

as an effective tool against the superior armed forces of the U.S. and other industrialized countries.”⁸³ The United States as “the only remaining globally active superpower is especially affected by the threat of the proliferation of biological weapons, because a major dimension of American strategy is the “prospect of being able to exert influence in areas of conflict in which U.S. national interests are considered at stake.” But it is the fear that certain “rogue” states may “adopt an asymmetric strategy” as a means to counter “American conventional military prowess” and thus “make it hard or even impossible for American forces to gain access to theatres of conflict by resorting to biological warfare.” The use of biological weapons would make it difficult for Washington to contain a regional conflict. Had Iraq used such weapons against Israel, it may have called forth a Israeli nuclear reprisal. In addition, Washington might find it difficult to rally coalition partners in any effort in which biological weapons might be employed by a country as they could be subjected to retaliation. “In sum,” notes Thranert, “the time is past when industrialized countries could intervene in conflicts far from their own shores at relatively low cost.” He adds that because of the so-called “‘CNN effect’ the American public will reject interventions, whether at the outset or after considerable losses have been sustained in biological weapons campaigns.”⁸⁴ In other words, the proliferation of biological weapons directly calls into question the claims made by proponents of the RMA.

Moreover the control of biological weapons in the presence of the RMA is particularly problematic. They are more of a threat than chemical weapons given that they are relatively inexpensive and uncomplicated to produce, use techniques available in the open market for civilian biotechnology products, do not need to be stored in large quantities and are “incomparably easier to conceal than are nuclear or chemical weapons programs.” “Without doubt” he concludes, arms control cannot be the only instrument for countering the threat posed by the proliferation of biological weapons.”⁸⁵

In a recent study published by the Brookings Institution, *Technological Change and the Future of Warfare*, Michael O’Hanlon also raises doubts about the prospects of new methods of controlling WMD. He argues that existing technologies and those likely to emerge in the next twenty years will be insufficient to detect concerted efforts to develop WMDs on the part of those states who wish to develop them. Sensors have limited ranges when it comes to the detection of nuclear materials. With regard to biological threats, lasers and other electromagnetic beams that might be used against deadly aerosols once released, cannot penetrate the buildings, vehicles and containers where they would most likely be stored, while finding them in a timely fashion presents difficulties as the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) “ on-site experience in Iraq has

⁸³ Oliver Thranert, “Nuclear Weapons: A Deterrent to Biological Warfare?” in David G. Haglund, Ed., *Pondering NATO’s Nuclear Options: Gambits for a Post-Westphalian World*, *Queen’s Quarterly* Special Edition (Kingston, Ont.: 1999), p. 87.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.91.

⁸⁵ *Ibid* pp. 90, 92.