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WHAT IS THE GIA?

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1. Introduction

There has been little disagreement that the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) bears responsibility for part of the campaign of gruesome massacres that have plunged Algeria into mourning in recent years. Paradoxically, there have been huge discrepancies between what people hold to be the actual identity of the GIA.

The incumbent authorities in Algeria, governments and major news agencies in the West claim it is a fundamentalist terrorist organisation. This is the received view. But segments of the Algerian population talk of the GIA as bearded security agents. Some Islamists believe it is a sect of Kharidjites while others qualify the Kharidjites as being infiltrated and manipulated by military intelligence. There have been claims that the GIA is just made up of gangs of apolitical hooligans and criminals. Some journalists have even maintained the GIA has never existed as an organisation, the names of its leaders are fictitious, and the whole thing is a propaganda tool fabricated to cover for the death squads and operations of the secret services.

What is the actual identity of the GIA? How does one make sense of these contradictory claims? What are their respective truth and falsity contents? Can some of them be reconciled?

These are a few of the questions this paper intends to tackle.

The argument put forward here is that the GIA is a counter-guerrilla organisation. As will be explained more fully, a counter-guerrilla organisation is a war instrument used to pursue the strategic objectives of modern counter-insurgency warfare. It is within this framework that the currently available facts about the GIA, its interactions with Islamist insurgents, on the one hand, as well as the data about the rapport between the GIA and the incumbent regime, on the other, make most sense.

Section 2 reviews the received opinion about the GIA and presents a sample of views that contradict it.

The GIA has evolved substantially since its inception and, in our view, any claim about its identity has to be time-bound if it is to make any sense. Section 3 provides a brief history of the GIA and locates the time frame within which our thesis about its identity is restricted.

The thesis that the GIA is a counter-guerrilla organisation is presented in section 4. Some general background about the principles, *modus operandi* and history of counter-guerrilla forces is given in section 4.1. Section 4.2 will illustrate some distinctive features of two counter-guerrilla organisations, namely Force K, active during the Algerian liberation war (1954-1962), and

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the Selous Scouts, active in the Rhodesian war (1972-1979). These were chosen because, as will become clear, both these groups and the events in which they were involved are of direct relevance to the men who are currently running the counter-insurgency campaign in Algeria. Section 4.3 presents the first argument, which consists of showing that the GIA manifests the institutional attributes of a counter-guerrilla force. In section 4.4 a second argument demonstrates that the functional identity of the GIA is to implement the strategic principles of counter-insurgency warfare. Section 4.5 discusses the explanatory value and testability of this hypothesis.

Two alternative hypotheses about the GIA's identity are studied in section 5. Section 5.1 looks at the Islamist claim that the GIA is an (infiltrated) Kharidjite sect while section 5.2 deals with the thesis that it is an anti-social movement.

Section 6 summarises the main points of this study.

2. The Received View and its Sceptics

The widely disseminated and accepted view outside Algeria is that the GIA is – what the acronym stands for – an Islamic insurgent organisation.

The Algerian government and media say the GIA is a ‘terrorist organisation’, a ‘fundamentalist organisation’ which seeks the destruction of ‘the Algerian State and Nation’ using armed terror. Foreign affairs minister Attaf and president of the Senate Boumaza often refer to it as ‘a fanatical terrorist organisation’¹, and prime-minister Ouyahia asserts that it is made up of ‘religious cranks who pretend they are purifying Algeria.’² Ex-prime minister Malek affirms it has ‘a central command – a national emir – who defines the policies, and is largely made up of intensively indoctrinated Islamists but also comprises hooligans acting for their private interests.’³ General X^A claims it is an ‘Islamist terrorist’ entity, with a strength of ‘1300 to 2000 men’ organised in ‘a loose structure in which various groups operate with a large autonomy.’⁴ Another officer of the Algerian army says:

The GIA is the youngest terror group in Algeria. Their logic is perverted to the point where killing is not a crime. We are talking about very young men who have had nothing in their lives but hardship and poverty, then suddenly they are offered warmth and hospitality by GIA teachers. Slowly, they are steeped in a new religious doctrine. Psychologically, their interpretation of God becomes an absolute in their lives. They are told to kill those who are not with them in their beliefs and absolve themselves from responsibility because they believe it is not their will to kill, but the will of God. We have taken prisoners who genuinely believe that in killing a child they become closer to God by saving their victim’s soul. It is a travesty of the Islamic faith but they are beyond all reason.⁵

^A A top-officer of the military who spoke anonymously but *Le Monde* of 7 May 1998 said it was the chief of staff, major-general Mohamed Lamari

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Major-general Djouadi says the ‘monarchies of the Gulf sponsor the GIA’⁶ while General X connects the emergence of the GIA to the influence of the Sudanese Hassan al-Turabi, the Saudi Osama Ben Laden, the Egyptians Omar Abdul Rahman and Cheikh Al Ghazali, in addition to the religious scholars in Qom in Iran.⁷ The Algerian press regularly echoes these claims. For instance *El Watan* speaks of the GIA as being ‘organised by Iran’s intelligence service’⁸ and *Le Matin* says the ‘GIA is armed by Sudan.’⁹ Political parties allied to the military (RCD, MDS etc.) propagate the same beliefs.¹⁰

These views have acquired wide international acceptance. For example, the US Department of State annual reports on patterns of global terrorism affirm that the ‘Armed Islamic Group’ is ‘the most radical of the insurgent groups’¹¹ while its yearly reports on human rights practices in Algeria assert the GIA is a ‘terrorist armed Islamic group.’¹² The French authorities hold the same tenets except that, in their statements, they further qualify it with attributes such as ‘barbarian’, ‘savage’, ‘religious’ and ‘criminal’.¹³ In the Council of Europe the GIA is spoken of as ‘Islamists stemming from the FIS’ who ‘turned towards violent terrorism.’¹⁴ The Arab League refers to it as an organisation of ‘terrorists’ and ‘Islamic extremists’ or ‘deviants’ and so do, for instance, the regimes of Egypt, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁵

These official pronouncements are broadcast as true beliefs internationally. *Reuters* dispatches regularly refer to the GIA as ‘the most violent guerrilla movement’, ‘Muslim rebels’ or ‘Muslim guerrillas’.¹⁶ *Agence France Presse* bulletins recurrently dub it as either ‘armed Moslem fundamentalists’ or ‘the most radical of the fundamentalist groups.’¹⁷ The *Associated Press* hammers in much the same belief: the GIA is ‘a radical insurgency organisation’ and ‘the insurgency’s most violent movement’, which ‘seeks to destabilise the military-backed government’ and ‘establish a new government based on a strict interpretation of Quranic law.’¹⁸ Retailers of the products of the news agencies, for example ABC News, broadcast views on the GIA such as:

The GIA’s proclaimed goal is the overthrow of the current military-backed government and establishment of an Islamic state based on Islamic law. The group’s philosophy is radically anti-governmental, anti-intellectual, anti-secularist and anti-West policies, and is blamed for much of the slaughter during the past five years.¹⁹

These beliefs have been canonised by a number of ‘experts’ on terrorism in general, and Islamic movements, violence or terrorism in particular, in TV and press interviews, articles and books. In France, Gilles Kepel, Xavier Raufer, Rémy Leveau, Séverine Labat, Roland Jacquard, and André Glucksmann have been particularly active in validating the claims of the military regime. Kepel, for instance, says the ‘GIA movement embodies a radical Islamist sensibility, which drives the contradictions arising within the world Islamist movement to their fiercest.’²⁰ Xavier Raufer, from the French MI-

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NOS think-tank, a regular presence on French and Swiss televisions and Algerian press, restates ceaselessly that the GIA is a ‘fundamentalist terrorist’ organisation, with increasing international links in ‘Tunisia, Morocco, France, England, Bosnia, Syria and Afghanistan’, that ‘applies the same strategy as that of the Shining Path [guerrillas] in Peru ten years ago.’²¹ In the US, ‘terrorism expert’ Phillips propagates similar beliefs about the GIA, which, he claims, is ‘one of the most ruthless and violent Islamic revolutionary organisations in the world.’²² In Israel, Maddy-Weitzman sanctions the same views. This ‘expert’ says the GIA is ‘an Islamist coalition’ of ‘armed networks’ whose ‘approach may be said to constitute an Islamic version of Frantz Fanon’s teachings on the cleansing, purifying properties of violence or, alternatively, of the Khmer Rouge’s vision of how to build a new society.’²³ Impagleazzo, an Italian ‘expert’ on Algeria, echoes analogous claims, i.e. the GIA is made up of

Gangs of adolescents, and disaffected government supporters. They are the armed bands of the desperate, who have adopted the destructive psychopathic radicalism of Pol-Pot – destruction at all cost.²⁴

However widespread and ‘expert’-sanctioned these beliefs may be, they do have their sceptics. In *Le Monde Libertaire*, Ait-Hanlouta wrote:

For us journalists, at the beginning of the conflict, it was clear that the Islamists were the perpetrators of abominable assassinations, killing innocent people, young school girls with scarves, etc. But *le petit-peuple* [the lower classes or ordinary people] were saying loudly that the *Sécurité Militaire* was behind the attacks attributed to the Islamists. For us, it was typical of *le petit-peuple* loving rumours, doubting the official account. But as the attacks went on, doubt entrenched itself and spread to an increasing number of people. The official accounts were becoming more and more implausible: judicial investigations were never opened. The course of events was confirming daily *le petit-peuple*’s rumour that the army organised counter-*maquis* and set up the GIA, the aim being to discredit the Islamists by sending faxes claiming responsibility for killing journalists, intellectuals, foreigners, etc. It was about presenting them as bloodthirsty fanatics and extremist criminals, rapists fearing neither God nor man. This propaganda was effective in France as it resonated with the myth of the Arab slaughterer. Most Algerian journalists knew the GIA emanated from the security services attached to the ministry of defence but they could not write it.²⁵

Ait-Hanlouta goes on to say that ‘some journalist colleagues remain convinced that figures such as Djamal Zitouni and Antar Zouabri are fictitious and have never existed. [...] This hoax has only been made possible by the press censorship whose purpose has been to make the existence of the GIA seem plausible.’²⁶

An Armed insurgent groups, the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (AIS), describes the GIA as ‘pawns manipulated’ by ‘eradicators of the military’²⁷ while the *Ligue Islamique de La Dawa et du Djihad* (LIDD) maintains the GIA is a ‘Kha-

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ridjite group' and 'a secret apparatus of the junta' used to 'project Islam as a religion of blood and violence and Muslims as bloodthirsty people.'²⁸

For Francois Gèze, the GIA does not have 'a centralised politico-military leadership', and thus, the issue is 'whether its groups are a simple creation of the *Sécurité Militaire* or only manipulated.'²⁹ According to François Burgat various components act under the GIA flag: 'Afghan war veterans', 'common law criminals', and '*provocateurs*' consisting of 'groups that are manipulated or directly made up of government recruits or military agents.'³⁰ Burgat believes:

These *provocateurs* are left or ordered to commit atrocities against the civilian population – under the guise of armed insurgents – with the aim of discrediting the Islamists and exacerbating divisions among them. The presence of an extremist component within the Islamists provides an easy cover under which the regime revels.³¹

Commenting on the nature of the GIA, Human Rights Watch declared:

The GIA, a group or groups with a record of brutal attacks on security personnel and terror attacks on civilians, had no visible political structure that commented authoritatively on its program or actions. Increasingly extreme edicts were issued in its name, which authorities permitted to be published in the press despite a strict censorship regime that encompassed statements by FIS leaders. Since the killing in 1994 and 1995 of the GIA's original leaders, mass killings increasingly became part of atrocities attributed to it.

Doubts that all of the killings attributed to the GIA were the responsibility of a single organisation acting alone were fueled by the posture of the security forces towards the perpetrators in 1997 and 1998 and by a series of statements by former security officials claiming Algeria's military intelligence apparatus, the *Securite Militaire*, had both deployed forces masquerading as Islamists and manipulated GIA groups through infiltration.³²

Clearly then, although the belief that the GIA is an Islamist insurgent group is widely accepted as authoritative or true, it is not incontrovertible. This belief will be shown to be actually false.

3. A Brief History of the GIA

To say the GIA is 'A' or 'B' means the social entity labelled GIA is 'the same as A' or 'the same as B', i.e. it instantiates all the properties of 'A' or 'B'. This is a process of identification.

One of the basic failures of the claims made about the identity of the GIA is that they implicitly take for granted that what they posit as constituting the identity of the GIA persists over time. This excludes construing the identity of the GIA as time-dependent. But even a cursory look at the his-

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tory of the GIA points to an evolving entity with stages of drastic changes in its social content.

One might model the social evolution of the GIA by five stages:

- a) *Nucleation*, from January to October 1992;
- b) *Growth*, from October 1992 to September 1994;
- c) *Inversion*, from September 1994 to November 1995;
- d) *Disintegration*, from November 1995 to early 1996;
- e) *Atrophy*, 1996 to date.

The military coup of 11 January 1992 prompted the spontaneous appearance of an increasing number of little armed cells throughout the national territory. For instance, in the West, there was the Saad group in Sidi Bel-Abbes, in the East, Aazi El Jemai-led groups in Bousaada and Msila while Arezki Ait-Ziane and Munir Brahim set up cells in Boumerdes and Tizi Ouzou.³³ In the central regions of Medea and Ksar El Boukhari Sayah Attiya and Ali Benhejar did the same.³⁴

However the groups that were to become the nucleus of the GIA were operating in Algiers, the theatre of operations of armed groups of different tendencies. Two groups are thought to be the core that grew into the GIA: 1) the group led by Mansour Meliani and 2) the cells commanded by Mohamed Allal (alias Moh Leveilly).³⁵

Meliani is reported to be the first to have used the denotation 'Armed Islamic Group' for the cells of Afghan war veterans over which he took command in January 1992.³⁶ Meliani was a veteran of the group of Mustapha Bouyali who had attempted to organise an armed rebellion in the 1980s. Bouyali was killed in 1987, and aids such as Meliani, Abdelkader Chebouti, and Azzedine Baa were arrested. They were released in 1990 by a presidential amnesty and, following the January 1992 military coup, became active organisers of the armed insurgency. Meliani broke away from Chebouti who was closer to the FIS and had refused to lead the Afghan war veterans; the Afghans had opposed the commitment to electoral politics of the FIS since its creation.³⁷ This group attacked the barracks of the Admiralty in Algiers in February 1992. Large scale arrests within the group on the eve of the attack have been read as indicating deep infiltration of this group.³⁸ Meliani was arrested in July 92 and the leadership of this group passed onto his deputy, Mohamed El-Oued, himself later captured in October 1992.³⁹

The second group has been associated with the leadership of Mohamed Allal. This group was made up of small cells of radical youths with no military or political experience, in the district of Algiers. Mohamed Allal was killed in September 1992; his deputy, Abdelhak Layada (alias Abu Adlan), a panel beater, took over.⁴⁰

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These two groups fused together in October 1992 and formed the nucleus of what was to become the GIA. Prior to this fusion, there had been a meeting on 1 September 1992 in Tamesguida, in the district of Medea, at which representatives of cells and groups emerging nationally had agreed to co-ordinate the armed insurgency under Abdelkader Chebouti, as national military commander, and Kacem Tajouri, as co-ordinator with the political leadership of the FIS.⁴¹ The meeting was reportedly attacked by the security forces and Mohamed Allal was killed in the fighting. Layada, his deputy, took over and refused to honour the pledge of allegiance to Chebouti, uniting instead with the group of Afghan war veterans led by El-Oued.⁴² Reports say the agreement was that El-Oued would lead the joint-force but he was arrested just after the agreement, in October 1992, and Layada became the leader of the GIA.⁴³

The second stage in the social evolution of the GIA is that of expansion. The leadership of Layada lasted till July 1993 and was marked by the use of the name 'GIA' in its publications (*Esha-bada*), fatwas to kill journalists and intellectuals, and verbal attacks on FIS leaders.⁴⁴ Attacks on high visibility targets increased and anti-FIS pronouncements became vociferous especially after the March 1993 meeting in which the other armed insurgent organisations, such as the *Mouvement d'Etat Islamique* (MEI), agreed to unite and co-ordinate with the FIS.⁴⁵ Layada was arrested in July 93, leaving the leadership of the GIA in the hands of his second deputy, Aissa Ben Ammar.⁴⁶ His tenure lasted only a few weeks. He was killed in August 93 and Sid Ahmed Mourad (alias Djaafar el Afghani) took over.⁴⁷ Mourad's leadership was marked by the initiation of attacks on foreign nationals (one week after the FIS set up its first foreign representation in Germany on 14 September 1993), further attacks on journalists, the proliferation of communiqués asserting the GIA's independence and distinct identity from FIS, and threats to kill FIS leaders (Abbassi Madani, Ali Belhadj, Mohamed Said, Abderezzak Redjam) along with MEI leader Said Makhloufi.⁴⁸ This gave the GIA an increasingly important projection of power on the insurgent scene, despite suspicions that it was infiltrated. The suspicions grew due to the short tenures of its leaders, its claims of responsibility for assassinations widely believed to be the work of the *Direction du Renseignement et de la Sécurité* (DRS), e.g. that of Kasdi Merbah, its operations defaming the whole Islamic movement, and its attacks on FIS.⁴⁹

In February 1994, both Mourad and the deputy leader, Sayah Attiya, were killed.⁵⁰ Cherif Gousmi (alias Abu Abdallah Ahmed) took over the leadership of the GIA.⁵¹ In March 1994 a large number of prisoners escaped during a massive break out from the Tazoult prison; a significant number of them joined the GIA. In May 1994 the GIA reached its apex of strength as a large number of insurgent groups agreed to unite under its umbrella. This took place on 13 May 1994, in the mountains south of Algiers. A number of

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insurgent groups agreed to unite under the GIA, which at the time appeared as the most visible and active insurgent force: GIA groups, the MEI led by Said Mekhloufi (a group said to be of *salafi* ideological orientation with a professional guerrilla experience rooted in the Algerian war of liberation), the *Front Islamique du Djihad Armé* (FIDA), an urban guerrilla force of the Algerianist tendency, various other independent groups from mainly central districts of the country, and some FIS political leaders, such as Mohamed Said and Abderezzak Redjam.⁵² In July 1994 the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (AIS) announced its creation.⁵³ This force comprised insurgent groups concentrated mainly in the West and East of Algeria. They had been active, either independently or under the *Mouvement Islamique Armé* (MIA) since 1992, having refused to join the GIA earlier in May, agreeing instead to unite with, and act as the military wing of, the FIS in response to the threat posed by the GIA to the political future of the FIS.⁵⁴ The GIA leader, Gousmi, was killed on 26 September 1994 as negotiations between the FIS leaders and the government were reportedly making good progress.⁵⁵

This marks the beginning of the third stage in the social evolution of the GIA: inversion. Whereas since 1992 the membership of this force grew steadily, the reverse process set in after the demise of Gousmi. His deputy, Mahfoud Tadjine (alias Mahfoud Abu Khalil), took over the leadership having been endorsed by the *majlis shura* (consultative council) of the force only to be ousted a few days later through a coup led by Djamel Zitouni (alias Abu Abdurrahman Amin), Antar Zouabri, Adlan and Bukabus. Zitouni became the *de facto* leader of the GIA.⁵⁶ In October and December 1994 Zitouni consolidated his power and launched purges against guerrilla commanders of the Algerianist tendency, the ousted leader being the first of them.⁵⁷ In January 1995 the GIA started a campaign of bombings leaving a large number of civilians dead. In March 1995 Zitouni issued a fatwa for killing all armed groups refusing to join the GIA: attacks on the AIS started.⁵⁸ In May 1995 Zitouni issued a fatwa for killing FIS representatives abroad if they did not stop speaking in the name of the struggle within 6 months (Abdelbaki Sahraoui, Anwar Hadam, Abdellah Anas, Rabah Kebir, etc.).⁵⁹ In July 1995 the GIA claimed responsibility for killing Abdelbaki Sahraoui in a Paris mosque and for a wave of bombings in the French capital.⁶⁰ In Algeria, the GIA killed two nationally prominent guerrilla commanders: Azzedine Baa, who had been leading an independent group in the district of Blida implacably denouncing the 'anti-islamic practices' and 'infiltrated' nature of the GIA, and Abdelnacer Titraoui, from the GIA.⁶¹ From September 1995 till November 1995, Zitouni oversaw the killings of tens of the most able GIA guerrilla commanders and political officers, most of whom were reported from the Algerianist tendency or former MEI fighters.⁶² FIS leaders Mohamed Said and Abderezzak Redjam were among the casualties. The presidential elections were held in November 1995.

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November 1995 demarcates the beginning of the fourth stage in the social evolution of the GIA. As the news of the assassination of the FIS leaders who had defected to the GIA in May 1994 spread, a process of disintegration started in November 1995. Tens of cells, sections, companies and whole groups issued communiqués denouncing the ‘take over of the GIA by the *mukhabarat*’ (DRS) and the ‘anti-Islamic beliefs and practices’ of the GIA.⁶³ Strictly speaking this process had in fact been initiated in August 1994, a month in which the GIA attacked the French embassy, announced the set up of a ‘caliphate’ and started burning down schools. This was the month in which Saïd Mekhloufi and his group left the GIA over its ‘reprehensible acts’.⁶⁴ But the break up and disbanding of the GIA accelerated irreversibly only after Zitouni’s large scale purges within the GIA became public. The process was almost complete by the beginning of spring 1996. The break away groups later reconstituted themselves under their earlier form (e.g. FIDA), or into new groupings^A or else remained independent^B; all these groups were to join subsequently the unilateral truce declared by the AIS in September 1997.⁶⁵

After the disintegration, the fifth stage of the GIA’s evolution, the atrophy of the GIA, began. It had shrank to a few groups operating mainly in pockets in Medea, the Mitidja, Boumerdes and Dellys. Zitouni was killed on 16 July 1996 in Medea, some say by FIDA commandos while others think by the DRS.⁶⁶ Two days later Antar Zouabri, a faithful aid of Zitouni, took over the GIA remnant.⁶⁷ In September 1996, Hassan Hattab in charge of the GIA groups in Boumerdes and Dellys broke away from Zouabri’s GIA.⁶⁸ Zouabri issued a fatwa against the constitutional referendum in November 1996, and claimed responsibility for massacres in January, March and June 1997. The Algerian press said Zouabri was killed in July 1997 but in October 1997 general Fodhil Cherif declared he was still alive.⁶⁹ No basic change has been reported up to this time of writing.

Given all these developments, it is clear that the constituents of the social entity labelled ‘GIA’ in 1992 were not the same as those in 1994, which, in turn, were different from its constituents in 1995 or 1997. It follows that any careful identification of the GIA cannot but take into account its time-dependence.

When we argue, in the next section, that the identity of the GIA is that of a counter-guerrilla organisation, the claim is restricted to the period from September 1994 to this day.

^A For instance, the *Mouvement Islamique pour la Dawa et le Djihad* (MIDD), led by Mustapha Kertali, set up on 21 July 1996, or the *Ligue Islamique pour la Dawa et le Djihad* (LIDD), led by Ali Benhejar, and created on 5 February 1997.

^B For example, the *Katibat Er-rabanniya* (The godly company), in the Louh mountain, led by Abdelkader Souane, or the *Katibat Es-sahara* (The company of the Sahara), in the Ghardaïa district, led by Bouaine.

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4. The GIA is a Counter-Guerrilla Force

The argument that the GIA is a counter-guerrilla organisation is presented in three steps.

First, some general features and examples of counter-guerrillas are discussed to introduce key notions and suggest that the thesis is *a priori* possible (sections 4.1 and 4.2). Next, section 4.3 justifies this view by showing that the GIA matches the institutional attributes of counter-guerrilla organisations. In the third step the focus is on the functional identity of the GIA, as section 4.4 argues that GIA actions are underlain by a strategic logic that corresponds to the prescriptions of counter-insurgency military doctrine.

Section 4.5 will summarise and evaluate these arguments.

4.1 Background on Counter-Guerrilla Forces

A counter-guerrilla organisation is an irregular force, disguised and posing as a guerrilla force, whose function is to combat the real guerrilla force. It is a well established though, for obvious reasons, not widely known tactical instrument that many counter-insurgency (COIN) managers have used to pursue the strategic objectives of various modern COIN campaigns. The rationale behind the use of false guerrillas to combat genuine guerrillas is the principle that the latter should be fought with their own methods, ‘carrying the revolutionary war into the enemy camp.’⁷⁰ As one recent analyst of counter-insurgency doctrine put it, within the counter-insurgency conceptual framework,

Insurgencies were seen to be most vulnerable not to conventional police work or military tactics but to a mirror image of guerrilla tactics and organisation. Insurgencies were to be countered using the same tactics a partisan force might employ to harry and defeat a foreign invader. Guerrilla organisation would be broken down and defeated by the creation of a counter-organisation of paramilitary irregulars. These would include both a counterparts to elite guerrilla cadres [...] and to the common or garden variety of guerrilla militia, to be provided by civilian irregulars recruited in accord with political, economic, ethnic, religious or other criteria. And the advantages of no-holds-barred guerrilla tactics would be cancelled out when the same tactics were employed by the counterinsurgent.⁷¹

A counter-guerrilla organisation as mirror image of the genuine guerrilla may comprise, amongst others, members of various ‘security’ forces, surrendered or captured guerrillas ‘turned’ by the former, in addition to members or groups that are dissident from, or in conflict with, the main guerrilla organisation. Organisationally and conceptually, a counter-guerrilla organisa-

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tion should be clearly distinguished from paramilitary militias, though both may operate in covert co-ordination to achieve COIN objectives. Also, although a counter-guerrilla force is controlled ultimately by the intelligence body to which the security agents within it are attached, it needs to and does retain some degree of independence in order to be operationally effective.

This pseudo-insurgent force, operating covertly among the guerrillas' personnel and within guerrilla-controlled territory, is used to perform a wide variety of intelligence, subversive, offensive tasks and 'special operations' with the aim of discrediting, isolating, fragmenting and ultimately destroying the genuine guerrillas. Its activities include: infiltrating and gathering intelligence (especially in the initial stages of the insurgency), disrupting and sowing distrust within and between genuine guerrilla organisations, sowing distrust between any genuine guerrilla organisation and the local population to deprive the former of the latter's support, observing guerrillas and guiding regular COIN forces to attack them, or itself independently carrying out aggressive hunter-killer tasks as well as other kinds of 'special operations' (assassinations, sabotage, kidnappings, selective or indiscriminate mass-terror etc.). Of course, the specific compositions and functions of counter-guerrilla organisations vary with the context of their operations and the nature of the strategic goals and phases (of the war) involved.

(1) The use of counter-guerrillas was introduced and developed by European colonial powers in their attempts to defeat armed decolonisation movements in Africa and Asia. For example, the French used counter-guerrillas in Indochina and Algeria. In Indochina, the *Groupement Mixte d'Intervention* (GMI), originally known as *Groupement de Commandos Mixtes Aéroportés* (GCMA), which comprised teams of native tribesmen organised and led by French agents, operated behind Viet-minh revolutionary lines and carried out various subversive and aggressive tasks against them.⁷² In Algeria, the French also used pseudo-insurgent instruments such as the Force K, the 'National Army of the Algerian People' ostensibly under the command of 'Brigadier General Bellounis' but actually commanded by General Parlange, and the 600-member counter-guerrilla force under 'Colonel Si Cherif' in fact led by the SAS (*Service d'Actions Spéciales*).⁷³ In the 1955-1960 war in Kenya, the British Special Branch made a reportedly successful use of a pseudo-revolutionary force, the counter-Mau-Mau, made up of former Mau-Mau independentist guerrillas but actually commanded by Europeans under the leadership of Kitson.⁷⁴ In the 1964-1974 independence war in Mozambique, the Portugese also used various counter-guerrilla groups such as the *Commandos Africanos* led by Spínola and the *Flechas* (Arrows) intelligence-gathering units commanded by Portugese intelligence, both of which included a high proportion of 'turned' Mozambiquan guerrillas.⁷⁵ In the 1972-1979 liberation war in former Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe),

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the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation made a deadly successful use of a pseudo-revolutionary force known as the Selous Scouts.⁷⁶

Western specialised military schools have built upon these colonial war experiences and, through the training of the military personnel of many non-Western countries in these schools, have spread COIN doctrines and war programs in many parts of the world. The 'special' warfare military schools operate

- 1) to help client regimes destroy popular organisations and insurgencies;
- 2) to help proxy subversive forces destabilise insubmissive sovereign states;

The former is justified as 'preserving democracy', the latter as 'facilitating democracy'.⁷⁷

For example, one such specialised military school in the US, the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, at Fort Bragg (North Carolina), trains foreign military personnel in

- 1) how to combat guerrillas and prevent them from succeeding (Counter-insurgency course);
- 2) how to help defeat an enemy by developing and fielding one's own guerrilla forces (unconventional warfare course).

McClintock says that the mission of the center is

To develop, organise, equip, train and direct indigenous military and paramilitary forces [...] with particular attention to subversion, other underground/auxiliary activities and guerrilla tactics

and that it

provides orientation on the basic organisation of Special Forces operation on the tactics and techniques of guerrilla force organisation, development, operations, and demobilization; psychological operations; guerrilla and counter-guerrilla practical exercises.⁷⁸

During the 70s and 80s, the use of pseudo-revolutionaries and counter-guerrillas became increasingly sophisticated – for instance in Angola⁷⁹, Nicaragua⁸⁰, Turkey⁸¹, Spain⁸² and Northern Ireland⁸³. COIN doctrine and practice continues to be applied in many parts of Africa, under the management of French-trained officers, French COIN personnel^A or that of mercenaries

^A France deploys many of its counter-insurgency-trained troops, notably the French Foreign Legion, the RPIMA's parachute regiments (eg. 2e REP and 9e RPC in Toulouse) and some naval infantry units in its former colonies. The training of counter-insurgency forces of client dictators and juntas is done locally by some of these troops but some training is also conducted in France in the bases of these counter-insurgency forces.

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with experience in COIN warfare who – for their own profits and those of big multinational corporations – prop up various dictators and military juntas.⁸⁴ The same is true of many parts of Central America⁸⁵. McClintock says that, to this day, counter-guerrilla organisations of various kinds ‘remain at the heart of counter-insurgency systems in El-Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru and the Philippines in perfect accord with long-standing United States military doctrine.’⁸⁶ In the Muslim world, countries known to have American, British and/or French trained COIN forces include Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi-Arabia, Senegal, Tunisia and Turkey.⁸⁷

(2) The ways in which counter-guerrilla forces operate have evolved and diversified continuously since the 50s so that it is hard to pin down a prototype model or standard operational procedures. However, some general features are worth pointing out.

The credibility and consequent acceptance by both the local population and genuine insurgents of the counter-guerrillas is a pre-requisite for their operational success. The deception process by which the counter-guerrillas acquire acceptance is called ‘validification’.⁸⁸ ‘Validification’ procedures, that is to say the deception methods used by pseudo-guerrillas to infiltrate and establish themselves as genuine insurgents, depend on detailed operational intelligence to avoid arousing suspicion, and are variously adapted to the nature of the areas (rural or urban) involved and other specific circumstances. Detailed operational intelligence often enables the pseudo-insurgent to establish contact with the local people and the contact(s) or agent(s) of the insurgents among them. The latter are used to arrange meetings with the insurgent forces in the area. These meetings constitute the last stage in establishing the pseudo-insurgents’ ‘credentials’. The ‘validification’ can also involve other, more cunning procedures. For example, in order to prove themselves as true insurgents, the Selous Scouts in Rhodesia were sometimes required to call in air strikes on, or close to, their own positions. They subjected themselves to mock ambushes; they themselves attacked selected regular army units or struck at selected civilians – e.g. those recognised as enemies or traitor-informers (‘sell-outs’) by the local population or the insurgents – to avoid arousing suspicion. Ultimately the success of the ‘validification’ procedures is said to depend crucially on the ability of the pseudo-insurgents to simulate the genuine insurgents down to the smallest details. This is achieved by intensive, careful training, whereby selected members of the security forces learn the habits and modus operandi of the insurgents down to the tiniest minutiae, but also by inducting politically illiterate or na-

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ive insurgents^B as well as surrendered or captured guerrillas who have been 'turned'.

The technique of 'turning' is important because the 'turned' guerrilla makes the best replica of the genuine guerrilla. There are various accounts of the process of 'turning' or converting guerrillas into their opposites. For instance, for the counter-Mau Mau in Kenya, Paget says:

it had been found that the loyalty of most Mau-Mau (revolutionaries) tended to be directed towards an individual leader rather than a cause. Therefore they were often perfectly willing when captured to 'turn their coat' and to operate under European leadership against their former comrades in arms.⁸⁹

Beckett reports that 'guerrillas may be tempted by offers of reward, amnesty and, as a symbol of government trust, may even be recruited into special units and sent back into remote and inaccessible areas to hunt down their erstwhile colleagues.'⁹⁰ In Mozambique, Beckett reports:

Arriaga (a counter-insurgency officer) claimed 90% success rate in persuading captured guerrillas to turn against their former colleagues, by payment of cash rewards for weapons and the widespread distribution of surrender leaflets [...] Spinola (another counter-insurgency officer) even made the point of evacuating wounded guerrillas to hospital before his men (to subsequently convert them).⁹¹

As for actual details of the psychological process involved, Newsinger writes of the Mau Mau:

How then were Mau Mau prisoners 'turned', how were they recruited into the counter-gangs and persuaded to help hunt down their former comrades? Taming, as Kitson called it, involved three stages. First the prisoner would be treated harshly, kept chained and poorly fed to 'make him realise he was not such a wonderful hero as he supposed'. This stage was, at least nominally, non-violent. Then, when his self-esteem had been sufficiently demolished, it would be rebuilt on Kitson's terms. The prisoner would be unchained and employed doing routine menial jobs around the camp, gradually integrated into the unit. If this worked out, the last stage saw him sleeping with the others, doing guard duty and going out on patrol. [...] The consequences of failing to co-operate led to 'the alternative of a death sentence.'⁹²

In the more recent war in Rhodesia, Ellert describes a much shorter process of conversion whereby a surrendered or captured guerrilla was knocked

^B The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in South Africa investigating various kinds of terror acts perpetrated during the apartheid era, found that the apartheid regime set up counter-revolutionary groups, such as the African Armed Resistance (based in Transkei), to fight against the ANC. It founded many training centres, such as a farm called Vlakplaas, in which politically naive trainees learnt to kill, murder and infiltrate anti-apartheid groups. Graduates of these training schools also committed various acts of terror so that people began to see African groups wanting freedom as bloodthirsty and violent, and equate blind violence with anti-apartheid. The Commission found that the trainees in such centres were people wanting to join freedom movements but who actually joined these counter-guerrilla groups and committed acts of terror in the name of anti-apartheid without realising that the state was directing their actions.

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down and rebuilt as his opposite. The development of shorter-time 'turning' methods aims at reducing the time-span between capture of the insurgents and their redeployment as pseudo-insurgents in the same area, so as to overtake the companions of the captured insurgents warning fellow insurgents and the local population. He states that

The technique of 'turning' or inducing a captured guerrilla to co-operate with the Selous Scouts (the pseudo-insurgent force) was achieved in many ways. Firstly he was made aware of the hopelessness of his own situation – death was the only alternative. Secondly he was put together with other 'captures' some of whom he would recognize from other training camps [...] They would explain the many benefits of working with the Selous Scouts – these included a standard kill-bonus of \$1000. Thirdly, the African members of the Selous Scouts subjected the prospective recruit to a crash course in political re-orientation. The 'turning' process was often achieved within twenty-four hours and many successful kills were recorded when a Selous Scouts unit moved into a village using the recent capture to authenticate them and request a guide to the nearest resident group.⁹³

Cilliers believes that the susceptibility to conversion of captured guerrillas depends on the strength of their ideological commitment to the cause of liberation. He claims that

research has substantiated that there is a willingness among captured insurgent personnel to change sides in the traumatic post-contact and initial period of capture. Should a captured insurgent not be presented with obvious means of escape and be physically involved in counter-insurgency operations on the side of government forces he, in effect, becomes committed to the latter cause.⁹⁴

In any case, whatever the 'turning' techniques used, the managers of pseudo-insurgents operations deem it necessary to have a constant supply of fresh 'turned' guerrillas so as to remain up to date with the guerrilla's internal security measures. This is also needed to update 'validation' procedures because, with time, genuine guerrillas and local populations learn to discriminate between genuine and pseudo-insurgents and may evolve complex anti-'validation' recognition-codes.

Past the stage of 'validation' and acceptance by the local population and genuine insurgents, and supplied with rules of operational co-ordination between the pseudo-insurgent team and regular army or police units in order to minimise the chances of possible clashes between them and to perform joint operations if any, the counter-guerrilla force is ready to execute a wide variety of anti-insurgent tasks.

The most obvious and continuous task is gathering intelligence from meetings with the local population and/or insurgents and/or their contacts and networks between them: in sum, 'identifying the enemy.' The information is then passed on to conventional units of the counter-insurgency forces for 'action'. Other forms of intelligence-gathering involve reconnaissance

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missions to determine physically the exact locations of bases, or of specific installations in such bases. According to Cillier, 'the majority of insurgent casualties inside Rhodesia were the direct result of intelligence obtained during pseudo operations.'⁹⁵

But pseudo-insurgent tasks are not restricted to intelligence gathering or combat tracking. For the strategic objective of demobilising the people and severing their support for the insurgents, infiltrated pseudo-guerrillas may carry out a variety of tasks aimed to create distrust between the local population and insurgent forces. Cillier says that

Such actions could include acts of indiscretion towards property, women and cattle, or local customs and tribal beliefs.⁹⁶

Psychologically preparing the people to reject or demonstrate hostility towards, or disinterest in, the guerrillas, is also achieved through the counter-guerrillas calling in police or regular army units or air strikes

On the insurgent group after they had left a specific village or place. After two or three such occurrences the insurgents invariably suspected the population of informing government forces of their presence. In revenge, and to forestall any repetition, innocent members of the village or place were executed. This would normally put an end to any voluntary support that the insurgents could expect from the population. [...] A second method used relatively widely once an insurgent contact man had been identified, was for a pseudo team to eliminate him publicly after labelling him a traitor to the insurgent cause. Since the rest of the population and insurgents knew the contact man to be a loyal and staunch insurgent supporter, such a death would lead to considerable disillusionment and bewilderment.⁹⁷

Another equally important subversive task is 'to create a focus of chronic internal and external conflict within the enemy camp.'⁹⁸ To create dissension within the insurgent force, or between competing insurgent organisations, the counter-guerrillas look for actual and potential frictions, lines of conflict (sectarian, ethnic, ideological, political etc.) and operate to magnify and exacerbate the tensions whenever possible into open armed hostility. For example, in the Rhodesian-Zimbabwean war, two competing nationalist insurgent armed forces, the ZANLA (Zimbabwean African National Liberation Army) and the ZPRA (Zimbabwean Peoples Revolutionary Army), were often incited to fight each other by counter-guerrilla operations. About these activities, Cillier writes that

A major success that did result from these operations was the mutual suspicion and distrust between insurgent forces in the field. Contact between such groups was increasingly preceded by lengthy exchanges of oral and written messages and co-ordination of forces for a single operation presented acute problems. This was even more so in those areas where both ZANLA and ZPRA forces were operating. Within ZANLA, groups frequently attacked one another. To increase this breach even further, pseudo ZANLA teams began attacking ZPRA insurgents, thus ensur-

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ing that the next encounter between ZANLA and ZPRA would turn into an armed clash. During the period between 1976 and 1978 when ZANLA attempted to encroach on Matabeleland, the success of this method was such that a captured ZANLA commander confessed to having been shocked by the fact that his first eight contacts were with ZPRA forces. He was captured by security forces in the ninth.⁹⁹

In addition to these two kinds of subversive actions, pseudo-guerrilla operations can also involve more offensive tasks, such as 'hunter-killer' activities, luring guerrillas into traps and ambushes -- such actions being often supported by paying substantial bonuses for insurgent casualties.

A diverse set of actions called 'special operations' may include, for instance, 'hostage-taking, random killing and maiming, sabotage, capture and killing.'¹⁰⁰ Special operations involving bombings and mass killings of the civilian population obey an age-old terror principle, which the Document on Terror describes as follows:

First, the entire population must be subjected to terror in order to establish the conditions for the destruction of one part of the population. Second, whoever is not in the ranks of the terrorists is either an actual or a potential opponent, or creates favorable conditions for the opponent by his passive attitude. The former must be destroyed, the latter must be terrorized. Third, if it is probable that a certain group contains one single enemy who cannot be identified, the entire group must be wiped out to make sure he is destroyed.¹⁰¹

Lawrence Bailey, an ex-US marine employed as a mercenary in El Salvador, describes this kind of terror operations:

there is a striking difference between news reports of the El Salvador war and what actually takes place in the field. The difference is the target of attack. 'The army is not killing communist guerrillas, despite what is reported,' he said. 'It is murdering the civilians who side with them. It is a beautiful technique,' Lawrence Bailey said. 'By terrorising civilians, the army is crushing the rebellion without the need to directly confront the guerrillas,' he said. Bailey contends that the massacres of civilians are not scattered human rights abuses in an otherwise traditional war. 'Attacking the civilians is the game plan,' he said. From the talks he has had with others in his political camp in El Salvador, and from what he has seen in the field, the strategy is clear. 'Kill the sympathizers, and you win the war.' 'The murders,' he concluded, 'are not a peripheral matter to be cleaned up while the war continues, but rather, the essential strategy.'¹⁰²

The arsenal of 'special operations' also comprises 'political operations'^C – political take-overs or manipulations through infiltrated agents, abductions

^C As an illustration, one may cite Kitson's prescription for counter-guerrilla political operations in Northern Ireland: 'set up pseudo-gangs (both Loyalist and Republican), to be involved in infiltration of diverse groups, manipulating loyalist gangs and orchestrating a campaign of assassinations that would terrorise the population; (mainly through SAS and other special units) wage a massive psychological war to discredit the IRA and, in the short term try and split them along Left/Right,

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or assassinations of adversary elite (individuals or groups) etc. – ‘psychological operations’, counter-propaganda, special disinformation and so on.

(3) Finally, from the scattered literature on the overall effectiveness of counter-guerrillas, it seems that, as a military instrument, the tactic can be a ‘most effective means of effecting insurgent casualties.’ Even if one allows for the over-glamorised gloss on some of the ‘success stories’, evidence of effective military use of counter-guerrilla exists and is compelling. Of course, not much literature is available to document cases of effective destruction of counter-guerrilla units. As a purely military instrument in the COIN campaign, the effectiveness of pseudo-insurgent operations is mixed and variable. But they have limited meaningful impact on the overall outcomes of wars. They often prove to be counter-productive in the long term, especially where their use is extensive and the incumbent regime has no political legitimacy. The moral, psychological and political implications of the local population, the insurgents and world opinion becoming aware of ‘security’ forces posing as insurgents and committing atrocities are highly damaging. This also undermines the regime's claim to legitimacy as enforcer of the law. Often, as the COIN campaign advances, the counter-guerrillas become intoxicated with their absolute power over life and death, distrustful and run out of control. They tend to lose sight of the purpose of the war and pursue increasingly aggressive and punitive strategies against the people to deter them from supporting the insurgent cause, hence further alienating them and channelling their discontent against political institutions.

4.2 Examples of Counter-Guerrilla Forces

Force K, during the Algerian liberation war (1954-1962), and the Selous Scouts, in the Rhodesian war (1972-1979), will now be discussed in some detail. The history of both these units is relevant to the ongoing conflict because it is part of the COIN tradition and experience of the current managers and advisers of Algeria's military.

The most influential generals of the army are former officers in the French army.^D They led the military coup of January 1992 and constitute the hard core of the self-styled ‘eradicator’ faction of the military. They are committed, as soldiers, to French military and security doctrines, strategies and tactics.¹⁰³ Further, the French army and intelligence services are directly involved in the counter-insurgency campaign.¹⁰⁴ In 1994, France despatched about fifty military advisors to advise and staff its Algerian trainees.¹⁰⁵

Doves/Hawks, North/South, and military/political axes.’ See R. Faligot, *Britain's Military Strategy in Ireland: The Kitson Experiment*, Zed Press, London 1983, p. 20.

^D They include Mohamed Lamari, Mohamed Mediene, Abdelhamid Djouadi, Mohamed Touati, Khaled Nezzar, Smain Lamari and Larbi Belhair.

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France has numerous personnel trained in COIN warfare, a substantial number of whom are deployed in its former colonies including Algeria. These include, in addition to the Foreign Legion and some naval infantry units, the RPIMA parachute regiments specialised in COIN operations overseas. In the summer of 1995, about 1500 members of these special paratroopers units were despatched.¹⁰⁶ For mobile counter-guerrilla warfare, France has provided its Algerian trainees with special anti-guerrilla helicopters, some of which are equipped with night-vision equipment, as well as the required training of the pilots at Le Luc, near Toulon.¹⁰⁷ French intelligence regularly meets the chief of the regime's military intelligence.¹⁰⁸ French anti-terrorist forces (GIGN, RAIDS and Gendarmerie) also train Algerian special units under the umbrella name of 'anti-terrorist units'. The satellite Helios-1 specialised in surveillance of the Maghreb (put into orbit in July 1995), the spy ship Berry which patrols the Algerian coastline, checking all radio communications (even those of the government and army), and French spy planes, supply on daily basis exhaustive data to the analysts of the French DRM and DGSE intelligence agencies.¹⁰⁹

The relevance of the Rhodesian experience lies in that mercenaries, among others from South Africa and former Rhodesia, with counter-insurgency combat experience in Rhodesia, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, are also currently advising, training and assisting the Algerian military. According to *The Observer*, a multinational corporation of war, called Executive Outcomes, is currently selling its military and security services (training and advisory roles) to the Algerian regime.¹¹⁰ It is engaged extensively all over Africa, notably in Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zaire, where it shores up military regimes in return for 'large shares of an employing nation's natural resources and commodities.'¹¹¹ This multinational of war has corporate links with oil and gas multinational corporations and companies engaged in the search for gold, diamonds and other gems and minerals. That is to say that 'Executive Outcomes' are not just 'guns for hire'. They are 'the advance guard for major business interests engaged in a latter-day scramble for the wealth of Africa.'¹¹² It comprises various European mercenaries, former Rhodesian and South African military officers with counter-insurgency combat experience in various African war campaigns.¹¹³ *Drillbits & Tailings* says Defence Systems Limited also sells COIN expertise to the army.¹¹⁴

4.2.1. *Force K in Algeria 1954-1962*

Force K – K for Kobus – was a counter-guerrilla organisation set up by the French DST in Algeria in the latter part of 1956.¹¹⁵ It should not be confused with Force K – K for Kabylia – involved in operation *Oiseau Bleu*.¹¹⁶ Its counter-*maquis* (roughly, 'zone of operation') was located between Ain-

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Defla and Oued Fodda, on the borders between the military district 3 and 4 as defined by the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN).

Force K was under the ostensible leadership of 'Kobus', whose real name was Belhadj Djillali Abdelkader, a former Messalist 'turned' into a French intelligence informer while serving a three-year prison sentence for being a member of the *Organisation Secrète* (OS). This pseudo-guerrilla force was in fact under the command of Captain Conille, who led the SAS of Lamartine, and that of Captain Hentic in charge of the *harka*^E of Beni Boudouane. Its membership grew from 200 to 1400 in 1958 and included former nationalists 'turned' or inducted forcibly through compromising them, politically illiterate or naive nationalists, fugitive criminals and mercenaries recruited from the ordinary criminal world. Force K included political commissars who indoctrinated both these pseudo-insurgents and the population. The French lieutenant Heux was in charge of handling its organisation, recommending any necessary changes in the force, indoctrinating the pseudo-guerrillas and co-ordinating between Force K and French army units as well as Bachagha Boualem's *harka*.

To get accepted by the population, Force K's political commissars employed anti-French propaganda in the hamlets; the Algerian flag was raised in Force K's camp and Kobus troops wore the same insignia as worn by the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (ALN). At the same time, their propaganda line against the FLN was intensely hostile: the 'FLN is led by communists', it is the 'real enemy' and 'all true nationalists', such as those in Force K, 'have to first cleanse Algeria of the FLN red leper.' Along with an infamous room for torture, the Force K base had well equipped printing facilities.

Its subversive actions involved sowing distrust between the population and the FLN guerrillas, isolating the latter from the former. This was done through the rapes of women, torture, stealing from and heavily taxing the population, in general spreading an atmosphere of terror and confusion in the minds of people, all done in the guise of FLN guerrillas. In its hunter-killer operations, it is reported to have destroyed the FLN mujahideen in its assigned area.

This success was, however, only temporary. Soon, this 'French Trojan horse in the heart of the Algerian resistance' was neutralised, using the very psychological principles and deception tactics that underlay Force K. Colonel Si Mhamed and Omar Oussedik astutely adapted and turned these principles against the French and Force K.¹¹⁷

Under Soustelle's psychological warfare experts, the French tried even larger scale experiments: the *Armée Nationale du Peuple Algérien* under the os-

^E *Harkis* were Algerians recruited by France to serve as para-military militias. The *harka* is a centre regrouping the *harkis*.

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tensible command of 'Brigadier General Bellounis'¹¹⁸ but actually under the supervision of the SDECE and command of General Parlange, and the counter-guerrilla force of 'Colonel Si Cherif' factually led by the SAS.¹¹⁹ The SDECE tried a last experiment in 1960. It set up the *Front Algérien d'Action Démocratique* (FAAD), a political party campaigning for 'an Algerian republic associated to France', also known as the 'third force', supported by an armed wing operating in the Bou Kahil, Zemra and Djelfa regions. The political party was outwardly led by Belhadi, Khellifah and Laid, former leaders of the Mouvement National Algérien (MNA) rival of the FLN, while the military wing was seemingly commanded by Amar Badri, a guerrilla and militant of the MNA. The actual commanders of the political and military branches of the FAAD were colonel Mercier and colonel Peltier, in Algiers, and colonel Marceau in Paris, while the supervisor of the whole operation at the *Service Action* of the SDECE was colonel Roussillat.¹²⁰ These experiments are said to have succeeded in destroying a number of ALN guerrilla units but they ended in failures.¹²¹ Commenting on these experiments Faivre said:

Attempts to create a third force in political and military opposition to the FLN were repeated throughout this war: the Kabyle operation in 1956, sometimes known as *Oiseau Bleu*, the Kobus Force, the National Army of the Algerian People of Bellounis, the auxiliary forces of Si Cherif, the 'bleus' of captain Léger, the committees of public salvation involving Muslims, the Challe project for the federation of self-defence and territorial units, the aborted rallying of Si Salah, the commission of deputies, and the Algerian republic proposed to general Jouhaud. Some of these attempts were led by the secret services, others were initiated by politicians or the military. All of them failed either for the inadequacy of the intelligence or the lack of political will [...] The FAAD was also doomed to failure from its inception.¹²²

4.2.2 *Selous Scouts in Rhodesia 1972-1979*

For a proper understanding of the Rhodesia-Zimbabwean war and the development of Rhodesian counter-insurgency doctrine, strategies and tactics, the emergence of the Selous Scouts counter-guerrilla unit and the development of its subversive operations, it is essential to consult the references cited in section 4.1 as well as Evans' work.¹²³ Suffice to say here that the Selous Scouts evolved from a classic pseudo-guerrilla tracking and secret reconnaissance unit to a battalion strength force, lavishly funded by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and the Directorate of Military Intelligence. It was made up mainly of former Zimbabwean nationalists but under the executive direction of CIO's Special Branch security and intelligence officers (white Europeans).

This literature also contains a wealth of operational details: 'validation' procedures used by the Selous Scouts, anti-deception tactics of the genuine resistance, 'turning' techniques, co-ordination rules between the Scouts and other Rhodesian regular force units ('frozen areas') and their problems,

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techniques for sowing dissent between the population and the Zimbabwean guerrillas, methods for sowing conflict within and between the armed insurgent organisations. These procedures will not be illustrated in detail here as this was done, to some extent, in section 4.1. We will, instead, look briefly at a few examples of the so-called 'special operations'.

In the class of aggressive operations, according to Ellert, the Scouts were continually searching for different clandestine warfare techniques and tactics to improve their kill-rate.¹²⁴ For instance, having noted the wide use of radios and record-players among the resistance through their close association with captured guerrillas, they used radio-bombs^G or cassette-players^H fitted with compact plastic explosives and multi-switch delay mechanisms which were supplied to the guerrillas through agents or secretly introduced into rural stores by substituting them for existing stocks. Another example: having learned the food, clothing and equipment habits of the guerrillas, the Selous Scouts launched a poisoning campaign. The intelligence laboratory impregnated odourless, colourless lethal toxins^I into the fabric of various consignments of clothing (blue Denim trousers and jackets, underpants etc.) which were passed to the guerrillas through various routes. The Scouts also poisoned water reservoirs used by the guerrillas and introduced measured quantities of bacteriological poisons in various places along the Ruya river, near the Mozambique border. In all these 'special operations', an unknown number of guerrillas were reported killed, but a substantial number of unsuspecting civilians died in the process too. According to Ellert, the Rhodesian regime hid these murders under the category of malaria or cholera epidemics.

From the many dastardly Selous Scouts 'special operations' aimed at severing local and international support from the Zimbabwean insurgents, two examples are worth citing.

The first concerns their massacre of St Paul's Musami missionaries while masquerading as ZANLA guerrillas. Prior to the massacre, it was known to the Rhodesian authorities, police and army that many individual missionaries disliked the regime's repression and ill-treatment of villagers and Ellert says that they 'strongly identified themselves with the guerrilla cause and actively assisted them with supplies'.¹²⁵ The Special Branch, which monitored the

^G Radio receivers were fitted with a homing signal effective up to fifty kilometres. The device was operated only when the radio was switched off, which in practice meant that the signal would be most active when the guerrillas were sleeping.

^H The design was such that the cassette-player would not explode until the on-off switch had been operated several times. This was meant to ensure that the radio would now be in a base-camp where the kill rate would be higher.

^I The poisons were selected so as to be absorbed by osmosis through prolonged skin contact in the genital, anal or arm-pit areas.

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missionaries, was aware that 'ZANLA guerrillas were in contact with the mission workers.'¹²⁶

The circumstances of the massacre are that on the evening of 7 February 1977 armed men said to be ZANLA guerrillas entered the mission, lined up the European staff and gunned them down. Ellert says that

The St Paul's killing came as an ideal propaganda opportunity for the hard-pressed Rhodesian government. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace had in October 1976 published a litany of murder, torture, malicious injury to property, extortion and threat and bodily harm which laid the blame at the door of the Rhodesians. The publication, *Civil War in Rhodesia*, had embarrassed the Rhodesian government and news of the St Paul's incident enabled the Rhodesians to yell 'bloody murder' back.¹²⁷

Various pieces of evidence pointed to the Selous Scouts' responsibility for this operation. They included spent cartridge identification, the killing of five African villagers living near the mission for being informers or 'sell-outs' (a Scouts 'validation' procedure) on the same night of the massacre as well as the 'frozen status'^J of the district surrounding the mission, on instructions from security headquarters, some days before the incident. This corroborated the information that, a day prior to the killing, a group of armed men had been seen jumping from a truck at a distance 25 km from St Paul's Musami. At the time, this was reported to be the genuine ZANLA section in the area. The ZANLA expressed surprise at the news. Ellert comments: 'this new group was never accounted for and disappeared.'¹²⁸

The second example of Selous Scouts's 'special operations' involved cutting the throat and massacring sleeping British missionaries and their children at the Elim Pentecostal mission, a year after the St Paul's Musami incident, on 23 June 1978. Six men, armed with axes, bayonets, knives and heavy clubs, identifying themselves as ZANLA guerrillas, attacked the mission and then disappeared into the surrounding forest, leaving a gruesome scene:

Thirteen people had been bayoneted, hacked and chopped to pieces in an orgy of the most grotesque proportions. Women had been sexually assaulted and the men had endured savage beatings with their hands tied behind their backs.¹²⁹

Ellert says that this incident came at a time when top-secret plans were being prepared for Operation Favour when 'the Rhodesians were making desperate attempts [...] to achieve a popular swing in world opinion in favor of the Internal Settlement partnership.'¹³⁰ In other political assassinations, the use of axes, bayonets, knives and clubs and non-use of fire-arms was

^J The Selous Scouts pseudo-teams adopted the rules of 'frozen areas' to operate without being killed by the Rhodesian security forces. A frozen area is a space in which security forces are not allowed to operate, except along the main roads.

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thought to be a way of getting round the efficient system developed by the ballistics section of the police to identify and link spent cartridge cases to guerrilla weapons from the operational area in question or to those of the Special Branch of the Central Intelligence Organisation.

Despite their many secret operations, which were successful in inflicting various military, political and psychological damages on the independentist guerrillas, commentators such as Ellert consider that the Selous Scouts were unsuccessful in substantially affecting the result of the liberation war. A last but not least illustration of the Selous Scouts' damaging but ultimately vain 'special operations' was their bombing campaigns. Ellert says:

The final hours of the Selous Scouts were as sullied as they were ignominious. Many Scouts bitterly resented what they perceived as a political sell-out of the Whites in Rhodesia. In early 1980 several incidents took place which all had the clear trademark of the Selous Scouts. In mid-February a number of disgruntled Scouts embarked on a bombing campaign in Salisbury (Harare) which they hoped would be blamed on ZANLA. The blasts came in the wake of a statement by Bishop Muzorewa who accused the Patriotic Front guerrillas of having plans to convert churches into schools and military barracks [...] The Presbyterian church in Jameson (Samora Machel) Avenue and the Kingsmead Chapel in Borrowdale were bombed, resulting in the accidental death of two civilians. Two days later, a crude bomb consisting of two RPG-7 projectiles, some slabs of TNT explosives and detonators were found inside a green canvas haversack together with a handwritten note from guerrillas expressing their desire to destroy churches. The makeshift bomb had been concealed at the Anglican cathedral in Salisbury (Harare).

Several days after this find, two African members of the Scouts, Lieutenant Piri-gondo and Corporal Moyo, died in a mysterious blast which completely wrecked the Renault Sedan in which they were driving. The explosion occurred [...] south of the city centre of Salisbury (Harare), and it was speculated they were on their way to yet another site when fate took a hand.¹³¹

After this digression to familiarise the reader with the general concept and mode of operation of counter-guerrillas, we are now in a position to look at the body of accumulated facts indicative of GIA's identity.

4.3 Institutional Identity Argument

In modern COIN doctrines and war programmes, a counter-guerrilla organisation is a tactical instrument whose main identifying institutional attributes are as follows.

a) It is an irregular guerrilla-like force, posing as a guerrilla entity, often operating in areas with a strong presence of genuine guerrilla. We call this the *irregularity* attribute.

b) It comprises, amongst others, members of various 'security' forces, surrendered or captured guerrillas 'turned' by the former, in addition to

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members or groups that are dissident from, or in conflict with, the main military-political insurgent force. This is the *composition* attribute.

c) It carries out intelligence, subversive, offensive and ‘special’ operations aimed at damaging the military and/or political and/or ideological and/or psychological and/or financial force of the main military-political insurgent force. This is the *anti-insurgent operation* attribute.

If the GIA can be shown to embody these attributes, it will justify the view that it is a counter-guerrilla organisation.

That the GIA is an irregular force, claiming to be committed to combating the incumbent regime, operating in urban and rural zones with a presence of genuine islamist insurgents, is uncontroversial. The account will only focus on demonstrating that conditions b) and c) are met by the GIA. We discuss the GIA composition in section 4.3.1 and GIA operations in section 4.3.2. In section 4.3.3 we review the argument, present some objections to it, and conclude.

4.3.1 *Composition of the GIA*

The GIA has comprised infiltrated security agents and ‘turned’ guerrillas at the top of its structure.

Various sources asserted security agents infiltrated the GIA: Ex-prime minister Brahimi, ex-diplomat Zitout, several intelligence officers now exiled in Europe, a few academic specialist on Algeria and intelligence analysts, journalists, and the targets of the intelligence themselves, erstwhile members of the GIA.¹³² For instance Gèze and Vidal-Naquet wrote in *Le Monde* on 5 March 1998: ‘Western intelligence services are convinced the GIA are highly infiltrated by the [Algerian] military secret service agents to discredit Islamists and to maintain a climate of terror to prevent any revolt.’ The Rand Corporation report by Graham Fuller says:

Suspicion had arisen, among French analysts that the Algerian intelligence services had infiltrated and were manipulating several Algerian terrorist groups both to sow disinformation and support terrorist acts in a desire to bring the West – especially France – around to the conviction that the Islamists represent an unacceptable violent movement.¹³³

Various testimonies from erstwhile targets of the infiltration, who left the GIA late in 1995 and early 1996, confirm it too. For instance, katibat al-muhajirun (the company of exiles) says: ‘the despotic regime chose a strategy of deceit and conspiracy to undermine the jihad from within by injecting hypocrites and collaborators among the ranks of the mujahidin at a time of inattention on the part of the sincere mujahideen.’¹³⁴ Seriyat al-iqdam (detachment of bravery) denounced ‘the plan of the infiltrated fifth column to liquidate the decision-makers among the preachers and military leaders.’¹³⁵

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The army, the military intelligence and the police have separate units specialised in infiltration. Captain Haroun, former intelligence officer, says a unit called infiltration Section operates within the DRS.¹³⁶ Dalila, a former policewoman now exiled in the United Kingdom, says ‘the infiltration of the Islamists’ is the job of ‘the religious brigade, bearded policemen.’¹³⁷

Maghreb Confidential explained the routes for infiltration this way:

The directorate of intelligence and security (formerly *Sécurité Militaire*) of General Mohamed Mediene, alias Tewfik, has organised a vast operation of manipulation of the GIA along three axes of infiltration

- 1) The creation of armed groups that carry out attacks, in the name of the GIA, and end up joining them.
- 2) True-false deserters from the army join the GIA with their weapons, and provide them with information pre-packaged by the central government.
- 3) The infiltration of agents from the bottom, i.e. in neighbourhoods where some manage to get recruited. These true-false GIA have three missions inspired by the famous ‘bleuite’, which allowed Captain Léger, in the Algerian War, to disorganise the underground ALN.

A well known case of the latter is Lieutenant Farid who infiltrated urban insurgents in the Casbah in the summer 1992, and lasted till 1994, time at which he was eventually found out and shot dead.¹³⁸ *Il Messaggero Domenica* reported that the validation technique used was an attention grabbing pseudo-arrest operation, in Bab El Oued, in which Lieutenant Farid ostensibly managed to escape. This established him in the Casbah, and within one year, he rose to the national leadership of the GIA, as he proved efficient at obtaining weapons, hide-outs, money, and recruiting insurgents.¹³⁹ His activities will be discussed later. Here suffices to mention that once he was accepted, he became a gate of infiltration in that he was recruiting fellow intelligence officers into the GIA.¹⁴⁰

Maghreb Confidential omitted two important routes of infiltration. The first is the Afghan route. Even before the military coup of January 1992 and the emergence of the armed groups, the regime had planted many of its agents within the FIS. These were among the veterans of the Afghan war. The Algerian-Afghans enjoyed prestige among the radical segment of the social base of the FIS for the legitimacy they earned fighting the Soviets. The Algerian-Afghans are known for their strong opposition to the electoral strategy of the FIS and advocacy of armed struggle. Captain Haroun says:

The surveillance work of radical Islamists dates back to the war in Afghanistan. To support the Soviet troops in difficulty against the Afghans, the Soviet KGB had asked their Algerian counterparts, with whom they had strong links, to infiltrate the Afghan *maquis*. To carry out this operation, the military security sent a number of officers among the Algerians who, by conviction, wanted to fight alongside their Afghan brothers. One of them had even become a close collaborator of Commandant

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Messaoud, who was one of the most important leaders of the Afghan resistance. When they came back, the officers – with a solid experience in Islamist groups – were converted into the combat against Islamists, which had intensified from the late 80s. The GIA were infiltrated right from the outset. This allowed the secret services to follow closely their development and to act effectively especially whenever they attempt to unify their ranks.¹⁴¹

The second route was the famous evasion of about 1 000 prisoners from the Tazoult prison, in March 1994, an operation master-minded by the Afghan veteran Qadi Said. Various accounts exist about the operation but there is no dispute that it infiltrated a large number of security agents and hardened criminals into the GIA.¹⁴²

Now, concerning the presence of the ‘turned’ component within the GIA various testimonial and inferential evidence support its existence. For example, Seriat al-iqdam (the detachment of bravery) stated that ‘the leadership of the GIA fell into the hands of a suspect and unknown clique manufactured by the secret services’¹⁴³ while Seriat al-wafa-a (the detachment of fidelity) stated that ‘by our lack of vigilance, a band produced by the military intelligence infiltrated itself up to the centres of decision making.’¹⁴⁴ These testimonies do not give details about the ‘production’ process but it is notorious.¹⁴⁵

For instance, in the testimony he gave about the torture he suffered at the hands of the DRS, Gharbi Brahim says: ‘the military security wanted to make a mole out of me.’¹⁴⁶ In the testimony of Thamert Hocine, tortured first in the Police School of Châteauneuf in Algiers and then at the centre of military security in Blida, one reads some details of the ‘turning’ method:

The officer who was sitting next to me was old. He was using a paternalistic tone to try and convince me to collaborate, ‘to come back to the straight path...’ The torturers took me to a corner of a shed to resume the interrogation. There were several officers and soldiers waiting for me. One of the officers used a soft approach at first. He offered me to work for the military intelligence and save my life. Another one took over from him and told me in a peremptory tone: ‘otherwise you will be executed’.¹⁴⁷

While Gharbi and Thamert resisted the ‘turning’ attempts there are other surrendered or captured activists or guerrillas who could not. The *bushkara* (hooded informers), accompanying the daily arrest, are the visible evidence of surrendered or captured insurgents successfully ‘turned’. For instance, a Gendarmerie captain told Devoluy and Duteille:

Mustapha Bensayed was lightly injured when he was captured following an engagement, in El Harrach, between his group of urbanites and an anti-terrorist unit that had been tracking them for weeks. After questioning, the prisoner revealed he was Mustapha Lebrika. He had cold-bloodedly killed a young policeman at a bus stop, at the beginning of the year, to prove his commitment. After a series of attacks in the East of Algiers, Mustapha took a *nom de guerre*: Abu Salah, and supplanted his com-

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mander. After treatment and conditioning, Abu Salah was 'turned' by Captain Rachid Benmohamed. He was used to neutralise an armed group led by one of his rivals operating near Larbaa. He disappeared in February 1993, 'probably killed by another armed band suspecting the infiltration', says Captain Benmohamed.¹⁴⁸

The conversion of 'turned' guerrillas, who are called 'penitent terrorists' by Algerian officials, is acknowledged by the minister of justice, Mohamed Adami. In 1997 he declared:

The application of law of mercy has allowed many of those who repented to make amends to their people, because many of them have taken up arms and fought against their former comrades. They have also effectively helped security services with the intelligence and information at their disposal.¹⁴⁹

The 'turned' insurgents are recycled into the paramilitary militia units^B or pseudo-insurgent armed groups such as the GIA.¹⁵⁰ The scale of the 'turning' into paramilitary and counter-guerrillas irregulars is not known. There is an official figure of 5,000 'penitent terrorists' since 1995 but it should be taken with scepticism.¹⁵¹

There is testimonial evidence of 'turned' insurgents at the top of the GIA structure. A probable, though less obvious, 'turned' was the former leader of the GIA, Zitouni, an unknown and reportedly very cruel figure, was precipitously elevated to the position of emir of the GIA. He had an unprecedented ability to last very long in that position. Islamists hold the view that he had been 'turned' during his detention, along with thousands of other FIS activists and supporters in the Sahara camps, following the military coup in January 1992.¹⁵² These sources maintain that during his detention he received the visit of several officers from the DRS and the army. An abridged account, from insurgent sources, of how Zitouni was subsequently infiltrated into the GIA, and later took over the GIA is given in the appendix.

In addition to these two components (infiltrated agents and 'turned' guerrillas), the GIA also comprised genuine insurgents. These comprised religious, political and military cadres, who up to 1994 saw the GIA as the only credible military force. Nationally known figures are Mohamed Said and Abderrezak Redjam. The bulk of the ranks however comprised young militants, often politically uneducated.

The proportion of agents of the military (infiltrators and 'turned') relative to the overall membership has evolved with time. In the pre-Zitouni stage one could speak only of the GIA as an infiltrated insurgent organisation because the available evidence indicates that the military agents were in small

^B The militia units, which include the *Groupes d'Auto-Défense* (GAD – self-defence groups) and the *Patriotes*, number over 200,000 men. They are led by guerrilla veterans of the liberation war (1954-1962). A notorious militia leader is Commandant Azzedine, ironically the very man who destroyed the counter-guerrilla Force K, in the decolonisation war.

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proportion and not in full command of the organisation. The OPA (politico-administrative operation) that put Zitouni and other security agents in total control, the gradual elimination of the most able cadres that followed, and the massive break away – from 1995 up to early 1996 as the realisation of the deception sank in at the rank-and-file level – changed the proportions of its constituents drastically. As will be concluded at the end of this argument, it mutated into a conventional counter-guerrilla organisation, more like the force K or the Selous Scouts model, with a dominant membership of security agents, ‘turned’ guerrillas, and ordinary criminals.

4.3.2 GIA Operations

Let us now examine whether there is a correspondence between the GIA's modus operandi and the classic forms of counter-guerrilla activity: intelligence work, subversive operations, offensive activities and ‘special’ operations.

4.3.2a Intelligence Work

The evidence that suggests the existence of counter-guerrilla intelligence gathering activities within the GIA is more inferential than testimonial or documentary. No public testimonial evidence exposing the details of the methods used by the army-controlled GIA from meetings with other insurgents (in the GIA and outside it), contact men and the local population is yet available.

But, of course, there is inferential evidence that intelligence has in fact been gathered and passed on to the army. *Il Messaggero Domenica* reported that infiltrator lieutenant Farid gave the locations of the hide-outs of urban insurgents in Algiers to the security forces; a good number of insurgents were killed as a consequence.¹⁵³ He would also take with him highly able fighters into battles where they would all get killed. We can also infer that intelligence flowed the other way. Farid got many policemen, informers, magistrates, and civil servants killed by genuine unsuspecting GIA guerrillas. These targets had been real sympathisers of the Islamist insurgency and had been passing intelligence to the insurgents. Lieutenant Farid's selection of targets must have originated from his security colleagues.

Stories of ‘betrayals’ leading to ambushes or arrests by the military abound. The most significant event of this kind occurred in the winter of 1995 as waves of arrests and operations followed the murders of the most able political, military and religious cadres of the GIA. This campaign started in November 1995, right after the presidential elections which brought Zeroual to power. These large waves of simultaneous arrests and operations were reported to have badly affected genuine insurgent groups in Algiers,

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Larbaa, Medea, Khemis Meliana, Djebel Louh, and Al Qasr. Massive intelligence transfer must have preceded this extensive campaign.

4.3.2b Subversive Operations

‘Subversive operation’ refers here to any overt or clandestine activity by which those who make up an institution, an organisation or a movement are turned against each other. There is testimonial and documentary evidence to support the view that the GIA carried out various operations with the aim of subverting the Islamist armed insurgents, and the whole Islamic movement by turning people against the armed insurgents.

In its description of the activities of the ‘putschist leadership’ of the GIA, *al-wathiqa ashar-iyā* (the jurisprudential document) describes their subversive consequences: ‘turning the shooting away from the despotic regime and onto our own ranks’¹⁵⁴, ‘the fragmentation of this Group into feuding factions’¹⁵⁵, ‘the demolition of the trust between the leadership and the mujahideen, and among the mujahideen themselves’¹⁵⁶, or also ‘the splitting of the Muslim ranks into two parties, a blamed party and a blaming party, a suspect party and a suspecting party.’¹⁵⁷

As for the nature of the subversive operations, *al-wathiqa ashar-iyā* reports them as including: ‘the spreading of conflict and disunity within the ranks of the mujahideen with fictitious incidents and preventing the promotion of a policy of brotherhood and tolerance among the mujahideen’, ‘spreading rumours, about the leaders and commanders of the Group, accusing them of heretical deeds, immorality, and disbelief’ or ‘disseminating hatred and division’¹⁵⁸. It also lists: ‘the fabrication of false pretexts and lies to secure agreement of some mujahideen to fight other mujahideen brethren.’¹⁵⁹ *Sariat al iqdām* (the detachment of bravery) reported ‘the spreading of sectarian [...] ideas [...] and the sowing of the seeds of conflicts, division and sedition among the brethren of the same faith.’¹⁶⁰ *Sariat al wafa* accused the infiltrators at the top of the GIA of ‘sowing despair in the ranks of the mujahideen by creating a climate of fear, hatred, terror and suspicion among the brothers.’¹⁶¹ Two other techniques were reported: ‘removal of the commanders known for their effectiveness against the despotic regime’ in addition to ‘severing the links between the jihad zones of operation.’¹⁶²

The subversive operations orchestrated by what the break-away groups call the ‘putschist leadership of the GIA’ have not spared insurgents outside the GIA, such as the AIS. There is evidence that the AIS (Armée Islamique du Salut) was also the target of fierce subversive propaganda. For example, the GIA has been seditiously portraying it as ‘a heretic sect with blasphemous innovations’ who ‘gave their struggle, loyalty and obedience to the FIS, hence becoming apostate Kharidjites.’¹⁶³ Typical GIA statements that

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have been interpreted as propaganda for creating and exacerbating frictions include:

examples of insinuations with the intent of creating frictions and exacerbating them into open armed hostility include GIA propaganda statements such as

the malevolent Western media, with the help of propagators of lies, hype the existence of an organisation called 'the Islamic Salvation Army'. This organisation was inflated to the point where people were misled into believing that its size was on par with that of the GIA.¹⁶⁴

or

the enemies of Allah from the Christians and the Jews do their utmost to create a 'military' organisation with a 'jihad' guise on a par with the GIA to foment conflict and infighting among the mujahideen.¹⁶⁵

With regard to the GIA's subversive operations aimed at sowing dissension between the people and the insurgents, and turning them against each other, there is a range of supporting testimonial and documentary evidence.

For instance, the jurisprudential document, cites the GIA's subversive actions as 'driving people to revolt against the jihad', 'prompting the people to withdraw gradually their support', and 'sowing despair and despondency among the ranks of the mujahideen and the people.'¹⁶⁶ Katibat Larbaa (the company of Larbaa) speaks of these subversive consequences as 'misleading the people about the truth.'¹⁶⁷ Seriat al-iqdam describes them as 'tarnishing the reputation of the mujahideen in the hope of turning the people against them, alienating their sympathisers and distancing the scholars from them' or as 'cutting the jihad movement from the people.'¹⁶⁸ Katibat Tablat observes that the consequence of the GIA subversive operations has been '1) driving many people to carry weapons in the service of the despots, 2) driving the inhabitants of the countryside to abandon their land and seek refuge in cities.'¹⁶⁹

The documented subversive operations that caused, initially, bewilderment and disillusionment and then produced the reported divisive consequences are not unusual. They have deliberately targeted the most sensitive areas in the lifestyles and identities of the people: their religious beliefs, their sense of honour, their security, their livelihood and their deeply held aspirations to such values as justice and education.

A few illustrative testimonies about livelihood-threatening subversive operations bear witness to 'violation of people's property', 'extravagance and exaggeration in demands of money and property from people, and lack of appreciation of their circumstances', 'sabotage of water reservoirs and destruction of house furniture of defenceless people', 'burning and destruction

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of public factories and facilities', 'plundering of money [...] robbing houses and shops by force of arms', and 'burning property of peaceable citizens (cars, lorries, water pumps and electric generators).'¹⁷⁰

The GIA's published material, far from concealing these acts, boasts about the destruction of private properties (houses, shops etc.) as well as collective properties: public health infrastructure (water reservoirs, hospitals and pharmacies), social infrastructure (town halls, youth centres etc.), economic infrastructure (factories, commercial centres etc.) in no uncertain terms. For example two GIA communiqués reported operations such as:

Batna: burning of enterprises of the despotic regime included a state-owned supermarket, a leather company, a pharmacy and seizing of the medicine, the youth club, a place of dance and immorality, the town hall, the regional district headquarters [...] a big number of cars and coaches belonging to the despotic regime.¹⁷¹

A detachment of the Group carried out a raid against a company specialised in prospecting and digging of wells. The mujahideen destroyed three heavy rigs costing around 16 million centimes.¹⁷²

Destruction and burning of a number of the enemy's commercial centres and a similar number of lorries and coaches belonging to the public sector.¹⁷³

Other operations with the objective of building up people's resentment against the insurgents include the destruction of their educational means and hopes for their children. GIA-published material acknowledges the destruction of schools:

In the same Wilaya (Batna), our detachment of destruction and sabotage carried out the destruction of seven educational institutions that did not heed the instructions addressed to them by the leadership of the mujahideen.¹⁷⁴

As for targeting people's sense of security, the GIA's operations aimed at sowing distrust and provoking hostility between the insurgents and the population, as reported by the groups that broke away from the GIA, include: 'prescribing the killing of Muslims on account of the slightest sin such as cigarette smoking and other similar deeds', 'prescribing the killing of innocent persons', 'the killing of children, women and elderly persons, and the random detonation of bombs in public places', and 'permitting the killing on the basis of suspicion and conjecture.'¹⁷⁵

4.3.2c Offensive Operations

Unlike strictly intelligence work and subversive activities, offensive operations shift emphasis to inflicting maximum casualties on the insurgents. But what distinguishes counter-guerrilla offensive operations from classic offensive warfare is their singularly secretive or disguised nature.

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There is testimonial and documentary evidence to establish that what break away groups call ‘the putschist leadership of the GIA’ oversaw the execution of such operations within the GIA itself, and against other insurgent organisations such as the AIS.

The testimonies of defecting guerrillas are pervaded with words such as ‘treachery’, ‘deception’, ‘confusion’ and statements like ‘the deviation of these people [putschists] has become obvious lately [...] in its worst form as they perpetrated massacres of mujahideen and they permitted killing senselessly and illegitimately, in a treacherous and deceitful manner’¹⁷⁶, and, ‘huge numbers of our brothers were recalled from several companies in Kasr al-Boukhari and El Affroun and killed treacherously.’¹⁷⁷ And further, ‘the phenomenon of disappearance of competent mujahideen, prominent for their jihad experience, became widespread. We were told “they died in combat”. Many of our brothers were killed treacherously.’¹⁷⁸

Ambushes and hunter-killer operations based on deceit were reported by testimonies [referring to the ‘putschist GIA leadership’] such as ‘they would send away brothers on the pretext of training [...] and then would treacherously kill them’, ‘they would promise safety than kill’, in ‘suspicious missions’, and ‘fake ambushes’.¹⁷⁹ Some reports speak of secret trial techniques: ‘the putschist leadership of the GIA sought to deprive the jihad, through secret trial, of the known preachers, the sons of the Islamic movement and the faithful youth who followed the righteous way.’¹⁸⁰ Others point to ‘disguised warfare’: ‘they are known to kill on account of mere suspicion or a vested interest and to make lawful the blood, honour and wealth of those among the Muslims who disagree with them on the most futile matters’ or ‘they prefer to fight the brothers who disagree with them in the interpretation of religious matters or a tradition of the Prophet (s) [...]. Indeed, they thrive on self-righteousness and advocate fighting their brothers before fighting the enemy.’¹⁸¹

These reports are however limited in details. In 1993 infiltrator Lieutenant Farid obtained 200 pairs of *Tango* training shoes which were distributed among urban insurgents in Algiers.¹⁸² The security forces decimated their ranks as those who wore them were shot on sight. The security forces reportedly joked about how many tangos they killed everyday.¹⁸³ Another technique used was the infiltration of special kalashnikov bullets, which would explode in the gun’s chamber. The GIA and the MIA units of Algiers were provided with large quantities of doctored ammunition and weaponry and consequently suffered heavy casualties.¹⁸⁴

The GIA communiqués corroborate these reports. For example, the secretive killings of two prominent FIS figures, Mohamed Said and Abderez-zak Redjam, were announced as martyrdom by the GIA. But after the news spread in Algeria that the GIA had in fact killed them, the GIA resorted to

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justifying their killings on the grounds that they were ‘apostates’. First the GIA had published a communiqué that stated:

Just as early leaders such as the brothers Meliani, Sayf Allah Jaafar, Abu Abdallah Ahmed and many other heroes gave their life, so did Mohamed Saïd and Abdelrezzak Redjam. They met their Lord while fighting for the religion and defending it. They died under the banner of the GIA in the battles of Islam against anti-Islamic tyranny to prove to the people that the path they embarked upon was that of Jihad, the path of blood and martyrdom and not the path leading to arm chair politics and political trips. May Allah have mercy on them, accept their gift of martyrdom. May He lead us on that very path, Amen [...]. They were killed about two months ago in an ambush set by the despots and died instantly.¹⁸⁵

Once witness reports stating they had been savagely tortured and slaughtered by Zitouni and his men spread nationally, the GIA published new communiqués stating:

Let it be mentioned that Mohamed Saïd and Abdelrezzak Redjam were never convinced of the legitimacy of the jihad, a fact known to all, because they believed in satanic politics and not the politics of the shariah,¹⁸⁶

and

These heretical apostates had pledged allegiance to the organisation led by the hypocrite Mohamed Saïd who was hiding behind his heretical deeds until he was killed by our salafist brothers.¹⁸⁷

Saïd and Redjam were only two targets of the wider campaign – which had started after Gousmi’s demise – that decimated the whole Algerianist tendency within the GIA.¹⁸⁸ Other prominent guerrillas liquidated in the same way include Abdelnacer Titraoui, assassinated in July 1995, and Mahfoud Tadjine (the leader overthrown by Zitouni) and Abdelwahab Lamara, both assassinated in December 1995.¹⁸⁹ A reliable estimate of casualties of the various kinds of clandestine warfare operations within the GIA ranks is still unknown but, in 1998, ex-prime minister Brahimi said:

In May 1994, two eminent FIS ‘ulama (scholars), Shaikh Mohamed Saïd and Abderezzak Redjam joined the GIA along with many of their supporters. Their idea was to unify the ranks of the mujahideen. But afterwards both Shaikh Saïd and Redjam as well as one hundred and fifty of their followers had their throats cut by the GIA.¹⁹⁰

As for the offensive operations against other Islamist insurgent groups such as the AIS, GIA publications make no secrets of them. In March 1995 a communiqué-fatwa declared war on all the groups that had refused to join the GIA.¹⁹¹ Under the rubric ‘fighting the pockets of apostasy’, GIA-published material reported news items such as:

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The GIA solved the matter of the residual AIS pockets by obliterating their presence in the city of Batna. [...] In a declaration published in this issue of Al-Ansar the GIA clarified its position with regard to the army which fights for a return to the electoral process and reclaim the 188 parliamentary seats. The GIA declared that whoever fought under the banner of that army belonged to anti-Islamism and deserved to be fought and repressed. The Group sought to sit down and engage them in a dialogue in order to explain to them the solid aims of the shariah in the jihad. Following such a dialogue, a group of 70 members from the region of Chlef, West of Algiers, decided to join the Group and declare their repentance. The Group settled the fate of the members in the region of Batna; one part repented and the other was overcome by force of arms. [...] Battles are still going on between the GIA and the AIS pockets in the region of Jijel.¹⁹²

After issuing a war declaration against the AIS and explaining the conditions and reasons behind this decision, the soldiers of the GIA have carried out an attack against the AIS in Chlef, which resulted in the death of 11 of its members.¹⁹³

Brahimi has testified that:

Since 1994, the GIA targeted the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) instead of attacking military objectives. In 1994 and 1995, many Algerian sub-battalions deserted their barracks with their ammunitions and joined the AIS in the mountains near Ain Oussera, Tablat, and Larbaa. All of them were killed by the GIA. But where the GIA does not exist, it is the army which does the dirty job. Therefore the regular army was sent into action when in April 1995 a large number of soldiers abandoned their units at Ain Defla and took to the mountains.¹⁹⁴

4.3.2d 'Special' Operations

In COIN terminology, 'special' is a euphemism for unconventional and extra-legal activities, often with an exceptional degree of violence, deliberately intended to create a psychological effect on specifically targeted groups with the aim of changing their political behaviour in a manner consonant with the COIN objectives. These may include political kidnapping, political assassinations, 'selective counter-terror' and 'mass counter-terror'.

There is circumstantial evidence to support the case that the GIA carried out such kinds of operations. Here only a few representative examples of each of these four categories of 'special operations' are exposed one by one, in the order they have been listed.

The kidnapping of the 7 monks of Tibheherine

The kidnapping of Christian de Cherge, Luc Dochier, Celestin Ringard, Michel Fleury, Bruno Lemarchand, Christophe Lebreton and Paul Pavre Miville from the monastery of Tibheherine, in Medea, took place earlier than the evening of 26 March 1996, the date at which the Algerian military regime

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made the announcement. The GIA claimed responsibility for their kidnapping only a month later, on 26 April 1996.¹⁹⁵

Prior to the kidnappings, the Trappist monks had very good relations with the population of Tibeherine as well as with the Islamist insurgents, whom they reportedly treated for gun wounds and referred to as 'our brothers from the mountain.'¹⁹⁶ Monsignor Claverie, other French sources and insurgents say that the monks they had been given guarantees for their security by the insurgents during the Christmas 1993 visit by Sayah Attiya, an insurgent commander in the district of Medea.¹⁹⁷ Rivoire said the monks had discreetly supported the dialogue initiative of Sant' Egidio (Italy) and had regular contact with Hocine Bouslimane, a figure close to the FIS leadership.¹⁹⁸ Impagliazzo, from the Sant'Egidio community, confirmed this claim.¹⁹⁹

The kidnapping of these symbolic targets prompted revulsion in Algeria, and attracted strong condemnation from the Islamic-world and the international community, isolating further the whole insurgent movement.

In a communiqué published on 4 April 1996, i.e. after the announcement of the kidnapping by the military authorities but before the GIA claim of responsibility, Katibat al wafa, in Medea, issued a statement denouncing the kidnapping and explaining:

It remains to be pointed out that we do sense a complicity between the perpetrators and the secret services because the statements of the forces of repression announced the kidnapping of the monks only on the night of 26 March 1996. But on the night of the abduction, the kidnappers of the monks had killed five innocent people, among whom were some of the best youths who grew up in mosques, injured several persons, destroyed their houses and television sets. Why have the forces of repression kept quiet on these events? The latter were afraid of being exposed to the world for doing nothing and not leaving the barracks to come to the rescue of the people. Had they gone out they would have foiled the kidnapping operation.

The communiqué further asked:

Was the kidnapping operation a ploy of the military regime because the killing of the monks would fuel the anger of France and that of the West and the supporters of the Sharm Echeikh summit? The aim is to force the West to increase its economic and military aid to the regime in its 'fight against terrorism'.

The kidnapped monks were subsequently assassinated in the most gruesome manner, a killing claimed by the GIA.²⁰⁰ Tincq believes their assassination was carried out with the complicity of Algerian secret services, a view shared by Captain Haroun who adds the extra detail that 'the death of the monks is the result of a conflict between the Algerian and French secret services.'²⁰¹ According to Haroun, French intelligence had access to the monks

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once during their detention, an event at which they were given tracking electronic devices, but as the SDECE attempted to free them, acting independently from the Algerian military intelligence, they were killed.²⁰² Aroua suggested their killing served 'to galvanise Christian public opinion around the world against Algerian Islamists, and to isolate them from international understanding and solidarity.'²⁰³

High Profile Assassinations

Islamic religious figures, non-military foreign visitors, political figures and journalists are some of the categories that have been particularly targeted by the GIA.

The GIA claimed, for instance, the assassination of Abdelbaki Sahraoui, inside a mosque in Paris.

The first operation carried out by our brothers was the killing of Abdelbaki Sahraoui who went on fighting the GIA after the expiry of the delay given to him and his like in the declaration of 11 July 1995.²⁰⁴

It also claimed the killing of Mokhtar Kadri, as states the GIA news item entitled 'killing of a high official in the ministry of religious affairs':

One of the GIA companies ambushed and killed a high official in the ministry of religious affairs whose name was Mokhtar Kadri of the Kouba town. The ministry headed by the apostate Essasi Lamouri is one of the biggest enemies of the mujahideen.²⁰⁵

These assassinations prompted dissent against the insurgents from the direct identification group of the victims (religious scholars and preachers).

Another important category in the political assassination programme of the GIA has been that of journalists. The GIA has publicised the motto 'we fight with the sword those who fight us with the pen.'²⁰⁶ More than 60 journalists have been killed, not all claimed by the GIA.²⁰⁷ A few examples:

After issuing a threat against journalists, instructing them to stop working in the information departments of the military regime, the GIA continued to carry out its threat by slaughtering the sports journalist Makhlof Boukhdar on the night of Monday, in Constantine. His body was placed in a car boot. In another operation, the despotic journalist Boukerz, enemy of Allah, was killed last Monday.²⁰⁸

In the same town (Birkhadem) the mujahideen succeeded in eliminating one of the voices of the despotic regime. The defunct used to work as a journalist in the radio-television of the apostate enemy. She did not respond to the edict of the Group which warned the journalists and gave them a delay to give up their posts or face death at the hand of the Group.²⁰⁹

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The psycho-political effects of this class of assassinations served the incumbent authorities. These killings aroused journalists and media institutions in Algeria and the world to identify more closely with their fellow victim, and react in a corporatist way. For many journalists, the reaction was simply a rallying to the cause of the incumbent authorities.²¹⁰

As for the assassination of political figures, the GIA targeted mainly those who were active in defending a negotiated settlement. For instance, a few days after the signing of the National Contract for Dialogue in Rome in January 1995, the news bulletin of the GIA, *Al-Ansar*, stated:

In a military operation carried out by one of the companies of the Group, six members of the FLN party were killed in the Western town of Relizane. They were working for the forces of the apostate enemy. As is well known, there is a close pact between this party and the apostate despotic regime.²¹¹

This intimidated the identification group of the victims, the FLN, which under the reforming leadership of Abdelhamid Mehri had been instrumental in contributing to expose and isolate the eradicator faction within the military, and proposing a constructive framework for peaceful negotiations.

Another similar political assassination was that of Kasdi Merbah. Merbah had been president of the MAJD party, a former prime-minister, and head of Algeria's military intelligence for more than a decade. He was believed to have files indicting influential members of the military. On his return from Switzerland where he had met opposition leaders, as part of his efforts to broker a peace deal, he was assassinated. This occurred on 21 August 1993, the very day the hawkish eradicator Redha Malek was appointed prime-minister. A special unit from the military was believed to have killed him and his security guards.²¹² Surprisingly, his murder was claimed by the GIA.²¹³

Selective mass terror operations

As for the third kind of 'special operations', there is evidence for GIA operations targeting families of the irregular militias as well as those of the Islamist insurgents.

GIA attacks on the families of the militias have been claimed in its publications. For instance, the following report on an attack in Sidi Moussa:

One of the companies of the Group stormed two houses belonging to the despots who fight Allah, His messenger, may Allah's peace and blessing be upon him, and the believers. The mujahideen slaughtered the two families without sparing anyone.²¹⁴

And from Baraki:

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This region saw a series of successful operations, with the help of Allah. These include the killing of a family from the despots.²¹⁵

The direct identification group of the victims (the militias in particular, and the security forces in general) responds to these killings with a heightening of their aggressiveness. From the genuine insurgent audience, these massacres provoke demoralisation and the heightened fear of retaliation on their own families. From the wider community, they stimulate discontent, condemnation, and the rejection of the insurgents.

These massacres were the prelude to the GIA and the militias launching widespread punitive killings of the families of insurgents (those who broke away from the GIA and those of other genuine armed opposition groups (FIDA and AIS)). The GIA claims responsibility for the mass-killings; for instance, this on the attack on Ktiten in the Medea district:

The Mujahideen may Allah protect them attacked the region of Ktiten whose population is known for its staunch support of the apostates of the jaz-ara [Algerianists]. Our brothers executed God's sentence on 31 members of those convicted of being apostates.²¹⁶

The 'convicted' were in fact mainly women and children, all belonging to the family of Ali Benhejar, one of the authors of the jurisprudential document cited above, which documented the crimes of the GIA and led to the revolt nationally against the 'take over by the infiltrated leadership'. Several insurgent groups denounced the GIA's killings of their families.²¹⁷

From the indirect audience, by demonstrating the inability of the insurgents to protect their families and supporters, the punitive mass-terror produced forced submission and control of the wider population. As *Le Figaro* put it, 'every massacre isolates the armed groups from the civilians who used to support them. This turning leads to a discredited guerrilla whose recruitment is suspicious.'²¹⁸ Abroad, mainly presented as Islamist terror, they elicited world-wide horror and condemnation.

Although the killings of the families of the militias and those of insurgents may seem mutually exclusive in purpose, they are in fact complementary actions: part of the same classic 'unconventional terror tactic' used in counter-insurgency warfare. For example, in the chapter entitled 'Tactics against insurgents and terrorists', one finds a list of 'unconventional' counter-guerrilla tactics that include the following prescription:

Counter-insurgency forces need to realise that guerrilla movements normally labour under certain disadvantages which should be exploited at every opportunity [...]. Guerrillas frequently live in fear of violence to themselves and their families. Although this violence might come from government forces, there is often a fear of attack by rival guerrilla groups or in retaliation for a perceived betrayal of the 'movement' for which the fighter is actually risking his life and liberty.²¹⁹

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Random mass terror operations

Finally, the fourth kind of 'special' operation – GIA's indiscriminate mass-terror tactics – is also confirmable.

For instance, insurgent groups denounced GIA operations describing them as 'indiscriminate and random killings', 'bomb attacks in the midst of the civilian population', and 'wholesale killings of children, women and elderly people.'²²⁰

Random maiming and killing operations are claimed in the GIA's own published material: 'an explosive device was planted in one of the civilian cafes resulting in the death of one of the despots'²²¹, and, 'our mujahideen brothers succeeded in destroying a bar in which a new year celebration was being organised.'²²²

During the Algiers bombing campaign^C in Autumn 94, the most deadly car bomb was detonated (on 29 January 1995, at the eve of Ramadan 1995) in front of the *Commissariat Centrale* of Algiers. Casualties numbered forty two dead and two hundred and eighty six injured, included many civilians. The bombing was claimed by the GIA. This kind of mass terror operations, mistakenly called 'blind terrorism' targets, kills and maims anonymous civilians intentionally as representatives of their identification group, in this case the wider population. From this direct audience, the psycho-political response it provoked was disorientation, outrage at, and alienation away from, the insurgents and a security need from, and hence some legitimization of, the incumbent authorities. Abroad it reinforced an already pre-formed international image of barbaric and ideologically corrupt insurgents.

In reference to the bombing campaign in Paris tourist sites and train stations in the summer and autumn 1995, a communiqué entitled 'Comment on the call to Islam to Chirac' and signed by Zitouni stated:

There we are continuing with pride and force our jihad and our military strikes: this time in the heart of France and in the midst of its biggest city to show that, with Allah's favour, our force is bigger than what the enemies of Allah reckoned. It was also made plain that nothing stood in our way as long as the action we sought to carry out was 'a worship of Allah', may He be exalted.²²³

^C On 14 September 1994, a day after the release from prison to house arrest of FIS leaders for talks out of the crisis with representatives of the junta, the GIA expressed its opposition to the talks by restating its 'neither reconciliation, nor dialogue, nor truce' slogan. On 12 October, just as talks began, a car bomb was detonated in Algiers. This bomb was followed by a series of car bombs throughout the autumn. The first bomb in a public space was detonated in Algiers Airport in August 93, a week after the murder of Kasdi Merbah. Though officially blamed on 'Islamists' the trial of the accused reinforced the widely held opinion that it was an attempt of the military regime to achieve a popular swing in world opinion in its favour as 'a bastion against barbarism.'

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In March 1997, the GIA was more specific about the bombings it claimed as can be seen in a document it made public.²²⁴ St Michel RER station on 15 July 1995, Place de l'Etoile on 17 August 1995, Maison Blanche metro station on 6 October 1995 and Musee-d'Orsay RER station on 17 October 1995. Interestingly, the list of bombings claimed in this GIA document includes other bombings which, according to *Libération* of 20 April 1997, never actually took place. In *The Observer*, John Sweeny wrote:

Even some Western analysts question Europe's backing for the Algerian regime. One political analyst said: '*Le pouvoir* has the French government in particular by the balls. They have made secret donations to French parties and politicians, so that they can blackmail them. At one time, five French cabinet ministers had mistresses controlled by the Algerians. And if the French don't play ball, they can bomb Paris.' 'French military intelligence and the DGSE [France's MI6] believe that at least some of the bombs in Paris were put there by terrorists manipulated by *le pouvoir*.' This extraordinary claim is supported by an influential Rand Corporation report.²²⁵

4.3.3 Critique of the Argument

We may begin by noting that the credibility of the proposition (that the GIA is a counter-guerrilla organisation) is supported by the background discussion and the examples presented therein. The fact that counter-guerrilla organisations are standard tactical prescriptions in modern COIN warfare, the training of Algeria's military in French COIN doctrines, the presence in Algeria of French and international mercenaries with counter-guerrilla expertise and combat experience supporting and advising the army, all made the thesis possible, a priori even plausible.

Next, in the preceding section, we first laid out the irregularity, composition and anti-insurgent operational attributes that are necessary and sufficient identifying features of any counter-guerrilla organisation. These attributes are those generally prescribed in modern counter-insurgency doctrines and tactics. We then showed that these attributes do match the body of facts and information currently available about the GIA. It therefore follows that it is justified to hold the view that the institutional identity of the GIA is that of a counter-guerrilla organisation.

Among the criticisms that may be raised against this argument, 'selectivity of the data' with regards to matching the anti-insurgent operational attribute to the facts and information about the GIA seems the only serious objection. The compatibility of the irregularity and composition attributes with the data is obviously unproblematic.

As a matter of fact, one could object that the operational data about the GIA do not include pro-insurgent and anti-incumbent operations which have been 'conveniently' left out in the comparison with the anti-insurgent operational attribute. For instance, various reliable reports exist about GIA

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military operations against the forces of the military regime. These operations have been claimed by the GIA in its publications. But then, why are such kinds of operations not taken into account in comparing the prescriptions of the anti-insurgent operational attribute with the data? Could it be that the counter-guerrilla model does not adequately account for *all* the operational data about the GIA?

In response to this criticism, two points should be considered.

First, on a general note, the execution of pro-insurgent operations concurrently with anti-insurgent ones by the same counter-guerrilla organisation is not a contradiction in terms. As was discussed in the general background (section 4.1), these seemingly mutually incompatible operations are consistent with counter-guerrilla identity and *modus operandi*. It may seem counter-intuitive but incumbent regimes committed to modern counter-insurgency doctrines do allow, for the 'validation' needs of their 'domesticated' guerrillas or for various subversive or political purposes, the killing of their own regular forces. In the particular case of the Algerian military regime, evidence does exist to show that it authorises the killing of its own regular forces for what it considers higher subversive or political purposes. For instance, the former first secretary of the Algerian embassy in Tripoli, Mohamed Larbi Zitout, stated that

Between February and April 1992, the military intelligence deliberately shot dead about 50 traffic policeman to discredit more efficiently the FIS.²²⁶

Le Monde reported the testimony of an Algerian policeman, Fouad, who served the incumbent regime and is now exiled in France:

At the beginning, there were doubts, rumours, and then the first confirmations. At funerals of murdered policemen, their families prevented their colleagues from touching their coffins, telling them 'it is not the Islamists who have killed him, it is you!' The most popular policemen, 'the most just, the most loved' were shot dead 'as if to shock, to make people revolt' [...] On one occasion the soup for 1600 police cadets was poisoned by a policeman. *Ninjas* special commandos were shot dead in their backs though they were backed up by military [...] garrisons. Fouad affirms he pursued a car that had just perpetrated an attack. 'We managed to stick close to it. We were happy. Suddenly we saw it drive into a military intelligence barracks. I reported it on my radio and was told 'mission accomplished, return to the station.' Fouad recounts that on another occasion a commando unit riding a car executed a policeman in the street. 'We had the registration number, the car was going to be identified. Then there was silence in the walkie-talkie. We were told to stop the chase.'²²⁷

One may therefore infer that the military are unlikely not to have sacrificed members of their regular forces for counter-guerrilla 'validation' needs. Clearly then, what gives an anti-insurgent to the operations of a counter-guerrilla organisation is not so much the executing of anti-insurgent

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operations to the exclusion of pro-insurgent ones as much as it is the concurrent carrying out of both activities with the overwhelming preponderance (dominance) of the former over the latter.

Secondly, while part of the GIA's pro-insurgent operations can be accounted for in terms of 'validation' requirements, it is not the case that this explanation accounts for all such operations.

It should be remembered that the thesis being defended here is that it is the GIA post-Gousmi which is a counter-guerrilla organisation. Of course, the GIA has operated as an infiltrated armed opposition group since 1993. The reason our claim does not cover the pre-Zitouni era is that it is only after the tenure of Gousmi that both the compositional profile of the GIA and the proportion of its pro-insurgent operations relative to its anti-insurgent ones changed drastically. This threshold is the precursor to the increasing dominance of 'turned' agents at the top of the GIA's structure, the gradual elimination of genuine pro-insurgent cadres (military, political, religious) and the massive desertions from GIA ranks by politically literate insurgents. The compositional profile of the GIA is now much more like Force K with a dominant membership of security agents, 'turned' and ordinary criminals. The same threshold was followed by a drastic increase in the proportion in the GIA's anti-insurgent operations relative to its pro-insurgent ones. The bulk of the GIA's pro-insurgent operations took place in the pre-Zitouni era; the post-Gousmi era saw a drastic decrease in pro-insurgent operations.

That which accounts for part of the GIA's pro-insurgent operations is simply the presence of genuine insurgent members and groups since the process of transforming the GIA from an infiltrated armed group into a conventional counter-guerrilla institution did not take place, nor consolidate, instantaneously.

In sum then, if one does not ignore the important fact of the evolving nature of the GIA's identity and the time dependence of the scale of the pro-insurgent operations associated with the GIA, then the objection of 'selectivity of the data' with regards to matching the anti-insurgent operational attribute to the data about the GIA fails to undermine the argument supporting the proposition that the institutional identity of the GIA is that of a counter-guerrilla organisation.

4.4 Functional Identity Argument

Instead of identifying the GIA by its institutional properties one may attempt to do so by its type of function. In a functional identification, role, rather than structure, is the basic discriminator. For example, what individu-

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ates ‘a mouse trap’, is not so much its constitutive elements as much as its role.

In an insurgency context, what characterises the purpose of a military force is its strategy. As a means of functional identification, it would therefore be appropriate to infer the strategic patterns that underlie the GIA ideology and activities, pin down the strategic doctrine that fits them, and identify the larger aims it serves.

This exercise pre-requires some acquaintance with the strategic principles of guerrilla as well as counter-insurgency warfare. This is done briefly in section 4.4.1. Section 4.4.2 is devoted to analysing the strategic patterns that underlie the GIA activities. The main ideas are summarised in section 4.4.3.

4.4.1 Guerrilla and Counter-Insurgency Strategies

In low intensity conflicts, the operations of the military contenders are tightly bound to political and psychological imperatives to influence the loyalties of the civilian population.

The strategic postulate of guerrilla warfare is that the civilian and military spheres of activities have to be fused and engaged in struggles whose primary objective is political. The agent of this warfare is the guerrilla, neither soldier nor civilian, but both at the same time: a token of the inextricable link between the combatants and the population.²²⁸

Counter-insurgency (COIN) warfare postulates the *appropriation* and *inversion* of the strategic principles of guerrilla warfare as the most effective doctrine to defeat the insurgent.²²⁹ The revolutionaries have to be fought with their own weapons, on their own grounds.

These fundamental precepts entail sets of guerrilla and COIN strategic principles, typical examples of which can be schematically classified as follows.

4.4.1a Preserving Oneself and Destroying the Opponent

Guerrillas are militarily weak and hence fight strategically defensive and tactically offensive wars. ‘Hit and run’ warfare typical of guerrillas give precedence to preserving the revolutionary forces over conquering territory.

COIN strategy appropriates this principle. For instance it prescribes, especially in the first stages of the insurgency, scaling down operations and/or accelerating army withdrawals until it controls its base areas and the populations dwelling therein, even if it means giving up territory to the insurgents.

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*Intents and Perpetrators***4.4.1b Mobilising the People**

Guerrilla movements usually prescribe the physical and political unity of the movement with the people, and severing the links between the later and the incumbent authorities. Such movements implement this principle through organising, administering, politicising, educating, serving and defending the people. Insurgency movements typically take drastic measures to prevent the guerrillas antagonising the masses who provide political support, information, and human and material resources to the insurgency.

COIN strategy adopts and inverts this principle. It enjoins separating the insurgents from the people and turning the latter into a palisade against the former. This is usually done by neutralising the political and para-political/military organisations and influence of the insurgents, and then further by counter-organising the people into political, para-political and para-military organisations controlled by the incumbents.

4.4.1c International Support for Oneself and Isolation of the Opponent

Typical guerrillas seek international support and aid to their cause. COIN strategy instructs that it is absolutely imperative to ensure the alliance of adjacent countries, wider international support, and the discrediting of the insurgency on the world stage.

4.4.1d Unifying the Efforts

Conventional guerrilla strategy requires that the political, military, diplomatic, propagandist, social and educational efforts should be complementary arms co-ordinating towards a single goal rather than disjoint battlefields. It enjoins unity of planning and direction from the village to national levels.

The same principle is adopted by COIN strategies, which prescribe taking the war to the insurgents at all levels: military, political, diplomatic, psychological and economic, from the village to the international arena. This is usually directed by a centralised command and control structure involving both military and civilian authorities.

4.4.2 Strategic Function of the GIA

One can now analyse the activities of the GIA by the strategic principles just reviewed.

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4.4.2a Destroying Oneself and Preserving the Opponent

The subversive activities discussed in section 4.3.2b and the offensive operations reviewed in section 4.3.2c provide evidence that after the GIA succeeded in incorporating the bulk of the insurgents it set about destroying itself as well as all the insurgent forces that had refused to join in.

On the other hand it acted to preserve the military forces of the incumbent regime. This is borne out by its intelligence work (section 4.3.2a) and various testimonies of groups that broke away from the GIA. For instance, referring to the rule of Zitouni, the company of Medea wrote in its jurisprudential document:

The period when they had usurped the power was characterised by weak leadership of the struggle and the combatants. The military operations were halted and all the commanders able to harm the *taghut* [arrogant oppressor] and sap its foundation were removed. The operations inflicting material and moral damage on the *taghut* were ordered to stop, and in their stead the fire was redirected against the military, political and religious cadres inside and outside Algeria.²³⁰

4.4.2b Demobilising the People

Various kinds of GIA operations sowing conflicts between the insurgents and the people were reviewed in section 4.3.2b. The personal security, property, honour, and religious beliefs of the populations supporting the insurgency were constantly attacked by the GIA. Members of the GIA were impregnated with an ideology excommunicating the Algerian people from Islam. Their political discourse was about negation, exclusion and aimless destruction which alienated the people.²³¹ The GIA massacres discussed in 4.3.2d prompted the target populations to join the armed militias to protect themselves.

In other words the GIA has been both a demobilising agent, severing the bonds between the insurgents and the population, and a counter-mobilisation spur, inciting the latter to join the counter-organisations of the incumbents.

4.4.2c International Isolation for Oneself and Support for the Opponent

The first GIA attack on foreign nationals occurred on 21 September 1993, exactly one week after the FIS set up, overseas, its executive office for foreign affairs. The campaign of killings of foreign nationals, including those of nuns and priests, and the claiming of bomb attacks in Paris in 1995 (see section 4.3.2d) provoked international condemnation in both the Muslim and Western worlds. These actions discredited the whole insurgent movement, not just the GIA. They were seen as barbaric, cruel, and medievalist aggressors with no regard to basic sanctities, hence resulting in international isola-

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tion. They also confirmed the regime's propaganda as the last bastion against an impending terrorist deluge. The bombings in Paris gave a pretext for strengthening 'international co-operation against terrorism'. In countries such as France, Spain, Italy, and Belgium, especially and in addition to the Arab world, this meant banning any form of organised civil, political or intellectual opposition to the military regime.

The GIA literature is replete with pseudo-theological proscriptions of diplomatic work. False scriptural interpretations are marshalled to exclude support from 'Christians', 'Jews', 'Shiites', 'non salafi sunnites', and 'salafis not engaged in jihad'.²³² Even 'salafis engaged in jihad' such as the Libyan and Egyptian armed Islamic groups were excommunicated, for 'being infected by Seyyed Qutb's thoughts', leaving, in actual fact, no one as an actual or potential supporter outside Algeria.²³³ The GIA issued repeated threats against FIS representatives abroad ordering them to cease all activities 'in the name of the struggle in Algeria'.²³⁴ In May 1995, it threatened with death Abdelbaki Sahraoui and Moussa Kraouche (in France), Abdelkader Sahraoui and Rabah Kebir and Abbassi Madani's sons (in Germany), and Anwar Haddam (in the US) if they did not cease issuing statements and meeting officials in host countries within six months.²³⁵ In July 1995 Abdelbaki Sahraoui was assassinated in Paris, inside a mosque, and the GIA claimed responsibility for the killing.²³⁶ The GIA is widely accused, within the insurgent groups, of giving names of insurgency supporters outside Algeria to the DRS.²³⁷

4.4.2d Disintegrating the Efforts

The GIA disjoined military and political activities. There is evidence to show that it de-politicised, in principle and in practice, the insurgency, turning it into a war for its own sake, a criminal enterprise of killing without justification or cause. The GIA targeted its own membership with a pseudo-religious propaganda describing politics as 'an impurity that must be avoided', 'a satanic activity practised by Christians and Jews', a 'trade of blood for chairs'.²³⁸ It drilled unrelentingly that 'the GIA does not need cadres as much as it needs sincere men who love death'.²³⁹ However, the same propaganda instruments proscribing politics as 'a satanic activity' have legitimised it for the GIA leaders:

The GIA is the sole legitimate and guided authority. It orders all Muslims in the regions where it combats to obey its commander who is their legitimate leader. He performs a legislative, judicial, political and military role on behalf of the Caliph.²⁴⁰

Public statements and literature of this force vigorously asserted that 'the GIA is not the armed wing of the FIS'²⁴¹, as if to deprive it of any political advantage in negotiations. They attacked all FIS dialogue initiatives, especially the National Contract signed by the main political parties in Rome in

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1995, as betrayals of its ‘no dialogue, no truce, no reconciliation, and no pact’ motto.²⁴² It went to great length to attack the earlier electoral victories of the FIS and also the integrity of its leaders. For instance the GIA repeatedly denounced the ‘deviancies and atheism of the polytheistic democratic elections’²⁴³ and, referring to the FIS electoral victories, it condemned ‘those who have called for the triumph of God’s religion with multi-party democracy’ because ‘in truth they support the heretical doctrine and polytheistic way.’²⁴⁴ The GIA also pursued a campaign of attacks on the moral character and religious integrity of the FIS leadership describing them as ‘freaks’, ‘deviants’, ‘madmen’, ‘double-minded’, ‘heretics’ for example.²⁴⁵

On the media front the GIA was reported to have dismantled many propaganda instruments of the FIS and other insurgent groups (e.g. the weeklies *Minbar Al Jum’u’a* (The Friday Pulpit), *Al-Rayya* (The Standard), *Al Itissam* (The Stronghold), the radio-station *Al Wafa* (The Fidelity)).²⁴⁶ On the other hand it imposed its own literature (communiqués, and periodicals such as *Al Ansar* (The Supporters) and *Al Jamaa* (The Group) periodicals) as the sole reading material allowed in the *maquis*.²⁴⁷ When Zitouni took over the GIA he reportedly decreed that all books (including classical Islamic texts on theological exegesis, jurisprudence, politics and military ethics), newspapers, and pamphlets be discarded or destroyed; he only allowed his pamphlet and GIA literature as reading material.²⁴⁸ Insurgent individuals and groups who had undergone this ideological drilling before they left the GIA describe its content as ‘attacking rational thought and decision-making’, ‘sowing schisms and ideological dissension’, ‘creating doubts on the veracity of Islam’, and ‘channelling attention to trivial religious matters and issues irrelevant to the insurgency.’²⁴⁹ They describe the effects it had on them as ‘demoralisation’, ‘despair’, ‘loss of confidence’, ‘disorientation’ and ‘fear’.²⁵⁰

4.4.3 Summary

The pattern that stands out from this analysis is that the GIA violates the basic strategic principles of guerrilla warfare and implements those of COIN warfare. The function of the GIA is to execute COIN strategy whose larger aim is to crush the insurgency.

In other words, if guerrilla leaders and strategists, say Vietnamese Ho Chi Minh, Chinese Mao Tse Tong, or Algerian Emir Abdelkader (1832-1847) or Krim Belkacem (1954-1962) were to analyse the GIA they would not describe it as an ‘insurgent’ or ‘revolutionary’, nor ‘guerrilla’ organisation, as does, for instance, the Algerian regime, the US Department of State, Agence France Presse, Reuters, or some ‘experts’ on terrorism. It performs quite the opposite role, that of a counter-guerrilla irregular force.

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4.5 Assessment of the Counter-Guerrilla Hypothesis

Before spelling out alternative hypotheses about the identity of the GIA, general comments about the counter-guerrilla hypothesis are in order.

First, in our survey of media material and analytical works on the GIA, we came across only two claims that defend the counter-guerrilla thesis. Attaf and Giudice suggested:

What the French experts managed to do, using methods learned from their lost combat against Vietnamese communists, their Algerian likes are improving on it today. False 'Islamist *maquis*', which are in fact *maquis*... of the army, correspond to the false *maquis* set up by the French [...]. Yesterday this was called 'Force K' for instance. Today it is called 'GIA'.²⁵¹

Attaf and Giudice did not provide detailed arguments to support their view of the GIA but their historically informed intuition and analogy guided them to what is, in our opinion, the first correct appraisal of the GIA's identity to be published. Abdelhamid Brahimi, former prime-minister of Algeria, also pointed out that:

The GIA is an invention of the military intelligence, a bit like the GAL [Anti-terrorism Groups of Liberation] in Spain when Felipe Gonzalez was in power. The GAL in Spain is like a Spanish GIA to fight the ETA [Euskadi Ta Askatasuna – Basque Homeland and Freedom Group]. The GIA was thus created to fight the FIS. Naturally, their first target was the AIS and then the poor peasants who voted for FIS.²⁵²

Secondly, to hold the view that the GIA is a counter-guerrilla entity is to recognise that there is an integrated set of assumptions (i.e. the principles and modus operandi of counter-guerrilla organisation and warfare) that effectively order the accumulated yet unsorted facts and observations that are indicative of the GIA's identity into a coherent picture. This model of the GIA's identity has explanatory value because it fits the body of detailed facts and observation and because – in the same way a map would do – it increases our understanding of the GIA's identity by reducing the number of facts taken as independent.

Thirdly, just as a map can give more information than was needed to construct it, this model is larger than the observations that gave rise to it. It has deductive consequences other than those it was constructed to explain, some of which are new particulars that can be tested.

Among the various consequences one can deduce from assuming that the GIA is a counter-guerrilla organisation, consider for instance the explanatory value of the notion of 'frozen area' in elucidating a puzzling class of events: GIA operations in contiguity with, yet unopposed by, the regular forces.

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For example, there is the enigma of the killings at road-blocks, manned by ‘bearded men’, in between close road-blocks set up by regular forces of the army. In the past six years thousands of car or bus passengers were randomly slaughtered or machine-gunned in road-blocks set up in the most militarised districts of the country.²⁵³ There is compelling testimonial evidence that these ‘false road-blocks’ operated in close proximity to security forces. *Libération* (from France) published, for instance, the testimony of Samir whose brother, an executive in a power station, had been killed by *gendarmes*.

In the summer of 1993, Samir’s younger brother refused to service the houses of gendarmes. He paid for refusing to get involved in corrupt practises. One night, his house was surrounded by five men. His back was burnt and he was finished off with a bullet in his head. ‘Those who killed my brother did not know he had a professional telephone for communicating with his colleagues. For four hours, throughout the attack, he was in touch with his assistant who was alerting the army, the police, the police headquarters... No one came, no one moved.’ A few days after the burial, Samir went back with a van to collect things from the burnt house. ‘There I saw the unthinkable: a false road-blocks, then a real one, one kilometre away from the first. My brother’s assistant told me, trembling, it was the *gendarmes* who killed my brother.’²⁵⁴

Amnesty International also reported that:

Most massacres have taken place around the capital in the Algiers, Blida and Medea regions in the most heavily militarised part of the country. In many cases massacres, often lasting several hours, took place only a very short distance, a few kilometres or even a few hundred meters away from army and security forces barracks and outposts. [...] That the security forces have not intervened during the massacres is also a fact, which is not disputed by the Algerian authorities.²⁵⁵

Referring to the massacres in the summer of 1997, *Libération* pointed out

Just as the patterns of assailants – Islamic groups according to the press and the authorities – are always the same, the behaviour of the security forces is strangely repetitive too. The latter intervene only several hours after the crimes. At Rais, there was a small garrison a few hundred metres from the killing. Immediately next to Beni Messous, there are at least 4 military concentrations. The massacre of Friday night took place 200 meters away from the *caserne du train* (military transport centre) and the headquarters of the military intelligence, and 300 meters away from two bases, that of the *gendarmerie* and the airbase for special paratroopers. This led even the press controlled by the authorities to ask many questions. As a matter of fact, how can one explain that terrorists move freely in several lorries, massacre civilians for several hours, abduct and kidnap women and leave without being challenged? All this happens at the door of a capital whose outskirts are tightly patrolled.²⁵⁶

Now if one believes, as is argued here, that the GIA is a counter-guerrilla organisation, then the unintelligible fact of the frequent occurrence of ‘GIA road-blocks and massacres’ in close proximity to passive regular forces finds

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its no-miracle explanation in the counter-guerrilla concept of 'frozen area'. In the case of the Rhodesian insurgency, the 'frozen area' rule was applied to co-ordinate between the Selous Scouts pseudo-guerrillas and the regular forces. A document of the Rhodesian military states:

A frozen area is a clearly defined area, in which Security Forces are precluded from operating, other than along main roads. Army security forces already in an area to be declared 'frozen' will be withdrawn from such an area by the time stipulated in the signal intimating that such an area is to be 'frozen'. This signal must be acknowledged by the recipient. The above ruling also applies to all armed members of the Services and Government Departments with the exception of: a) Those personnel tasked to operate exclusively along the Cordon Sanitaire b) Those personnel stationed at Protective or Consolidated Villages and establishments provided with a permanent guard in which case they are restricted to 1000 metres from the perimeter of such establishments. c) In the event of a vehicle breakdown, ambush or mine deterioration on the main road within a Frozen area those personnel involved are to remain in close proximity to their transport.²⁵⁷

In other words, an operational co-ordination between the GIA and the regular forces, as prescribed in COIN management procedures for counter-guerrilla forces, may well account for these puzzles.

Fourthly and finally, note that this hypothesis about the GIA's identity is actually testable. If, as is assumed here, the GIA is a counter-guerrilla force, then there must exist publicly accessible data, in the form of both material and testimonial evidence, to confirm conclusively the nature and structure of the institutional relationship between the GIA and the DRS. We would consider this hypothesis decisively refuted if a competent international investigation failed to come up with material and testimonial evidence confirming that the GIA is a COIN appendage of the DRS, under the ultimate command of major-General Mohamed Mediene.

5. Alternative Theses on the GIA's Identity

Of course, alternative hypotheses may be conjectured to account for the body of accumulated facts that are indicative of GIA's institutional identity. In the literature on the GIA, one encounters three other main views. The GIA is alternatively held to be an 'Islamic guerrilla force', i.e. the received view discussed in section 2, a 'Kharidjite sect' and an 'anti-social movement.' We briefly discuss and evaluate the evidential support for, and explanatory value of, the latter two.

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5.1 The GIA is a Kharidjite Sect

In Islamist writings attempting to pin down the identity of the GIA, one commonly finds a class of denotations highlighting either its ideological particularity (e.g. 'Kharidjite' or 'Hijra-Takfir') or its inclusion of (or control by) '*mukhabarat*' (DRS) agents.

The spread of testimonial reports and the objective support of the GIA to the COIN campaign make transparent why such writings would refer to the GIA as infiltrated or *mukhabarat*, it is less clear why the GIA is referred to as 'Kharidjite'.

The Kharidjite denotation is a reference to one of the earliest sects in Islamic history (8th century) which, according to some views^D, emerged as a dissent against Imam Ali's acceptance of arbitration during the battle of Siffin. Originally made up of warriors mainly from the Tamim tribe, led by an obscure soldier named `Abd-Allah b. Wahb al-Rasibi, it progressed into some kind of popular movement as an increasing number of soldiers deserted Imam Ali's army to join 'those who went out', whence the name Kharidjite^E. This movement, though momentarily defeated by Imam Ali in the battle of an-Nahrawan, continued and manifested itself in resurgent armed insurrections which destabilised the Eastern part of the Muslim lands during the last two years of the Caliphate of Imam Ali. Some historians see these Kharidjite armed insurrections as having contributed to Moawiya's victory over Ali and their continued resurgence under Ummayyad rule as having aided the Abbassids' defeat of the Ummayyads.

From a doctrinal point of view, the original and subsequent Kharidjite are said not to have had a unified set of doctrines but to have shared two distinctive doctrines. First, a rejection of the legitimacy of Imam Ali's Caliphate and a condemnation of Uthman's conduct. Secondly, while the original Kharidjite movement branded as apostate or infidel whoever did not disown Ali and Uthman, subsequent manifestations of Kharidjite did the same for whoever did not accept their point of view on a variety of other self-defining issues. One may speak of their rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith without works and their regarding a Muslim as *murtad* (apostate), *kafir* (infidel) or *mushrik* (polytheist) for moral shortcomings, *ma'siyya* or *kabira* (minor or major sins) – which, according to the Quran and prophetic traditions, are considered as not entailing excommunication – or for simply resid-

^D There are other views that do not see a connection between the origin of the Kharidjites and the issue of arbitration at the battle of Siffin. The view expressed here is reported from C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, B. Lewis and C.H. Pellat (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, Brill & Leiden Publishers, The Netherlands 1991, p. 1074.

^E There is an alternative view that associates Kharidjite with the idea of their leaving the community of believers.

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ing in the *dar el harb* (i.e. Muslim territories under the authority of a ruler they consider as infidel).

In terms of attitude and behaviour, historical accounts associate the Kharidjite with cruelty, as they committed countless murders, especially not sparing women, with extremism and intolerance towards Muslims and a relative benevolence towards non-Muslims. Some historians view the Kharidjite's extremism, intolerance and schismatic mentality as the cause of endless religious disputes and splits within their ranks and as having chiefly contributed to the failures of the Kharidjite guerrilla wars.

Undoubtedly, given that the GIA holds doctrines of *takfir* (excommunication) resembling those of the early Kharidjite and since the GIA's guerrilla nature and indiscriminate use of violence against the Muslim population prompts parallels with the armed insurrectionary aspect of the Kharidjite's political history, the identification of the GIA as 'Kharidjite' seems plausible. In fact, there have been arguments put forward to justify this identification. These arguments involve two main steps.

First, they justify the view of Kharidjism as a trans-historical phenomenon rather than one confined to the early history of Islam. For instance, Srour²⁵⁸ appeals to the authority of the Prophetic saying:

Zaid ibn Wahb Al-Jahani was in the army that set out to fight the Karidjites and heard Ali saying: I heard Allah's Apostle saying, 'in the last days of this world there will appear young foolish people who will use (in their claim) the best speech of all people (i.e. the Qur'an) and they will abandon Islam as an arrow going through the game. Their belief will not go beyond their throats (i.e. they will have practically no belief), so wherever you meet them, kill them, for he who kills them shall get a reward on the Day of Resurrection.'²⁵⁹

to justify this interpretation. The trans-historical nature of the Kharidjite phenomenon is also justified by appealing to the authority of Imam Ali's interpretation:

Ali Ibn Abi Taleb, may Allah be pleased with him, said, after he had been told that the whole army of the Kharidjites was annihilated: many more Kharidjites will be born and whenever they gather under a leader and a banner they will be killed till their last generation will be forced to lead the life of robbers and thieves.²⁶⁰

The second stage of these arguments consists in demonstrating that the membership of the GIA, its doctrines and practices, match the characteristic attributes of the Kharidjite, as described in the prophetic sayings or as classified by classical jurists, such as Ibn Taymiyya. For instance, in his argument by correspondence, Srour's paper mainly emphasises the youthfulness and ignorance of the members of the GIA, their doctrines of excommunication, their practices of killing Muslims (men and women) and

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sparing anti-Muslim forces as the key attributes that would identify the GIA as Kharidjite.

Probing the justifiability of this identification pre-requires an expertise in Islamic jurisprudence, textual analysis, and the body of *hadith* literature (prophetic traditions) and its interpretation as well as in eschatology, all of which are beyond the scope of the present discussion. However, assuming that this identification is justified, one finds that it extends one's understanding of the GIA but it raises several problems.

Identifying the confusing GIA with the well-understood historical Kharidjite allows Islamists to make inferences about the former on the basis of the latter and hence makes the former a less unfamiliar entity. It recognises precisely the doctrines of the GIA and locates them within the wider body of doctrines of the deviant sects known in the history of Islam. This specification of the ideological particularity of the GIA is its main strength. It also fits some facts such as the youthful, unspiritual, uneducated, extremist, intolerant, schismatic nature associated with part of the membership of GIA as well as the guerrilla war and criminal forms of its actions. In sum then, these inferences about the GIA, on the basis of the doctrines and political history of the Kharidjite, do fit some facts and make the GIA a less unfamiliar entity.

But familiarity should be distinguished from explanation. The Kharidjite hypothesis has a number of shortcomings and raises several questions. For instance, even if one puts the issue of the evolving nature of the GIA aside, this hypothesis ignores the DRS and the 'turned' components whose presence within the GIA is established. It fails to explain the specific and detailed forms that the GIA operations take. These are important features indicative of the GIA's identity. Moreover, this identification also fails to account for the common political and strategic patterns that underlie the GIA operations. It is one thing to recognise the similarity between the anti-Muslim nature of the armed insurrections of the historical Kharidjite and the anti-Islamic guerrilla warfare of the GIA, but it is quite another thing to explain why the strategic patterns that underlie its operations are such that they serve to implement the COIN strategy of the incumbent authorities.

Of course, most of the communications that identify the GIA as Kharidjite also refer to it as infiltrated by DRS agents. But none says how these two entities may be related conceptually, organisationally, operationally and functionally. In these accounts, the emphasis is sometimes on the Kharidjite character and some other times on the military intelligence feature, depending on the sets of facts needing explanation, as if they were somehow incongruous, indissoluble identities that cannot be integrated.

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In addition to these problems, the identification of the GIA as Kharidjite raises further questions. For instance, how should one interpret the trans-historical nature of the Kharidjite phenomenon?

One could interpret this trans-historicity as meaning that every manifestation of Kharidjite-like insurgents is inevitable, spontaneous, and natural in the sense of being an expression of a regularity of history. But this view is hard to defend. Arab regimes have an interest in artificially engineering, or catalysing Kharidjite-like movements in order to lengthen their survival. Extremist groups provide them with a domestic and international legitimacy (they otherwise lack) as a bulwark against anarchy, bigotry and terror. Any psychological warfare department can engineer them by impregnating susceptible target groups with the old Kharidjite doctrines.^F These social, political, and ideological manipulations undermine the ‘naturalness’ that one would ascribe to any Kharidjite manifestation under the interpretation of trans-historicity we just mentioned.

To sum up this discussion, our conclusion is that the ‘Kharidjite’ and ‘*mukhabarat*’ denotations do reflect a few salient characteristics of the GIA but they stand fragmented and, in our view, fail to fit, summarise and explain the wider set of facts indicative of its institutional and functional identity.

5.2 The GIA is an Anti-Social Movement

The hypothesis that the GIA is an anti-social movement, or various of its slightly different versions, has appeared in some French writings. Unlike much of what is written in the largely islamophobic mass media in France, these writings appear as objective social inquiry.

This hypothesis about the identity of the GIA emerges from various argumentative schemes seeking to interpret Islamist ‘political violence and terrorism’ as excessive forms of action due to a lack of social actors, as deriving from an inversion process. In the sociology of political violence and terrorism, there is a theory that claims there are forms of terrorism that are the outcome of *inversion*.²⁶¹ Inversion is taken to denote the process through which a collective action drifts away from both its inceptive ideals as well as

^F These regimes oversee the situational conditions under which extremist movements often emerge. Cultural alienation, political dictatorship, economic deprivation and social disintegration constitute a structurally violent environment which dislocates human lives and produces people with feelings of powerlessness and isolation, and unable to find opportunities to make their lives worthy and meaningful. It is the people who experience most acutely these alienating feelings who have been most susceptible to extremist ideologies. The *mukhabarat* (military intelligence) of some Arab regimes have impregnated selected inmates in prisons by feeding them with reading material on the doctrines of the historical Kharidjites. (Abdurrahman ben Mu'ala al-Luwayhaq, *Al Ghulu fi-Deen fi Hayat al Muslimeen al Mu'assira* (Religious Extremism in the Contemporary Muslim World), Mua-ssassat ar-Rissala, Beyrouth, 1992 and Na'aman 'abd errezaq Assamirai, *Atakfir, Judburabu, Asbabuhu wa Mubarinatuhu* (Excommunication, its History, Causes and Justifications), Al Manara, Beyrouth, 1986).

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the population on behalf of which it claims to be acting, ending into ‘organised practice of indiscriminate and irredeemable violence.’ It is said to involve a gradual loss of meaning and an estrangement from the social movement whose views the armed group claims to be voicing; those who previously suffered on behalf of people oppressed by a system drift away from their ideals and become scornful, dismissive and negative of people’s existence, needs and expectations and turn into criminals outside their group as well as within it. Within this framework, terrorism therefore derives from inversion, i.e. the collapse of a social movement into its negation, an anti-social movement. There are three features which are said to distinguish an anti-social movement. In an anti-social movement, the political actor or arm bearer:

1) Construes (and speaks about) the people – on behalf of whom he claims to act – as an abstract and ideological construct and not as a concrete, human and social entity. This is the *identity* condition.

2) Inverts opposition from fellow members into betrayal and that from social adversaries into total enmity. This is the *opposition* condition.

3) Has neither the wish to create a new society, nor the vision to transform it and his actions are never constructive or future-directed but aim exclusively at the destruction of the existing order as the ultimate end. He inverts the relationship between violence and politics; his violence is expressive rather than instrumental, an end in itself rather than a means to an end, spontaneous rather than rational. This is the *totality* condition.

It is this sociological perspective, or some of its journalistic versions, that some authors have applied to interpret the ‘political violence and terrorism’ in Algeria, in general, and that of the GIA, in particular. Labat, a representative figure of such a view, asks

When the ambition of a fraction of the armed groups is [...] not so much the management of an instrumental violence as it is a ‘blind’ violence, and, as the conflict gets entrenched, some groups linked to the FIS gradually lost sight of the initial aim of the struggle, thus evolving similarly to the GIA, should one speak of a *dérive terroriste* [terrorist drift]?²⁶²

Within this perspective, the argumentative strategy often put forward, as does Labat, to substantiate this sociological interpretation of the ‘political violence and terrorism’ associated with the GIA can be broken down into three steps:

a) Put forward a delineation of the social dislocation of the FIS following the coup d’état;

b) Throw out a narrative for the emergence, or actually take over, of the GIA, and an outline of the social recombination processes underlying it;

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c) Argue that the GIA is an anti-social movement.

In Labat's account, these three steps are meant to demonstrate the collapse of the FIS into an anti-social movement (the GIA) and hence account for the 'political violence and terrorism' of the GIA. Although, for the purposes of this section, only the argument that the GIA is an anti-social movement, i.e. argument c), is of central relevance, a brief sketch of the full argument is important for the evaluation and criticism of Labat's view later.

First, the social dislocation of the FIS following the coup d'état of January 1992 is described as a fracture between the cultural and institutionally integrated component of FIS, on the one hand, and its labour, social and least integrated component, on the other, or – as Labat puts it – between its 'institutionalised elite' and its 'proletarianised elite'.^G The decapitation of most of its leadership (repressed, broken down and dispersed by the regime), the failure of its electoral strategy and its unpreparedness for an armed struggle are said to have left what remained of the local and national officials divided and marginalised. This dislocated the movement.

The second step deals with the recombination of individuals and groups that fragmented away from the FIS or had existed outside it into the GIA. Labat's main point is that it is those that were the least integrated into the FIS and the socially marginalised and excluded youth that recombined under the MIA and most importantly the GIA. Labat asserts

The subordinate cadres of the party, those who were marginalised by the electoral strategy developed in the three years of FIS electoral existence, provided the first battalions to the armed groups after the electoral process had been interrupted. As the repression of the regime became more systematic and severe, numerous actors, peripheral to the social movement, came to picture the social scene only as a battlefield.²⁶³

The social recombination under the GIA, according to Labat, consists of those least disposed to submit to the authority of the FIS and those least rooted and accountable to society: 'the most troubled actors and those least integrated to the party', 'Afghans', 'Hijra-Takfir' groups in addition to

A majority of elements sharing a common exclusion that makes them the figure-heads of the under-urbanised Algeria: unemployed, *trabendistes*, the excluded from the educational system, actors that represent a social movement whose surge onto the political scene takes mainly the form of a violence against the State. This violence is the terrain into which they transfer their quest for new forms of collective

^G Labat claims: 'Is it enough to interpret the spiral of violence suffered by Algeria simply as the substitution of the participatory logic of the FIS up to 1992 with the military option of the armed groups? Should it not be seen as the effect of the polarisation of the Islamist party into two irreducible trends as a result of the tension between the revolutionary aspirations of its proletarianised elite and the conservative disposition of its institutionalised elite?' S. Labat, 'Le FIS à l'épreuve de la lutte armée', in R. Leveau (ed.), *L'Algérie dans la guerre*, Complexe, Paris 1995, p. 87.

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identity. The armed Islamic groups also know how to make their interest converge with those of local clientelist networks. They get the rallying, or at least the support, of bands of delinquents whose anti-state postures and thirst 'to smash cops' they convert into forms of politico-religious crime.²⁶⁴

Labat does not fail to mention, too briefly though, the infiltration of the GIA by the DRS.²⁶⁵ In Labat's account, this is an incidental detail, irrelevant to her supporting arguments and her *terrorist drift* thesis.

The final step in Labat's argumentative scheme is to claim the GIA is an anti-social movement. For this, she argues that the GIA instantiates the features proper to anti-social movement. In Labat's view, the GIA construes the popular base as a purely abstract and ideological construct and not as a concrete human resource to mobilise:

The GIA are a distorted image of the social movement once expressed through the FIS. They are caught in a drift that leads them to perceive the social and political scene in an ultra-ideological and bellicose mode. Increasingly distant from its original social references, the violence of the GIA becomes a direct and exclusive confrontation with the state and feeds its own dynamics.²⁶⁶

This purports to show that GIA meets the identity condition of an anti-social movement. Labat further describes the notion of opposition within the GIA in the following terms:

The social and political adversary, in this case the regime and its representatives or associates, is demonised – enemy of Islam, unbelievers in the pay of Christian crusaders and Jews – whereas the partisan gets ascribed a meta-social identity.²⁶⁷

Furthermore, Labat considers that the GIA has no political perspective other than to overthrow the existing regime. She says 'the morbid drift of the GIA confirms that the means tend to get confused with the end.'²⁶⁸ She also argues that the armed violence of the GIA is expressive rather than instrumental: 'the GIA puts an alternative logic in place: an action is not judged by its possible outcomes but according to its conformity with the cause it is supposed to defend.'²⁶⁹ Labat equally asserts:

As carriers of a '*culture sauvage*' [savage culture] that diffused into the compost fertilised by the FIS, these former sympathisers of the party are at the borders between militancy and crime, and see in the handling of weapons the means to enhance their local symbolic and material capital.²⁷⁰

This last claim combines with those Labat makes above about the GIA's identity and opposition conditions to complete the argument that identifies the GIA as an anti-social movement.

Is Labat's thesis correct? Although Labat does not provide adequate evidence to support this thesis, some of its content happens to be in fact correct.

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Labat neither reads nor understands Arabic and provides no evidential support for her claims: no data about, or interviews with, members of the GIA is given, not even an analysis based on literature published by the GIA is presented.

But some of the claims Labat makes are correct. In so far as the GIA has comprised a 'Hijra-Takfir' membership, 'Afghan veterans' and some marginalised youth, this component of the GIA manifests indeed the identity and opposition principles of an anti-social movement. These principles may be regarded as analogues, in sociological terms, of 'Hijra-Takfir' or 'Kharidjite' doctrines, on the basis of the testimonial reports of the various break away insurgent groups in Algeria, and the GIA literature.^H In other words, there has indeed been a component of the GIA that displays the attributes of an anti-social movement.

But the GIA has also comprised other components which Labat ignores without any justification. Labat ignores the fact that the GIA also comprised, at some stage, a substantial number of elements she would classify as 'institutionalised elite' of the FIS, for instance Mohamed Said, Abderezzak Redjam, and members of society who would hardly qualify as marginalised (professionals from all walks of life, deserting soldiers and officers etc.). Likewise, Labat regards the presence of members of the security forces infiltrated within the GIA as insignificant and incidental despite strong testimonial and circumstantial evidence to the contrary. Similarly, the existence of 'turned' guerrillas within it is not accounted for. These components of the GIA can hardly be associated with an anti-social movement.

Furthermore, it is obvious that highlighting these unjustifiably ignored components seriously undermines Labat's claim that the GIA's violence is expressive rather instrumental. Quite apart from the objection that one cannot separate expressiveness from instrumentality in any violent action, the evidence that Labat, Khelladi and Martinez present is either lacking or selective.^I First, one needs only read GIA published literature to find explicit ref-

^H One has to rely on testimonies from insurgents inside Algeria because it is not at all clear whether relying exclusively on GIA published material is sufficient for showing that the GIA is an anti-social movement. The reason is that, even if one takes this inversion framework of analysis for granted, one would need to establish whether it is these ideological features which led GIA members into terrorist actions. Although the GIA has comprised a membership committed to 'Hijra-Takfir' ideology, a careful scrutiny of the GIA published literature in the light of events shows that a substantial part of the GIA's beliefs and doctrines appear as *post-facto* justification for various violent actions. Furthermore, the fact that the main ideologues of the GIA, e.g. Abu Muss'ab Assury, Abu Qutada Al Falistini, and Abu Hamza Al Misri, are not Algerians, have never lived in Algeria, and are widely regarded as linked to Arab intelligence agencies, further undermines relying solely GIA published material to relate the GIA's ideology to the social status and consciousness of its membership in Algeria.

^I Khelladi makes the claim that 'it is a new Islamism that is not so much after destroying a state as it is after purifying its soul by killing. It is the expiatory jihad, the ritual of blood, the sullied body that is slaughtered, mutilated, at which they go unrelentingly. It is the impossible redemption that the released violence confirms [...] The violence of Islamic groups is deliberately primitive, barbarian, irra-

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erence to strategies, and hence instrumentality, of violence.²⁷¹ Secondly, one may grant that say a small number of schools are destroyed by frustrated youths. But is the organised destruction of several hundreds of schools expressive and not instrumental violence? Is the organised mass-killing of the civilian population and the well planned selective elimination of the ‘institutionalised elite’ within the GIA expressive and not instrumental violence? Is the perpetration of massacres and bombings within areas of specific political geography and against specific target-groups expressive and not instrumental violence? Is the kidnapping of priests, killing of specific foreigners, rape of women expressive and not instrumental violence? Labat empties the GIA's violence from its instrumental content, which was shown to serve, in fact, a COIN strategic function.

The last but not least failure in Labat's account is the lack of attention to the time-dependence of the compositional profile of the GIA even though there is good evidence that the relative presence and distribution of these various components within it changed drastically over time. Reducing the GIA to one of its sub-components, and freezing it within a particular period, precludes various questions that would undermine the rather simplistic *terrorist drift* thesis. For instance one thinks of the break-away from the GIA of most genuine insurgent groups and individuals after the uncovering of the DRS infiltration, manipulations and killings of its most competent members (‘institutionalised elite’) were uncovered. Perhaps this should be described, in Labat's terms, as a *dérive anti-terroriste*, an anti-terrorist drift.

Borrowing such terms would not, however, be a good idea. Beyond the substantive deficiencies and failures of the *dérive terroriste* thesis as applied to the GIA, it is the framework of analysis within which it lies that requires careful scrutiny. Refuting the thesis without questioning the unspoken pre-suppositions intrinsic to this framework only re-asserts it by the back door. A few points need to be made.

First, this framework is not clear even about its basic objects of enquiry: ‘terrorism’ and ‘violence’. Within it, they denote vague and ideologically and politically evaluative categories open to dispute, rather than particular sets of facts, or specific and detailed patterns of violent acts.

Besides, inversion theories of terrorism are not explanatory, as some practitioners, such as Labat, hold them to be. They are also not testable.

tional. It does not kill, it shows, exposes, and demonstrates.’ (see A. Khelladi, ‘Les islamistes Algériens’, in *Les Temps Modernes*, No 580, January and February, 1995, p. 151). Martínez also claims that the GIA's violence is more a statement of deprivation, rejection and misery suffered by the militants (i.e. an expression of a class consciousness) than an instrument for attaining some goal: ‘the destruction of schools by armed groups [...] is due not just to the content of the taught courses, seen to be against quranic injunctions, but also to the frustration felt by the mujahideen against a system that excluded them too early [in their lives].’ (see L. Martínez, ‘L'enivrement de la violence: ‘dijhad’ dans la banlieue d'Alger’, in R. Leveau (ed.), *L'Algérie dans la guerre*, Complexe, Paris 1995, op. cit., p. 69).

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They do not assign causes nor do they provide sets of integrated assumptions that would account for *specific* cases of violence. What they provide is assignments of meanings, interpretations imputing subjective states (motives, dispositions etc.) to human agents participating in 'violent' actions. These putative states are in general not publicly ('inter-subjectively') accessible and hence not verifiable, as is the case in Labat's account.

Even so, this is not to say that inversion theories, with their stress on the subjective rationale of violence, would not be useful accounts if they were complemented by analyses from other perspectives such as the political or strategic ones.^J But in Labat's analysis the strategic perspective is given no consideration at all.

Clearly, the pre-suppositions that direct Labat's identification of the object of inquiry, her choice of method, perspective and, as was discussed earlier, her way of identifying facts and assessing evidence are highly selective. They direct attention to certain selected portions of the wider content of the Algerian war reality, and they deflect it away from some others. After all, state terrorism or violence, although much more destructive in Algeria and elsewhere, are poorly researched objects of inquiry. Labat, like most 'experts in terrorism studies', shows no interest in analysing and accounting for state involvement in the GIA, and in state terrorism in Algeria in general. The pre-suppositions that direct Labat's choice of method and perspective in her study of the GIA are not inevitable. For example, in 'terrorism studies' in European societies a distinction is often made between leftist terrorism and rightist terrorism. Leftist terrorism is said to proceed from the collapse of an idealistic movement into an anti-social movement, to project itself from below, to be anarchic. Rightist terrorism, on the other hand, has been tied to secret services, the police and crime (a hand of the state or some of its leaders), to work from above, to be authoritarian. The equivalent distinction in an insurgency context would be that between an anti-social movement and a counter-guerrilla force. But Labat ignores this well-known distinction.

^J To highlight this point one may think of the following example. In so far as modern military or paramilitary forces are indoctrinated (as part of their training)

- 1) into believing that they are a special elite acting on behalf of abstract and meta-social constructs (the Nation, National Security etc.) rather than on behalf of concrete, human constituencies,
- 2) into objectivising opposition into total enmity, into targets to be attacked and destroyed,
- 3) into championing absolutes (do-or-die attitudes), and the destruction of the target (property, people or system) as an ultimate end.

it is legitimate to say that they embody the defining attributes of an anti-social movement. But then it is obvious that to account for the specific 'violent' or 'terror' actions of any such force, it is just not enough to invoke the three principles above (identity, opposition and totality). One would need to understand the strategies and tactics involved to be able to account properly for the patterns of such actions.

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One may speculate on the political values and interests at work behind the pre-suppositions and orientation of this kind of sociological inquiry into the nature of the GIA. The *dérive terroriste* has obvious consequences in terms of war policy recommendation. In Labat's reductive account, the violence of the GIA appears as having both a social source and character, as empty of political and strategic content, and as unconnected with the military regime, and even less with the French government whose COIN experts advise and supervise Algeria's generals. Discourses on violence being strongly normative, this account depoliticises and criminalises the wider insurgent violence by implication and it sanctions state violence, and French support to it, by omission.^K

The value-oriented bias of Labat's inquiry into 'Islamist terrorism' is unfortunately not just an aberrant exception; it is in fact typical of studies posturing as objective inquiries into the phenomena of violence in the international order, what the philosopher Alexander George calls the discipline of terrorology.²⁷² In a critical survey of such studies about conflicts in Latin America, Indonesia, Africa and the Middle-East, Herman and Sullivan have shown that they ignore wilfully large scale state terror and state sponsored terror and deflect and impose the terrorist charge on the victimised populations.²⁷³ As George put it, 'the reader's gaze is directed away from the complicity and responsibility of his or her own government for the 'tragic situation' and towards more convenient targets.'²⁷⁴ Referring to the discipline of terrorology and the underlying value and interest orientations of its research efforts, Herman and Sullivan asserted that,

Western governments and business firms do underwrite such intellectual efforts, and they want data and analyses pertinent to their needs in confronting their perceived enemies, who are rebels and restive under-classes, rather than right-wing governments engaging in large-scale torture and killings, or Western organised and funded insurgents attacking disfavoured states. The definition, models of 'terrorism', and appropriately selective focus of attention follow accordingly.²⁷⁵

In their exhaustive analysis of the political economy of terrorology, what they call 'terrorism as ideology and cultural industry', Herman and Sullivan argue that in order to maintain access, control and privileged positions in the Third World, in the face of nationalist and popular upheavals, governments and corporate multinationals develop and sponsor institutes and think-tanks whose business is to produce and justify policy recommendations on 'terrorism' and to manufacture, refine and distribute ideological instruments of propaganda: information, disinformation, selected facts, analyses and perspectives on the topic of 'terrorism'. These are then disseminated to the public by the mass media through interviews, articles, books etc. by selected

^K This is also the case for the writings of Kepel, Leveau, Galissot, Khelladi, Martinez and Raufer. These will be analysed in detail in a forthcoming publication.

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analysts and intellectuals directly or indirectly funded by the terrorology industry and self-servingly given the authoritative status of 'experts on terrorism.'

6. Summary and Conclusion

Although it is widely accepted that the GIA is responsible for part of the massacres suffered by the Algerian population, there are large discrepancies between the various views on the GIA's actual identity. These conflicting theories were reviewed, a brief chronology of the GIA was given and it was pointed out that any examination of the institutional identity of the GIA should recognise the fact that it has evolved over time. In September 1994, following the demise of Gousmi and the OPA that put Zitouni in charge, it underwent a drastic change. The thrust of this paper did not deal with the GIA pre-Zitouni because identifying it as an infiltrated Islamist insurgent group before then is uncontroversial. The focus of this paper has been on the GIA's identity post-Gousmi; its thesis, that the GIA is a counter-guerrilla organisation.

This paper defined the concepts of counter-guerrilla forces and discussed some general features about how the latter operate. These concepts and *modus operandi* were illustrated in the case of the Force K and the Selous Scouts because of their direct relevance to the counter-insurgency campaign currently unfolding in Algeria.

The paper then presented the argument in support of the view that the GIA is a counter guerrilla organisation. The strategy of the argument was to show that the GIA embodies the identifying institutional attributes typical of a counter-guerrilla organisation. The body of accumulated facts indicative of the GIA's identity does fit the irregularity attribute, the compositional profile condition and the anti-insurgent operational attributes typical of a counter-guerrilla force.

This argument was contradicted by what seems the most serious objection, i.e. selecting out GIA pro-insurgent operations in the matching of the counter-guerrilla anti-insurgent operational attribute with the relevant body facts about the GIA. This objection was dealt with by pointing out the time-dependence of the GIA's identity, the fact that the advent of Zitouni's leadership oversaw a drastic increase in the proportion of the GIA's anti-insurgent operations relative to its pro-insurgent ones, and that the *modus operandi* of counter-guerrilla forces allows for small scale pro-insurgent operations for 'validation' purposes.

The second justification of the counter-guerrilla hypothesis focused on the functional identity of the GIA. The GIA was shown to operate in viola-

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tion of all the strategic principles of guerrilla warfare and in accordance with those of COIN warfare.

The paper indicated that the counter-guerrilla thesis has been independently asserted by Attaf and Guidice, and Brahimi. The thesis was said to have an explanatory content because it effectively orders the accumulated and unsorted facts about the GIA into a coherent picture. It was pointed out that it has deductive consequences other than those it was constructed to explain; the example of the operational 'frozen areas' was discussed.

This paper also considered the main alternative hypotheses about the GIA's identity. The Islamist thesis that considers the GIA as an (infiltrated) 'Kharidjite sect' was reviewed. It was shown to reflect a few salient features of the GIA, (e.g. some of its religious and political doctrines), but to fail to fit, sum up or explain the wider body of facts indicative of the GIA's identity.

The alternative view was Labat's thesis; the GIA as an 'anti-social movement'. It was indicated that Labat's thesis correctly applies to the Hijra-Takfir component of the GIA but her identification of the *whole* GIA as an anti-social movement was shown to be false. Labat used an unjustifiably selective body of facts, weak evidence and ignored obvious facts contradicting her matching the defining attributes of anti-social movement to those of the GIA. Labat also overlooked the time-dependence of the compositional profile of the GIA. Some comments on the politically oriented bias of Labat's inquiry were made to explain her rather unjustifiably selective and evidentially weak analysis.

An important conclusion of this assessment was that the counter-guerrilla thesis is, unlike other claims about its identity, testable. If, as is claimed here, the GIA is indeed a counter-guerrilla force there must be publicly observable data, material and testimonial evidence, to confirm conclusively the nature and structure of the institutional link between the GIA and the DRS. This thesis would be decisively refuted if an international war crimes investigation team, that includes counter-insurgency experts from neutral countries, failed to come up with the adequate material and testimonial evidence. Given that the Algerian generals have already appealed many times to foreign bodies to monitor elections, there is no reason why they should not do so to refute the allegations that give them paternity over the GIA.

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Appendix

Zitouni's Infiltration, Rise and Practices within the GIA according to insurgent sources

The 1996 report of the *Rabitat al-Islamiyya li-Dawa wal Jihad* (Islamic League for Predication and Jihad) on the effects of military intelligence upon the GIA states that prior to his rise Zitouni had been an insignificant figure with no public profile. It says he had enjoyed no media exposure, until the propaganda of the military regime, and that of France, exploited the anti-French sentiment of the population to infiltrate him as a hero. It gives the following account:

The French and Algerian media hyped his role as leader of the attack on the French embassy whereas the operation was planned and executed by the group of Mahfoud Abu Khalil. According to some sources, Zitouni was not a leader but a member of the group. The media then wanted to draw public attention and concentrate the minds on the name of Jamal Zitouni to transform the person behind it into an international star and a hero.

The report distinguishes between his infiltration into the population and that into the insurgent movement. For the latter it claims that:

Jamal Zitouni acquired a reputation among the mujahideen and his name was linked to the smuggling of an anti-aircraft weapon (*Dousbka*). In reality, the acquisition of the weapons was, to a large extent, the effort of a mujahid brother who had defected from the army; he was in charge of this weapon. This brother did not survive longer and was killed in a battle in the region of Khemis Miliana. As to the *Dousbka*, its fate remains unknown since it was never used in battles or for shooting down aircrafts or helicopters. There is no trace of it, nor of its whereabouts until now [...] Recently, a witness named Abderrezzaq Al-Qara, who fought in the group of Zouabri, declared in a testimony, which is recorded on a video in our possession, that the *Dousbka* and the other arms were recovered by the military authorities from a cache in the mountains. He personally heard this from Antar Zouabri who explained how this happened and who was responsible[...] Was the whole affair planned to launch Zitouni and create a halo of heroism around him to achieve specific aims? Was the matter a plan of the secret services and the weapons were returned to their sources once they played their roles? Or was there within the leadership of Zitouni and his henchmen somebody working with the despotic regime. This could explain why the weapon was never used for it was destined only as a mere exposition and display piece. Time will reveal the truth.

Following the death of Gousmi, who, according to a public report issued by the Medea Battalion on 15 January 1996, was killed in an ambush pre-arranged in collaboration with his driver, the constitutional leadership which took over was swept aside by a coup. The report says that instead of the ap-

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pointment of Mahfoud Abu Khalil, the first deputy of Gousmi, and hence interim leader according to 'article 10 of the third principle on the political constants of the GIA', various pre-planned events culminated in the unauthorised issue of a communiqué appointing Djamel Zitouni as leader. The report states:

The appointment of Jamal Zitouni as leader of the GIA happened through announcement only and not through a plebiscite from the mujahideen, present or absent, as was the case with the plebiscite that Abi Abdallah Ahmed secured from everyone. All the military districts pledged their allegiance to him.

If one takes the view that these statements are true, it remains a mystery why this coup was not challenged. Publicly accessible periodicals of the insurgents do not discuss this issue but Ait-Aarab cites an anonymous source who offered the following explanation:

But the brothers, fearing for the implosion of the Group and eager to avoid harming it, decided not to challenge Jamal Zitouni, temporarily, until the consultative assembly would meet. But the faction of Jamal Zitouni (Antar Zouabri, Fares Said, Abou Abbas, alias Boukabous, Adlan and others with suspicious links to the secret services) ensured that the consultative assembly never met. Zitouni started to dismiss the commanders with whom he disagreed. He also proceeded to kill others on the pretext that they had links with the secret services or were splitting the Group. He replaced them with commanders close to him. He succeeded in killing more than seven hundred able commanders in the various districts of the country. The absence of Abu Khalil Mahfoud during the first days of the leadership of Zitouni helped the latter put his plan into execution. Abu Khalil Mahfoud had fallen into an ambush set up at night by Zitouni's men and was told afterwards that his group had been mistaken for an army patrol. He was wounded in his feet and spent seven months in bed. This absence was a golden opportunity for Jamel Zitouni. He ordered that no visitor be allowed access to Abu Khalil in the hospital, especially his close friends. Zitouni dismissed also brother Khaled Abu Saeed, the second vice-deputy of Abu Abdallah Ahmed, and appointed Fares Assaid as his deputy. The latter was among the most abominable individuals who tortured Abu Khalil Mahfoud and Abdelwahab Lamara, the ex-commander of Fida. Other strangers with suspicious links with the secret services took part in the torture of the brothers.¹

This source also makes the claims that:

Zitouni also took part in the torture by burning of brother Abu Mohamed, the surgeon of the group. He tortured him, his wife and their daughter in front of an assembly of people[...]. Abu Khalil as well as dozens of brothers were savagely tortured. One of the brothers, named [...], from [...], who fled from the prison of the Group [...], where he had his ten toes cut off, described to us the situation as follows: 'Zitouni appointed a special group for torture. The members of this group would break bones, mutilate, burn and Zitouni himself would take part in the torture.' The brother went on to describe this appalling spectacle: Zitouni would ask

¹ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., p.31.

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Abu Khalil Mahfoud and Abdelwahab Lamara to imitate the sounds of animals and to sing. Abu Khalil bore his ordeal with patience and, tied by a rope and in chains, did tell Zitouni: 'you and your men belong to the secret services. You follow the way of the Kharidjites and the group of exile and excommunication and you seek to destroy the jihad, its symbols and leaders.' But Zitouni kept laughing and mocking Abu Khalil. The more Abu Khalil spoke, the more he was hit and tortured. This is the testimony of the brother [...]. He is still alive and the testimony is recorded on tape.^M

NOTES

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- ³ R. Malek, 'Face au terrorisme, l'alternative patriotique et républicaine', in J-P. Chagnollaude (ed.), *Confluences Méditerranée*, No 25, Spring 1998, pp. 93-97.
- ⁴ General X, 'Algérie: Les grands cimenterres sous la lune', interview by A. Taheri, in *Politique Internationale*, No 79, Spring 1998, pp.11-44.
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- ¹³ *Le Monde*, 7 January 1998; *Journal Officiel*, 5 March 1998; *L'Humanité*, 25 December 1997; *L'Express*, 22 January 1998.
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- ¹⁵ *Libération*, 31 January 1998; *Al Hayat*, 30 September 1998; *Le Monde*, 10 November 1997; *Associated Press*, 15 January 1998, *CNN*, 15 January 1998; *Reuters*, 16 January 1998.
- ¹⁶ *Reuters*, 24 and 25 January 1998, 26 July 1998, 3 August 1998.
- ¹⁷ Two samples: *Agence France Presse*, 29 December 1997, 12 November 1998.

^M M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhiyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., p.51.

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³⁶ M. Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*, Ithaca, Garnet Publishing Ltd, Reading 1996, p. 280.

³⁷ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., pp. 17-18.

³⁸ Ibid.

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⁴⁰ M. Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*, op. cit., p. 281.

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⁴¹ M. Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*, op. cit., p. 272; M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., pp. 21-25.

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⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., p. 29; M. Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*, op. cit., pp.282-284;

⁴⁹ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., pp. 32-37; M. Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*, op. cit., p. 286, 289; M. Stone, *The Agony of Algeria*, Hurst & Company, London, 1997, p. 187.

⁵⁰ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., p. 38; M. Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*, op. cit., p. 324.

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⁵³ M. Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*, op. cit., p. 328;

⁵⁴ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., pp. 46-47.

⁵⁵ Ibid; M. Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria: A Political History*, op. cit., p. 336.

⁵⁶ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., pp. 50-55.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ See section 4.3.2 of this paper.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., pp. 50-55.

⁶² See section 4.3.2 of this paper.

⁶³ Ibid; M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., pp. 56-59.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ *Le Monde*, 11 October 1997.

⁶⁶ *Libération*, 29 July 1996; *Le Monde* 30 July 1996; *Le Soir*, 29 July 1996.

⁶⁷ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., p. 61.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ *El Watan*, 15 July 1997; *Agence France Presse*, 27 July 1997; *Le Monde*, 11 October 1997.

⁷⁰ R. Trinquier, *Guerre, Subversion, Révolution*, Robert Laffont, Paris 1968.

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⁷¹ M. McClintock, 'American Doctrine and Counterinsurgent State Terror', in A. George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1991, p. 121. Thompson formulated this rationale in this way: 'The old *cliché* of setting a thief to catch a thief is nowhere more appropriate than in countering guerrillas or terrorists.' (L. Thompson, *Ragged War: The Story of Unconventional and Counter-Revolutionary Warfare*, Arms and Armour Press, London 1994, p. 139.)

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⁷⁵ See I. F. W. Beckett, 'The Portuguese Army: The Campaign in Mozambique 1964-1974', in I. F. W. Beckett and J. Pimlott (eds), *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-insurgency*, Croom Helm, London and Sydney 1985, p. 149, and A. Humbaraci, *Portugal's African wars: Angola, Guinea Bissao, Mozambique*, Macmillan, 1974.

⁷⁶ See P. Stiff and R. Reid-Daly, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War*, Galago Press, Albertown 1982; I. F. W. Beckett, 'The Rhodesian Army: Counter-Insurgency 1972-1979' in I. F. W. Beckett and J. Pimlott (eds), *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-insurgency*, Croom Helm, London and Sydney 1985, p.163 ; J. L. Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia*, Croom Helm, Sydney 1985 and H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia 1962-1980*, Mambo Press, Gweru 1989.

⁷⁷ In an analysis on how various strategies and policies to handle 'terrorism' may affect 'democratic capacities to govern', Yehezkel Dror puts forward various 'positive functions of terrorism'. About one of these functions, Dror says: 'In the international arena, democracies should use rather than repress terrorism, to eliminate crazy rulers and inhibit anti-democratic forces. Other countries, in any case, will continue to employ terrorism, so why should not democracies teach the others a lesson in their own coin? If democracies do not want to dirty their own hands, they can always find proxies to act on their behalf. Indeed, carefully encouraging "freedom fighters" in anti-democratic countries may be a good way to destabilize them and prepare the grounds for democratisation.' (Y. Dror, 'Terrorism as a Challenge to the Democratic Capacity to Govern', in M. Crenshaw (ed.), *Terrorism, Legitimacy and Power*, Wesleyan University Press, Connecticut 1983).

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⁷⁸ See L.L. Lemnitzer, 'Memorandum for the Special Group (CI), Subject: Military Training Related to Counter-Insurgency Matters (U)', 30 January 1962; NSF, *Special Group*, Military Training Report, Box 319, Kennedy Library. For further details see M. McClintock, 'American Doctrine and Counterinsurgent State Terror', in A. George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*, op. cit., p. 145.

⁷⁹ See W. Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: an inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique*, Zed Books 1994, and W. M. James, *A political history of the civil war in Angola, 1974-1990*, Transaction Publishers, 1995.

⁸⁰ See R. Pardo-Maurer, *The Contras, 1980-1989: a special kind of politics*, Praeger Publishers, 1990; C. Dickey, *With the Contras: a reporter in the wild of Nicaragua*, Simon and Schuster Books, 1985; D. Eich, *The Contras: interviews with anti-Sandinistas*, Synthesis Publishers, 1985 and T. Cabestrero, *Blood of the Innocent: victims of the Contras' war in Nicaragua*, Orbis Books, 1985.

⁸¹ In Turkey, the Ozel Harp Dairesi (Special Warfare Department), created by American 'advice' in 1959 and led by US counter-insurgency trained personnel, has managed several counter-guerrilla groups, some of which have operated subversively against the Kurdish population and resistance. See S. Celik, *Turkey's Killing Machine: The Contra-Guerrilla Force*, Arm The Spirit, Canada 1995.

⁸² Acusación Popular en representación de los familiares del GAL, *Estado Español y Actividad Parapolitica*, Euskal Herria, 1995; 'French connection to official murder', *Le Monde*, 22 August, 1995; B. C. Vigden, 'A State of Terror', *Nexus*, February-March 1996, pp. 16-17; P. Webster, 'Invisible Enemy Haunts Paris', *The Guardian International*, 3 September 1995.

⁸³ R. Faligot, *Britain's Military Strategy in Ireland: The Kitson Experiment*, Zed Press, London 1983.

⁸⁴ See K. Pech and D. Beresford, 'Corporate dogs of war who grow fat amid the anarchy of Africa', in *The Observer*, 19 January 1997. E-2G Research Group and Executive Outcomes, two London-based corporations of war which train forces in counter-insurgency and low-intensity conflicts, in Amnesty International, *Made in Britain: How the UK Makes Torture and Death its Business*, AI, London 1997; 'Sandline Caught in Sierra Leone Diamond Scandal', *Drillbits&Tailings*, 7 June 1998, p. 4; 'People Power Ousts Mercenaries from Papua New Guinea', *Drillbits&Tailings*, 21 March 1997, p. 4; 'Canadian Oil Company Employs Mercenaries in Sudan', *Drillbits&Tailings*, 7 August 1997, p. 4; 'Sierra Leone Titanium Mine and Mercenaries', *Drillbits&Tailings*, 21 August 1997, p. 2; 'Colombia Oil Violence Escalates', *Drillbits&Tailings*, 21 December 1997, p. 1; 'Cold War Spy Rivals Now Jointly Battle for Mineral Companies', *Drillbits&Tailings*, 21 January 1998, p. 4; G. Burke, 'US admits role in Chiapas conflict', *El Financiero International*, Vol. 8, No. 7, (1998) p.1; T. Spicer, 'Guns for hire from a soldier of fortune', *The Independent*, 4 May 1998, p. 3; M. Honigsbaum and A. Barnett, 'British firms in African arms riddle', *The Observer*, 31 January 1999, p. 9;

⁸⁵ See M. T. Klare, *Low Intensity warfare: how the USA fights wars without declaring them*, Methuen Publishers, 1989; M. McClintock, *Instruments of statecraft: US Guerrilla warfare, counter-insurgency, and counter-terrorism, 1940-1990*, Pantheon Books, 1992; S. T. Hosmer, *The Army's role in counterinsurgency and insurgency*, Rand Corporation Publication, 1990; M. T. Klare and P. Kornbluh, *Low intensity warfare: counter-insurgency, pro-insurgency and anti-terrorism in the eighties*, Pantheon Books, 1988 and A. J. Bacevich, *American military policy in small wars: The case of El salvador*, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1988.

⁸⁶ M. McClintock, 'American Doctrine and Counterinsurgent State Terror', in A. George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*, op. cit., p. 145.

⁸⁷ Brief details can be found in L. Thompson, *Ragged War: The Story of Unconventional and Counter-Revolutionary Warfare*, Arms and Armour Press, London 1994.

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- ⁸⁹ J. Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning*, Faber and Faber Ltd, London 1967.
- ⁹⁰ I. F. W. Beckett and J. Pimlott, *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-insurgency*, Croom Helm Publishers, London and Sydney 1985, p. 24.
- ⁹¹ Beckett, op. cit. p.149
- ⁹² J. Newsinger, 'A counter-insurgency tale: Kitson in Kenya', in *Race & Class*, Vol. 31, 1990, p. 4.
- ⁹³ H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia 1962-1980*, op. cit., p. 94.
- ⁹⁴ J. K. Cilliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia*, op. cit., p.119; Cilliers cites the reference A. R. Molnar et al, *Human factors considerations of undergrounds in insurgencies*, Department of the Army Pamphlet No 550-104, Washington DC, 1965, as authority for the cited claim.
- ⁹⁵ J. K. Cilliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia*, op. cit., p. 124.
- ⁹⁶ J. K. Cillier, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia*, op. cit., p. 119. For an example of pseudo-guerrilla psychological operations introducing sex stories against guerrilla see C. Foley, *Legacy of Strife: Cyprus from Rebellion to Civil War*, Penguin 1963.
- ⁹⁷ J. K. Cillier, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia*, op. cit., p. 118.
- ⁹⁸ See for instance National Committee for a Free Europe, 'Document on Terror', *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, Vol. 1, No 3, 1952, p. 44.
- ⁹⁹ J. K. Cilliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia*, op. cit., p.119.
- ¹⁰⁰ For more details, see for instance McClintock, op. cit. The Fort Bragg Special Warfare Centre Directive ST 31/15 for operations against irregular forces lists: 'assassinations, bombings, armed-robbery, hostage-taking, arson, sabotage, propaganda, disinformation and extortion.'
- ¹⁰¹ National Committee for a Free Europe, 'Document on Terror', *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, Vol. 1, No 3, 1952, p. 45.
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- ¹⁰³ M. Ait-Embarek, *L'Algérie en Murmure*, Editions Hoggar, Geneve 1996
- ¹⁰⁴ Documents in Mouvement Algérien des Officiers Libres, <http://www.anp.org>.
- ¹⁰⁵ *VSD* (France), November 1994.
- ¹⁰⁶) M. Ait-Embarek, *L'Algérie en Murmure*, op. cit.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Maghreb Confidentiel*, No 254, 9 November 1995; *Maghreb Confidentiel*, No 173, 3 February 1994; *Maghreb Confidentiel*, No 260, 21 December 1995; *Maghreb Confidentiel*, No 349, 27 November 1997; *Maghreb Confidentiel*, No 321, 10 April 1997.
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¹¹⁶ C. Lacoste-Dujardin, *Operation oiseau bleu*, La Découverte, Paris 1997.

¹¹⁷ J-C Carrière and Commandant Azzedine, *C'était la Guerre: Algérie 1954-1962*, op. cit.

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¹²⁴ H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia 1962-1980*, op. cit.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia 1962-1980*, op. cit., p. 118.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

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¹³⁰ H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia 1962-1980*, op. cit.

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¹³² A. Brahim, 'From coup to coup', *Impact International*, November 1998, p. 26; A. Brahimi, 'J'accuse', *Le Journal du Francophone*, September 1998, p. 5; *The Guardian*, 30 October 1995, 11 November 1997; *The Times* 9 December 1997; *The Independent*, 1 and 3 November 1997; *The Observer*, 25 May 1997, 26

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¹³³ *The Observer*, 25 May 1997.

¹³⁴ Katibat al-muhajiroun (company of the exiles), mintaqat al wassat (Central District), *Bayan tandibi* (clarifying communiqué), 18 February 1997.

¹³⁵ Seriyat al-iqdam (detachment of bravery), mintaqat al wassat (Central District), *say-hat tabri-a ila kuli al murabiteen fi al thugbur* (A cry of innocence to all the resistance), 24 December 1995; see also Katibat al-mawt (company of death), al-affroun, *Bayan tandibi* (clarifying communiqué), 31 January 1996; Katibat al- fidaa (company of sacrifice), mintaqat al-assima, *Bayan raqam 1* (communiqué No 1), 25 February 1996.

¹³⁶ Mouvement Algérien des Officiers Libres, <http://www.anp.org>

¹³⁷ *Libération*, 22 June 1995; Comité Algérien des Militants Libres des Droits de l'Homme et de la Dignité Humaine (CAMLHDHDH), *Le Livre Blanc sur la répression en Algérie*, Vol. 2, Editions Hoggar, Geneva 1996, p. 170.

¹³⁸ V. Pellizzari, 'Ecco come il regime ha infiltrato la casbah', *Il messagero Domenica*, 1 February 1998, p. 12

¹³⁹ Ibid.

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¹⁴¹ Capitaine Haroun, 'J'en veux a mourir a ceux qui sont responsables', in J-P. Chagnollaud, *Confluences Méditerranée*, No 25, Spring 1998, p. 233.

¹⁴² A. Ait-Idir, *al mukhabarat wa al jamaa: waj-han li 'umla wabida* (The DRS and the GIA : Two sides of the same coin), to appear in 1999, at Ezzaman Publisher, London, UK. Ait-Idir is a former world champion in Judo, former commander of the GIA in the district of Tizi Ouzou. He says he escaped assassination after the GIA had been taken over by the DRS. He now lives in Europe.

¹⁴³ Seriyat Al-iqdam (detachment of bravery), mintaqat al wassat Central District, *say-hat tabri-a ila kuli al murabiteen fi al thugbur* (A cry of innocence to all the resistance), 24 December 1995.

¹⁴⁴ Seriat al wafa bil 'ahd (Detachment of fidelity to the pledge), mintaqat Bousaada, *Bayan 1* (Communiqué No 1), 15 March 1996.

¹⁴⁵ General Mohamed Mediene and General Smain Lamari have turned many founding members of the FIS: Zebda, Merani, Fqih, Guechi, Kerrar, Sahnouni (see T. Kawthar, 'Je me souviens', in *La Cause*, Vol. 1, No 1, 5 July 1994). For a Rhodesian analogy in 'turning' senior politicians see H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia 1962-1980*, op. cit., p. 105.

¹⁴⁶ See CAMLDHDH, *Livre Blanc sur la Répression en Algérie 1991 - 1995*, Tome 2, op. cit., p. 52

¹⁴⁷ See CAMLDHDH, *Livre Blanc sur la Répression en Algérie 1991 - 1995*, Tome 2, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁴⁸ Reported in P. Devoluy, M. Duteille, *La Poudrière Algérienne*, Calmann Lévy, Paris 1994, p.241.

¹⁴⁹ *El Moudjabid*, 28 April 1997.

¹⁵⁰ See J-P Marie, 'Ces Algériens qui prennent les armes', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 February 1997.

¹⁵¹ *Agence France Presse*, 30 May 1999.

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¹⁵² T. Benomar, *La contre-révolution en Algérie*, December 1997 (in <http://www.ccfis.org>).

¹⁵³ V. Pellizzari, 'Ecco come il regime ha infiltrato la casbah', *Il messagero Domenica*, 1 February 1998, p. 12

¹⁵⁴ katibat el medea, *al wathiqah ashar-iyah* (the jurisprudential document), in *Al Anfal*, Vol. 2, 8 February 1996, p. 10 'The same document states, in page 13, the putschist 'turned the confrontation from the despotic regime into internecine quarrel and infighting among the mujahideen.'

¹⁵⁵ Ibid; katibat al-muhajirun (company of the exiles), mintaqat al wassat (Central District), *Bayan tandibi* (clarifying communiqué), 18 February 1997.

¹⁵⁶ katibat el medea, *al wathiqah ashar-iyah* (the jurisprudential document), op. cit, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ katibat el medea, *al wathiqah ashar-iyah* (the jurisprudential document), op. cit, p. 12.

¹⁵⁸ katibat el medea, *al wathiqah ashar-iyah* (the jurisprudential document), op. cit, p. 2 and 12.

¹⁵⁹ katibat el medea, *al wathiqah ashar-iyah* (the jurisprudential document), op. cit, p. 5; *al wathiqah* also states that 'they use the concealment of intentions and other forms of lies [...] in the service of falsehood' (page 22).

¹⁶⁰ *Seriyat al-iqdam* (detachment of bravery), mintaqat al assima (Central District), *say-hat tabri-a ila kuli murabiteen fi al-thughur* (A cry of innocence and warning to the resistance), 24 December 1995.

¹⁶¹ *Seriat al wafa bil 'ahd* (detachment of fidelity to the covenant), Bousaada District, *bayan 1* (Communiqué No 1), 15 March 1996.

¹⁶² katibat el medea, *al wathiqah ashar-iyah* (the jurisprudential document), op. cit, p. 3 and 5. *Seriyat al-iqdam* testified that: 'whenever a preacher or a mujahid rose to call for the closing of ranks, the correction of deviations and application of the principle of consultations, he was removed and disarmed, and would eventually disappear without leaving any trace.' (See *Seriyat al-iqdam* (detachment of bravery), mintaqat al assima (Central District), *say-hat tabri-a ila kuli murabiteen fi al-thughur* (A cry of innocence and warning to the resistance), 24 December 1995.)

¹⁶³ *Al Ansar*, No 130, 4 January 1995.

¹⁶⁴ S. Abdenour, 'for these reasons, the GIA decided to put an end to the rebellion of these pockets', in *Al Ansar*, No 89, 23 March 1995.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ katibat el medea, *al wathiqah ashar-iyah* (the jurisprudential document), op. cit, p. 9, 7 and 3 respectively.

¹⁶⁷ Katibat Larbaa, *bayan 1* (Communiqué No 1), 18 January 1996.

¹⁶⁸ See *Seriyat al-iqdam* (detachment of bravery), mintaqat al assima (Central District), *say-hat tabri-a ila kuli murabiteen fi al-thughur* (A cry of innocence and warning to the resistance), 24 December 1995.

¹⁶⁹ Katibat Tablat, *Bayan tandibi* (Communiqué for Clarification), 16 April 1996.

¹⁷⁰ These five testimonial quotations are from *al-wathiqah ashar-iyah*, op. cit., p.9 and p.6; Katibat Larbaa, *Bayan 1* (Communiqué No1), 18 January 1996; Katibat al-medea, *Bayan 1* (Communiqué No 1), 12 February 1996; *Seriat al wafa bil 'ahd*, Bousaada, *Bayan* (Clarification), 15 March 1996, respectively.

¹⁷¹ *Al Ansar*, No 68, 27 October 1994.

¹⁷² *Al Ansar*, No 65, 6 October 1994.

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¹⁷³ *Al Ansar*, No 60, 1 September 1994.

¹⁷⁴ *Al Ansar*, No 65, 6 October 1995.

¹⁷⁵ The testimonies are from Katibat al-muhajiroun, mintaqat al wassat (Central District), *Bayan*, 18 February 1997, Katibat al-medea, *Bayan* 1 (Communiqué No 1), 12 February 96, and Katibat al-medea, *bayan wa tawdih* (Communiqué and Clarification), 10 January 1996. See also *Al Ansar*, No 87, 9 March 1995 and *Al Ansar*, No 135, 8 February 1996.

¹⁷⁶ *Al-Anfal*, No 2, 8 February 1996.

¹⁷⁷ Katibat Tablat, *Bayan tawdih* (Communiqué of Clarification), 16 April 1996.

¹⁷⁸ Katibat al-arbi-a, *min tawdih lil-mujabideen wa-`amat al muslimeen* (Clarifying matter for the mujahideen and all Muslims), 23 December 1995.

¹⁷⁹ See for instance Katibat al-arbi-a, *Min tawdih lil-mujabideen wa-`amat al-muslimeen* (Explaining Matters to the Mujahideen and the Muslims), 23 December 1995 and the joint document Katiba Rabaniya (Djebel luh), Katiba al-khadra (ksar-el-bukhari) katibat al-feth (al-djelfa), *Kashf al litham `ani adukhala wa-li-am* (Lifting the Veil on the Infiltrators and the Wicked), 10 January 1995.

¹⁸⁰ Katibat al mawt, El Affroun, *Bayan Tawdih* (Communiqué for Explanation), 31 January 1996.

¹⁸¹ Katibat al-fidaa, Mintaqat al-assima, *Bayan raqam 1* (Communiqué No 1), 15 February 1996.

¹⁸² V. Pellizzari, 'Ecco come il regime ha infiltrato la casbah', *Il messagero Domenica*, 1 February 1998, p. 12; A. Ait-Idir, *al mukhabarat wa al jamaa: waj-ban li `umla wahida*, op. cit.

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¹⁸⁵ *Al Ansar*, No 127, 14 December 1995.

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¹⁸⁷ See 'kashf haqa-iq hawla mu-a-marat al-jaza-a-ra al-mariqa li-itiwaa al-GIA' (Revelation of the truth concerning the machinations of the heretic Jaz'ara with a view to taking over the GIA), in *Al Jamaa*, No 10, September 1997.

¹⁸⁸ *Al Ansar*, No 135, 8 February 1996, p.3; No 150, 23 May 1996, p. 5; No 137, 22 February 1996, p.3; No 141, 21 May 1996, p.5; No 142, 28 March 1996; No 155, 18 April 1997, p.5; No 154, 4 April 97, p.5.

¹⁸⁹ *Al Ansar*, No 105, 13 July 1995; M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhiyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁹⁰ A. Brahim, 'From coup to coup', *Impact International*, November 1998, p. 26.

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¹⁹⁵ *Al Ansar*, No 150, 23 May 1996; GIA, 'Al Milaf al kamil liqital al jamaa al islamiya al musalaha dhada firanca ummu al khabaith' (The complete report of the GIA's war against France the mother of all treachery', *Al Jamaa*, No. 12, March 1997.

¹⁹⁶ *Spécial Algérie* documentary, shown in the programme *Le Vrai Journal*, on the French channel Canal+, on 22 November 1998; A. Aroua, *Hororis Causa*, Hoggar, Geneva 1999.

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²⁰³ A. Aroua, op. cit.

²⁰⁴ *Al Jamaa*, No 12, March 1997, p. 12.

²⁰⁵ *Al Ansar*, No 107, 27 July 1995.

²⁰⁶ *Al Jamaa*, No 9, September 1995.

²⁰⁷ International Crisis Group, 'Between Death Threats and Censorship', *Algeria Report*, 31 March 1998; M. Margenidas, 'L'Information Asservie en Algérie', in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 1998, p. 19; Article 19, *Algeria: Press Freedom Under the State of Emergency*, Issue 19, 26 December 1992.

²⁰⁸ *Al Ansar*, No 91, 6 April 1995.

²⁰⁹ *Al Ansar*, No 111, 24 August 1995.

²¹⁰ A. Charef, *L'Algérie: le grand dérapage*, L'Aube, Paris 1994, p. 479.

²¹¹ *Al Ansar*, No 80, 19 January 1995; *Al Ansar*, No 107, 27 July 1995.

²¹² *Al Hayat*, 26 August 1993.

²¹³ *Al Ansar*, No 17, 4 November 1993; *Al Hayat*, 25 August 1993, 27 August 1993.

²¹⁴ *Al Ansar*, No 130, 4 January 1996. *Al Jamaa*, No 7, July 1996; *Al Ansar*, No 90, 30 March 1995.

²¹⁵ *Al Qital*, No 34, 20 May 96.

²¹⁶ *Al Ansar*, No 155, 18 April 1997; *Al Jamaa*, No 13, June 1997.

²¹⁷ See for example Katibat Al Intiqam, Al-'amariya, *Bayan* (Communiqué), 16 February 1996; Katibat al muhajiroon, mintaqat al wassat (Central District), *bayan tandibi* (Explaining Matters), 28 February 1997.

²¹⁸ *Le Figaro*, 1 September 1997, p.2.

²¹⁹ See L. Thompson, *Ragged War: The Story of Unconventional and Counter-Revolutionary Warfare*, op. cit., p. 148.

²²⁰ Katibat al-muhajiroon, mintaqat al-wassat, *Bayan Tandibi*, 18 February 1997, Katibat Tablat, *Bayan tandibi*, 16 April 1996; Katibat al-medea, *Bayan wa tandeeb*, 10 January 1996.

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²²¹ *Al Ansar*, No 101, 15 June 1995.

²²² *Al Ansar*, No 129, 28 December 1995.

²²³ *Al Ansar*, No 118, 12 October 1995.

²²⁴ See 'Al Milaf Al Kamil liqital Al Jamaa Al Islamiyya Al mussalha dhada fransa ummu Al khabat-ith', *Al Jamaa*, No 12, March 1997.

²²⁵ *The Observer*, 25 May 1997.

²²⁶ *Ouest France*, 5 March 1997.

²²⁷ *Le Monde*, 7 March 1995.

²²⁸ J. Ellis, *From the Barrell of a Gun: A history of guerrilla revolutionary and counterinsurgency warfare from the Romans to the present*, Greenhill Book, London 1995.

²²⁹ J. McCuen, *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary Warfare*, Faber and Faber, London 1966; J. Ellis, *From the Barrell of a Gun*, *op. cit.*

²³⁰ katibat el medea, *al wathiqa ashar-iya* (the jurisprudential document), in *Al Anfjal*, Vol. 2, 8 February 1996, p. 3. A large number of similar statements are available in the communiqués of the groups that split away from the GIA in 1995 and early in 1996.

²³¹ katibat el medea, *al wathiqa ashar-iya* (the jurisprudential document), *op. cit* p 9, pp.20-23, p. 228, pp.40-41; Katibat al- fidaa, mintaqat al-assima, *Bayan raqam 1*, 25 February 1996; *Al Jamaa*, No 10, September 1996, No 12, March 1997, No 13, June 1997; Abu 'abd errahaman amin (Djamal Zitouni), *Hidayat Rab al 'Alameen fi tab-yeen usul assalafiyeen wa ma yajibu min al 'abd min al mujahideen* (The Guidance of the Lord of the Worlds in Clarifying the Fundamental Beliefs of the salafis and the Obligations of the Mujahideen towards the GIA), GIA publication 1995.

²³² katibat el medea, *al wathiqa ashar-iya* (the jurisprudential document), *op. cit* p 8; all issues of *Al Ansar* from No 90 to No 154; all issues of *Al Jamaa* from No 6 to No 13; Omar Abdelhakim (alias Abu Muss-'ab essouri), *al mu-amara al kubra 'ala al jihad fil jazair fi dbilal saleeb al vatican* (The Big Conspiracy against Jihad in the Shadow of the Cross of the Vatican), Part 3 of fil binaa al fida-I 'ala tariq al jihad, London 1996.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Al Ansar*, No 90, 30 March 1995, p.6; GIA Communiqué No 30, in *Al Ansar*, No 96, 12 May 1995, p. 16.

²³⁵ GIA Communiqué No 30, in *Al Ansar*, No 96, 12 May 1995, p. 16.

²³⁶ GIA, 'Al Milaf al kamil liqital al jamaa al islamiya al musalaha dhada franca ummu al khabaith' (The complete report of the GIA's war against France the mother of all treachery), *Al Jamaa*, No. 12, March 1997, p.12.

²³⁷ M. Ait-Aarab, 'dirassa tarikhiyya lil jamaa al islamiyya al mussalaha', *op. cit.*, pp. 70-72.

²³⁸ See for instance the communiqués and articles in *Al Ansar* No 101, 15 June 1995, p. 16; *Al Ansar* No 114, 14 September 1995, pp.11-13; *Al Ansar* No 115, 21 September 1995, p.13; *Al Jamaa* No 5, March 1995, p.17; *Al Jamaa* No 7, July 1995, p.7.

²³⁹ *Ibid.* See also *Al Ansar*, No 16, 27 October 1993, p.7.

²⁴⁰ GIA Communiqué No 49, in *Al Jamaa* No 10, September 1996, p.49.

²⁴¹ See for example Communiqué No 36, in *Al Ansar*, No 101, 15 June 1995, p. 15.

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²⁴² *Al Ansar*, No 107, 27 July 1995, p. 8; *Al Ansar*, No 108, 3 August 1995, p. 3; *Al Ansar*, No 109, 10 August 1995, p. 16; *Al Ansar*, No 110, 17 August 1995, p. 15; *Al Ansar*, No 111, 24 August 1995, p. 15; *Al Ansar*, No 112, 31 August 1995, p. 16; Omar Abdelhakim (alias Abu Muss-'ab essourî), *al mu-amara al kubra 'ala al jibad fil jazair fi dbilal saleeb al vatican* (The Big Conspiracy against Jihad in the Shadow of the Cross of the Vatican), Part 3 of fil binaa al fida-I 'ala tariq al jihad, London 1996.

²⁴³ *Al Ansar*, No 115, 21 September 1995, p.15; *Al Jamaa*, No 9, September 1995.

²⁴⁴ *Al Jamaa*, No 7, July 1995, p.3.

²⁴⁵ See for instance *Al Jamaa* No 7, July 1995; *Al Jamaa* No 10, September 1996; *Al Ansar*, No 114, 14 September 1995.

²⁴⁶ katibat el medea, *al wathiqa ashar-iya* (the jurisprudential document), op. cit p 5, pp.7-10; A. Ait-Idir, 'al mukhabarat wa al jamaa: waj-han li 'umla wahida', op. cit.

²⁴⁷ Ait-Idir, 'al mukhabarat wa al jamaa: waj-han li 'umla wahida', op. cit.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ katibat el medea, *al wathiqa ashar-iya* (the jurisprudential document), op. cit.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ R. Attaf and F. Guidice, 'Algérie: La Grande Peur Bleue', in Les Cahiers de l'Orient, Avril 1995.

²⁵² A. Brahimî, 'J'accuse', in *Journal de la Francophonie*, September 1998, p.5.

²⁵³ *Agence France Presse*, 12 December 1996, 27 June 1997, 30 November 1997, 26 December 1997, 13 Mat 1998; *Renters*, 14 October 1997.

²⁵⁴ N. Abdi, 'C'est devenu une guerre de tribus', *Libération*, 24 September 1997.

²⁵⁵ Amnesty International, *Civilian Population Caught in a Spiral of Violence*, MDE/28/23/97, November 1997.

²⁵⁶ *Libération*, 8 September 1997.

²⁵⁷ See Rhodesian Army, *Military Support to the Civil Power* (MCP), restricted, as amended, dated 1 May 1976, p. xvi.

²⁵⁸ M. Srouf Nayef Zin Al Abideen, 'Assalafiya bayna al-wulat wal ghulat', *Al-Sunna*, No 92, December 1996, p. 78.

²⁵⁹ Reported by al-Bukhari, Muslim and-Abu Dawud.

²⁶⁰ *Nahjul Balagha* 4-1.

²⁶¹ See for instance M. Wiewiorka, *Sociétés et terrorisme*, Editions Fayard, Paris 1988 translated as *The making of terrorism*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1993.

²⁶² S. Labat, 'Le FIS à l'épreuve de la lutte armée', in R. Leveau (ed.), *L'Algérie dans la guerre*, Complexe, Paris 1995, p. 98.

²⁶³ S. Labat, op. cit., p. 88. Martinez speaks of 'the Islamist partisans of jihad who had been marginalised within the FIS during the electoral process, and were propelled into leadership positions due to its interruption.' (in L. Martinez, 'L'enivrement de la violence: 'djihad' dans la banlieue d'Alger', in R. Leveau (ed.), *L'Algérie dans la guerre*, op. cit., p. 46).

²⁶⁴ Labat, op. cit., p. 99.

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²⁶⁵ Labat, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁶⁶ Labat, op. cit., p. 102.

²⁶⁷ Labat, op. cit., p. 102.

²⁶⁸ Labat, op. cit., p. 104.

²⁶⁹ Labat, op. cit., p. 104.

²⁷⁰ Labat, op. cit., p. 102.

²⁷¹ See for instance *Al Ansar*, No 17, 4 November 1993 for a discussion on GIA strategic advantage of killing foreigners.

²⁷² A. George, 'The Discipline of Terrorology', in *Western State Terrorism*, A. George (ed.), Polity Press, Cambridge 1991, p. 76.

²⁷³ A. George (ed.), *Western State Terrorism*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1991.

²⁷⁴ A. George, op. cit., p. 78.

²⁷⁵ E. S. Herman and G. O'Sullivan, "'Terrorism" as Ideology and Cultural Industry', in *Western State Terrorism*, A. George (ed.), Polity Press, Cambridge 1991, p. 39.

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Intents and Perpetrators

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