

# Science-physics



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First sur Lecturer's Unit Drilling oil in ANWR Sometimes the advance in technology and technological development is met by resistance from the people it is supposed to assist. The resistance may stem from various reasons ranging from fear to the connotation envisaged by such technologies.....

Sometimes the advance in technology and technological development is met by resistance from the people it is supposed to assist. The resistance may stem from various reasons ranging from fear to the connotation envisaged by such technologies. These technologies might be feared because they are seen as intrusion into the daily life or because they portend a change in social structure of the society.

Oil drilling in the ANWR (Alaska National Wildlife Reserve) is such an issue that has elicited heated debate on whether drilling of oil in this reserve should be allowed or not. Proponents of drilling have argued that drilling the oil in the reserve will secure for the US a local energy reserve, effectively reducing America's dependence on foreign oil. This they argue will reduce America's vulnerability to sabotage by enemy states by withholding oil from her. Moreover, they say that the oil drilling will only take a small part of the 19.8 million square acres of land which was established as a reserve in 1980 by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (National Research Council, 2003). Furthermore, they say that there would be a lot of jobs created should the drilling process begin.

Opponents of this venture argue that the destruction that will be caused by a drilling station will be devastating for the reserve; affecting both the plants and animals in the area immediately surrounding the well as well as causing other environmental hazards such as oil spillage and contributing to global

warming, which would directly or indirectly destroy the habitat. In addition, they argue that the amount of oil that would be got has not been verified and it might prove to be so small in the long run. They also reiterate the fact that there are many other oil well like in Texas which have not been drilled but are just leased to other countries. They say these idle lands should be exploited first before destroying new lands. But by far their most convincing rebuff of drilling oil is in response to the fact that the area to be used for drilling will be a small section of the reserve accounting for less than 2% of the total reserve. They cite an example of the nearby Prudhoe Bay oil fields. The fields which were initially assumed would only occupy about 2100 acres of land have today expanded to over 640, 000 acres (National Research Council, 2003)

While by and large, the advantages that are to be got from drilling oil from the Alaskan reserves are quite massive encompassing national economic growth and improved sense national security, the environmental price that will be paid are also worth considering. The question as to whether to drill for oil in the potential vast field Alaska or to preserve nature's beauty and animal habitat remains, for now, open for both those who consider that technology should intrude into our lives upsetting it or the status quo should be maintained in the event that there are likely repercussions of such a technological move.

#### References

National Research Council (U. S.). Cumulative environmental effects of oil and gas activities on Alaskas North Slope. New York: National Academies Press, 2003.