**Discussion Questions on Gavin, “Blasts From the Past”**

History 300 / for October 10, 2013

Directions: Please read the Gavin article, found in our “virtual course packet.” For a direct link, click [here](http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~wggray/Teaching/His300/Readings/Gavin-Blasts.pdf). Use the questions below to help guide your reading.

1. What does Gavin say is novel about his argument, and where in the introduction does he lay out the major points he wishes to make?

2. Why were the Kennedy and Johnson administrations so concerned about the prospect of China developing a nuclear weapon? (Didn’t another communist state, the Soviet Union, already have nuclear missiles?)

3. Why did China’s detonation of an atomic bomb in October 1964 heighten the concern in Washington about nuclear proliferation? Which other countries appeared most likely to seek nuclear weapons for themselves?

4. What was the task of the Gilpatric Committee? What sorts of backgrounds did its members have? Are you impressed or underwhelmed by the committee’s enumeration of four basic options for U.S. non-proliferation policy?

5. What was the MLF, and why did the United States originally pursue this program within the NATO alliance? What challenges did the MLF pose to the adoption of a coherent, worldwide non-proliferation agenda?

6. Why did the Gilpatric Committee recommend “option three” as the best advisable course for U.S. policy?

7. Why did the director of the ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) favor the Gilpatric proposal, and why did George Ball at the State Department vehemently oppose it?

8. What considerations made it difficult to wield military force against countries that had already developed, or were about to develop, nuclear capabilities?

9. Did it seem feasible to create a system that discriminated among states on an individual basis – allowing, say, Sweden or Japan to have nuclear weapons, but not other ambitious countries? What were the advantages of pursuing a consistent worldwide non-proliferation agenda instead?

10. Why was the deployment of a defense against missiles – an Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) system – seen as a problem for the Atlantic Alliance?

11. To what extent did the U.S. and the Soviet Union have overlapping interests in the realm of non-proliferation? In the end, did the Johnson Administration wind up helping an enemy and harming its allies?

12. Gavin’s article does not carry the story forward to 1968, when a major international non-proliferation treaty (NPT) was adopted. But compared with U.S. projections in 1964 about the dangers of a proliferating world, does the NPT look like a success story to you?