

be unable to strike back. These emblems of United States technological superiority," observes Blank, "taken together and multiplied in effectiveness" are alleged to "confer not just operational superiority, but a lasting American superiority and hegemony."⁷

Writing in 1992, Van Creveld argued that a major break with the past was coming. He argued that as military technology, and the organizations needed to fully implement it advanced, the forces of the major powers came to resemble each other and "to see each other as their most dangerous opponents and, consequently, they acquired more and more powerful technology to smash each other." In the twentieth century, fewer and fewer countries were able to compete. "By 1914, only a few countries could still produce all their weapons, field first rate armed forces and incidently, divide the globe among themselves." With the advent of the Cold War, continued enhancement of conventional weapons and, above all, atomic power, this number was further reduced.⁸ With the end of the Cold War, and the cost of major weapons systems only one power capable of fielding the full array of modern forces was left, the United States.

But Van Creveld also contended that since the development of nuclear weapons, and despite improvements in conventional capabilities brought about by improvements in surveillance and accuracy, the era of large scale interstate conventional warfare was nearing its end. Both superpowers tried to develop nuclear and conventional arms in an effort to "decouple" them from full "scale 'strategic war," but gave up, "whereupon one Superpower disintegrated and the other started bringing its forces home. With this example to follow, as of 1992, other countries seem to be following the same road, in the Middle East and South Asia, "proliferating nuclear technology was well on its way to putting an end to large scale, conventional conflict".⁹

Van Creveld stressed that most of the conflicts since 1945 have been low intensity conflicts and most of them were waged "by or against political entities that were not states with the aid of armed forces not amounting to regular armies." He noted that none of the twenty conflicts then going on was being waged by "state-owned, regular, armies with the aid of heavy modern weapons or at least not on both sides". Because of this, military technology, "appears ready to shift gears. Technology in short will focus less on defending against an external threat by regular forces and more on providing security against an internal one. Its enemies will be guerillas and terrorist who in turn will often be indistinguishable from ordinary criminals; and indeed the shift is taking place

⁷ Stephen Blank, "How We Will Lose the Next War with Russia: A Critique of U.S. Military Strategy," *Defence Analysis* (15) (1998), pp. 120-1.

⁸ Martin Van Creveld, "High Technology and the Transformation of War-Part I," *Royal United Services Institute Journal* (137) (October 1992), p. 78.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 80-1.