

# AVOIDING ARMAGEDDON

Our Future. Our Choice.

## Nation Building

**Grades:** 9-12

**Subjects:** Social Studies (government, global studies, American history),  
Language Arts

**Background:** Reestablishing peace and security in the United States and abroad may depend on strategic, collaborative international efforts to reduce terrorism, resolve conflicts between and/or among countries, and assist nations with social, economic, and political challenges. One method is through nation building. The United States has proposed undertaking nation building in Afghanistan. This international effort would help rebuild the country's war-ravaged infrastructure and ensure the formation of a stable government. These lessons can be used alone, or in conjunction with Episode 4 of "Avoiding Armageddon" – "Confronting Terror: Turning the Tide."

Some world leaders have suggested creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century nation building strategy modeled after the Marshall Plan, a reconstruction effort initiated by the United States in 1947 to rebuild some European nations that were devastated by World War II. In 1948, President Truman signed the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), which would promote European production, bolster European currency, and facilitate international trade. Another object was to curb Soviet influence, especially in Czechoslovakia, France, and Italy. While many nations participated in the project, the Soviet Union opposed it and several Eastern European countries denounced or ignored it. From 1948-51, the United States expended over \$12 billion under the program.

In June 2001 then 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.

**Tools and Materials:**

Paper and Pen  
Access to the Internet

**Activity:**

- Write the term "nation building" on the chalkboard.
- Ask students to discuss what the term means, charting key points.

- Review with students the elements of nation building with a summary of proposed efforts in Afghanistan, as well as a brief history of America's nation building activities in other countries.
- Invite students to discuss what the United States' role should be in regards to nation building.
  - What should our nation's role be in other nations? How does America benefit from such efforts?
  - Do these efforts decrease the threat from terrorism? How?
  - Should America expend funds on the development of other nations?

**Activity Options (these can be sequential or stand alone):**

- 1) Divide students into small groups and assign each group to research America's nation building efforts one of in the following nations:
  - Somalia
  - Haiti
  - The Balkans
  - Guatemala
  - Cuba
  - Vietnam
  - Grenada

Using a graphic organizer, instruct students to identify the type of nation building that occurred (economic development, change of government, etc.), whether the efforts were successful, what the costs of the programs were to the United States, whether goals were met, etc.

Invite each group to share its findings and then have the class compare and contrast the varied nation building efforts. Then, invite them to review pro and con perspectives on America's post-war role in Afghanistan. Have the students discuss, given their knowledge, whether the U.S. should pursue nation building in Afghanistan. Instruct students to write a speech that they will present before members of Congress that reflects their points of view.

- 2) Present students with background on The Marshall Plan. (The Marshall Plan [http://www.marshallfoundation.org/about\\_gcm/marshall\\_plan.htm](http://www.marshallfoundation.org/about_gcm/marshall_plan.htm) is a comprehensive resource.) Explain to students that a proposal has been made to reconstruct The Marshall Plan to assist poor nations, in part as a measure to address socioeconomic challenges that could contribute to terrorism. Have students compare and contrast The Marshall Plan and the Zedillo Report (Executive Summary <http://www.un.org/reports/financing/summary.htm>). Then have students take on the roles of members of a United Nations commission charged with the economic, political, and social redevelopment of undeveloped countries and have them construct a plan that would facilitate these nations' efforts to become more self-sufficient.

**Grades 7-8 adaptation:** Discuss with students the United States' proposal to undertake nation building in Afghanistan. Probe with students what they feel the role of America should be in Afghanistan. Have them research the pros and cons of nation building in Afghanistan and then write a speech reflecting their points of view that they will present before members of Congress.

## **Resources**

After Afghanistan: The Future of Intervention and Nation Building  
<http://www.cato.org/events/011212pf.html>

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](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/ksgpress/bulletin/spring2002/features/nation_building.html)

When Nation Building Destroys  
<http://www.spiked-online.com/Articles/00000006D87C.htm>

The Folly of Nation Building in Afghanistan  
<http://www.cato.org/dailys/10-17-01.html>

Flirting With Nation-Building in Afghanistan  
<http://www.cato.org/current/terrorism/pubs/carpenter-011102.html>

Nation Building in Afghanistan  
<http://archives.theconnection.org/archive/2001/10/1022a.shtml>

Afghanistan: The hazards of nation building  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/1578370.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1578370.stm)

Building and Breaking Nations  
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec02/nations.html>

Talk Back Bosnia: A Dialogue on Nation Building  
<http://digitalfusion.info/clients/tbb/index.html>

Financing for Development: Articles (includes The Zedillo Report)  
<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/a55-1000.pdf>

USAID: Marshall Plan  
<http://www.usaid.gov/multimedia/video/marshall/>

Truman Presidential Museum and Library: The Marshall Plan  
[http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/marshall/large/marshall.htm](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/marshall/large/marshall.htm)

National Archives and Records Administration

[http://www.archives.gov/research\\_room/alic/reference\\_desk/military\\_resources/old\\_war\\_and\\_marshall\\_plan.html](http://www.archives.gov/research_room/alic/reference_desk/military_resources/old_war_and_marshall_plan.html)

### **About the Author**

From classroom instructor to an executive director, Michele Israel has been an educator for nearly 20 years. She has developed and managed innovative educational initiatives, taught in nontraditional settings in the U.S. and overseas, developed curricula and educational materials, and designed and facilitated professional development for classroom and community educators. Currently operating Educational Consulting Group, Israel is involved with diverse projects, including strategic planning and product development.