

Saakashvili Sees No Prospect Of Restoring Relations With Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili said that he sees no prospect of restoring friendly relations with Russia unless the current situation in two of Georgia's former Transcaucasian republics changes.

The two countries have been at loggerheads since Moscow recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in August 2008.

Georgian troops had entered South Ossetia to assert control over the breakaway republic, but were forced to withdraw following a brief but bloody conflict with Russia. Tbilisi then broke off diplomatic relations with Moscow and declared the two republics as "occupied territories."

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said on Tuesday that Tbilisi should begin talks to end its dispute with South Ossetia. He also said that NATO membership for Georgia would create "a long-term source of tension" between the two countries.

"I think that it is impossible to restore normal relations," Saakashvili said Wednesday in an interview Rustavi-2 television channel.

The leader said that he had behaved toward Russia "as a lamb before the wolf, but a wolf will never be good to a lamb and the Georgian people must understand that and go their own way — the European choice."

Saakashvili also said that he once offered to abandon Georgia's plan to join NATO in exchange for a solution being reached with Moscow over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, RIA Novosti reported.

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