

Security in Afghanistan: 2006-2007

Summary

The number of security incidents in 2007 has increased considerably compared to 2006. The largest increase can be seen in January of 2007, with a 90 percent increase in security incidents over the year before. The spring offensive as a whole in 2007 brought substantially more attacks than 2006, with an 84 percent rise in March 2007 compared to March 2006, a 39 percent increase in April 2007 from April 2006, and a 66% increase in May 2007 from May 2006. The only decline was in the winter months, from October to December in which there were declines of 12, 24, and 26 percent respectively over the previous year. Overall, there was a 17 percent increase in attacks from 2006 to 2007.

Suicide attacks increased the most out of any other attack in Afghanistan. The highest increase came in July from one attack in July 2006 to 18 suicide attacks in July 2007. January through March had the next highest increases ranging from 133 percent to 550 percent. The winter months of 2007 expectantly brought a significant decline in suicide attacks. All types of attacks from September to December were down between nine and 58 percent. Overall, however, the trend from 2006 to 2007 was a rise in suicide attacks by 42 percent.

The data exemplifies a wave of suicide violence in Afghanistan, a trend which only began in 2005 and before that saw its first modern suicide attack on September 9, 2001. The growth in these types of attacks displays an increasing reliance upon foreign fighters; particularly from Pakistan's tribal areas, Central Asia, and Iraq.¹ The influence of international jihadist groups such as Al Qaeda in Iraq has enabled the Taliban in Afghanistan to sustain ongoing operations and as this database shows, increase those operations. Large scale information campaigns from DVD videos, internet messages, radio, night letters (*shabnamah*), and other IO campaigns have allowed Al Qaeda, Taliban, and other groups to increase their recruitment operations and the potency of their jihadist message. These messages are viral within the dispossessed communities of tribal and rural areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan where few opportunities exist.

IED attacks rose only slightly over the year by nine percent. Significant increases during some months were contrasted by significant declines in other months. In particular Afghanistan saw a 91 percent decline in February 2007 and a 77 percent decline in October 2007; however these declines were often before or after a large surge in attacks, such as 19 attacks in January, a decline of 11 in February, and then a surge of 20 in March – all in 2007.

International groups have also provided knowledge and training to Taliban and terrorist groups in Afghanistan. The “TV bomb”, a tactic often used in Iraq, has started to be a

¹ Seth G. Jones, “Pakistan’s Dangerous Game,” *Survival*, The IISS Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 1, Spring 2007, pp. 15-31.

common device for roadside bombing operations.² TV bombs are shape charged mechanisms hidden under brush or debris on a roadside and set off by remote control from more than 300 meters away. Taliban have also used improvised rocket propelled grenades as roadside bombs packed with propellants and high velocity shape charges. These are tactics and munitions are similar to those used in the insurgency in Iraq.

Methodology

The following database represents data collected from the BBC Monitoring Service, a publication that provides daily summaries of security incidents in Afghanistan. The information on security incidents is collected, analyzed, and resourced in our database. A team of researchers at the Program for Culture & Conflict Studies uses the following criteria to determine which events are listed as Security Incidents, IED attacks, and Suicide attacks:

Security incidents are defined as any action, instigated by insurgents or government forces (to include NATO and ISAF) and the arrest of insurgents by government forces.

Improvised Explosive Device (IED) events are listed and defined as any attack in which an IED explodes irrespective of whether it accomplishes the task of maiming or killing individuals. IEDs that are discovered by government forces before they explode are not counted in the database. Also, IED attacks in which the person planting the explosive device inadvertently kills or maims himself in the process of setting the device are not counted in the database.

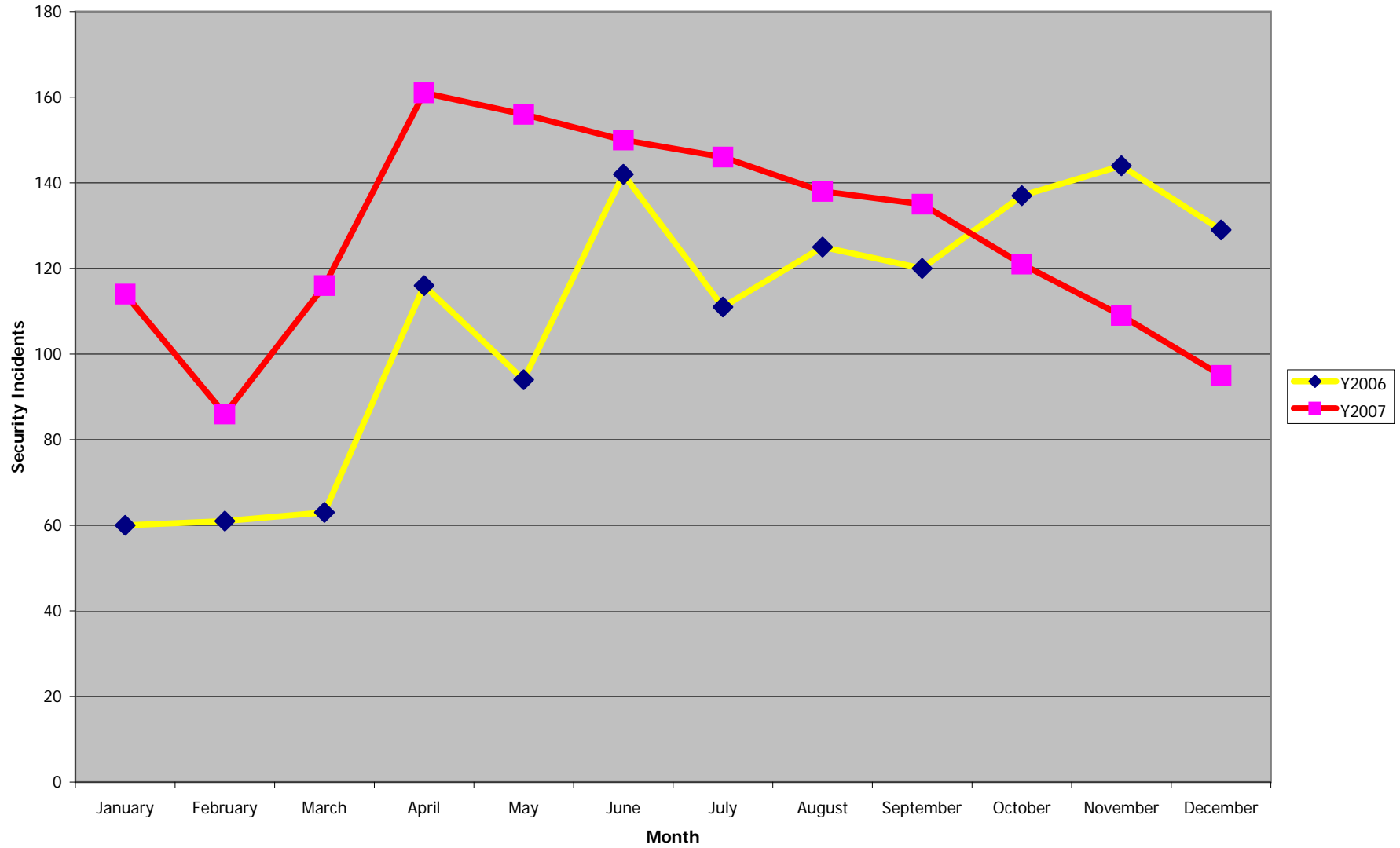
Suicide attacks are labeled separately from IED events. IED events in which the bomber is killed as part of the explosion are then labeled as suicide attacks. Attempted suicide attacks which are foiled and thus not detonated are not considered in the database.

Our database is maintained on a daily basis and subsequent updates will be made available to the public as time permits.

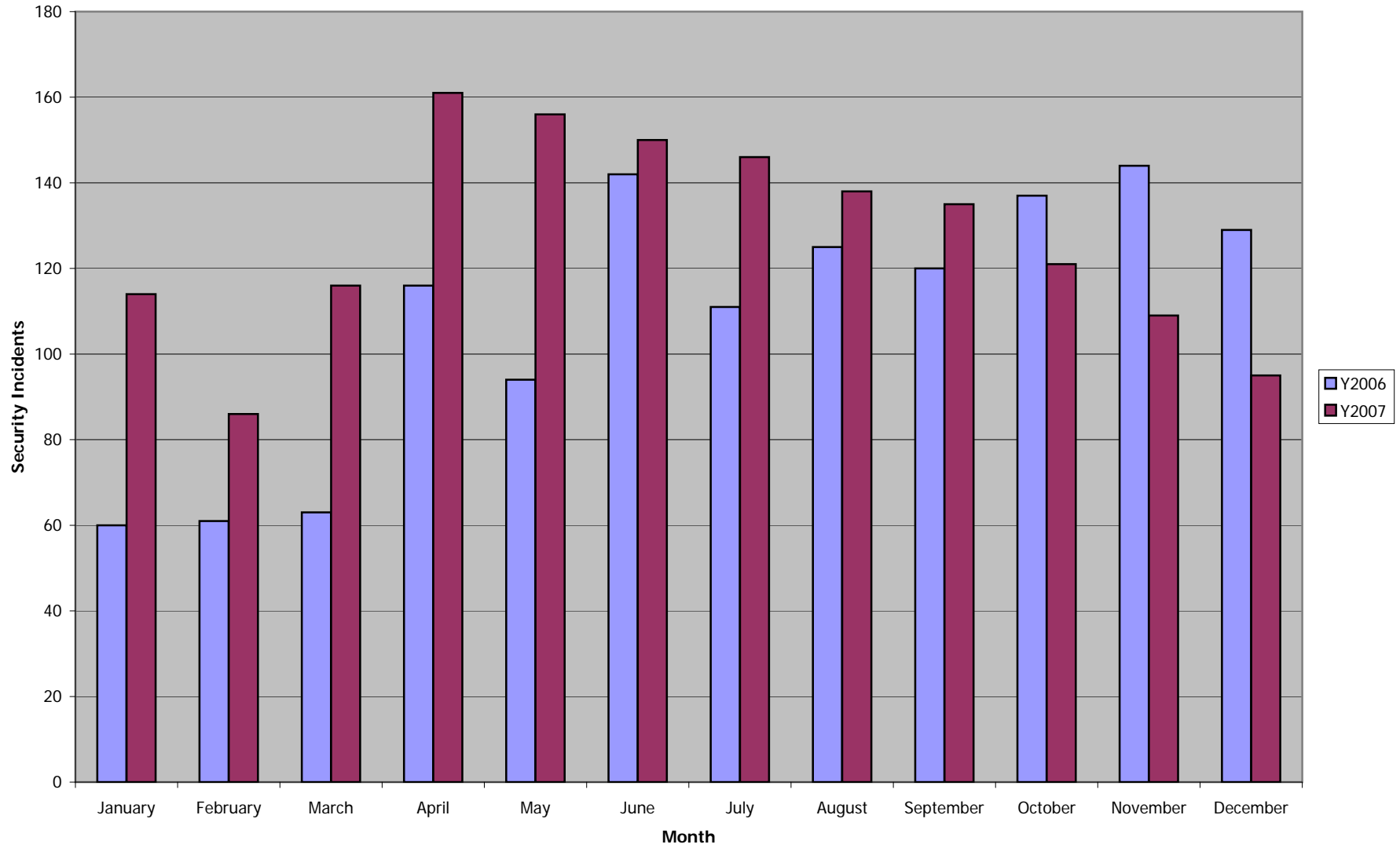
² Ibid.

Month	Security Incidents			Suicide Attacks			IED Attacks		
	Y2006	Y2007	Change	Y2006	Y2007	Change	Y2006	Y2007	Change
January	60	114	90%	2	13	550%	13	19	32%
February	61	86	41%	3	7	133%	21	11	-91%
March	63	116	84%	5	15	200%	19	20	5%
April	116	161	39%	4	10	150%	24	23	-4%
May	94	156	66%	7	13	86%	16	31	48%
June	142	150	6%	11	10	-9%	22	26	15%
July	111	146	32%	1	18	1700%	14	19	26%
August	125	138	10%	10	11	10%	19	19	0%
September	120	135	13%	14	11	-21%	12	23	48%
October	137	121	-12%	11	10	-9%	23	13	-77%
November	144	109	-24%	12	8	-33%	8	14	43%
December	129	95	-26%	12	5	-58%	21	14	-50%
Total	1302	1527	17%	92	131	42%	212	232	9%

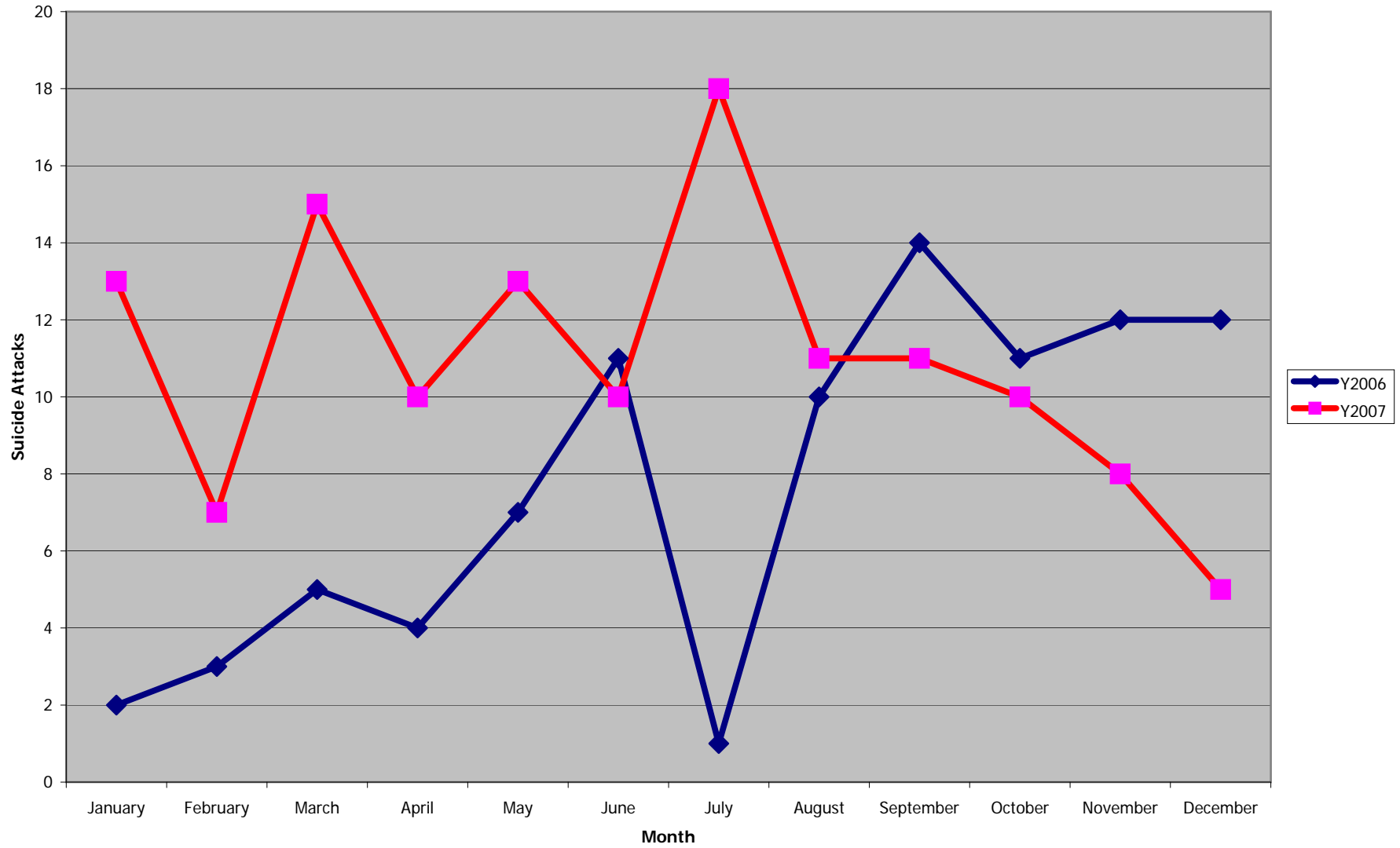
2006-2007 Security Incidents



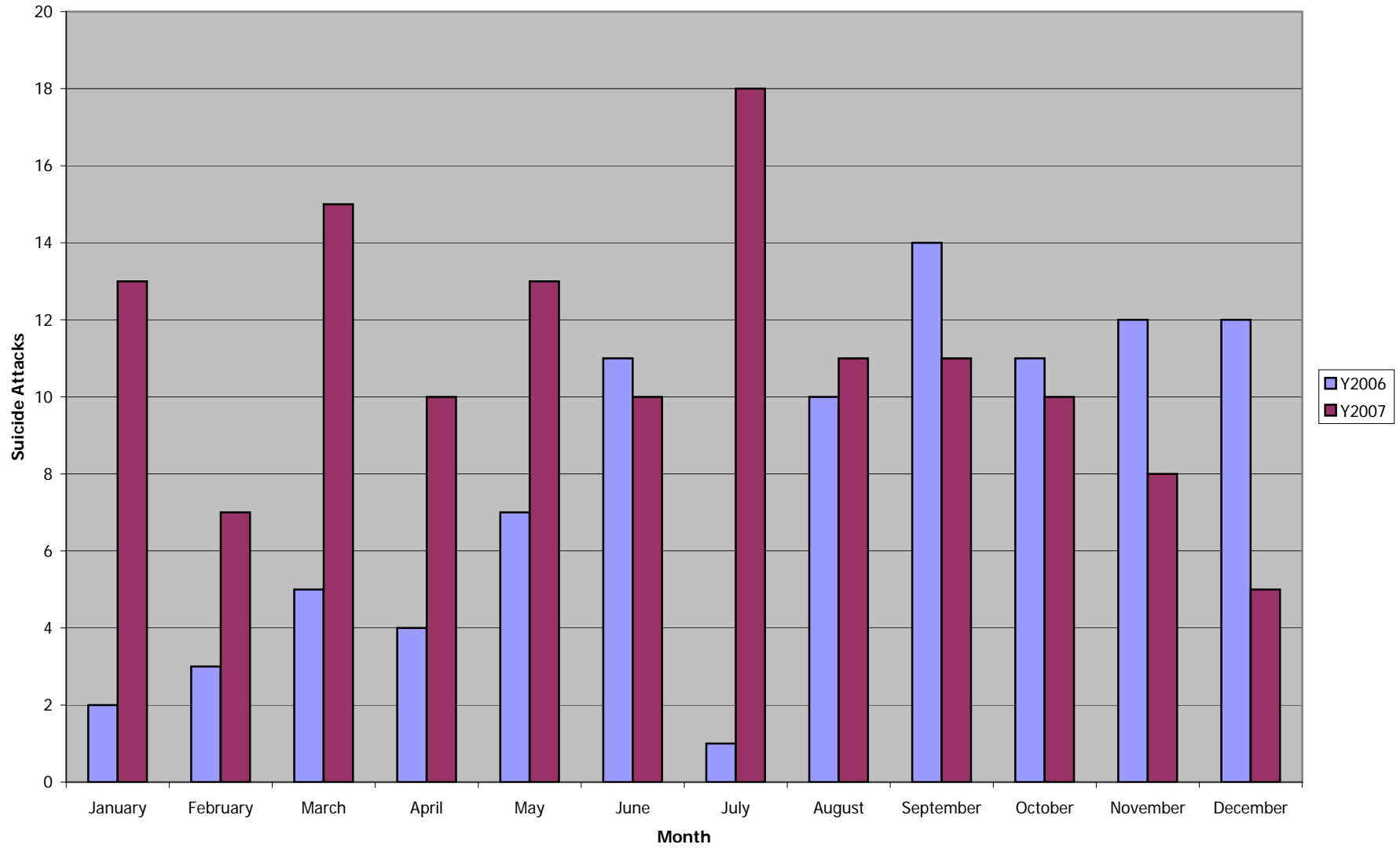
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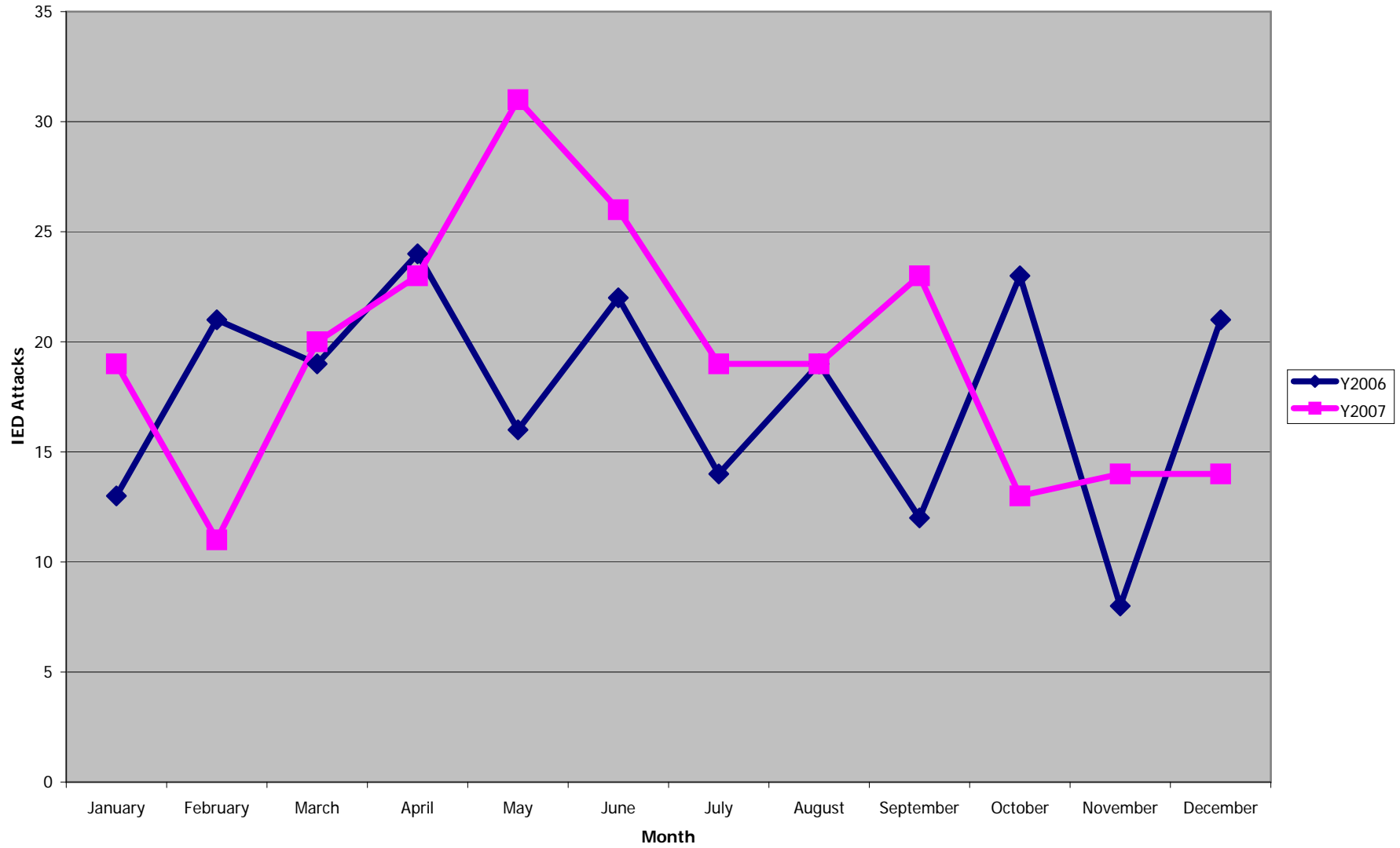
2006-2007 Suicide Attacks



2006-2007 Suicide Attacks



2006-2007 IED Attacks



2006-2007 IED Attacks

