INDICATIONS WAR WOULD NOT BREAK OUT

(HANDOUT #2)

1. The outcome of the six-day war in 1967 had made Washington **believe** Israel was nearly invincible—and certainly would be able to repel any invader. Egypt starting a war it knew it could not win on the battlefield was beyond the comprehension of most intelligence officers and policymakers.
2. Egypt had conducted numerous maneuvers throughout 1973 and there had been no war. All of the maneuvers involved men and materiel moving to the Red Sea. The maneuvers were a masterful **deception** because every time the troops withdrew they left some of the men and equipment on the shores of the Red Sea. There were a total of 20 Egyptian military maneuvers throughout 1973 until war broke out in October.
3. Israel had mobilized in May 1973 in response to similar large-scale Egyptian military maneuvers and there had been no attack. Mobilizations are expensive and disrupt the Israeli economy. (We now know that Egypt would have attacked in May had Israel not mobilized. Tel Aviv was reluctant to repeat an expensive mobilization without conclusive evidence the threat was real.)
4. Egypt lacked air superiority and **conventional wisdom** dictated that no country goes to war without air superiority.
5. Egypt was pursuing negotiations to get the Sinai back, and Washington **assumed** that no country would go to war when it stood a chance of getting what it wanted through negotiations.
6. There was a **belief** in Washington that Moscow would not allow Cairo to start a war.
7. U.S. policymakers were preoccupied with relations between Jordan and Israel and **did not want to be told** war between Egypt and Israel was likely.
8. There was no civilian preparation for war in Egypt.
9. Syrian forces were in a defensive posture after an air battle with Israel.

10. The Egyptian air force was in defensive posture until the last minute. U.S. policymakers **assumed** Egypt would not attack Israel without a second front—Syria.

11. Israeli military intelligence, when asked by U.S. officials, assessed the risk of war as low. (The U.S. Government and the CIA let someone else do their thinking.)

On the morning of October 6, 1973, the lead CIA article in the *President’s Daily Brief,* estimated the possibility of war between Egypt and Israeli as low.