"The Eclipse of the US ‘Empire of the Air’ and the challenge of the Gulf Airlines"

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DESCRIPTION

This presentation explores how the Middle East became incorporated into US-centered global regimes of aeromobility and how those regimes were unmade by radical politics, rivals firms, and economic crisis leading to the eventual rise of petrodollar-fueled networks based in the Gulf. In the early postwar era American airlines and government policies sought to define a new global order based on global trade and communications without requiring direct control of overseas territories. American efforts to build global air travel networks and a so-called ‘empire of the air’ provided the material infrastructure and the aerial optic geopolitical vision to sustain America’s non-territorial empire critical to Henry Luce’s notion of the American Century. By the 1970s and 1980s, however, US-dominated regimes of aeromobility were challenged by air piracy, oil price spikes, and eventually airline deregulation.