

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 29, 2023
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November 29, 2023, 7pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

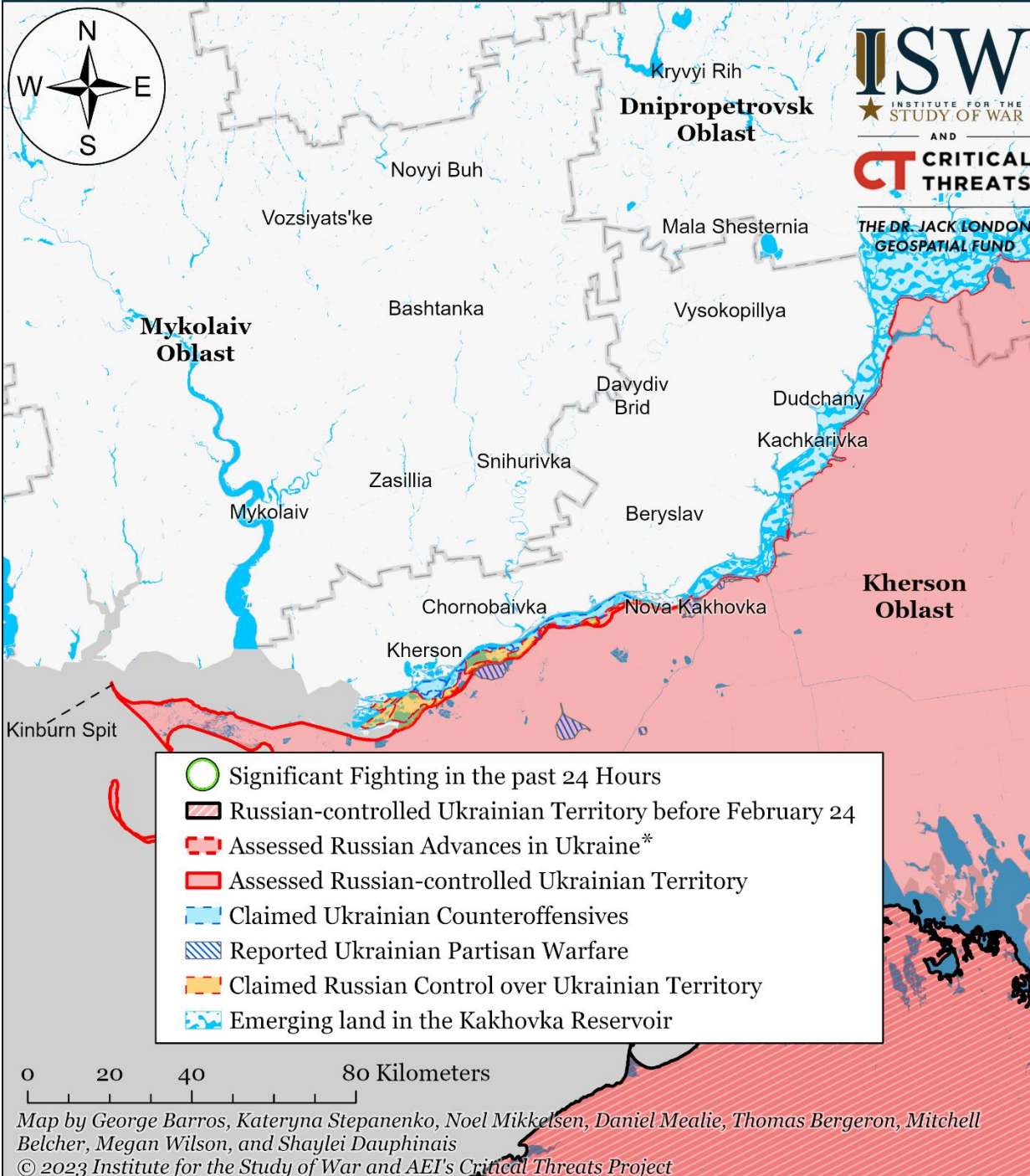
Click [here](#) to see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:30pm ET on November 29. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 30 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The apparent Russian failure to establish a cohesive command structure among forces defending on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast continues to degrade Russian morale and combat capabilities. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on November 29 that elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) operating near Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River) are refusing to conduct assaults on Ukrainian positions due to a lack of artillery coordination, tactical intelligence transmission, and proper communication about the location of Russian minefields.[1] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that maps of the Russian minefields are classified and that Russian commanders have not properly coordinated with assault units about the locations of these minefields, leading to 50 casualties among elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade in the last month.[2] Elements of the 810th Naval Infantry brigade arrived in the Krynky area in early October 2023 and appear to have taken over responsibility for the immediate Krynky area from elements of the newly created 18th Combined Arms Army (CAA) following the start of Ukrainian ground operations on the east bank of the Dnipro in mid-October 2023.[3] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the 18th CAA's 28th Motorized Rifle Regiment is currently operating in Pishchanivka (14km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River).[4] Additional elements of the 18th CAA and the 7th Airborne (VDV) Division reportedly hold positions in near rear areas on the east bank, and the joint command of these formations is likely overseeing much of the current Russian response to the Ukrainian ground operations on the east bank.[5] The reported minefield incident suggests that the command of the 18th CAA did not share relevant tactical details with the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade's command, suggesting that higher-level Russian commanders responsible for the defense of the east bank have yet to remedy this failure in coordination.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 29, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

The Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces is increasingly comprised of disparate elements of recently transferred and degraded units and new formations, which may be contributing to this apparent lack of cohesive command structure. Elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade and 177th Naval Infantry Brigade (Caspian Flotilla) transferred to the Kherson direction likely after sustaining heavy casualties defending against the Ukrainian counteroffensive in western Zaporizhia Oblast in the summer of 2023.[6] The majority of the 7th VDV Division’s combat elements are currently still defending in western Zaporizhia Oblast, although the 7th VDV’s 171st Air Assault Battalion (97th VDV Regiment) and 104th Separate Tank Battalion are reportedly operating on the east bank of Kherson Oblast.[7] Elements of the 49th CAA (Southern Military District) have reportedly been operating in the Kherson direction since the Ukrainian liberation of Kherson City in November 2022, but some Russian and Ukrainian sources claim that the Russian command has since redeployed elements of at least one of its brigades to the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area.[8] The newly created 18th CAA’s 70th Motorized Rifle Division and 22nd Army Corps (formerly of the Black Sea Fleet) are operating on the east bank.[9] Elements of the newly created 104th VDV Division’s 328th VDV Regiment are reportedly defending in the Krynky area, and Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that additional elements of the 104th VDV Division are currently deploying to the Kherson direction.[10] ISW previously observed elements of the 80th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) operating on the left bank in July 2023, and November 28 reports of 14th Army Corps Deputy Commander Major General Vladimir Zavadsky’s death in the Kherson direction suggests that these elements may still be in the area.[11] Elements of the 41st CAA (Central Military District) reportedly transferred from the Kupyansk direction to Kherson Oblast in early October and may be defending on the east bank.[12]

The Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces, therefore, appears to be comprised of elements of the Black Sea Fleet, the Caspian Flotilla, the Southern Military District, the Central Military District, the Northern Fleet, and the VDV. Russia’s other grouping of forces in Ukraine largely correspond with Russia’s military districts reinforced in some cases with VDV units, making the “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces a notable aberration. The unnamed force grouping in charge of the Russian defense in western Zaporizhia Oblast is primarily comprised of elements of the 58th CAA (Southern Military District) reinforced with elements of several VDV regiments but has not suffered any of the apparent coordination issues that the “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces has faced. The Russian military command should be able to form groupings of forces interchangeably between formations from different military districts and combined arms armies. Persistent Russian issues with sharing situational awareness between units and creating common operating pictures and coherent command structures throughout Ukraine have likely incentivized the creation of groupings of forces comprised of formations and units largely from the same military districts as mitigations.[13] The recent arrival of likely degraded, understaffed, and undertrained Russian elements to the Kherson direction and their immediate commitment to defensive operations has likely further complicated Russian efforts to create a coherent command structure for the disparate elements of the “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces.[14] The Russian military command appointed VDV Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky as Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces Commander on October 29, 2023, and one of Teplinsky’s main objectives is likely to establish a more unified command for the grouping.[15] The Russian military command is unlikely to remedy the “Dnepr” Grouping of Force’s command issues in the short term, however, and the continuation of Ukrainian ground operations on the left bank will likely only complicate these efforts. It is not yet clear if the command-and-control challenges facing Russian forces in Kherson will generate notable battlefield effects.

Russian forces launched a series of drone and missile strikes against Ukraine on the night of November 28 to 29. Ukrainian military sources reported on November 29 that Russian forces launched three Kh-59 missiles, primarily targeting Khmelnytskyi City, and 21 Shahed-131/-136 drones at targets in Ukraine.[16] Ukrainian air defenses destroyed two of the three Kh-59s and all of the Shahed drones over Odesa, Mykolaiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, Kherson, Zaporizhia, and Khmelnytskyi oblasts. The Ukrainian Air Force Command reported that the third Kh-59 missile did not reach its target.[17] The Ukrainian General Staff later reported that Russian forces also launched a Kh-31 missile and two S-300 missiles targeting civilian infrastructure in an unspecified location.[18] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat reported that Russian forces are flying drones over riverbeds and highways to avoid Ukrainian mobile fire groups that have deployed throughout Ukraine.[19]

Russian authorities plan to extend criminal liability for crimes against the law on military service to participants in volunteer formations, a measure that would impact many irregular military formations and personnel on which the Russian military relies for manpower in Ukraine. Russian media reported on November 29 that the Russian State Duma adopted a bill in its first reading extending criminal liability for crimes against regular military service to volunteer servicemen.[20] Russian volunteer servicemen are currently exempt from existing legislation that holds Russian conscripts, contract servicemen, and reservists liable for crimes committed while performing combat missions. The new bill empowers Russian military courts to try volunteer servicemen for select crimes including desertion, failure to comply with an order, resistance to or violent actions against a superior, unauthorized leaving of a place of service, evasion of duties by feigning illness, and intentional or accidental destruction, damage, or loss of military property. Russian senators previously called for the introduction of criminal penalties for volunteer servicemen for “improper performance of their contractual duties” and desertion.[21] This legislation may impact the Kremlin’s ongoing

volunteer recruitment efforts if the threat of criminal liabilities outweighs incentives for volunteer service such as high salaries and additional social benefits.[22]

Russian officials proposed laws that would restrict the actions of foreign citizens in Russia, likely to support continued efforts to coerce migrants into Russian military service. Russian Duma deputies Alexei Zhuravlev, Mikhail Matveev, and Dmitri Kuznetsov proposed a bill that would consider migration violations an aggravating circumstance in a criminal offense.[23] Zhuravlev, Matveev and Kuznetsov cited figures that Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin released on September 25 claiming that the number of serious crimes that foreign citizens committed in Russia increased by 32 percent from 2022 to 2023.[24] Kremlin newswire TASS reported on November 28 that the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) proposed a bill that would require all foreigners entering Russia to sign a "loyalty agreement" banning them from discrediting Russian domestic and foreign policy, denying Russian family values, or "disrespecting the diversity of regional and ethnocultural ways of life" in Russia among other restrictions.[25] The proposed measures likely seek to increase Russian law enforcement's ability to investigate and arrest migrants with foreign citizenship as part of an effort to coerce them into Russian military service. Russian authorities are also continuing efforts to coerce migrants with Russian citizenship into the Russian military by threatening to revoke their citizenship and forcibly issuing them military summonses.[26]

The NATO–Ukraine Council (NUC) met at the foreign minister-level for the first time on November 29 and discussed steps to increase weapons and ammunition production. NATO reported that it is developing a roadmap for full Ukrainian interoperability with NATO and reaffirmed its support for Ukraine's democratic and security sector reforms "on its path toward future membership in NATO." [27] Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated that the NUC discussed increasing the production of weapons and ammunition and noted on the sidelines of the NUC that the European Union (EU) has provided Ukraine with 300,000 rounds of ammunition of the promised 1 million.[28]

Poland is reportedly considering sending military advisors to Finland in response to Russia's ongoing attempts to artificially create a migrant crisis on the Finnish-Russian border as part of a known Russian hybrid warfare tactic meant to destabilize NATO and the EU. Polish Secretary of State and Head of the Polish National Security Bureau Jacek Siewiera stated on November 28 that during Finnish President Sauli Niinistö's official visit to Poland, Niinistö requested "allied support" against the hybrid Russian attack on the Finnish border.[29] Siewiera reported that Poland intends to respond to the request by sending a team of military advisors to Finland to provide "on-site knowledge on border security" and other unspecified operational support.[30] Finnish authorities announced on November 28 that Finland will close the last open border checkpoint at midnight on November 30 until at least December 13, following Russia's artificial creation of a migrant crisis on the Finnish border that started on November 18.[31] Russian sources, including Kremlin spokesperson Dmitri Peskov and a prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger, responded negatively to Siewiera's announcement and claimed that it is "excessive" and meant to prepare Finland for a confrontation against Russia in the Arctic.[32] Poland has experienced the impacts of Russian hybrid warfare firsthand on its borders from a Russian-orchestrated migrant crisis on the Poland-Belarus border in fall of 2021, and Finland likely seeks to leverage Poland's knowledge of such crises to address the current situation on the Finnish border.[33] Poland and Finland both belong to a number of military, political, economic, and diplomatic organizations, including NATO, the EU, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The Russian Foreign Ministry (MFA) formally announced Russia's termination of a nuclear reduction pact with Japan on November 28. [34] The Russian MFA stated that the bilateral agreement with Japan on cooperation in nuclear weapons reduction, initially signed in 1993, will terminate on May 21, 2024, six months after Russia's formal notification of termination.[35] Kremlin newswire TASS reported on November 9 that Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin signed an order approving Russia's termination of the bilateral agreement with Japan.[36] Japanese news outlet the *Japan Times* reported that the agreement allowed Japan to support the decommissioning of weapons, including Russian nuclear submarines.[37] The Russian MFA claimed that Russia is withdrawing from the agreement against the backdrop of "the openly anti-Russian policy of [Japanese Prime Minister Fumio] Kushida's administration" including Japanese sanctions against Russia and alleged increasing Japanese military activity near the Japanese-Russian border.[38] The *Japan Times* also noted that Russia has withdrawn from several other bilateral negotiations and initiatives following the imposition of Japanese sanctions against Russia after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[39]

Russia's efforts to generate combat power via recruitment from Central Asian countries may become a source of tension in Russia's relationship with its Central Asian neighbors. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)*'s Central Asian service *Radio Azattyk* reported on November 28 that a Kazakh court sentenced Kazakh citizen Alexei Shompolov to six years and eight months in prison on charges of mercenarism.[40] Shompolov reportedly fought in a Wagner Group artillery unit near Bakhmut.[41] Shompolov's case represents the second charge of mercenarism pursued by a Central Asian country against a combatant who fought for Russia in Ukraine—an Uzbek court similarly sentenced an Uzbek man who fought with Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) troops in Ukraine in 2014–2015 on October 31.[42] Russian milbloggers responded to Shompolov's sentencing by criticizing Kazakh leadership for taking an "anti-Russian" stance and questioned if Kazakh authorities would similarly charge Kazakh citizens who fought in the Ukrainian army.[43] Russia's continued insistence on leveraging Central Asian populations for force-generation purposes, both within Central Asian countries and in Central Asian migrant communities in Russia itself, is likely to create friction between Russia and its neighbors as Central Asian countries use mercenarism laws to punish residents who fought for Russia.[44]

Adam Kadyrov, younger son of Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov, will reportedly “oversee” the newly formed “Sheikh Mansur” volunteer battalion in a new unspecified position, possibly further indicating Ramzan Kadyrov’s desire for Adam to succeed him as head of Chechnya. Chechen Republic Parliament Deputy Magomed Daudov claimed on November 29 that Adam will “oversee” the battalion but did not provide additional information regarding Adam’s official title, although the role may be more ceremonial than combat- or command-oriented given Adam’s age.[45] Daudov stated that Adam also received the star of the “Sheikh Mansur” Battalion award. Ramzan Kadyrov has previously appeared increasingly favorable to Adam in recent months, including appointing Adam to a prominent yet unspecified “important position” in the Chechen secret service.[46]

Key Takeaways:

- **The apparent Russian failure to establish a cohesive command structure among forces defending on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast continues to degrade Russian morale and combat capabilities.**
- **The Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces is increasingly comprised of disparate elements of recently transferred and degraded units and new formations, which may be contributing to this apparent lack of cohesive command structure.**
- **Russian authorities plan to extend criminal liability for crimes against the law on military service to participants in volunteer formations, a measure that would impact many irregular military formations and personnel on which the Russian military relies for manpower in Ukraine.**
- **Russian officials proposed laws that would restrict the actions of foreign citizens in Russia, likely to support continued efforts to coerce migrants into Russian military service.**
- **The NATO-Ukraine Council (NUC) met at the foreign minister-level for the first time on November 29 and discussed steps to increase weapons and ammunition production.**
- **Poland is reportedly considering sending military advisors to Finland in response to Russia's ongoing attempts to artificially create a migrant crisis on the Finnish-Russian border as part of a known Russian hybrid warfare tactic meant to destabilize NATO and the EU.**
- **The Russian Foreign Ministry (MFA) formally announced Russia’s termination of a nuclear reduction pact with Japan on November 28.**
- **Russia's efforts to generate combat power via recruitment from Central Asian countries may become a source of tension in Russia's relationship with its Central Asian neighbors.**
- **Adam Kadyrov, younger son of Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov, will reportedly “oversee” the newly formed “Sheikh Mansur” volunteer battalion in a new unspecified position, possibly further indicating Ramzan Kadyrov’s desire for Adam to succeed him as head of Chechnya.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make any confirmed advances.**
- **Russian Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) Head and Duma Deputy Leonid Slutsky proposed a bill on November 28 that would grant war correspondents "combat veteran" status and associated social support benefits.**
- **Russian authorities continue efforts to erase Ukrainian culture and identity in occupied Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 29, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

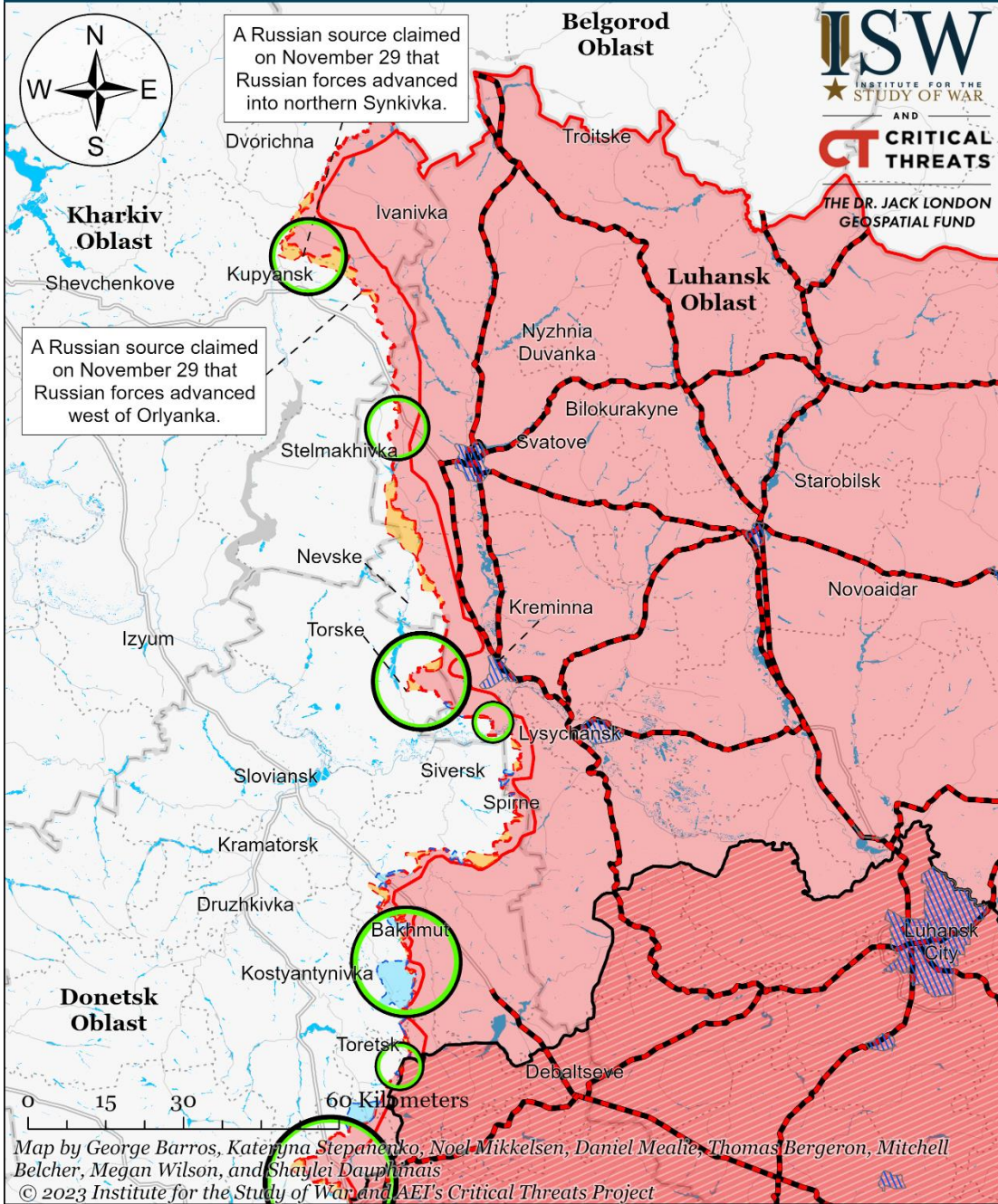
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 29 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults in the Kupyansk direction northeast of Petropalivka (7km east of Kupyansk) and near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk) and Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and in the Lyman direction near the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna), Torske (15km west of Kreminna), Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna), and east of Terny (17km west of Kreminna).[47] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced into Synkivka, near Zahoruykivka (a settlement 16km east of Kupyansk that was disincorporated in the 1980s) and Tymkivka (19km east of Kupyansk) and captured unspecified positions south and southwest of Lyman Pershyi (11km northeast of Kupyansk).[48] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces also attacked south of the Zhuravka Gully (18km west of Kreminna).[49] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces also counterattacked and advanced near Chervonopopivka (6km north of Kreminna) on November 28.[50] The spokesperson for a Ukrainian unit reportedly deployed in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction stated on November 29 that Russian forces continue conducting attacks despite worsening weather conditions.[51]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued unsuccessful counterattacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 29. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Lyman Pershyi and Synkivka in Kharkiv Oblast, Yampolivka in Donetsk Oblast, and the Serebryanske forest area.[52] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked near Terny and the Zhuravka gully.[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 29, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- - - Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▨ Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

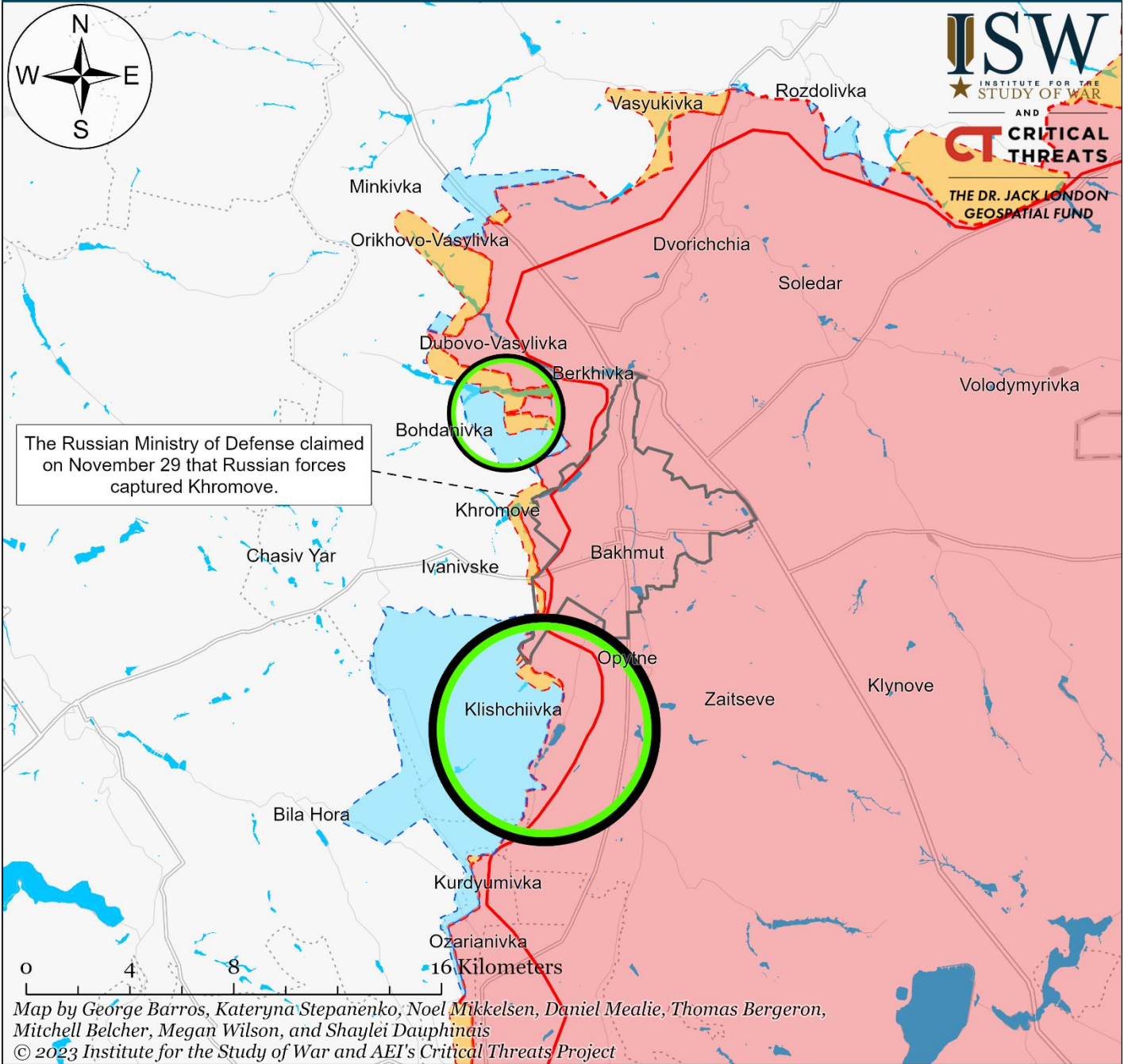
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction on November 29 and reportedly advanced. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces captured Khromove (on the western outskirts of Bakhmut).[54] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 98th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division captured Khromove and additionally advanced near the Berkhivka Reservoir (3km northwest of Bakhmut).[55] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation that Russian forces have completely captured Khromove, however. Russian sources claimed that fighting continues northwest and southwest of Bakhmut, and a Ukrainian reserve officer noted that the situation southwest of Bakhmut along the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line (5km-12km southwest of Bakhmut) is especially challenging due to an increased number of Russian assaults and the number of Russian units fighting in the area.[56] The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian assaults near Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut), Ivanivske (5km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[57]

Ukrainian forces continued counterattacks in the Bakhmut direction on November 29 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Khromove and Klishchiivka.[58] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces also unsuccessfully counterattacked near the Berkhivka Reservoir.[59] The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Ukrainian forces are continuing successful assault actions south of Bakhmut.[60]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 29, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



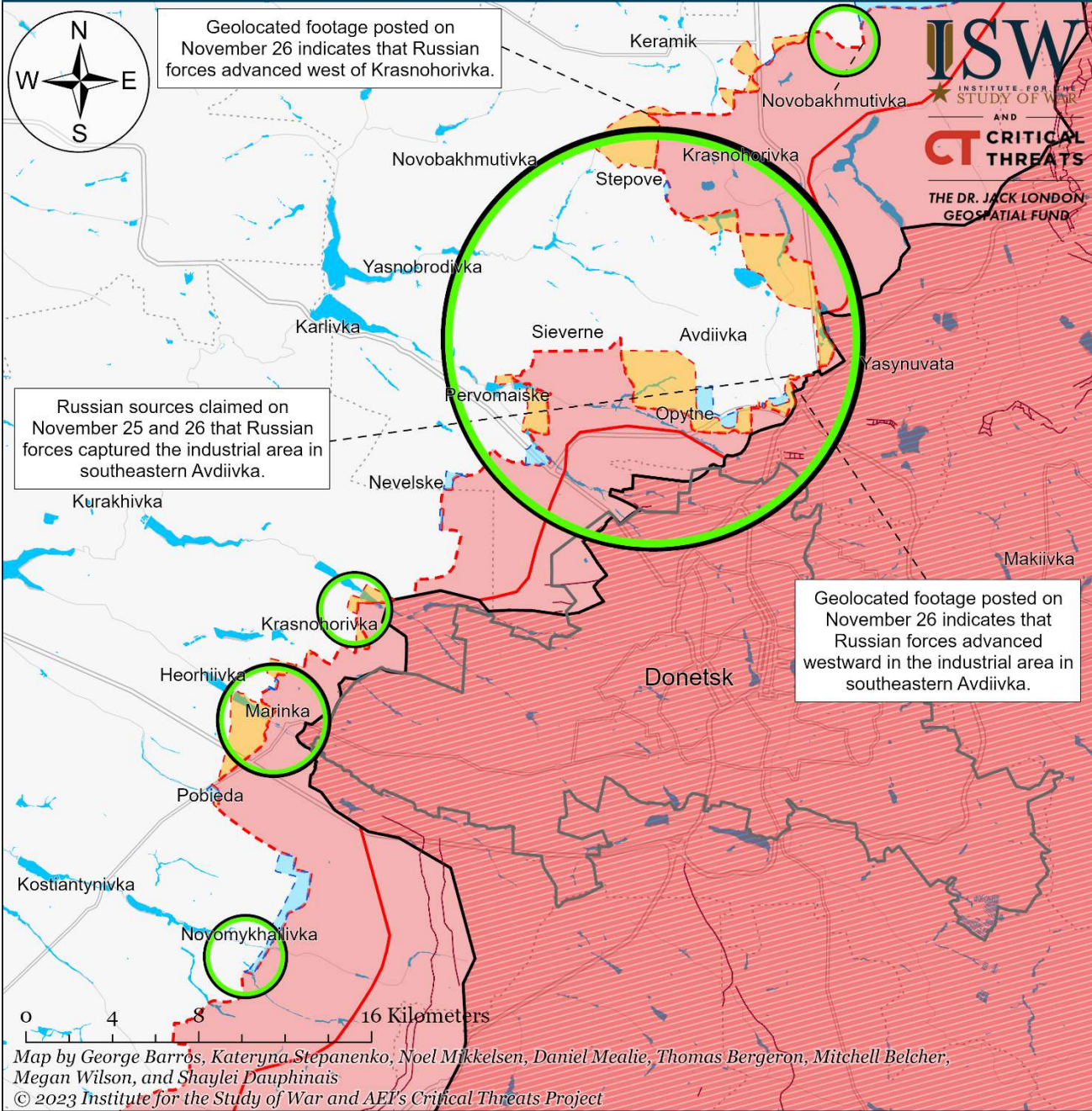
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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- Bakhmut City Limits
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Avdiivka direction on November 29 and reportedly advanced northwest of Avdiivka. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced between 300 to 500 meters in the direction of Novokalynove (10km northwest of Avdiivka) and near Stepove (7km northwest of Avdiivka), although ISW has not yet observed visual evidence of Russian advances in either of these areas.[61] Russian sources additionally claimed that Russian forces are clearing and consolidating positions within the industrial zone just southeast of Avdiivka.[62] A Russian soldier who is reportedly fighting in the industrial zone claimed that the situation is very challenging and that it is difficult for Russian forces to move through the area due to Ukrainian drone use and constant mortar fire.[63] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces captured several unspecified Ukrainian positions near Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka).[64] Ukrainian sources reported that Russian forces are also trying to capture the Avdiivka Coke Plant just northwest of Avdiivka, and a Ukrainian battalion commander reportedly defending near the Coke Plant characterized Russian attacks in this area as highly attritional squad-sized frontal assaults.[65] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy noted that Russian activity near Avdiivka has significantly increased over the past day and reported that Russian forces are using armored vehicles.[66] The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian offensive actions near Avdiivka itself, Stepove, Novokalynove, Sieverne, Pervomaiske (10km southeast of Avdiivka), east of Novobakhmutivka (11km northeast of Avdiivka), and south of Tonenke (6km west of Avdiivka).[67]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 29, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

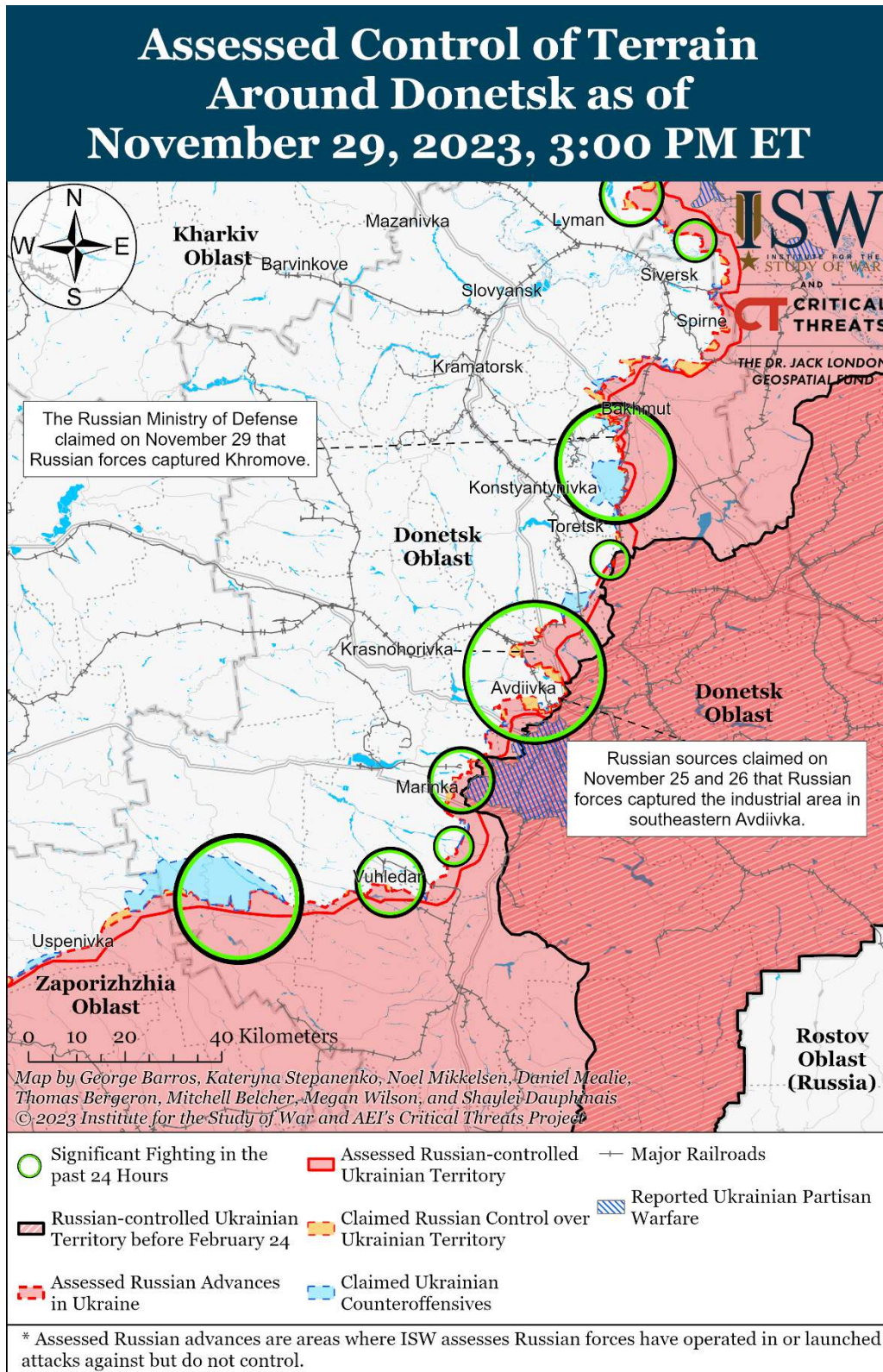


- Donetsk City Limits
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

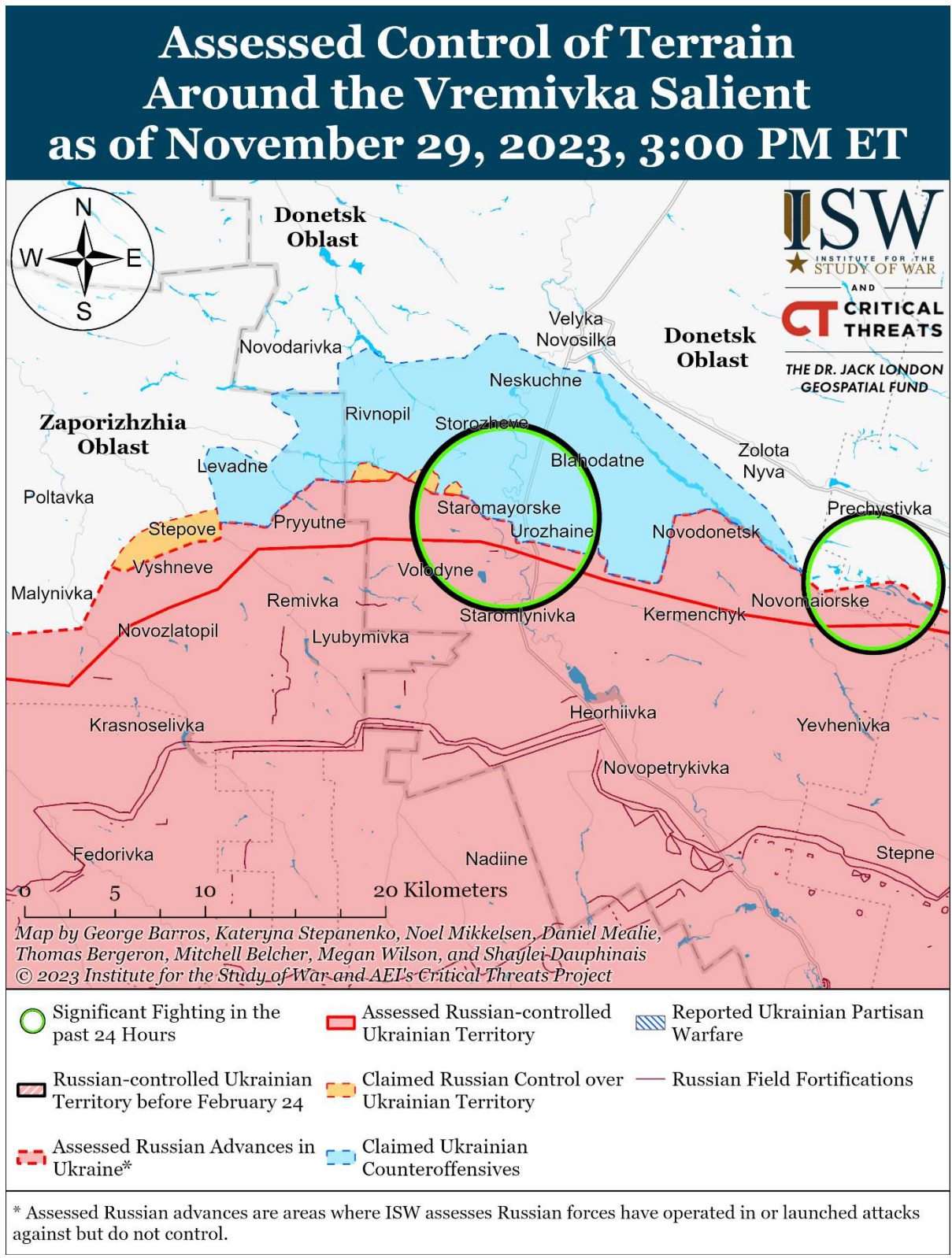
Note: Russian sources claimed on November 29 that Russian forces advanced between 300 to 500 meters in the direction of Novokalynove.

Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 29 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian assaults on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Marinka, near Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City), and near Vodyane (25km southwest of Donetsk City).[68] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the "Kaskad" formation of the Donetsk People's Republic Ministry of Internal Affairs (DNR MVD) are fighting near Novomykhailivka and Vuhledar (30km southwest of Donetsk City).[69]



Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

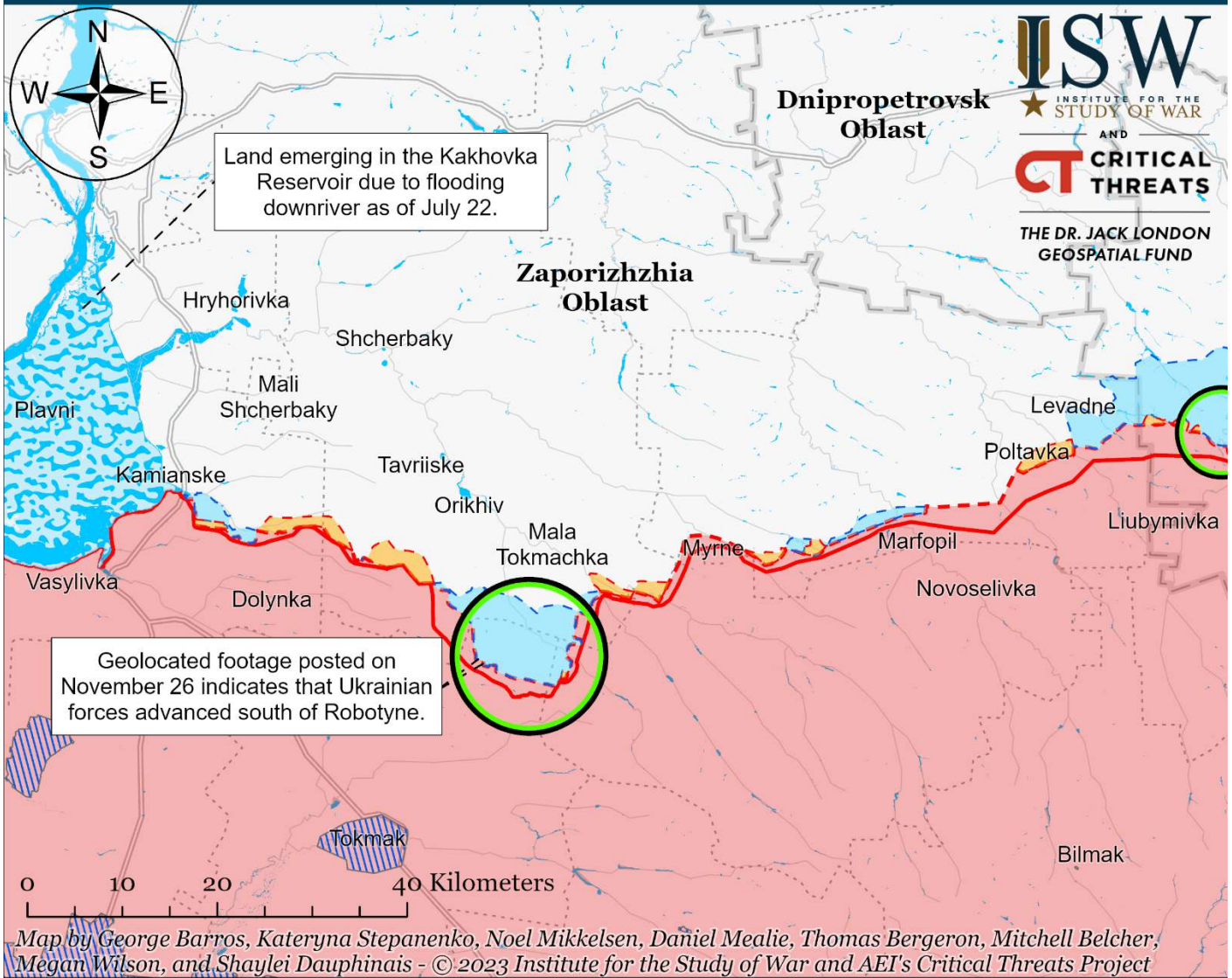
Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on November 29 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than two Russian assaults south of Prechystivka (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and southwest of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[70]



Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 29 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[71] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults west of Robotyne, near Novoprokopivka (3km south of Robotyne), and northwest of Verbove (9km east of Robotyne).[72] A Russian milblogger amplified footage purporting to show elements of the Russian 247th Air Assault (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) striking Ukrainian infantry near Verbove.[73]

Russian forces counterattacked in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 29 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than nine Russian assaults near Robotyne and west of Verbove.[74] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces captured several unspecified Ukrainian positions near Robotyne.[75] Another milblogger claimed on November 28 that Russian forces counterattacked along the Kopani-Robotyne-Novoprokopivka-Verbove (7km northwest of Robotyne to 9km east of Robotyne) line and that elements of the Russian 70th Motorized Rifle Regiment, 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment, and 136th Motorized Rifle Brigade (all of the 58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) advanced up to 800 meters in several areas near Kopani and Robotyne.[76] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces also captured unspecified Ukrainian strongholds near Verbove. ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claimed Russian advances in the Robotyne area. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on November 29 that Russian forces are focused on capturing tactically advantageous positions in the Robotyne area and do not intend to launch larger counterattacks.[77]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of November 29, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on November 28 that Russian forces advanced up to 800 meters in many areas near Robotyne and Kopani.

Ukrainian forces continued ground attacks in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 29 and reportedly advanced. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced southwest of Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River) and established a foothold in a nearby forest area.[78] Russian milbloggers claimed that battles are ongoing near Krynky and that Russian aviation and artillery units are heavily striking the area.[79] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces maintain positions on the east bank of the Dnipro River.[80] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continue to transfer new assault groups to the left bank and that 300 to 400 Ukrainian personnel are operating near Krynky.[81] Continued Russian claims about the arrival of Ukrainian reinforcements on the east bank of the Dnipro River suggest that Russian forces are struggling to interdict Ukrainian efforts to supply and reinforce their positions in east bank Kherson Oblast.[82]



Ukrainian forces struck a building in occupied Yuvileine, Kherson Oblast, on November 28 during a Russian occupation law enforcement meeting. Kremlin newswire TASS reported that a Ukrainian HIMARS strike killed four occupation police and injured 18 others.[83] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Ukrainian forces struck the occupation law enforcement meeting in Yuvileine (49km southeast of Kherson Oblast) thanks to information from local Ukrainian partisans and killed five high-ranking Russian officials.[84]

The recent cyclone in the Black Sea on November 27 destroyed water barriers that Russian forces constructed to protect naval assets and ground lines of communications (GLOCs) in occupied Crimea. Satellite imagery from November 27 indicates that the recent storm destroyed protective Russian structures near the Kerch Strait Bridge that connects Russia to occupied Crimea.[85] Satellite imagery from November 29 shows storm damage to defensive barriers at the entrance to the port in occupied Sevastopol.[86] A Russian milblogger responded to the imagery by expressing concern about Russian vulnerability to Ukrainian naval drone strikes.[87]

Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Russian Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) Head and Duma Deputy Leonid Slutsky proposed a bill on November 28 that would grant war correspondents "combat veteran" status and associated social support benefits. Slutsky argued that war correspondents do "selfless work" in high-risk environments and therefore deserve the same social guarantees, such as payments in the case of injury or death and support measures to relatives, as combat veterans receive.[88] The Russian Ministry of Digital Development and the Russian Union of Journalists previously expressed support in July 2023 for measures that would grant military correspondents some type of veteran status.[89] ISW continues to assess that Russian ultranationalist figures are likely supporting these measures to court the Russian milblogger community and that the Kremlin could use such measures to exert more control over milbloggers.[90]

St. Petersburg Municipal Deputy Valery Veremeychik reportedly sent an appeal to the Russian State Duma requesting the establishment of service limits for mobilized personnel on November 28.[91] Veremeychik's appeal reportedly proposed limiting the period of partial mobilization for a mobilized citizen to one year starting from the issuance of an individual's military summons and limiting the duration of service under partial mobilization to six months.[92] Veremeychik's appeal to the Russian State Duma may be a response to a recent increase in protests among relatives of mobilized personnel calling for the return of their loved ones.[93] ISW recently observed a report that the Kremlin instructed Russian regional authorities to prevent relatives of mobilized personnel from protesting by paying them off.[94]

The Russian 1st "Hispaniola" Fan Volunteer Reconnaissance and Assault Brigade is recruiting women into assault units and other combat roles.[95] Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* reported on November 28 that the 1st "Hispaniola" Fan Volunteer Reconnaissance and Assault Brigade, which is reportedly subordinate to the Kremlin-affiliated "Redut" private military company (PMC), began to advertise recruitment for women into combat roles such as assault personnel, communications operators, drone operators, and electronic warfare (EW) operators.[96] ISW previously observed reports that Redut's "Borz" Battalion began to advertise recruitment for women into combat roles in October 2023.[97]

The Russian Navy reportedly received a new submarine for its Pacific Fleet on November 29. Kremlin newswire RT reported that St. Petersburg-based Russian ship builder Admiral Shipyards transferred a new Project 636.3 "Mozhaisk" multi-purpose diesel-electric submarine to the Russian Navy.[98] The "Mozhaisk" submarine is reportedly the fifth submarine of six submarines that are designated for the Pacific Fleet.[99] Kremlin newswire TASS reported that Russian shipbuilder Sevmash Enterprise delivered the Project 885M "Arkhangelsk" Yasem-M class nuclear submarine to the Russian Navy for testing on November 29.[100] The "Arkhangelsk" is reportedly one of six Project 885M submarines that Sevmash is building.[101]

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec announced on November 29 that it is developing a training program for "Okhotnik" combat drone operations to accelerate their use in unspecified Russian military units.[102] Rostec noted that it is currently conducting preliminary tests with the "Okhotnik" combat drone.[103]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian authorities continue efforts to erase Ukrainian culture and identity in occupied Ukraine. Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) head Leonid Pasechnik announced on November 29 that Russian Presidential Administration First Deputy Head

Sergei Kiriyyenko and Russian Deputy Culture Minister Sergei Obryvalin visited occupied Luhansk Oblast to discuss the development of Russian culture and education in the occupied territories.[104] Kiriyyenko and Obryvalin met with representatives of unspecified cultural institutions in occupied Luhansk Oblast and emphasized the need to convey “patriotism and love for the Motherland [Russia]” to Ukrainian youth. Kiriyyenko announced that the Russian Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives will continue to fund grants for institutions that help promote the Kremlin’s objectives in 2024. Pasechnik, Kiriyyenko, and the Russian Military Society’s Deputy Chairman Nikolai Ovsienko also attended the opening of the “Unhealing Wound of Donbas” memorial in occupied Luhansk City, dedicated to residents of occupied Luhansk Oblast who have died since 2014.[105]

Russian authorities continue to forcibly deport Ukrainian children to Russia under the guise of educational trips. Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Military Administration head Artem Lysohor reported on November 29 that the Russian government ordered occupation officials to send 10,000 children to Moscow during fall and winter 2023–24, likely to visit the “Rossiya” International Exhibit and Forum.[106] Lysohor reported that the Russian federal government is paying for the children to travel to Moscow by train.

Russian authorities continue to facilitate the arrival of Central Asia migrants to occupied Ukraine to artificially alter the demographics of occupied areas. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on November 29 that more than 100,000 Central Asian migrants have arrived in occupied Ukraine and are mainly working for Russian-controlled construction companies.[107] The Ukrainian Resistance Center stated that Russian authorities may offer the migrants Russian citizenship in exchange for military service in the future, which would be consistent with ongoing Russian efforts to coerce Central Asian migrants into military service.[108]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov posted footage on November 29 purportedly showing 50 Palestinian refugees from the Gaza Strip arriving in Chechnya.[109] Kadyrov claimed that the Gazan refugees will stay at the “Gorny Klyuch” children’s health camp in Shalinsky Raion, Chechnya and that an additional 100 Gazan refugees will arrive in Chechnya on November 30.[110] Kadyrov’s claims reflect the Kremlin’s shift to a much more anti-Israel position in the Israel-Hamas war, as well as Kadyrov’s desire to show unwavering support for Russian President Vladimir Putin.[111] ISW cannot independently verify the footage or any of Kadyrov’s claims, however.

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense announced on November 29 that Belarusian military delegations met with Egyptian and Cuban military officials to discuss bilateral military cooperation and training. Head of the Belarusian Armed Forces Military Education Department Colonel Andrei Klishevich visited military education institutions and met with his counterparts in Egypt.[112] Belarusian Assistant Defense Minister for International Military Cooperation Colonel Valery Revenko met with Chief of the Cuban General Staff General Roberto Legra Sotolongo in Havana.[113]

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

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