

# Signs of 1973 Mideast War Eluded U.S. Spy Agencies

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 11—The United States intelligence community acknowledges that it failed to predict the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and that several intelligence agencies even predicted that there would be no war only hours before the hostilities broke out, according to a secret report made public today.

The report represents the first public admission by the intelligence agencies that they failed to warn of the war. On Oct. 30, 1973, however, American officials who declined to be identified said that despite suspicious signals they had not seriously believed that Arab nations were about to attack.

Press reports in the past and the findings of an Israeli military review board had blamed Israeli intelligence services for inadequately evaluating information of the Arab build-up.

The House Select Committee on Intelligence made public parts of a "postmortem" prepared by the intelligence community on its handling of the Arab-Israeli conflict in October, 1973. The report disclosed that a top-level committee met the day the Arab forces attacked Israel said, "We can find no hard evidence of a major, coordinated Egyptian-Syrian of-

fensive across the canal and in the Golan Heights area."

The report of the committee, which is charged with advising the National Security Council on war and critical situations, went on to note, "It is possible that the Egyptians or Syrians, particularly the latter, may have been preparing a raid or other small-scale action."

The committee met, its report said, at "0900 on 6 October 1973," which was a few hours before the attack.

In an intelligence summary dated the same day but presumably prepared the night before, the Defense Intelligence Agency reported, "There are still no military or political indicators of Egyptian intentions or preparation to resume hostilities with Israel."

A Central Intelligence Agency bulletin dated the day before the attack said of the Egyptians: "The exercise and alert activities [deletion] may be on a somewhat larger scale and more realistic than previous exercises, but they do not appear to be preparing for a military offensive against Israel."

## Move Termed Suicidal

On the day of the attack the C.I.A. reported that another round of hostilities would almost certainly destroy President Anwar el-Sadat's "painstaking efforts to invigorate the economy and would run counter to his current efforts to build a united Arab political front."

The C.I.A. bulletin went on to contend that for the Syrian President, Hafez Al-Assad, "a military adventure now would be suicidal."

The report on the intelligence assessment attributed failures to the analysts of the various agencies and not to a failure to collect intelligence.

"The information provided by those parts of the community responsible for intelligence collection was sufficient to prompt a warning," the report said. "Such information (derived from both human and technical sources) was not conclusive but was plentiful, ominous and often accurate."

The report maintained that "certain substantive preconceptions (deletion) turned the analyst's attention principally toward political indications that the Arabs were bent on finding non-violent means to achieve their objectives and away from indications (mainly military) to the contrary."

Maj. Gen. Howard P. Smith, an Air Force officer in charge of the Pentagon agency's analytical section, said that three analysts had been transferred as a result of the failure.

The material from the secret report was made public after nearly two days of jousting between the Ford Administration, the intelligence community and the House committee. Part was read into the record by William Parmenter, chief of the C.I.A.'s office of current intelligence.

The report was made public in the third set of hearings conducted by the House committee in its examination of the efficiency of the intelligence community, which some estimate requires an expenditure of \$6-billion a year.

The committee has sought, first by letter and later by subpoena, materials given to Presidents Johnson and Nixon on four major recent crises, including the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the 1968 Communist Tet offensive in South Vietnam, the Cyprus crisis and the recent revolution in Portugal.

Representative Otis G. Pike, Democrat of Suffolk County and the committee chairman, complained today that the Administration had been unwilling or slow to respond to the committee's requests. "All we have been confronted with since we started is delay," he said.

The C.I.A. was prepared to make public part of the material that went to the committee today, but when Mr. Pike asked C.I.A. officials to read other portions they balked.

The committee met through the afternoon in closed session and finally voted, 6 to 3, to make public a half dozen of the individual intelligence evaluations noted in the postmortem. Most of the document remained secret.