

it requires active intervention on the part of leading producers to slow the rate of diffusion of military technologies (via some form of export controls). Such intervention will, in principle, increase in importance after point Y, when the rate of innovation (eg: of military R&D) has slowed to a point where first-tier producers would become conscious of the possible erosion of their technological lead. This could describe the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, when the efforts of the CoCom (Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Strategic Export Controls) appear to have at least slowed the erosion of the West's lead in military technologies.

The actual structure of the arms transfer and production system is more complex than this schematic sketch would suggest, and crucial variations are evident in different areas of weapons technology. There also exist linkages between various levels of producers, which sometimes permit advanced technologies (such as missiles or fire control systems) to be incorporated into relatively primitive platforms (such as armoured vehicles or aircraft). But this analysis highlights the need to think about the possibilities for controlling the proliferation of conventional weapons and their technologies in terms of two key questions:

- *which states or groups of states are able to produce the weapons or technologies that pose a proliferation danger, now and in the immediate future?*
- *where is the weapons system or technology in question located in its "product cycle," and how does this affect the possibilities for control?*⁹

⁹ This is analogous to the concept of "technology maturity," which is discussed below. See James Keeley, "Weapons of Mass Destruction as Mature Technologies: Implications for Control, Verification and Confidence-Building," paper prepared for a Non-Proliferation Verification workshop sponsored by the Verification Research Unit, Department of External Affairs and International Trade Canada, 28 November 1993.