

confidence in the kind of quick decisive victory which the RMA promises.

In the future the presence of an advanced WMD capacity in countries such as Iran would also raise the cost of any military action as it could place at serious risk not only deployed forces but the surrounding populations, including those in neighboring countries which might be drawn into the conflict. This was the fear during the Gulf War. In the most extreme case, where an Iran or Iraq had developed long-range missiles, the United States, or other allies participating in a coalition effort, would be at risk. In these circumstances, Washington might find itself deterred from taking any military action at all, especially if the issues at stake were not those of vital interest to the United States or its allies. In general, category-one states provide the United States and its allies with reasons to retain nuclear weapons as instruments of deterrence, further weakening general arms control efforts.

In order to provide protection for neighboring countries which may be friendly to the West, Washington would rely upon political pressure backed-up by its general deterrent capabilities, including nuclear weapons. The United States could, as it is already doing, organize and support multilateral non-proliferation efforts, and if necessary call for sanctions and embargoes. It could use its extensive NTM capabilities to monitor the situation and engage in unilateral counter-proliferation policies, all of which remain available with or without the RMA. But without a change in the political relationship, arms control efforts will be difficult and the cause of general arms control will not be much advanced.

In the case of states with less formidable conventional capabilities but an extensive WMD capacity, the RMA offers more potential for effectiveness since this state has fewer options in the event of a high-tech attack by the United States. However, in this category the impact of RMA attacks will vary with the size of the country and the size, sophistication and deployment of its conventional forces. It will also depend upon the amount of damage its leaders are prepared to accept. An initial RMA attack may have to be followed up by an invasion in which case the costs to the United States will rise.

If a category-two states is unable to counter the RMA with its own conventional forces and lacked the numbers to sustain a protracted conflict, but was unwilling to surrender, such a state would face the problem of whether to cross the WMD threshold. The resort to WMDs would be a last desperate measure likely to draw even more conventional attacks, if not a nuclear response. Moreover, with a weaker conventional capability, especially in the area of aerospace defence, WMD facilities would be subjected to concerted attack. Given the lack of a strong conventional capability, the uncertainties regarding the utility of WMDs, and the underdevelopment of WMDS, such a state may be more amenable, depending upon the political situation, to arms control measures. With proper inducements, it might be persuaded to sign, or more closely adhere to, an existing WMD treaty or regime and more accepting of intrusive methods of verification. Here again though, some category two states, those with larger conventional capabilities and a leadership more hostile to the West, such as Iran or North Korea, may be less receptive to WMD arms control.