

DRAFT

THE OIL CRISES OF THE 1970S AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE GLOBAL ORDER

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The oil crises of the 1970s played a central role in the transformation of the global order in the late twentieth century. Disruptions in oil production and distribution in 1973-74 and again in 1978-80 led to sharp increases in oil prices, the restructuring of the global energy system, the end of the “golden age” of economic growth, and the creation of a privatized international financial order. The crises also had a significant impact on the global environment. Although the oil crises reflected and intensified the larger crisis of US/Western hegemony in the decade, they set in motion a series of changes that contributed to the collapse of communism, the reassertion of Western dominance in the Global South, and the transitory “unipolar moment” of reconstituted US global hegemony. Understanding the causes and consequences of the oil crises is crucial to understanding the transformation of the international order in the late twentieth century and provides important insights into the forces that continue to shape the contemporary world.