

conventional capability but significant WMD capacity; and 3) a state with *both* a limited conventional capability and limited WMD capacity. Each case can be examined from the standpoint of the effectiveness of the RMA, the possible responses by the target state and the implications for arms control. The connecting thread in all three scenarios from an arms control standpoint is that the RMA appears to provide increased, although not absolute, advantages to the United States in terms of power generated through either the latent or applied use of force compelling potential target states to either acquire RMA capabilities themselves or develop and retain WMDs. As summarized in Table 3, each presents a unique challenge for the United States both in terms of the potential application of force and arms control efforts.

A state with significant conventional capabilities and some RMA capacity, as well as advanced WMD such as Russia, China (and in the future perhaps India and Iran) will pose the greatest challenge to the use of the RMA and perhaps to arms control. In the Russian view, the RMA "degrades strategic stability." Recent changes in Russian doctrine which, as a result of Kosovo, suggests the use of tactical nuclear weapons "in a first strike response to conventional attack." Here the enlargement of NATO only contributes to this trend since it is viewed as "preparation for a future military threat that can only be countered by the threat or use of tactical, if not strategic, nuclear weapons." They fear the very type of attack which the Americans hope the RMA will afford them, one that uses PGMs and Information Warfare to threaten a government's ability "to govern or command its armed forces." Faced with such a threat, "Russia or similarly-oriented states" might indeed strike first or preemptively with nuclear systems even against purely conventional attacks." Nuclear weapons take on a renewed aura of usability, "as if they were just particularly lethal missiles," the line between nuclear and conventional is blurred and the threshold for nuclear is lowered. As Blank notes, as a result of the RMA, Russian "[n]uclear strategy and policy have become conventionalized."<sup>111</sup> It is the prospect that the RMA may be at odds with the goals it is supposed to achieve and in the process undermine the evolving post-Cold War consensus, to the detriment of Russian and Western security, that has prompted arms control concerns about it.

At the same time in the case of Russia and, to a lesser extent, China, the continuing fear of nuclear attacks upon the United States itself will serve as a powerful deterrent to any military action and thus the existing strategic stability and arms control regimes may remain unaffected, although both countries may attempt to acquire RMA technologies.

More concern will focus on the potential of other states, such as Iran, which may strive for category one status, especially with regard to WMDs. The potential for crisis or conflict here may be greater and it is not at all clear that the application of RMA technologies can easily overcome large conventional forces where that state has the capacity to employ them skillfully and the numbers to fight a protracted struggle, particularly one involving land forces and the need to capture and hold large amounts of territory. If this state also deploys some RMA technologies, such as cruise missiles or a capacity to disrupt communications and intelligence links, then the United States will have less

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, pp.143-4.