In writing Paper 2, please refer to the general guidelines for papers on the first page of the assignment for Paper 1. All of those guidelines apply for Paper 2.

Prompt for Paper 2:

During the second and third weeks of the class we studied the influence of the Atomic Age on Alaskan lands, society, and politics. Two critical projects of the federal Atomic Energy Commission were based in Alaska, colloquially referred to as “Project Chariot” and “Amchitka.” In Paper 2 you will consider these two projects and their outcomes in Alaska.

Project Chariot, which would have used thermonuclear explosives to carve out a deep-water harbor in northwest Alaska, was proposed in 1958 as part of the AEC’s campaign to demonstrate peaceful applications of nuclear technology. By 1962 the execution of the project had begun to look unlikely, and in 1963 it was officially cancelled. In contrast, the underground nuclear weapons tests that took place on Amchitka Island in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s did proceed as originally planned. Common to both events was strong and vocal opposition from certain segments of both the Alaskan and national populaces.

Your task in Paper 2 is to answer a simple question: why was Project Chariot eventually cancelled while the Amchitka tests were executed as planned? A number of factors have been proposed for ultimately causing the demise of Project Chariot, just as other factors have been suggested to have tipped the balance in favor of the Amchitka tests. Yet there is no one “real” or “correct” answer to this question, because the truth of the matter is that there were a lot of things going on at once in both cases. In this paper, your job is to give a clear reason (or reasons) for why you believe Chariot was cancelled and Amchitka approved, and to provide convincing evidence for your claim.

In choosing the argument you will make in this paper, I suggest that you study carefully the available readings on these topics for sources of evidence to support your argument. These readings include:

- Chapters by Ross about both Chariot (Ch. 7) and Amchitka (Ch. 8).
- Chapters about Chariot by Coates (Ch. 4) and another in the course pack by O’Neill (also available on eReserve under “additional readings”).
- The selection of short articles about Project Chariot that we discussed in class on Thursday, April 9th, available in the course pack and on eReserve.
- Two chapters about Amchitka by Kohlhoff that we discussed in class on Tuesday, April 14, available in the course pack and on eReseve.
- The article by Coates entitled “Amchitka, Alaska: Toward the Bio-Biography of an Island,” also discussed in class on April 14 and available in the same places.

As you write and review your paper, continually ask yourself: What is my argument? What evidence do I provide to support my argument? and Is this clear to the reader?