

Protecting the American People

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Senior Group Website
Website Word Count: 1199
Process Paper Word Count: 500

This topic came to us from almost a month of discussion about what we should do. We had offered many topics, from animal rights in experiments, to the Indian Removal Act, but we just could not agree on a topic. Then, when we learned of the Damascus incident from a State NHD Workshop, this gave us the idea of the Damascus missile silos and the explosion that had occurred there. We proceeded to expand it to the all-encompassing topic of how far the government can go to keep its secrets before it encroaches upon the people's rights, specifically with hazardous wastes or weapons.

Originally, we thought we might also include the transportation of hazardous waste and maybe nuclear reactors. However, we finally narrowed our research into nuclear production and nuclear weapons. We found an excellent secondary source by investigative reporter Eric Schlosser. We looked up the names of people involved with both Rocky Flats and Damascus, which were the most representative examples of the safety problems, to find interviews. We interviewed two men who were reporters at Damascus and obtained a book and an email interview of Kristen Iversen, who had first-hand experience with the problems surrounding Rocky Flats, as well as another email interview about Rocky Flats. We just recently visited the town of Damascus, interviewing two people who owned the property and a dairy farmer who lived across the highway. We also went to the Central Arkansas Library System and a regional university to get newspapers that are only available on microfilm, and we got many books and government documents from our local public library.

We have created websites before, and already knew how to use the Weebly editor and felt comfortable with its interface. We also enjoyed its many improvements, which made the project even easier than the last time we used it. While Weebly was what we used to design our website, we also used Adobe Premiere Elements to edit the videos that we recorded and found online. To

edit the telephone interview, we used the program Audacity to cut it into segments and convert it to MP3 files. We also used Photoshop to create the header for the Thesis page and Resources page. We wanted to create something original and striking to get our point across.

As we started thinking about rights and responsibilities and our topic, we analyzed both sides of the argument: the rights of the people, predominantly the right to life and by extension the protection of that life, and the responsibilities of the government, which include keeping the public safe and protecting the nation as whole. This might include some secrecy, specifically when it comes to the manufacture and storage of hazardous materials. Two examples of people's rights being infringed by the government's irresponsibility regarding hazardous materials were the Titan II Missile explosion in Damascus, Arkansas, and Colorado's Rocky Flats Nuclear Production Facility. These are examples of much larger problems with storing hazardous materials and protecting the American public from them.