

by American RMA forces.³³ This may well be what Washington, and especially the Congress and the people, are expecting from the RMA and what allies fear.

The doctrinal imperative of quick victory, combined with the impact of rapid communication, suggests that the lines between traditional levels of warfare, and their associated echelons of command, will become blurred or “permanently erased.” There will be a melding of the strategic, theatre (operational), and tactical levels. Combined with the information warfare aspects of the RMA, this will create a requirement for commanders at all levels to know what is going on at all levels.³⁴ This does not mean, though, that “micro-management” of these operations will disappear and more responsibility will fall to lower command levels. Indeed, as Cohen points out, the technologies associated with the RMA, which would literally allow the overall commander of an operation (and/or the politician) to see what the pilot in the cockpit sees, may actually increase the tendency of the highest echelons to involve themselves in tactics.³⁵ Where conflicts are being fought for limited objectives, and where concern about collateral damage to civilians and high casualties could be important, the RMA may well make micro-management very tempting. This new doctrine is to be applied to all aspects of military operations, including various forms of peacekeeping and non-combat missions where decisiveness and political considerations will be particularly important.

In order to exploit the benefits of technology and achieve the doctrinally mandated decisive results, it has been argued that military organization will itself have to change. This is not to say that armies, navies, and, above all, air forces will disappear as distinct organizational entities. At the same time, the implementation of RMA technologies is likely to hasten an already apparent trend, at least in western armed forces, away from large conscript militaries to smaller forces wherein a premium will be placed not upon the combat experience of the personnel, especially the officer corps, but upon technical and management skills. And the RMA with its rapid transmission of information right down to the tactical level, may, as it has done in business, remove the need for layers of military middle management in the conduct of operations.

RMA advocates also argue that when forces need to be deployed, new technologies and organization will make them much more effective. For example, as Thierry Gongora notes, the United States Army has tried to integrate information technologies, by digitalizing the structure and equipment of its forces. In one 1997 exercise, the 4th Infantry Division showed that in comparison with regular formations, “the digitalized” division, “inflicted more than twice as many enemy casualties, in half the time, over three times the normal battle space using 25 percent fewer combat platforms.” Western armed forces will seek this kind of capability “in the twenty-first century to

³³ *Ibid*, pp. 7-8.

³⁴ Jablonsky, *The Owl of Minerva*, p. 29.

³⁵ Cohen, “A Revolution in Warfare,” p. 49.