

electronics, mostly from commercial sectors of the global information economy.”¹⁰⁶

In this sense, the distinction between advanced conventional weapons and WMDs, becomes harder to maintain. As Keller and Nolan argue, “It is not a simple dichotomy, conventional on one side and unconventional on the other. Amongst nuclear, chemical and biological weapons there are differences in technology, levels of lethality and delivery requirements, with nuclear being harder to acquire but not to deliver:

“In short, the category “weapons of mass destruction” is based more on historical usage than on logical grounds or on an analysis of the characteristics of various weapons. But the false dichotomy between weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons has helped to legitimize arbitrary limits on nonproliferation, both intellectually and in terms of specific treaties and regimes. If it is not a weapon of mass destruction or a missile to carry one or occasionally a weapon of ill repute, then it is presumed to have a legitimate place in commerce and warfare. Consequently, there are few if any controls over the sale of such weapons or the transfer of their underlying technologies.”¹⁰⁷

This brings up the moral dimension of the RMA. Why should its technologies be regarded as more just in terms of the conduct of war, than WMDs? While it promises to reduce civilian casualties because of the accuracy of the weapons systems, it can inflict great suffering on civilians as the weapons seek to cripple military and governmental infrastructures. So-called “minimal collateral damage” is a relative term, usually employed by the attacking forces. The NATO campaign against Yugoslavia have led some to call for allied leaders to be tried on war crimes.

Even discounting the morality of the weapons, the distinction which the United States and its allies hold to seems to make even less sense when it is considered that the exports of conventional weapons technology, which they promote, could lead to improvements in capabilities which will approximate the kind of WMDs whose proliferation they wish to stop. Combined with the moral considerations, this would seem to suggest the need to put in place the same kinds of transparency and controls on end-use for sensitive dual-use civil-military technologies which are applied to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and some missiles.¹⁰⁸ But these have proven difficult in the past and, as noted above, may be even more so given the globalization of high technology trade and its relationship to the RMA.

All of this highlights another of the central arguments of this paper, which is that the RMA in promising to provide the West with security in a way that diminishes the salience of nuclear weapons and thus enhance the prospects of arms control, has in fact raised its own host of

¹⁰⁶ Keller and Nolan, “The Arms Trade,” p. 119.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 120.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 123.