Timeline of Georgian-Russian Relations Since 1995

November 1995  Eduard Shevardnadze elected president of Georgia.
May 1998  Fighting erupts between Abkhazians and Georgians in Abkhazia’s Gali region; displaced Georgians now number in the tens of thousands.
December 2001  South Ossetian separatists elect current president Eduard Kokoity; elections unrecognized outside of South Ossetia and Russia.
November 2002  Georgia announces intention to join NATO; becomes subject to the provisions of an individual partnership action plan (IPAP).
January 2003  Putin’s government has conferred Russian citizenship on the vast majority of ethnic Abkhazians and South Ossetians.
April 2003  Construction begins on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline.
January 2004  Saakashvili elected president; pledges to reunite Georgia by reasserting central control over the irredentist republics of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Ach’ara.
May 2004  Saakashvili ousts the increasingly powerful Aslan Abashidze as leader of Georgia’s Autonomous Republic of Ach’ara; Abashidze flees.
July 2006  Georgian Special Forces regain control of Kodori Gorge, a key geographic boundary between de facto independent Abkhazia and Georgia.
September 2006  NATO member countries agree to commencement of intensified dialogue (ID) stage with Georgia.
July 2006  BTC pipeline begins transporting Caspian oil through Georgia and Turkey to the Mediterranean, bypassing Russia.
November 2007  Saakashvili authorizes use of force to quell antigovernment demonstrations in the streets of Tbilisi. He calls for snap presidential elections and resigns to campaign for reelection.
January 2008  Upon reelection, Saakashvili reshuffles his cabinet and commits to increasing dialogue with Russia.
February 2008  Kosovo declares independence from Serbia.
March 2, 2008  Dmitri Medvedev is elected President of Russia and appoints his predecessor, Vladimir Putin, as prime minister.
April 3, 2008  NATO agrees that Georgia and Ukraine may join the alliance in the future, though neither country is advanced to Membership Action Plan (MAP) status.
April 2008  Russia dispatches reinforcement troops to Abkhazia, reportedly in response to increased Georgian aggression in the region.
July 8, 2008  Russian fighter jets fly over South Ossetia.
July 10, 2008  Georgia withdraws its ambassador from Moscow in response to the violation of its airspace.
August 8, 2008  Georgian forces penetrate South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali in an effort to retake the city. Russia sends in its own forces, stating it will protect its citizens from Georgian aggression.