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Grade level: 7

Primary Source Citation: Remarks by President Jimmy Carter, Veterans Day National Ceremony, Arlington National Cemetery, October 24, 1977, from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, retrieved online at <https://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/speakers/1977remarks.asp>.

Allow students, in groups or individually, to examine the text while answering the questions below in order. The questions are designed to guide students into a deeper analysis of the source and sharpen associated cognitive skills.

Level I: Description

1. Where is this document from?
2. Whose words are being recorded here?
3. What is the purpose of this speech?

Level II: Interpretation

1. Was the president a veteran who can speak first-hand of his experiences in war? As he addresses the nation, does he add personal experiences to grab our attention?
2. He mentions several people in this speech that you may not be familiar with, but can you still relate to the message when he talks of his son Jack who served in Vietnam?
3. Does he support all veterans? How can you tell?

Level III: Analysis

1. Can you imagine who would be in the audience to listen? Describe what you see in your mind.
2. Who would keep the channel tuned in when passing this address on television or radio?
3. Does this message help you to understand the magnitude of Veterans Day, and the history behind the way it has touched every life?

Veterans Day Remarks
Remarks by President Jimmy Carter
Veterans Day National Ceremony
Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, Virginia
October 24, 1977

PRESIDENT CARTER: As I stand here this morning representing the greatest nation on Earth, and as I've heard the prayer of Captain James Carter and joined in the Pledge of Allegiance with General Rogers, and then introduced by my own close, personal friend, Max Cleland, I've been overwhelmed, as I have many times in the past in my life, with a sense of love and gratitude for those who have offered, and sometimes who have offered and given their lives in service to our country. Our hearts are filled with love and appreciation and gratitude and closeness and brotherhood. And at the same time, we think about the horrors of war, when those attributes are missing from the hearts and lives of people who have to fight.

I come from the South, as you know. We are one of the parts of the Nation who have suffered severely, along with those who fought in the War Between the States. And I think Robert E. Lee gave a good analysis of this duality of feeling when he said to his wife in a personal letter, "What a cruel thing is war, to separate and destroy families and friends and mar the purest joys and happiness that God has granted us in this world, to fill our hearts with hatred, instead of love, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world."

We are here to commemorate the dead. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated in 1921, and the body of an unknown soldier from the First World War was buried here. Later, we had the bodies of unknown soldiers from the Korean war and the Second World War. We don't have the body of a Vietnam veteran, because every body so far discovered has been identified. But they share in the commemoration of their heroism perhaps in a special way.

Since the Revolutionary War in 1776, 45 million Americans have been part of the Armed Forces during conflict. About 140 years after my own family came to this country, the first James Carter in our family who lived in Georgia fought in the Revolutionary War. My great-grandparents participated in the War Between the States. My own father was a first lieutenant in the First World War. I wore the uniform of our country during the second war and the Korean war.

I represent the kind of family that's close to all your hearts. And the prospect in the service in war has touched almost every life in our country. Francis Bacon said that peace is much better than war, because in peace, sons bury fathers and in war, fathers bury sons.

My son Jack served in Vietnam. And although I came back from the wars as something of a hero although I was not a hero--my son came back unappreciated, sometimes scorned by his peer group who did not join in the conflict. And I think there's a special debt of gratitude on the part of American people to those young men and women who served in Vietnam, because they've not been appreciated enough.

It's difficult enough to fight in a war that's popular with our people because of a sense of patriotism and dedication and gratitude that is a sustaining force when one's life is threatened to the danger of combat. But to fight in a self-sacrificial way in Vietnam, when there was not this depth of gratitude and commitment on the part of the people back home, is an extremely difficult thing, even above and beyond the difficulty of previous wars.

I have a deep sense of this responsibility on me as President. And we've tried, since Max Cleland has been in office and since I've been in office, to recommend-and the Congress has responded well -- to increase Veterans Administration compensation, to increase Veterans Administration pensions, to increase GI bill coverage, and to reverse the effort that had been made to reduce the time during which Vietnam veterans would qualify for the GI bill.

When we initiated our jobs program this year, we put veterans at the top place in the responsibility to give them gainful employment.

We have with us today a special person, Chairman George Mahon, who will be retiring after this term after long service in Congress. In a speech the other night, he pointed out that he had fought in the Congress to allocate more than \$2 trillion for the defense of our country. And I know that all our people feel very deeply that we must have peace.

Those who love peace most are those who serve in the Armed Forces and whose lives would first be lost if conflict occurs. But we know that peace can best be preserved by maintaining the strength of our Nation. We must be strong enough militarily, we must have a strong commitment of the American people, and there must be a demonstrable will to defend freedom in order to prevent war. Those are the commitments that I make to you.

Those are the commitments that I make to you, and I ask you today and millions of Americans to join me in assuring that the future will hold peace for all of us, because our will for freedom and our commitment to the principles of our Nation will always be strong in gratitude to those in the past who have given their lives and those today who are willing to give their lives for the preservation of the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you very much.