalalabad-Qandahar area.

Target Complex By Region and Opposition Group Supported

Table One, and Charts Three and Four, show the distribution of target complexes by region and by major group within the opposition to the Taliban. They show that US strikes have concentrated on major air, land, and leadership fixed facilities that are concentrated in the triangle between Kabul-Jalalabad-Qandahar.

This does not mean the US is focusing on aiding the Northern Alliance, however, as major fixed or area targets in other regions have also been hit, and most targets hit in the Kabul-Jalalabad-Qandahar affect the Taliban's capability to supply and reinforce its forces throughout the country.

There have been no more strikes in the immediate area of Northern Alliance forces than near other combat forces, and most humanitarian relief missions seem to have gone into the Uzbek areas near Mazaar e Sharif, which has only nominal ties to the Northern Alliance.

One major shift occurred on October 19, when the US struck heavily for the first time at army garrisons and other Taliban targets in the Shi'ite areas near Heart.

“Running Out of Targets”

These patterns still should not be construed as in any way indicating that the US not only is not running out of targets, it has not really begun either interdiction or close air support. There are approximately 700 major weapons in dispersed Taliban ground forces, and at least known 30-60 interdiction point or area targets. US restrikes against garrisons, command and communications, maintenance, and other previously struck facilities will also be needed. Given the rough terrain, dispersed forces, weather, and other factors, it would take between 500 and 1,000 additional attack sorties to achieve a 50% damage criteria used in the Gulf War against the remaining Taliban force structure, although the Taliban might collapse long before that time.

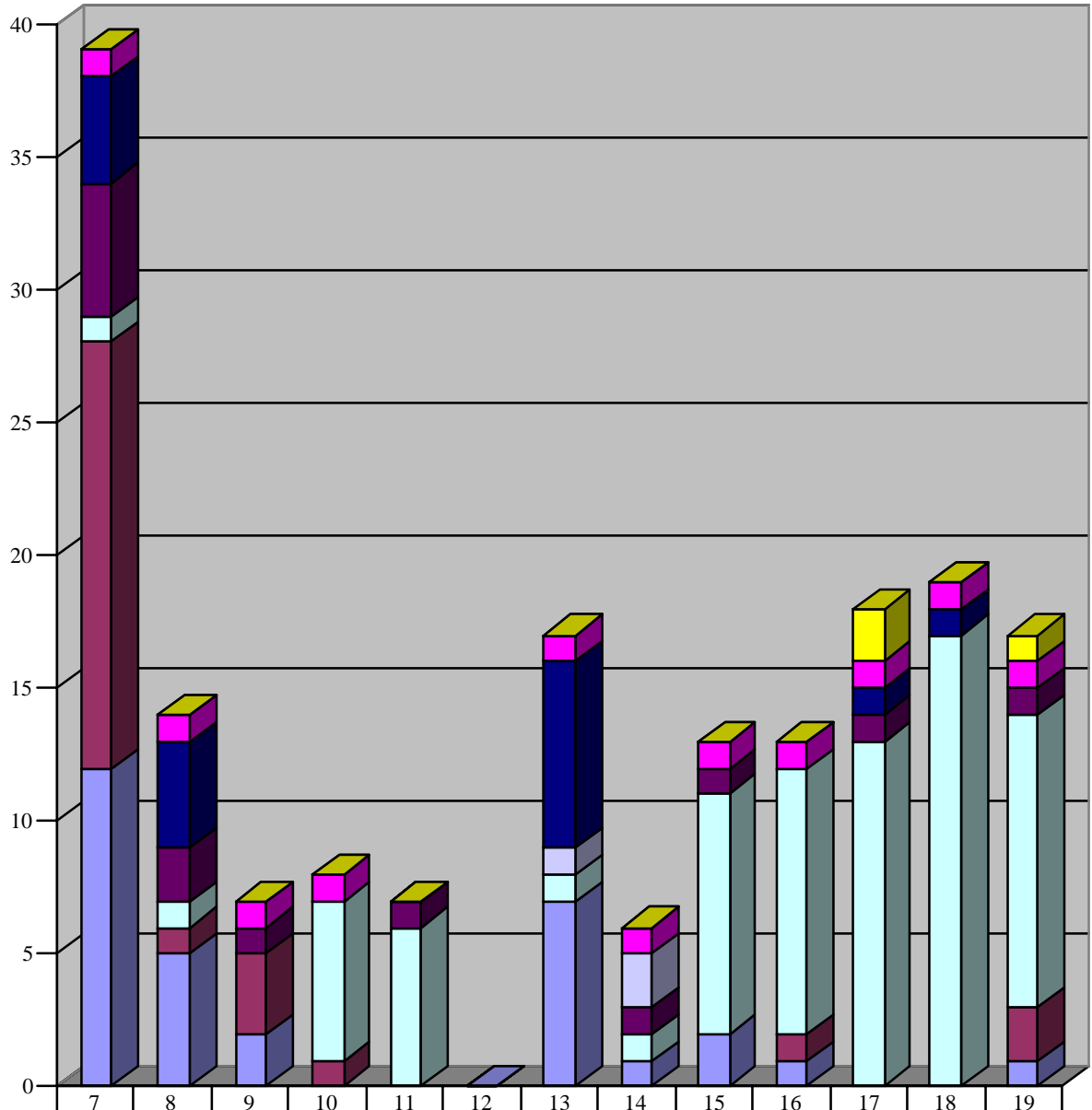
Table One**Target Complexes Hit Per Day – 7-14 Oct**

TARGET GROUP	7-Oct	8-Oct	9-Oct	10-Oct	11-Oct	12-Oct	13-Oct	14-Oct
Air Field	12	5	2	0	0	0	7	1
SAMs	16	1	3	1	0	0	0	0
Total Air Defense	28	6	5	1	0	0	7	1
Garrison	1	1	0	6	6	0	1	1
Al Qa'da	5	2	1	0	1	0	0	1
Logistics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maintainance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Military	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
Total "Land"	6	3	1	6	7	0	3	6
Comand & Comms	4	4	0	0	0	0	7	0
Humanitarian	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Leaflets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
TOTAL	39	22	7	8	7	0	18	12
REGION STRUCK								
1. Kabul-Jalalabad	16	6	3	4	4	0	5	3
2. Qandahar Area	8	4	1	3	3	0	4	5
3. Kunduz- Northern Alliance	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
5. Herat & West	9	1	1	0	0	0	3	0
6. Mazar Sharif/ Northwest	7	3	2	1	0	0	5	4

Table One**Target Complexes Hit Per Day – 15-19 Oct**

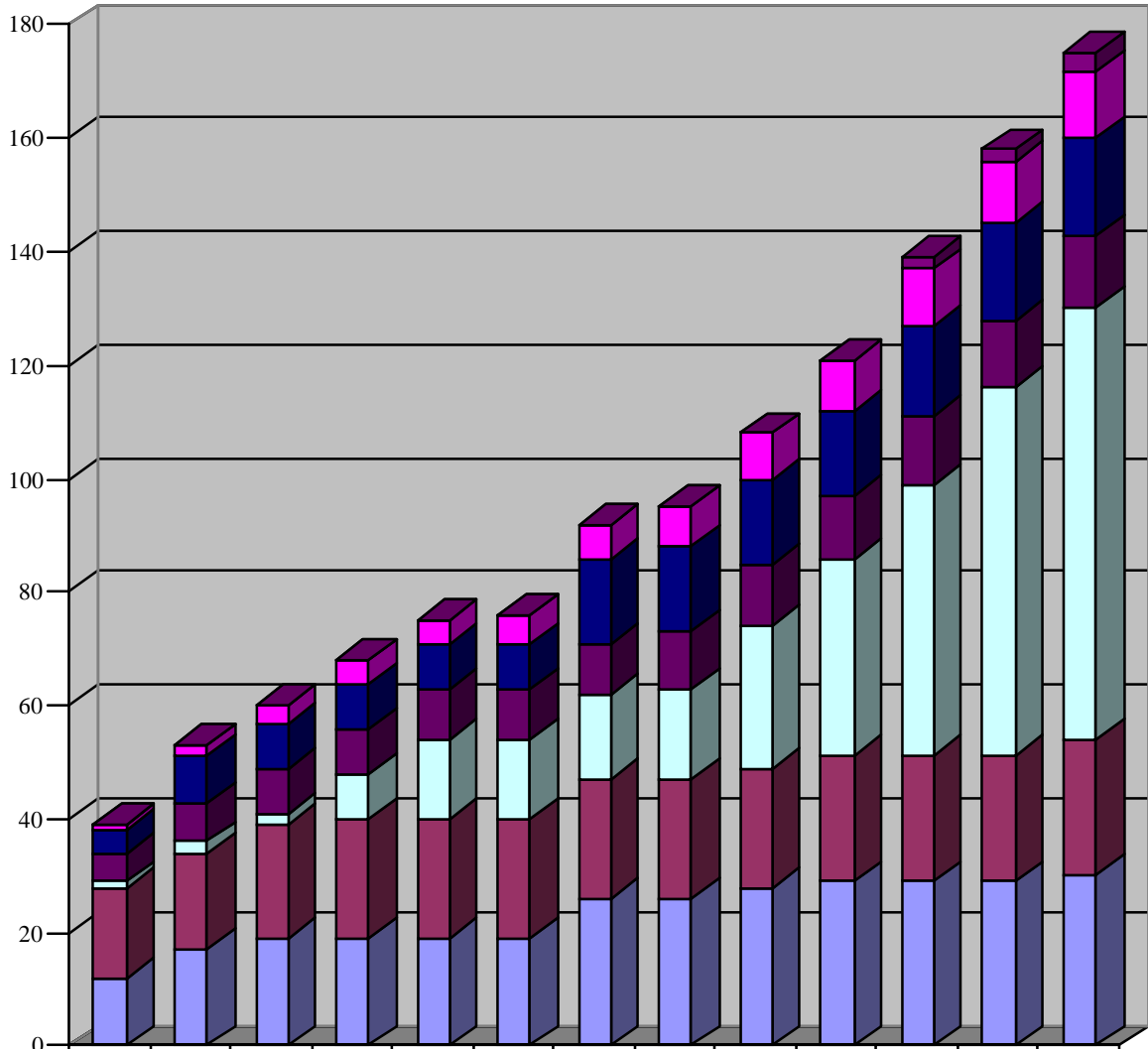
TARGET GROUP	15-Oct	16-Oct	17-Oct	18-Oct	19-Oct	20-Oct	21-Oct	22-Oct
Air Field	2	1	0	0	1			
SAMs	0	1	0	0	2			
Total Air Defense	2	2	0	0	3			
Garrison	9	10	13	17	11			
Al Qa'da	1	0	1	0	1			
Logistics	0	0	0	0	0			
Maintainance	0	0	0	0	0			
Military	0	0	0	0	0			
Total "Land"	10	10	14	17	11			
Comand & Comms	0	0	1	1	0			
Humanitarian	1	1	1	1	1			
Leaflets	0	0	2	0	1			
TOTAL	13	13	18	19	16			
REGION STRUCK								
1. Kabul-Jalalabad	4	4	11	13	1			
2. Qandahar Area	7	5	4	5	8			
3. Kunduz- Northern Alliance	0	1	2	0	0			
5. Herat & West	0	0	0	0	6			
6. Mazar Sharif/ Northwest	1	3	1	1	2			

Graph One: Daily Target Complexes Hit by Type



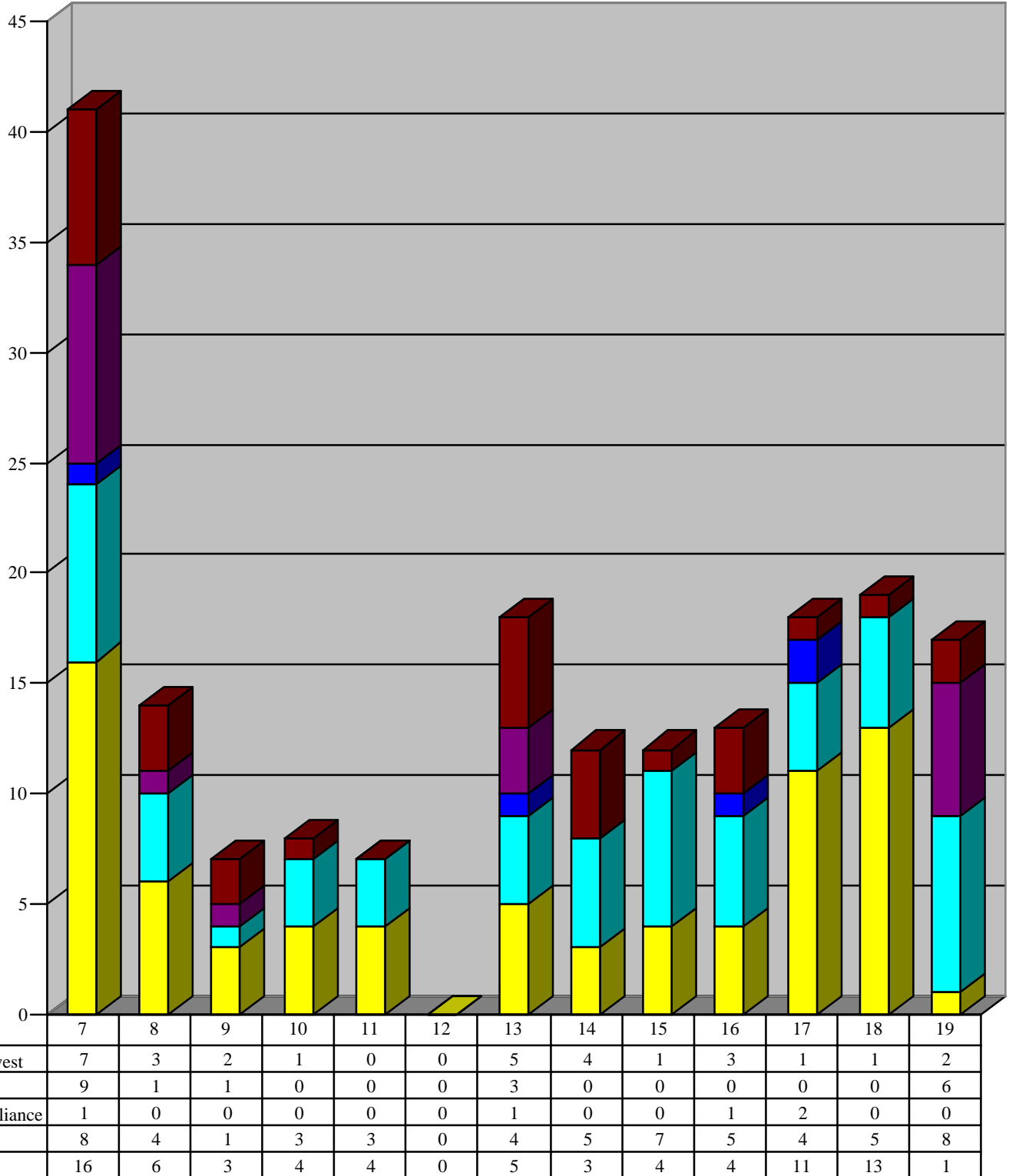
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
■ TOTAL	*39	*22	*7	*8	*7	*0	*18	*12	*12	*13	*18	*19	*16
■ Leaflet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
■ Humanitarian	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
■ Comand & Comms	4	4	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	1	0
■ Total "Land"	*6	*3	*1	*6	*7	*0	1	2	*10	*10	*14	*17	*11
■ Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Logistics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Al Qa'da	5	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
■ Garrison	1	1	0	6	6	0	1	1	9	10	13	17	11
■ Total Air Defense	*28	*6	*5	*1	*0	*0	*7	*1	*2	*2	*0	*0	*3
■ SAMS	16	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
■ Air Field	12	5	2	0	0	0	7	1	2	1	0	0	1

Graph Two: Cumulative Target Complexes Hit by Type

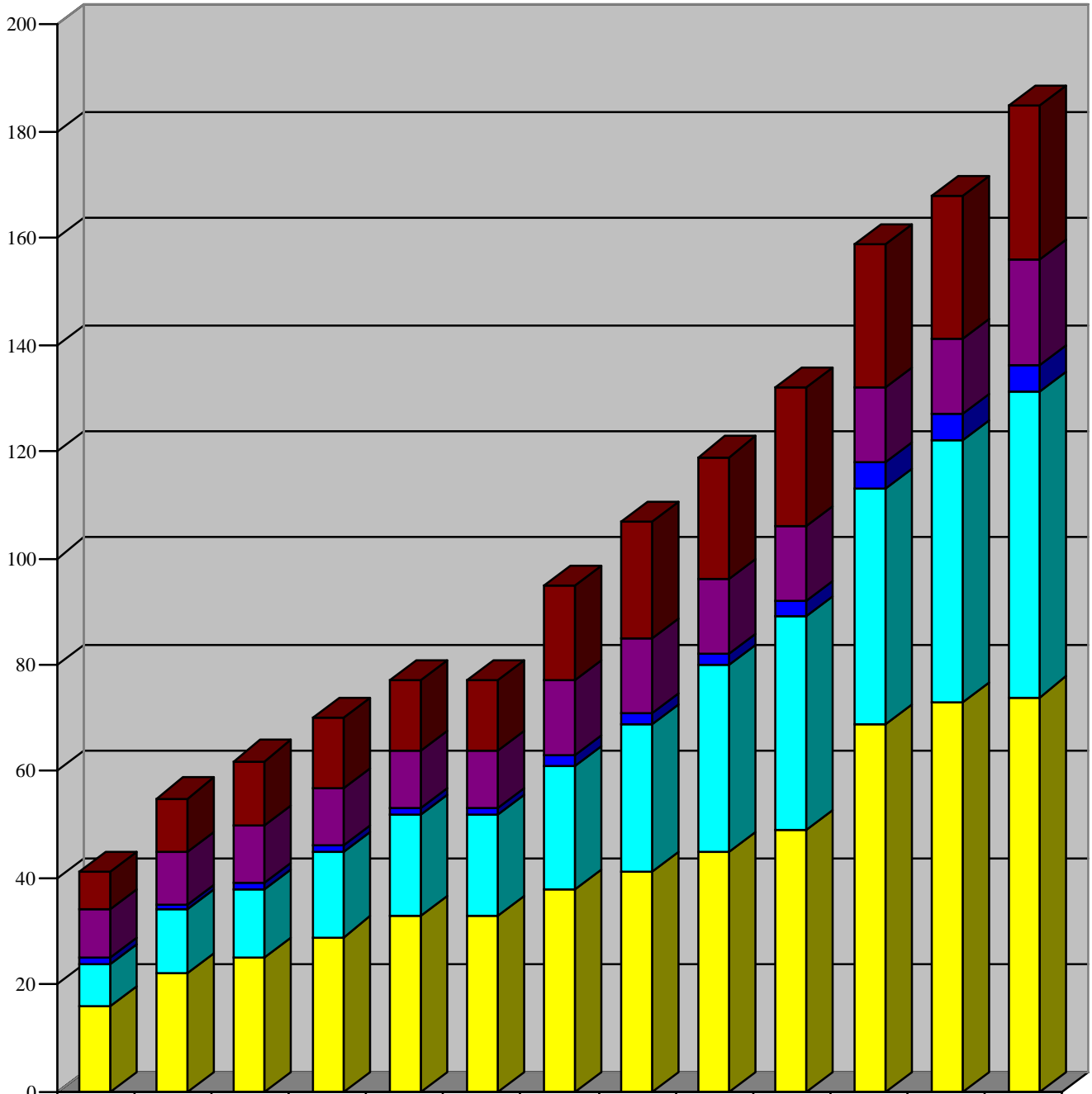


	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
■ TOTAL	*39	*61	*68	*74	*81	*81	*92	*95	*108	*120	*139	*158	*175
■ Leaflet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3
■ Humanitarian	1	2	3	4	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
■ Comand & Comms	4	8	8	8	8	8	15	15	15	15	16	17	17
□ Total "Land"	*6	*9	*10	*16	*23	*23	*24	*26	*36	*46	*60	*77	*89
■ Military0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Logistics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Al Qa'da	5	7	8	8	9	9	9	10	11	11	12	12	13
■ Garrison	1	2	2	8	14	14	15	16	25	35	48	65	76
□ Total Air Defense	*28	*34	*39	*40	*40	*40	*47	*47	*49	*51	*51	*51	*54
■ SAMs	16	17	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	22	22	22	24
■ Air Field	12	17	19	19	19	19	26	26	28	29	29	29	30
■ TARGET GROUP													

Graph Three: Daily Target Complexes Hit by Region and Area of Major Opposition Group



Graph Four: Cumulative Target Complexes Hit by Region and Area of Major Opposition Group



	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
■ Mazar Sharif/Northwest	7	10	12	13	13	13	18	22	23	26	27	27	29
■ Herrat & West	9	10	11	11	11	11	14	14	14	14	14	14	20
■ Kunduz-Northern Alliance	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	5	5	5
■ Qandahar Area	8	12	13	16	19	19	23	28	35	40	44	49	57
■ Kabul-Jalalabad	16	22	25	29	33	33	38	41	45	49	69	73	74

