Avoiding Armageddon, the inaugural production from Ted Turner Documentaries, provides an unflinching global look at the threats posed by nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and examines the explosive connection between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. The series asks whether the world has the ability and the will to control the weapons that — ironically — came from the best of mankind’s ingenuity but have been perverted to advance the worst of mankind’s instincts.

The Avoiding Armageddon documentary is the centerpiece of an extensive effort to raise awareness about weapons of mass destruction and terrorism and engage citizens in a dialogue about choices about the future. Components of this multimedia effort include outreach partnerships with community, educational, and media organizations to make these issues accessible to a broad and diverse audience and a companion interactive Web site located at www.pbs.org/avoidingarmageddon.
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Introduction

A powerful television series airing on PBS stations nationwide, Avoiding Armageddon examines the threats posed by nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and brings the viewer face-to-face with the people racing to use them. The series also highlights programs and people that are working to reduce the chances that these weapons will be deployed — either accidentally or intentionally — in any of the volatile conflicts around the globe.

Recent domestic and international events bring closer the possibility that these weapons could be used. The Avoiding Armageddon documentary is the centerpiece of an extensive effort to raise awareness about weapons of mass destruction and terrorism and to engage citizens in making educated choices about the future.

The series raises “what if” questions that give pause: What if the next act of terrorism involved nuclear weapons? What if a chemical agent were released that could sicken or kill a significant number of people? What if an act of biological terrorism set off a devastating epidemic?

But while the series brings attention to these frightening scenarios, it also promotes proactive solutions — ones that average citizens can understand and support — to protect the world from Armageddon.

This guide was designed to help discussion group leaders engage community members in informal dialogue about the issues presented in the Avoiding Armageddon series by providing thought-provoking questions, background material, series highlights and an extensive list of follow-up resources.

KEY ISSUES:

Avoiding Armageddon highlights several key issues

The huge Cold War stockpiles of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and materials and the fact that much of these weapons and materials are undersecured.

The challenge to safely destroy the aging chemical weapons which are leaking and poisoning nearby communities.

The fact that security today means finding and stopping terrorists and hostile states before they obtain — and use — weapons of mass destruction.

The new security concerns that arise from the intersection between available weapons of mass destruction and international terrorists who would use these weapons.

The continuing pursuit of these weapons — especially in hostile nations such as Iraq and North Korea.

The hot spots of the world, such as Kashmir and Korea, where weapons of mass destruction might escalate a local regional dispute into a deadly international disaster.

The issues of homeland security — especially relating to issues of response — such as the ability of our health care system to handle a massive biological, chemical or nuclear attack.

The positive and hopeful actions of citizens, grassroots organizations and political leaders to address and eliminate the threats from weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.

— Margaret Mead
FACILITATOR GUIDELINES

Before convening a group, view the film in its entirety and read this guide, which provides discussion questions for each segment and supplemental information and resources to further discussion.

The film is a total of eight hours, divided into four two-hour segments. Decide whether participants should watch the segments individually or as a group. A group viewing will require at least one four-hour session per two-hour segment, to allow for thoughtful discussion time. Or, participants can watch the entire series individually and then attend a three-hour discussion session that integrates topics and issues. (Session lengths will vary depending on the nature of the group and your familiarity with members.) Regardless of viewing and discussion formats, provide participants with reading materials that familiarize them with the film’s content and concepts.

Smaller groups of five to eight members are ideal. You can divide a large group into two smaller ones, each with a different facilitator. Where possible, groups should be representative of diverse views. Encourage participants to be open to differing ideas, be active and responsive listeners, and submit controversial opinions. Create with participants a set of discussion guidelines (i.e., no interruptions, no questions are minimized).

Moderate discussion where appropriate, modeling active listening and questioning techniques that enable group members to clarify and elaborate on statements, diffuse tension or misunderstanding, and make clear connections to the questions and topics. For example, restate the perspective of others and have participants paraphrase what they hear. If people disagree with others’ statements, ask them to explain why. Be sure that all participants have an equal opportunity to be heard. This may require setting time limits on responses.

Because of the topics’ complexities, it might be necessary to reframe issues and provide additional information to reference for factual evidence and background. Important to the process is allowing people to link the film to their lives. Before posing questions, you might invite participants to briefly reflect on how a topic segment relates to their personal experiences.

Be mindful that the film’s content could promote or heighten fear regarding potential terrorist attacks. Part of the facilitator’s role is to minimize fear by nurturing constructive discussion.

Providing participants with additional information or pointing them to useful resources that can answer questions might help to allay specific concerns. For example, group members might wonder about the potential of a biological or chemical terrorist attack; perhaps data related to or expert opinions on this threat would ease anxiety.

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO ASSESS THE DISCUSSION’S IMPACT:

At the end of the session, invite participants to take a few minutes to write about their experience — for instance what they learned, feelings the film evoked, or subjects about which they would like to know more. Encourage people to share their thoughts.

Ask each person in the group to indicate one idea they will take away from the discussion and/or one thing they will do to further their understanding about or take action on issues associated with weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

Divide the participants in pairs to briefly discuss what concepts stood out for them. Invite the team to share their thoughts with the group.

Distribute a short questionnaire that probes participants’ feelings about the experience, what they learned, how they will apply what they learned, what additional information they need, and constructive recommendations for similar future sessions.
Chemical and biological weapons are among the oldest on earth. And among the most efficient. When the Athenians attacked the Spartans in the Peloponnesian War, they were driven back by choking sulfur fires. Smallpox-infected blankets were given to the Indians during the French and Indian War.

But the 21st-century victims of these horrifying weapons are as likely to be citizens retrieving their mail or riding on a subway as they are soldiers on the battlefield. Or they may be children who have the misfortune of going to school near an army weapons depot, where an aging supply of chemical weapons is leaking.

Unlike the spectacular explosion of a nuclear bomb, chemical and biological weapons are silent and stealthy — and can be just as deadly. And unlike a nuclear weapon, they are relatively easy to make — and deploy — by anyone who has access to a small lab and is willing to do the unthinkable. The growing concerns about chemical and biological weapons challenge traditional ways of thinking about prevention, deterrence, nonproliferation, and response and require us to think anew about how to define and implement effective and enduring solutions.

The film dramatically explores where these devastating weapons came from, who has them, who might use them and what the world must do to prevent their use. As with nuclear weapons, these weapons come from the best of mankind’s ingenuity, perverted to advance the worst of mankind’s instincts. Unlike nuclear weapons, which have only been used twice in battle, chemical weapons have been used often.

The program revisits many of these tragic incidents, from the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack where 12 died and thousands were injured, to the Kurdish villages where 7,000 died when Saddam Hussein gassed his own citizens.

It also looks at a troubling future trend — the prospect of genetically engineered biological agents.

What biological and chemical elements should concern us most? What harm can they cause? What is the likelihood of their being used as agents of war or by terrorists?

**Biological**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, Category A type biological agents are the riskiest, as they are easily spread, are typically passed from person to person, and have the highest death rates. When considering that terrorists might acquire these microbes, most concern rests with the following:

**Anthrax:** Inhalational — Caused by breathing bacterial spores into the lungs, symptoms causing respiratory complications.

**Cutaneous:** Caused by anthrax spores that contaminate the skin, resulting in skin or intestinal disease.

**Botulism:** Caused by a bacterial protein that has been eaten or inhaled.

**Smallpox:** Viral disease that spreads from person-to-person through airborne transmission.

**Pneumonic plague:** Caused by inhaling the bacteria associated with the “Black Death.”

**Tularemia:** One of the most infectious bacterial diseases known, causing fever, headache, and a pneumonia-like illness.

**Viral hemorrhagic fevers:** Caused by a diverse group of viruses (e.g., Ebola and
THE REALITY OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Between 1986 and 1988, Iraq used chemical weapons against Iranians and Kurds. Mustard gas, cyanide and nerve agents caused 3 to 5 percent of the 1 million deaths or casualties in the conflict. Experts estimate that 7,000 Kurds alone died when their villages were gassed.

In the spring of 1995 the Aum Shinrikyo cult unleashed the deadly nerve agent sarin in the Tokyo subway, killing 12 commuters and sending thousands to the hospital.

Russia has 40,000 metric tons of chemical agents located in seven sites in six different regions — the largest stockpile in the world.

Eradication of smallpox was declared in 1980. The virus officially exists today in only two laboratory repositories in the United States and Russia. Appearance of human cases outside the laboratory would signal use of the virus as a biological weapon.

In October 2001, a small amount of extremely fine weapons-grade anthrax was sent in envelopes to news outlets and the U.S. Congress. Five people died, Congress was shut down, the Supreme Court building was evacuated, and the mail system was affected for weeks.

(Source: Center for Nonproliferation Studies)

Victims of the 1995 sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway are treated. The state of readiness of the world’s health care system for such an attack is explored in episode one.

Yellow Fever (that spread from person-to-person through contact with body fluid, such as blood).

Chemical
There are four categories of chemical substances that terrorists might use:

Blister agents: These incapacitate rather than kill. Blister agents, are chemical agents that cause red skin, blisters, irritation, eye damage, respiratory damage and gastrointestinal damage.

Choking agents: Exposure to these death-causing agents is through vapor inhalation or skin contact.

Blood agents: These are comprised of cyanide-based compounds that are not best used on many people, but are probably favored for individual assassinations. Exposure can occur by contact with either liquids or vapors.

Nerve agents: The “new wave” of chemical agents that were first developed as insecticides by German scientists and then evolved into — and were stockpiled as — chemical weapons. Exposure to nerve agents can occur via inhalation, skin contact or ingestion. A small amount can cause significant damage, but these agents are difficult to obtain.
1. Avoiding Armageddon features incidents of modern biological and chemical warfare and terrorism. Describe the differences and similarities among these events. What are the implications of these occurrences for the future?

2. Points of view regarding the use of chemical and biological weapons vary, from those who believe that use of these weapons by terrorists would be difficult and unlikely, to others who believe that biological or chemical terrorism is probable and could be quite deadly. What do you think is the likelihood of wide-scale biological or chemical terrorism? Who would be most likely to use these substances? What can be done to prevent biological or chemical attacks?

3. After World War I, the world was so horrified by the use of chemical weapons that their use was banned. Yet nations were allowed to manufacture and store chemical weapons. What was the reasoning behind this decision? International treaties prohibit the use of chemical and biological weapons. Yet, in many instances, the development of such weaponry is secret, making it difficult to assess whether a country possesses them. What can be done on a global level to ensure nations adhere to international laws regarding the production and use of biological and chemical weapons?

4. The film notes the dangers associated with stockpiles of chemical weapons. The U.S. and Russia have committed to destroying these weapons. Why haven’t they destroyed them despite the threats they pose? What types of resources would be required to eliminate them and/or to provide safety standards?

5. Among the concerns of experts is the production and/or storage of genetically engineered biological agents of new lethal bacterial and viral strains. The mixing and matching of elements — recombinant DNA technology — could allow, for example, someone to take a gene that makes a deadly toxin from one strain of bacteria and introduce it into other bacterial strains. Bacterial weapons could also be created that are resistant to antibiotics. How can this production be monitored and who should do it?

6. Most of the current focus of public attention has been the intrinsic difficulties in mounting an effective response to a chemical or biological attack and what can be done to improve early warning and rapid detection systems to minimize casualties in the face of an event. How prepared do you feel your local organizations are in the event of an attack? What can a community do to prepare for a potential biological or chemical attack? What do you think you can do to make your community safer?
This episode of *Avoiding Armageddon* illustrates the deadly threats posed by countries such as North Korea, India, Pakistan and Iraq, as well as other potential flash points around the world. The sense of relief that came over many people at the end of the Cold War was premature — in fact, the nuclear terror that has been part of the collective consciousness since the 1940s is still very real.

There are massive nuclear arsenals in the United States and Russia. *Avoiding Armageddon* examines both the sheer size of these arsenals and the growing danger that terrorists could obtain nuclear weapons or materials. This episode tells the story of Leonid Smirnov, a mid-level employee in a Russian nuclear facility, who patiently pilfered tiny amounts of highly enriched uranium, hoping to sell them to the highest bidder on the black market. Fortunately, Smirnov was caught before he reached a buyer. But the material he stole was never missed.

Yet, in keeping with the objective of *Avoiding Armageddon* to show potential solutions, there is reason for hope. An analysis of the nuclear arsenal reductions in the United States and Russia is inspiring. Hope is embodied in the cooperative efforts in Kazakhstan and Yugoslavia to secure their nuclear material, and in programs such as Project Sapphire where, in a covert operation, 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium were removed from Kazakhstan after officials discovered that Iran had been making inquiries about it. Weapons factories in the former Soviet Union have been converted to peaceful manufacturing, and thousands of former weapons scientists have found new employment.

Splitting the atom was one of humanity’s most ingenious breakthroughs, but also one of its most dangerous. Hiroshima ended a war but began a frightening new chapter in human history. From the Cuban missile crisis to Leonid Smirnov, we see that the world has repeatedly stepped to the brink, peered over and pulled back. As the nuclear club expands, will the pattern change?
EPISODE TWO — DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Avoiding Armageddon* highlights emerging threats associated with nuclear weapons. What are these threats and how have they evolved over time? Given the world's understanding of and experience with the dangers of nuclear weapons and their elements, why do they continue to exist? What are the benefits associated with nuclear weapons? What are the dangers? Why could it be advantageous for a country to have nuclear weapons? What are the obstacles to monitoring and/or limiting the creation, use, and/or testing of nuclear weapons?

2. A segment of the film illustrates how easy access to nuclear elements can be. Such availability increases the potential for a nuclear accident or even the intentional use of nuclear weapons. What needs to happen to secure all nuclear material? What can be done globally to monitor and limit access to nuclear substances?

3. The United States spends significant sums protecting the nation from a nuclear attack and maintaining its nuclear weapons. What is your feeling about these expenditures? Explain your point of view. How else could funds be spent to protect the nation and the world from a nuclear catastrophe or from events that might lead to such an occurrence?

4. In this post-September 11 world, are we more or less likely to experience a nuclear attack than we were during the Cold War? Explain. Have our prevention techniques changed since the Cold War?

5. Since the 1960s, a series of disarmament treaties and agreements have been established. Often nations adhere to them; sometimes, however, there are loopholes or conditions and situations that enable the illegal development and testing of such weapons. Discuss your understanding of disarmament and what some of the obstacles might be in negotiating disarmament treaties and agreements. What recommendations might you make to U.S. political leaders regarding the creation of domestic and international disarmament legislation?

FROM SILOS TO SUNFLOWERS

As a group, read the following story about political enemies “joining hands” to ensure that dangerous nuclear weapons in the Ukraine are eliminated. What decisions did these leaders have to make to ensure the safety of a nation? What prompted their actions? Is this a scenario that could be repeated around the world?

Visitors to the farmland around Pervomaysk in Ukraine today would see fields of sunflowers — an important cash crop in this rich agricultural land. But just five years ago vegetation co-existed with missile silos, holding more than 700 nuclear warheads aimed at the United States and Europe. The transformation of this land is more than a story of treaties and diplomacy. It is a story of former enemies becoming colleagues and working together for a safer world.

The story begins in 1991 with the breakup of the Soviet Union. As a legacy from the Soviet war machine, four new nations inherited nuclear weapons. Strategically located, Ukraine’s territory held the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world; with 2,000 nuclear warheads, this arsenal outranked those of China, France or the United Kingdom.

The United States knew that Ukraine needed financial and technical help to dismantle this lethal legacy. Politically they knew that any efforts had to involve the Russians as well. In January 1994 the three nations signed a Trilateral Agreement, confirming Ukraine’s commitment to return the nuclear warheads to Russia in exchange for power reactor fuel from Russia and security guarantees from the United States. Senators Richard Lugar and Sam
6. A series of arms control treaties has also been passed to regulate the acquisition, use, and testing of nuclear weapons. Have the treaties and agreements been successful over time? In considering the current level of nuclear proliferation, what are the implications of this legislation for future weapons monitoring and regulations?

NUCLEAR FACTS

Between January and March 2001, there were 20 cases of illicit trafficking in radioactive materials in Germany, Romania, South Africa and Mexico.

Russia has enough fissile material to produce up to 80,000 nuclear weapons; much of this material is held in unsecured locations. In 2000, there were more than 500 incidents of illegal transportation of nuclear and radioactive material across the Russian state border.

In 1998, India conducted five nuclear test explosions. Pakistan quickly responded with six nuclear tests of its own.

North Korea has withdrawn (2003) from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty and threatens to resume missile testing.

(Source: Nuclear Threat Initiative)

The nuclear weapons facility in Semipalatinsk — once the center of the Soviet nuclear weapons program — is destroyed. Progress in reducing the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals is chronicled in episode two.

Nunn succeeded in getting the Congress to approve legislation to give Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia support for reducing the nuclear and other dangerous weapons in their territories. This support extended beyond removing the missiles and dismantling the silos. The United States also helped build housing for the military personnel and their families who no longer had to guard and launch these missiles.

Then U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry was directly involved in the transformation of the silos around Pervomaysk over a period of three years. In 1994 he visited the operating silos and saw the map on the wall that had a glowing bulb for every U.S. and European city targeted by a live warhead. A year later he came back to monitor progress and saw the silo being dismantled and an Orthodox priest sprinkling holy water on a new nearby factory.

The following winter, Dr. Perry returned. Dr. Perry, accompanied by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and Ukraine Defense Minister Valeri Shmarov, simultaneously turned the keys that only two years earlier would have launched nuclear missiles at the United States. This time the keys ignited the explosives that blew up the empty silo.

When Dr. Perry next visited the site in June, the snow and ice of winter had given way to summer. The concrete and barbed wire of the military enclave were also gone and in its place were furrowed fields. The three men — once sworn enemies — together dug into the fertile earth and planted sunflowers.

(Source: Nuclear Threat Initiative http://www.nti.org/h_learnmore/h1_sunflower.html)
**TYPES OF TERRORISM**

Terrorism commonly falls under six categories:

**Nationalist:** Terrorists seeking to form a separate state for their national group, using violence to fight for national liberation. They do not see themselves as terrorists but as freedom fighters and thus, often gain international sympathy and support for their cause. Examples: The Irish Republican Army, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Basque Fatherland and Liberty.

**Religious:** Terrorists whose violence is "divinely commanded" and who target a broad base of enemies — typically anyone who is not a member of their religious group — to achieve change. Religious terrorists come from different faiths and cults. Examples: the al Qaeda network, Hamas, Hezbollah, some American white supremacist groups, Aum Shinrikyo, and radical Jewish groups affiliated with the late Rabbi Meir Kahane.

**State-sponsored:** Terrorist groups used by nations as "foreign policy tools" who essentially wage war. Because they are supported by states, these groups have greater resources to undertake terrorist acts that cause greater harm. Among nations cited by the State Department as terrorism sponsors are Iran, Cuba, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria. Examples: Iranian-backed Hezbollah and Libya-supported Japanese Red Army.

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**EPISODE THREE — “THE NEW FACE OF TERROR: UPPING THE ANTE”**

Nuclear, biological or chemical weapons are extremely dangerous. But in the hands of those unafraid to use them, they become a threat unprecedented in the history of mankind. Global terrorism has changed everything.

*Avoiding Armageddon* investigates the best and the worst of humanity's impulses and actions. It goes into the heart of war-ravaged Gaza where 17-year-old Ehab Yusef is struggling between his desire to embrace life and the attraction of a martyr's death. Ehab knows that terrorism has worked in the past, and everywhere he looks he sees a celebration of terrorism's current power.

Osama bin Laden has proven that a small group of people willing to do the unthinkable can inflict enormous damage — even to a super power. In a chilling interview with a middle-class Islamic couple living in Great Britain, *Avoiding Armageddon* shows that bin Ladenism is not just confined to the caves of Afghanistan and the rubble of Gaza. This episode will also seek to define terrorism, demonstrating what can often be the fine line between a terrorist and a freedom fighter.

This episode of *Avoiding Armageddon* asks the stark, overarching questions: What if terrorist groups were to secure weapons of mass destruction? When, how and against whom would they use them? What can be done to prevent this from happening? The program explores ideas to defuse the terrorist time bomb, including a look at the IRA and how Britain walked a delicate, but eventually successful, balance of ending the destructive cycle of terrorism.

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*A bus bombing in the Middle East was the work of terrorists. The many facets of world terrorism are examined in episode three.*
DEFINING TERRORISM

Some definitions and/or language to consider:

**League of Nations (1937 Proposed)**
All criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public.

**United Nations Resolution language (1999)**
1. Strongly condemns all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and by whomsoever committed;
2. Reiterates that criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them.

**FBI Definition (Revised July 2001)**
Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.

**U.S. State Department**
The term “terrorism” means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. The term “international terrorism” means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. The term “terrorist group” means any group practicing, or that has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism.

**United States Department of Defense**
The calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.

*Left wing:* These groups want to replace capitalism with communism or socialism because they feel that many people are exploited by capitalist regimes. Typically, they limit their violence, often resorting to kidnapping the rich or bombing monuments. Examples: The German Baader-Meinhof Group and the Italian Red Brigades.

*Right wing:* These racist and anti-Semitic terrorists are typically associated with “skinheads” (also with 1980s neo-Nazi riots) and seek to replace liberal democratic governments with fascism. Immigrants and refugees from developing nations are often their targets.

*Anarchist:* This form of terrorism, which reached its peak about 1920, may be reemerging — most evident with the recent protests against globalization. Anarchist terrorists were revolutionaries who sought to overthrow governments and conducted a series of bombings and assassinations of heads of state, including President William McKinley, killed in 1901 by a young Hungarian refugee.

(Source: Council on Foreign Relations)
1. *Avoiding Armageddon* introduces Ehab Yusef, a Palestinian boy living on the Gaza strip. Ahab describes his life and thoughts about becoming a suicide bomber. What sociopolitical and environmental factors contribute to his beliefs? Would you say these factors are common to most terrorists? Five years from now, where do you think Ehab will be? Based on his story, has your perspective on terrorism changed? If Ehab had economic choices, do you think he would find the martyr’s life so attractive?

2. Throughout history groups have used what we would now call terrorism to achieve their political or religious aims. Terrorism tends to flourish in environments where there is instability or conflict. In what ways does terrorism prevent or support resolution of conflicts? Is terrorism acceptable under a repressive government structure? Explain. Is it ever an accessible mechanism for change? Discuss. What kind of unified global action could assist nations in resolving their differences?

3. The series delves into the history of terrorism. In reviewing the chronology of the contributing events, identify and discuss commonalities and differences among the circumstances from which terrorism grew. With your understanding of the sociopolitical factors that could foster terrorism, what might have helped to avert terrorist acts? What do these conditions suggest regarding the current and future status of global terrorism?

(NOTE TO FACILITATOR: You might divide the group into teams to discuss specific events and/or nations and then have each group share with the larger group their findings. You might alert participants to this activity in advance and provide relevant reading and resource materials with which to prepare for the discussion.)

4. There is not a universal definition of terrorism, though concepts do overlap. Yet, even when there is agreement on what terrorism is, debate exists over whether a particular incident fits the definition. For instance, is a “freedom fighter” a terrorist? There are those who believe that some extreme actions are justified; others feel that the label of terrorism may be applied too loosely. For others, terrorism is not easily justified and is clear-cut in terms of the acts the terrorists undertake, particularly since they fall beyond conventional warfare. How would you define terrorism? Is it necessary to have a global definition of terrorism? Explain.
The concluding episode of *Avoiding Armageddon* looks at the New World that we are now living in. Global communications, advanced technology and rapid international transportation have created a world where problems in nations across the globe can threaten security at home. It used to be that troubled nations failed quietly, neither mourned nor noticed by the rest of the world. But today a vacuum of governance can create a dangerous opening for opportunistic terrorism.

This episode of *Avoiding Armageddon* looks at the situation in Afghanistan where yesterday’s policies of international indifference created today’s nurturing ground for terrorism. The episode looks at the difficult task of nation building, an effort not unlike the rebuilding of Europe after World War II that recreated the infrastructure that makes nations function — safely. Yet in the case of nations such as Afghanistan, it is an even greater task because more than roads and buildings must be built before that society can be free from internal chaos. The episode also takes viewers around the world to look at successful examples of nation building.

A detailed segment on homeland security explores the “new normal,” looking at what the government as well as individuals are doing in San Francisco. The area is well known for its preparedness for earthquakes — how has the city responded to the threat of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction?

On a global scale, the concept of nation building is explored through the on-going American experience in Afghanistan, illuminating the prospect that future neglect of poor nations and failed states can create conditions that can breed support for instability and terrorism.

War may not be the only factor that destabilizes a nation. Other factors, such as the AIDS crisis in Africa, where enormous percentages of the adult population are infected with HIV, can leave a country without leadership, commerce or armies — fertile ground for threats to global security.

*An Austrian soldier on patrol in Afghanistan is representative of the challenges of nation building.*
1. *Avoiding Armageddon* invites the viewer to consider ways to strengthen security and decrease the growing threat from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction in the United States and abroad. The film notes the importance of strategic, collaborative international tactics to reduce terrorism, resolve conflicts, and assist “failed” nations.

One approach is through nation building, which is what the United States has begun to undertake in Afghanistan. What is your understanding of nation building? What is involved in this type of effort? Is this an effort the United States should undertake? Why or why not? What other examples of American-driven nation building efforts can you cite? Were they successful? Explain. What is the difference between nation building and peacekeeping efforts? Should the world support the latter? Why or why not? What type of unified international efforts would you recommend to limit terrorist activities, solve conflicts between nations, and grow underserved countries?

2. There has been discussion among leaders to create a strategy for nation building that would be modeled after the Marshall Plan, a reconstruction effort initiated by the United States in 1947 to revive the economy of certain European nations. In 1948, President Truman signed into action the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) to promote European production, bolster European currency, and facilitate international trade. Another object was to curb Soviet influence, especially in Czechoslovakia, France and Italy. Many nations participated in the project, but the Soviet Union opposed it and several Eastern European countries denounced or ignored it. From 1948 to 1951, the U.S. expended over $12 billion under the program.

In June 2001, former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo proposed a new Marshall Plan that was adopted by the United Nations. The Zedillo report noted that “development targets in poor countries could be met by 2015 only by increasing aid from the rich world by $50 billion a year.” This is
more than double the amount currently donated, bringing the annual total international aid close to $100 billion.

Given your understanding of the original Marshall Plan, what might be the benefits and problems associated with a similar project in, for example, Afghanistan? How might this type of effort influence nations' perspectives of the United States? Should the United States be economically involved with struggling nations? Discuss. Should “rich” nations around the world support developing countries? Discuss.

3. The film notes that terrorists can find haven in “failed” societies and examines conditions that might contribute to these “failures,” such as lack of education and health care, the AIDS epidemic, particularly in Africa; and the treatment of women in developing countries, who are often deprived of educational and economic rights. Why might terrorists find haven under such conditions? Are there related circumstances that create terrorist sympathizers in developing nations? In what ways can the international world rectify these situations and if they are remedied, can terrorism be kept at bay?

4. The film discusses ways the average citizen can effect change and illustrates that point by highlighting ways people have been involved in key historic events, which now include September 11. According to the film, in what capacity have Americans nurtured change? What prompted this civic action? What types of activities might people pursue in light of recent terrorist events and the threat of weapons of mass destruction?

5. On November 25, 2002, President Bush signed the Homeland Security Act of 2002 into law, which will enable the executive branch to better address the threat of terrorism to our country. What are the merits of this act? What are its potential deficits in regards, for example, to civil liberties and historic efforts to ensure the nation’s safety? Are there similar programs that could promote global security? Explain. What type of international plan could be created to protect the world at large?

(NOTE TO FACILITATOR: Participants should review President Bush’s speech about how the act will function and aspects of the act itself.)
RESOURCES

INTERNET

Nuclear Weapons
Arms Control Association
http://www.armscontrol.org

Atomic Archive.com
http://www.atomicarchive.com/

University of California, Berkeley:
Institute of International Studies
Nuclear Danger and Global Survival
http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/nuclearforum/reports

United Nations Peace and Security
through Disarmament
http://disarmament.un.org/index.html

Biological and Chemical Weapons
Centers for Disease Control
Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response
http://www.bt.cdc.gov/

Federation of American Scientists
http://www.fas.org/

NOVA: Bioterror
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bioterror

Terrorism
Centre for Defense and International Security Studies
http://www.cdiiss.org/terror.htm

Frontline: The Roots of Terrorism
http://www.pbs.org/frontline/roots

George Mason University
History News Network: History of Terrorism
http://hnn.us/articles/299.html

President Discusses War on Terrorism
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/

Foreign Policy Research Institute
http://www.fpri.org

The Brookings Institution
http://www.brook.edu

The Terrorism Research Center
http://www.terrorism.com

Comprehensive Sites on Weapons
of Mass Destruction and Terrorism
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
http://www.ceip.org

Center for Defense Information
http://www.cdi.org/

Center for Nonproliferation Studies at Monterey Institute of
International Studies
http://cns.miis.edu/index.htm

The Global Security Institute
http://www.gsinstitute.org

Nuclear Threat Initiative
http://www.nti.org

Public Agenda Online
http://www.publicagenda.org/

The Henry L. Stimson Center
http://www.stimson.org

Nation Building
“A Natural Fear Increased with Tales: America’s Aversion to
Nation Building and Peacekeeping”
http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/nation-building.cfm

“Nation Building”
http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/ksgpress/bulletin/
spring2002/features/nation_building.html

Nation Building in Bosnia
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/
military/etc/peace.html

Emergency Preparedness
Federal Emergency Management Agency
http://www.fema.gov

FEMA for Kids Guide to National Security Emergencies
http://www.fema.gov/kids/nse/

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic

American Red Cross
http://www.redcross.org
A crew cleans up a nuclear weapons facility in Russia. The threats from unsecured nuclear facilities are enumerated in episode two.

Additional resources as well as educational activities for classroom teachers are available at http://www.pbs.org/avoidingarmageddon.)
1899 Two dozen countries sign Hague Convention, pledging not to use toxic gases or other poisons as weapons.

1914-1918 Chemical weapons used on World War I battlefields. Germany attacks with chlorine gas; Allies retaliate. By war’s end, gases cause 1.3 million injuries and 100,000 deaths.

1925 Geneva Protocol bans the use of chemical and biological weapons in war.

1936 German scientists discover the nerve agent tabun — far deadlier than anything used in World War I.

1932-1945 Japan kills 260,000 in China with biological weapons, chiefly plague.


1945 The U.S. drops the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing more than 120,000.

1949 The U.S.S.R. tests its first nuclear weapon.

1950s-1960s The U.S. identifies dozens of viral and bacterial agents that can be weaponized. Testing done on animals and humans.

1952 The United Kingdom tests its first nuclear weapon.


1962 Cuban missile crisis brings world to brink of nuclear war.


1964 China tests its first nuclear weapon.


Science has brought forth this danger, but the real problem is in the minds and hearts of men.

— Albert Einstein

1974 India (not party to NPT) tests its first nuclear weapon.

1979 Anthrax spores accidentally released in U.S.S.R. kill at least 68 people.

1980 Smallpox is officially eradicated.

1983-1988 Chemical weapons used extensively in Iran-Iraq war; thousands die.

1988 Iraq kills 5,000 Kurds with mustard gas and other chemicals dropped on the town of Halabjah.

1991 UN orders Iraq to destroy all weapons and related technology, then begins inspections.

1992 U.S. announces moratorium on nuclear tests.

1993 Chemical Weapons convention opens for signature.


1996 All Soviet nuclear weapons in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine are transferred to Russia.

1998 Pakistan tests its first nuclear weapon.

1998 Soviet Union dissolves; U.S. starts nonproliferation aid program in former U.S.S.R.

1999 Citing lack of cooperation, UN withdraws weapons inspectors for Iraq.

2001 Al Qaeda attacks World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

2002 Anthrax spores mailed via U.S. postal system infect 23, killing five.

2002 U.S. withdraws from ABM Treaty to allow development of missile defense.

2003 North Korea withdraws from NPT.

(Source: National Geographic)
Avoiding Armageddon
Our Future. Our Choice.

A Production of Ted Turner Documentaries. Presented by WETA Washington, D.C.

Please visit the Web site at www.pbs.org/avoidingarmageddon