From:	Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent:	Wednesday, November 21, 2012 5:50 PM
To:	H
Subject:	Fw: Israel's battle damage report says Hamas crippled (Reuters)

From: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, November 21, 2012 04:29 PM
To: NEWS-Egypt; NEWS-IO; NEWS-IsrPAL; NEWS-Mahogany
Subject: Israel's battle damage report says Hamas crippled (Reuters)

TEL AVIV (Reuters) - Israel's Operation Pillar of Defence has crippled the military power of Gaza's ruling Islamist movement Hamas, the Israeli military said on Wednesday, as an Egyptian-brokered truce halted eight days of combat.

In a statement, the military named key militant leaders killed by Israel and listed weapons and bases destroyed.

Referring to the confrontation pitting Hamas rockets against Israeli air strikes and naval artillery as "the fighting in the south", it said the offensive launched on Nov. 14 had "accomplished its pre-determined objectives".

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the aim of the operation was to stop Hamas, Islamic Jihad and smaller militant groups firing rockets and mortar bombs at southern Israeli communities. The militants, who reject Israel's right to exist, say they are defending Gaza against Israeli aggression.

Israel targeted 1,500 sites, the military said in its detailed summary of the conflict, and the "command and control apparatus of Hamas was significantly struck".

Targets included "19 senior command centres, operational control centres and Hamas' senior-rank headquarters, 30 senior operatives, hundreds of underground rocket launchers, 140 smuggling tunnels, 66 terror tunnels, dozens of Hamas operation rooms and bases, 26 weapon manufacturing and storage facilities and dozens of long-range rocket launchers and launch sites".

"These actions have severely impaired Hamas's launching capabilities, resulting in a decreasing number of rockets being fired from the Gaza Strip," the army said. Israel captured Gaza in the 1967 Middle East war and withdrew unilaterally in 2005.

It did not give any estimate of how many Palestinians were killed in its operation, but named seven senior Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives who had been "targeted".

They included one man in charge of anti-tank operations, another in propaganda, a senior police officer, a man in charge of air defence and another responsible for tunnel operations in the south where Hamas has smuggled in weapons via Egypt.

Gaza health ministry officials say over 160 people were killed in Israeli air strikes and shelling in the narrow enclave, more than half of them civilians including 37 children.

The Israeli military said Hamas fighters and other militant groups fired 1,506 rockets from Gaza into Israel, of which 316 were launched on Nov. 15, the day after an air strike killed the acting head of Hamas's armed wing, Ahmed al-Jaabari.

Most of the rockets, 875, exploded in open country. Israel's Iron Dome interceptor missiles knocked out 421 in mid-air and 58 exploded in urban areas, killing five Israelis and wounding 240, the military's battle damage account said. Failed launches accounted for a further 152 rockets.

"These operational achievements provided the underlying framework for this evening's ceasefire agreement," the Israeli military command said. The truce mediated by Egypt commits both sides to stop shooting, but leaves other parts of the agreement to be finalised.

"The 'Iron Dome' defence system has accomplished a high rate of successful interceptions (84 percent) and Hamas's accuracy with regards to hitting populated areas within Israel remained below 7 percent," the statement said.

Israelis - especially in Tel Aviv which came under Gaza rocket fire for the first time - were grateful for the shield in the sky. But many question whether Hamas has been effectively disarmed and deterred by Israel's latest military onslaught.