

nuclear arsenals. The role of the conventional weapons in Europe in the presence of nuclear weapons suffered from its own contradictions and uncertainties. The most important "threshold" was not that between nuclear and conventional war, but between crisis and war itself. If deterrence had failed, it can be argued that it would have meant failure at all levels since NATO's nuclear forces were intended to deter conventional as well as nuclear attack. NATO's "flexible response" strategy always seemed to be more an agreement amongst allies not to disagree over strategy for the sake of allied unity than a prediction of how a war would actually be fought. While neither side wanted to rely entirely upon mutual nuclear deterrence, it was always highly suspect that there could be a protracted conventional war in Europe.

Second, there is the multiplicity of weapons systems and associated command and control technologies of the RMA as well as a variety of scenarios in which they might be used, something that was not the case with nuclear weapons. This suggests that any effort to control the RMA will encounter many of the difficulties associated with conventional arms control.

Third, while RMA forces cannot be considered the same as the strategic nuclear forces of the Cold War, it is interesting to note that similar claims are being made for them. That is they do have deterrent value, they limit damage if war takes place, they are cost-savings in terms of larger conventional forces and they have a positive impact upon global and regional stability. In other words, the RMA is attractive because it holds out the prospect of providing enhanced security for the leading RMA nation, the United States. This alone may make efforts to control it difficult, just as it did for nuclear weapons. Fourth, as with nuclear weapons, it is evident that, whatever its operational effectiveness, the mere existence of the RMA and its associated technologies, doctrines and military organizational changes are increasingly being entrenched into post-Cold War international politics. Finally, the record of arms control during the Cold War suggests that even if certain important agreements can be reached on a mutually beneficial basis, the technology of warfare continues to progress. This is something that needs to be kept in mind with regard to the RMA which has placed so much emphasis on the importance of pursuing continual technological innovation.

ARMS CONTROL AND THE RMA: THE PROBLEM OF PROLIFERATION

Because of some of its characteristics, the RMA presents specific problems for arms control for which the lessons of the Cold War may be of limited value. To begin, the proliferation problems associated with the RMA cannot be separated from what Keller and Nolan call the "new proliferation" of arms world wide which they see as the direct result of the dominance of market forces, as opposed to political strategic considerations in the sale of arms. Whereas in the Cold War the transfer of arms and the technologies to build them were used to secure allies and influence, particularly by the United States. Today "almost everyone sells almost anything to just about anyone who can pay-and often to some who cannot." Without "enforceable multilateral restraints, the invisible hand has become the principal mechanism for allocating conventional weapons and associated technology on a global scale." Moreover, the globalization of weapons and technologies