ANWR (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) Debate

On Friday, 13 April we will take the second half of the class period to debate/discuss whether ANWR should be opened up for oil and gas drilling.

Teams
You will be assigned to one of four teams, each of which has a unique view of potential drilling of ANWR:

(1) Bush Administration/ Alaskan senators,
(2) Environmentalists
(3) The Inupiat Eskimo of Kaktovik, Alaska
(4) The Gwich'in Indians of Alaska and Canada

Short Reports (due beginning of class on 13 April)
In preparation for the debate, each team will address four topics listed below. Responses should take the real-world position of your group when possible (i.e., environmentalists are against drilling). The teams are responsible for assigning a specific topic to a specific team member. Each member will individually write a separate short report that addresses their topic. You may discuss your short report with your fellow teammates but all of the writing must be yours.

Short Report format & Grading
At least 1/2 page, no more than 1 page, double spaced, typed, with references (at least 2). Grades will be a bit less than 3% of your total semester grade (part of other small reports & homeworks). You will be graded on your research effort, your written argument, how well your report represents your group, and how well your group does during the debate.

Short Report Topics
For each of the topics, I have listed several potential questions you may want to address. You are not required to answer these particular questions.

(1) Geography & Petroleum Geology
Where is ANWR? Is all of ANWR being considered for drilling? How much oil does your group think might be at ANWR? If your group has no official position, what are the ranges of volumes being discussed? What kind of oil traps exist in ANWR? What about natural gas?

(2) Biology & Ecology
What are some of the key species in ANWR? How likely is it that drilling will disrupt them? What are some of the possible effects near the drilling pads? Far from the pads? What does the data from Prudhoe Bay suggest? Will the effect of drilling at ANWR be the same as Prudhoe? How clean have the oil companies been during their drilling at Prudhoe?
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Short Report Topics continued

(3) Energy & Politics
How much of US daily energy consumption does the expected oil from ANWR represent? Six months? More? Less? Should Alaskans have more say about ANWR than other states? Is drilling at ANWR a key component of a solid national energy policy?

(4) Native culture & rights
What native groups live in and near ANWR? Do they have the same position with regard to drilling? If not, why? Has their position changed with time? If so, why? If a native group prefers to live a native lifestyle that excludes drilling, should they be allowed to do so even if it means less oil for all Americans?

Potential Sources of Information:
There are many potential sources of information, including newspaper articles and special websites. To give you a start, I have listed several web sources below:

Web pages
Page for supporters of oil drilling
http://www.anwr.org/

Page showing many sides to the issue, including that of the native peoples of the region
http://arcticcircle.uconn.edu/ArcticCircle/ANWR/

List of web sources for differing views
http://arcticcircle.uconn.edu/ArcticCircle/ANWR/anwrdebate.html

General Web search
Using a search engine such as Google.com, search for "ANWR", etc

Newspaper articles
New York Times: do searches on "Alaska drilling", "Arctic refuge" etc
http://www.nytimes.com/

Boulder Daily Camera: do searches on "Alaska drilling", "arctic refuge" etc
http://www.bouldernews.com/

Debate Format
The "debate" will consist of a series of questions asked by Dr. Lubinski and responses from each of the teams. Some of the questions will resemble those suggested for the short reports. After the question is asked, each team will have a few moments to discuss their answer and elect a representative to give their oral argument.