

Perestroika and International Law

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Unlike any other dimension of Soviet domestic or foreign policy in the twentieth century, *perestroika* and *glasnost*, in capturing the imagination of the West, have begun to affect the international legal process and perhaps the substance of international law itself.

The initial ingredient from the Soviet Union was 'new thinking', combined almost immediately with foreign policy decisions that are contributing to a *de facto* restructuring of the post-1945 international order. The new thinking is also leading to a restructuring of the past. Even given the necessarily shortterm perspective of the current viewpoint, the implications of this new thinking are dramatic, but are the changes purely cosmetic, or are other reconceptualizations in progress that reinforce perceptions of a fundamental reassessment of the Soviet role in the international system?

The implications of 'new thinking' for Soviet approaches to international law were first explored extensively by Vereshchetin and Mullerson in 1988, who suggested that it would require 'a number of rather material changes in international law itself and a rethinking of certain... traditional notions about international law'.

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