A BRIEF RELEVANT HISTORY of the SOVIET UNION

MARCH 5, 1953
Stalin dies and is soon replaced by Nikita Khrushchev as the leader of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union, who rehabilitates thousands of political prisoners and presides over a “thaw” in the totalitarian regime.

OCTOBER 16-23, 1962
The height of the Caribbean Crises, during which the Soviet Union and the U.S. threaten each other with a nuclear confrontation.

OCTOBER 14, 1964
Khrushchev is ousted and Leonid Brezhnev is installed as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, later renamed General Secretary. Krushchev-era reforms are scaled back, and, socially, the “thaw” is replaced with the period of “stagnation.”

MARCH 11, 1985
Mikhail Gorbachev becomes the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, pushing forward the agenda of radical social reforms known as perestroika and glasnost. Later, his title is changed to President.

AUGUST 19-22, 1991
After a failed coup by the conservative wing of the Communist Party, President Gorbachev is succeeded by Boris Yeltsin in Russia, leader of the popular resistance.

DECEMBER 26, 1991
Soviet Union is officially dissolved, leaving in its wake fifteen independent States, including Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Latvia, Estonia, Kazakhstan, and others.

FEBRUARY 1988–MAY 1994
War in Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia’s military victory, unfortunately, escalated the country’s economic problems and resulted in its longstanding blockade by neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkey.

MAY 7, 2000
Vladimir Putin succeeds Boris Yeltsin as the President of Russia.

MAY 24, 2003
Paul McCartney comes to Russia for the first time and performs on the Red Square.

NOV. 22, 2004–JAN. 23, 2005
Orange Revolution in Ukraine led to a popular victory by Viktor Yushchenko who had been poisoned with chemicals in the lead up to the election. Later, Yushchenko lost his reelection to a pro-Russian candidate, Yanukovich.

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OCT. 17, 2013–FEB. 23, 2014
Euromaidan protests in Ukraine ousted pro-Russian President Yanukovych from power, and were followed by Russian annexation of Crimea and an attempt to take over the Donetsk region, as well as unrest in Odessa.

MAY 9, 1945
USSR celebrates victory in World War Two, also known there as The Great Patriotic War.

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Vladimir Putin succeeds Boris Yeltsin as the President of Russia.

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