

The second noteworthy feature is the increasing sophistication of the weapons transferred, both in absolute and relative terms. In absolute terms, the number of states with advanced systems has been steadily increasing, as the data in Table V demonstrate. By the early 1980s, supersonic aircraft, main battle tanks and simple missiles were widely distributed in the developing world. Obviously, in relative terms the sophistication of these items was not at the forefront of military technology, but the destructive force accumulated in these arsenals was historically unparalleled. Since the late-1970s, the most privileged clients of the two superpowers have been given access to many of the most advanced weapons systems that were available. The production lines for the American F-14 and F-16 were shared with foreign clients, the Soviet Union delivered the MiG-27 as it entered its own service, and Egypt received the *Mirage 2000* as French forces did.¹³ This trend continues: in the early 1990s in the Middle East, for example, the Russians have sold MiG-29s to Iran, the Americans have sold the M1-A2 tank to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and F-18s to Kuwait, and France has agreed to sell the United Arab Emirates the same version of the *Leclerc* tanks that will enter service with French forces.¹⁴

The final feature is the "maturation" of several important post-1945 military technologies and the changing pace of technological innovation. This is difficult to quantify, but a large proportion of the military technologies that are of proliferation concern can be classed as "mature technologies." The main characteristics of mature technologies are that:

- the scientific and technical knowledge is in the public realm;
- barriers to production are low (beginning producers can produce primitive versions of particular systems);
- the components necessary for various steps in the production process are widely available from many different sources, and are embedded in civilian industry (ie: dual-use).¹⁵

The best recent example of this was the Iraqi chemical weapons program, details of which were uncovered by the UNSCOM inspections. Although the program was poorly organized, and suffered from "poor quality nerve agents, badly designed munitions, production problems, and cavalier attitudes

¹³ Jacques Gansler, *The Defense Industry* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980), 204, 208, 312n; Gu Guan-Fu, 'Soviet arms sales and military aid policy to the Third World,' *Osteuropa Wirtschaft*, 29:1 (März 1984), 52. India and Syria received the MiG-29, as it entered service with Soviet forces. *Air International*, May 1990.

¹⁴ For details see SIPRI, *1993 Yearbook*, 483-518.

¹⁵ Keeley, *passim*.