

“is a form of proliferation that threatens the emerging framework of agreements on weapons of mass destruction...”⁵⁷

While many new sellers have entered the market, the United States with 43 per cent of world-wide arms trade remains dominant. Indeed, despite statements that Washington regards the spread of weapons as a threat and the establishment by Congress of a Presidential Advisory Board on Arms Proliferation, American policy since the mid-1990s has been to promote the sale of its weapons and advance technologies abroad in part to compensate domestic producers for reduced sales to the U.S. military. In announcing his policy in 1995, President Clinton “explicitly sanctioned” arms exports as a way “to enhance the ability of the U.S. defense industrial base to meet U.S. defense requirements...at lower costs.” According to Keller and Nolan, “The absence of policy in the world’s largest arms dealer has given way to a global frenzy of marketing.”⁵⁸

The market factors driving the current arms trade are particularly relevant to the RMA. In looking into the arms control and verification issues raised by the RMA, one important feature of the transformation, whether evolutionary or revolutionary, is the fact that many of the technologies that drive it are civilian in origin as indeed many technologies were in the past. As Cohen points out, the end of the Cold War and the “efflorescence of capitalism” in the U.S. and in many other countries, has in a sense “freed up the markets in military goods and services. Countries can gain access to a wide spectrum of military capabilities for ready cash, including the services of skilled personnel.”⁵⁹ Because of this “the potential will exist for new military powers to emerge extremely rapidly.” Nations such as Japan and China will be able to “translate technology power into its military equivalent.” During the Cold War, military industry was an “exotic and separate entity.” With the RMA, “the pendulum has begun to swing back, and economic strength may again prove easily translatable into military power.”⁶⁰

Another factor in spreading the RMA is that there is a certain “observable” characteristic about it. Progress on various systems, the results of research and development is widely reported in the specialized and popular press, especially the arms trade journals. Firms operating in the worldwide arms market, both legitimate and clandestine, have an incentive to spread the most recently available improvements. Military establishments which see themselves as inferior because they do not have the most recent technology, will attempt to “leap frog” the dominant players and

⁵⁷ William W. Keller and Jane E. Nolan, “The Arms Trade: Business As Usual?”, *Foreign Policy* (109) (Winter 1997-98), p. 113.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp.117-8.

⁵⁹ Cohen, “A Revolution in Warfare,” p. 43.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 51.