

FOREWORD

Russia's international law persona is still in its infancy and it will take a while for the cycle to run its full course. However, significant changes have already occurred in some areas, thus offering an opportunity to analyze the trends here and track the process of emergence of successor doctrines and practices slated to replace the Soviet heritage. The quartet of topics selected for treatment in this volume illustrates major shifts in Russia's international law policy in a bid to shed the corset of Communist ideology and the old regime's *modus operandi* and join the international community's mainstream culture. The test cases also attest to the difficulties encountered in the process of transition and that progress on this front has by no means been uniform. The sample includes both instances where the break with the past looks quite pronounced and where greater distancing from precedent might logically have been expected, but, for reasons that are then explored, a sense of substantive continuity instead prevails, albeit made more palatable by an application of linguistic cosmetics. In the long run, of course, occasions for research on various aspects of Russia's international law scenario will multiply, regardless of whether Russia goes forward on its presently charted course or backslides into its former habits, even if sporting a new political wardrobe.

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