

gional actors. Soviet involvement, in this sense, is far more a product rather than a cause of regional crisis. With regard to the first, the manifest and growing material poverty of much of the population, coupled with the intellectual and moral poverty of the ruling groups, has created a highly unstable situation in the region. The global recession and the debt crisis have exacerbated these local difficulties. With regard to US policy, the persistent tendency – evident in all of the cases considered here – on the part of the US government to equate the revolutionary activities, which emerge from these conditions, with Soviet challenges to US interests, encourages covert and overt military, diplomatic and economic pressure on radical regimes in the region. This reinforces their anti-American orientation and forces them to seek protection and assistance from the adversaries of the United States, notably in this context the Soviet Union. In this sense, to the extent that there is a “Soviet problem” in the region, it is in large part the creation of the United States.