

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, and Tom Thacker

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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.



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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Grace Mappes, and Frederick W. Kagan**

May 25, 2024, time 7:20pm 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 1:00pm ET on May 25. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 26 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that Ukrainian forces are increasingly contesting the tactical initiative in northern Kharkiv Oblast and characterized Russian operations in the area as defensive, although Russian forces are likely attempting to bring the Northern Grouping of Forces up closer to its reported planned end strength before possibly intensifying offensive operations in the area. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 24 that Ukrainian forces are pushing Russian forces back from Ukrainian defenses in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[1] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Ukrainian forces established "combat control" over an unspecified section of the border where Russian forces had initially crossed into northern Kharkiv Oblast following the start of Russian offensive operations on May 10.[2] A Ukrainian commander operating in the Lyptsi direction (north of Kharkiv City) stated that Ukrainian forces have completely stopped Russian offensive operations in the Strilecha-Hlyboke direction (north of Lyptsi) and that Ukrainian forces are now focused on regaining territory in the area.[3] The commander stated that Ukrainian forces are successfully pushing Russian forces out of captured positions but that Russian forces are saturating the area with manpower and equipment to prevent Ukrainian forces from seizing the tactical initiative.[4] A prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces have partially transitioned to the defensive in northern Kharkiv Oblast after consolidating captured positions and are currently focused on destroying reserves that Ukrainian forces have concentrated near Kharkiv City.[5] The milblogger assessed that Ukrainian forces would have to launch counterattacks in the area at the end of May 2024 to push Russian forces out of northern Kharkiv Oblast and that future Russian plans on this axis likely depend on the outcome of Ukrainian counterattacks.[6] Russian forces launched their offensive operation into northern Kharkiv Oblast with limited manpower and have yet to commit significant reserves to the area, leading to a decreasing tempo of Russian advances and offensive operations.[7] This decreasing tempo is likely presenting

Ukrainian forces with tactical opportunities to counterattack, although Ukrainian forces are not yet conducting a limited counteroffensive operation that aims to push Russian forces completely out of northern Kharkiv Oblast.

The disparate Russian elements currently operating in northern Kharkiv Oblast and the Russian military's apparent hesitance to commit available reserves to fight suggests that Russian forces are likely attempting to bring the Northern Grouping of Forces up to its reported planned end strength before intensifying offensive operations and pursuing subsequent phases of the offensive operation in northern Kharkiv Oblast. Russian forces reportedly had roughly 35,000 personnel in the international border area as a part of the Northern Grouping of Forces when they started offensive operations on May 10, whereas Ukrainian sources had been indicating that the Russian military intends to concentrate a total of 50,000 to 70,000 personnel in the international border area.[8] Russian forces likely launched the offensive operation in northern Kharkiv Oblast earlier than intended with an understrength force hoping to establish a foothold before the arrival of resumed US military aid to the front made that task more difficult.[9] Ukrainian sources have identified elements of the 11th Army Corps [AC], 44th AC, and 6th Combined Arms Army [CAA] as the main elements of the Northern Grouping of Forces, and limited elements of these formations have participated in the offensive operation and have reportedly suffered significant casualties.[10] Zelensky stated in an interview published on May 25 that Russian forces have suffered an eight-to-one casualty ratio in northern Kharkiv Oblast in the past two weeks, although these losses do not appear to have forced the Russian military to commit significant reserves from the 11th AC, 44th AC, or 6th CAA to sustain Russian offensive operations in the area.[11]

Instead, Russian forces appear to be relying on limited elements of units that are part of various different force groupings in eastern Ukraine. Limited elements of the 47th Tank Division's 153rd Tank Regiment and 272nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) and limited elements of the 2nd Motorized Rifle Division's 1st Motorized Rifle Regiment (1st GTA, MMD) are reportedly operating near Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City).[12] Elements of the 47th Tank Division and the 2nd Motorized Rifle Division are currently heavily committed to intensified Russian offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line, and Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets previously reported that the Russian Western Grouping of Forces is "leasing" limited elements to the Northern Grouping of Forces.[13] Elements of a battalion of the 98th Airborne (VDV) Division's 217th VDV Regiment are reportedly operating in a border area in Kursk Oblast, even though elements of the 217th VDV Regiment and other elements of the 98th VDV Division are participating in intensified assaults on Chasiv Yar's eastern outskirts.[14] Russian forces have either been attacking with an understrength 217th VDV Regiment in the Chasiv Yar area for some time or have recently transferred a battalion of the regiment to the Northern Grouping of Forces.

Russian forces are likely holding back reserves of the 11th AC, 44th AC, and 6th CAA in order to establish the Northern Grouping at closer to its intended end strength. The Russian military command may be waiting to intensify offensive operations and pursue a second phase of the operation because its plans require a grouping of 50,000 to 70,000 personnel strong. Russian forces likely intend to launch the second phase of their offensive operation in northern Kharkiv Oblast following their intended seizure of Vovchansk, although positional fighting and possible Ukrainian counterattacks could require Russian forces to conduct another wave of intensified assaults in the area to complete the seizure of the settlement.[15] Russian forces currently aim to establish a "buffer zone" in northern Kharkiv Oblast

and advance to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City, and it is unclear which goal a second phase of the operation will support or if Russian forces have a more ambitious operational objective in mind.[16] **The Northern Grouping of Forces, even at the upper limit of its reported end strength, will lack the necessary manpower needed to conduct a successful operation to envelop, encircle, or seize Kharkiv City.**

The likely premature start of Russian offensive operations appears to have undermined Russian success in northern Kharkiv Oblast. Russian forces reportedly managed to surprise Ukrainian forces on May 10 and made tactically significant gains in areas that Ukrainian officials reported were less defended.[17] The Ukrainian State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) announced on MAY 25 that it has launched an investigation into improperly prepared Ukrainian defenses in the area and the abandonment of Ukrainian positions in the Lyptsi and Vovchansk directions.[18] The SBI noted that this allowed Russian forces to advance to a second line of Ukrainian defenses in the area, although it appears that limited manpower prevented Russian forces from achieving a deeper penetration. While it is possible that the Russian military command thought the accumulation of a larger force would have alerted Ukrainian forces and prevented the opportunity for operational surprise, the Russian decision to not immediately introduce significant reserves likely prevented Russian forces from achieving rapid gains and a deeper penetration. Ukrainian forces have now established themselves at defensive positions in the area, and Russian forces have likely expended their tactical opportunity to make relatively rapid gains against lightly-held positions in this area.

Russian forces continue to leverage their sanctuary in Russian airspace to strike Kharkiv City to devastating effect, likely as part of efforts to depopulate the city and demoralize Ukrainians. Russian forces conducted four distinct missile and glide bomb strikes against Kharkiv City on May 25: a missile strike with an Iskander-M missile and S-300/S-400 air defense missiles against an educational facility just after midnight; a strike with two KAB precision-guided glide bombs against the Epicenter construction hypermarket in the city at around 1300; a strike with unspecified munitions against Central Park in Kharkiv City just after 1700; and a strike in a residential area in central Kharkiv City just after 1900.[19] The hypermarket strike sparked a fire that spread to more than 15,000 square meters and engulfed the entire hypermarket.[20] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that up to 200 people could have been in the hypermarket at the time of the strike, and Ukrainian officials have since confirmed that the Epicenter hypermarket strike has killed at least five people, injured at least 40 and that 16 are currently missing.[21] Ukrainian Kharkiv Oblast Head Oleh Synehubov reported that the evening strike against a central Kharkiv residential area has injured at least 18 people.[22]

The Russian use of precision-guided bombs against civilian areas in Kharkiv City indicates that Russia likely intends for these strikes to scare Ukrainians into leaving the city. Russian forces have been heavily targeting Kharkiv City with missile strikes and glide bombs – often FAB and KAB bombs modified with glide modules frequently equipped with guidance systems – in recent weeks in part to force residents to flee.[23] Russian aircraft have conducted these strikes from their sanctuary in Russian territory without fear of Ukrainian air defenses due to Western constraints on Ukraine using Western-provided systems against military targets in Russian territory and airspace.[24] Russian forces will very likely continue these strikes as part of the offensive operation in northern Kharkiv Oblast as long as Western prohibitions prevent Ukrainian forces from adequately challenging the Russian military's sanctuary in Russian territory.

Russian electronic warfare (EW) capabilities reportedly impacted the effectiveness of select Western weapon systems in Ukraine in 2023 as Ukraine and Russia continue to compete in a technical offense-defense race. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times (NYT)* reported on May 24 and 25, respectively, that senior Ukrainian military official sources and confidential Ukrainian military assessments described how Russian EW has previously decreased the effectiveness of Western weapons in Ukraine.[25] The *NYT* reported that the success rate of M982 Excalibur guided artillery shells fell from 55 percent to seven percent between January and August 2023 and that Ukrainian forces stopped using the shells.[26] Ukrainian forces also reportedly experienced issues with Joint Direct Attack Munition-Extended Range (JDAM-ER) guided munitions in early 2023.[27] US JDAM-ER manufacturers reportedly delivered more EW-resistant systems to Ukraine in May 2023, but Russian forces adapted their countermeasures, causing the JDAM-ER's success rate to drop to its lowest point in July 2023. The *Washington Post* noted, however, that the JDAM-ER's success rate was more than 60 percent for much of 2023. The *Washington Post* reported that the effectiveness of Ukraine's M30/M31 rockets for multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) also decreased but that the Ukrainian military assessment that the *Washington Post* reviewed did not discuss these issues. The *NYT* stated that Russian forces often deploy EW systems near headquarters and command centers, and Thomas Withington of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) told *NYT* that Ukrainian forces have focused on striking fixed Russian radars and other EW equipment, especially in occupied Crimea, in order to then strike Russian command posts and supply depots.[28] The *Washington Post* noted that the United States has the means to combat Russian EW jamming, stating that the US military would likely not experience the same issues with Russian EW since the United States has a more advanced air force and "robust" EW countermeasures.[29] Ukrainian forces have notably recently conducted successful ATACMS missile strikes on Russian targets in occupied Ukraine, including Crimea, suggesting that Ukrainian forces have been able to at least partially overcome Russian jamming and/or that Russian EW capabilities are not pervasive throughout all of occupied Ukraine.[30] Both the *NYT* and the *Washington Post* noted that Russia and Ukraine are engaged in an offense-defense race as both sides aim to adapt to the other's innovations – as ISW has frequently assessed.[31]

Russian Ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov categorically rejected Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's legitimacy and outlined Russia's maximalist conditions for peace negotiations during an interview with *Newsweek* on May 25.[32] Antonov denied Western statements that Russia is unwilling to negotiate with Ukraine and criticized these statements as a "deliberate attempt" to misrepresent reality. Antonov stated that any Russian-Ukrainian peace agreement must account for the battlefield situation and be signed by a "legitimate" Ukrainian leader, but that it is unclear who could sign such a document since Zelensky has "lost [his] legitimacy." ISW has previously noted that the Ukrainian constitution allows a sitting president to postpone elections and remain in office past the end of his term during times of martial law, which is currently in effect in Ukraine due to Russia's full-scale invasion.[33] Russian officials' focus on Zelensky's presidential term is only the latest talking point in the Kremlin's ongoing information operation to discredit Zelensky and frame any pro-Western Ukrainian government as illegitimate.[34] Antonov also dismissed the upcoming Ukrainian Peace Conference in Switzerland as meaningless and as part of a perceived Western effort to legitimize Zelensky's presidency.[35] Antonov threatened that Ukraine would lose much more territory if the United States continued to ignore Russia's peace proposals, highlighting the Kremlin's persistent belief that Russia could subvert Ukraine's interests and sovereignty by negotiating with the West.[36]

Antonov insinuated that Russia would reject any peace agreement predicated on the retreat or withdrawal of Russian forces from any part of occupied Ukraine, likely including recently occupied areas of Kharkiv Oblast.[37] Antonov claimed that Russia's constitution prohibits the external division of Russian territory and that Russia's "new federal subjects" — referring to the illegally annexed and occupied areas of Crimea and Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts — are now part of Russia's clearly marked border and thus cannot and should not return to Ukrainian control. Antonov's claim insinuates that Russian authorities have clearly determined the borders of the Ukrainian territory that Russia has illegally annexed, but occupation authorities have previously presented conflicting assessments of the extent of Russia's illegally annexed territory. Occupation authorities published conflicting maps in honor of the anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of occupied Ukrainian territory in September 2023, with some maps showing the entirety of occupied Crimea and Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts up to their administrative borders as claimed Russian territory and others showing claimed Russian territory extending roughly to the frontlines.[38] It is unlikely that the Kremlin has taken further steps to determine the boundaries of the Ukrainian territory it illegally annexed in September 2022, and it is unclear how the Kremlin envisions the previously and recently occupied areas of Kharkiv Oblast fitting into this framework. Official Russian statements continue to support ISW's assessment that Putin remains uninterested in meaningful negotiations and any peace agreement that would prevent him from pursuing the complete destruction of an independent Ukrainian state and the subjugation of the Ukrainian people.[39]

Russia is likely helping North Korea develop its defense industrial base (DIB) in exchange for North Korean munitions supplies, and US officials reportedly assess that Russia may also be supplying North Korea with military equipment, weapons, or technology. *NBC* reported on May 24 citing six senior US officials that the Biden administration is concerned that the Russian-North Korean relationship could help North Korea expand its nuclear capabilities.[40] US officials reportedly stated that Russia may push North Korea to conduct its "most provocative military actions in a decade" close to the US presidential election in November 2024. *NBC* reported that a senior US official stated that US intelligence officials assess that Russia is providing North Korea with nuclear submarine and ballistic missile technology in return for North Korea's provision of munitions to Russia. US officials reportedly assess that Russia may be helping North Korea develop a long-range ballistic missile that can re-enter the atmosphere with its payload intact — likely referring to the capability required to field an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). *NBC* noted, however, that US officials stated that they do not have an "entirely clear understanding" of what technology Russia is giving to North Korea as it is difficult to detect and track military technology exchanges. *NBC* reported that US officials also stated that North Korea may want Russian ballistic missile parts, aircraft, missiles, and armored vehicles and that Russia may help North Korea develop its own DIB. Known facts suggest that Russia is likely at least helping North Korea develop its DIB. Western officials previously stated that North Korea supplied Russia with more than one million artillery shells in 2023.[41] Although these shells are reportedly mostly old, North Korean authorities likely would have agreed to relinquish such a high quantity of munitions only if they thought they would be able to replenish their stockpiles in the near future.[42] North Korea's ability to produce such a high quantity of shells rapidly would likely require some level of Russian funding and assistance.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that Ukrainian forces are increasingly contesting the tactical initiative in northern Kharkiv Oblast and characterized Russian operations in the area as defensive, although Russian forces are likely attempting to bring the Northern Grouping of Forces up closer to its reported planned end strength before possibly intensifying offensive operations in the area.**
- **The likely premature start of Russian offensive operations appears to have undermined Russian success in northern Kharkiv Oblast.**
- **Russian forces continue to leverage their sanctuary in Russian airspace to strike Kharkiv City to devastating effect, likely as part of efforts to depopulate the city and demoralize Ukrainians.**
- **Russian electronic warfare (EW) capabilities reportedly impacted the effectiveness of select Western weapon systems in Ukraine in 2023 as Ukraine and Russia continue to compete in a technical offense-defense race.**
- **Russian Ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov categorically rejected Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's legitimacy and outlined Russia's maximalist conditions for peace negotiations during an interview with *Newsweek* on May 25.**
- **Russia is likely helping North Korea develop its defense industrial base (DIB) in exchange for North Korean munitions supplies, and US officials reportedly assess that Russia may also be supplying North Korea with military equipment, weapons, or technology.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Donetsk City.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has cancelled its annual "Army Games" international competition for the second year in a row, prompting celebration among critical Russian ultranationalist milbloggers.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 25, 2024, 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.

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.

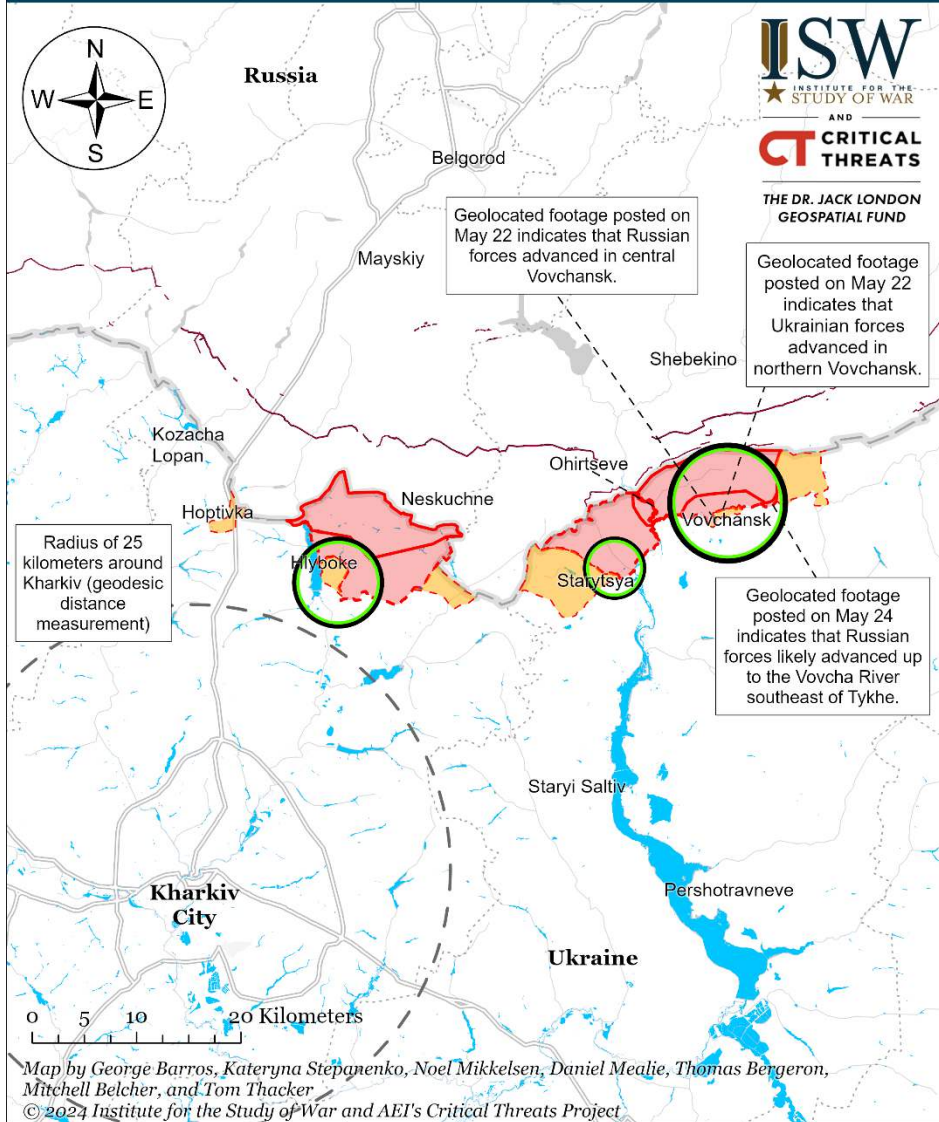
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of three subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives
- Significant Activity in Belarus

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Kharkiv Oblast (Russian objective: Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City)

Fighting continued near Lyptsi (north of Kharkiv City) on May 25, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in the area. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces retreated from unspecified positions near Lyptsi and that there are reports that Ukrainian forces in the area pushed Russian forces back towards Lukyantsi (northeast of Lyptsi).[43] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces continued assaults near Lypsti and Neskuchne (east of Lyptsi), and the Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian counterattacks near Hlyboke (north of Lyptsi).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are struggling to advance through lowlands north of Lyptsi that provide little concealment from elevated Ukrainian positions further south.[45] A Ukrainian intelligence officer operating in Kharkiv Oblast stated that Russian forces are conducting assaults in the Lyptsi direction with a large number of infantry and with support from extensive glide bomb strikes.[46]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

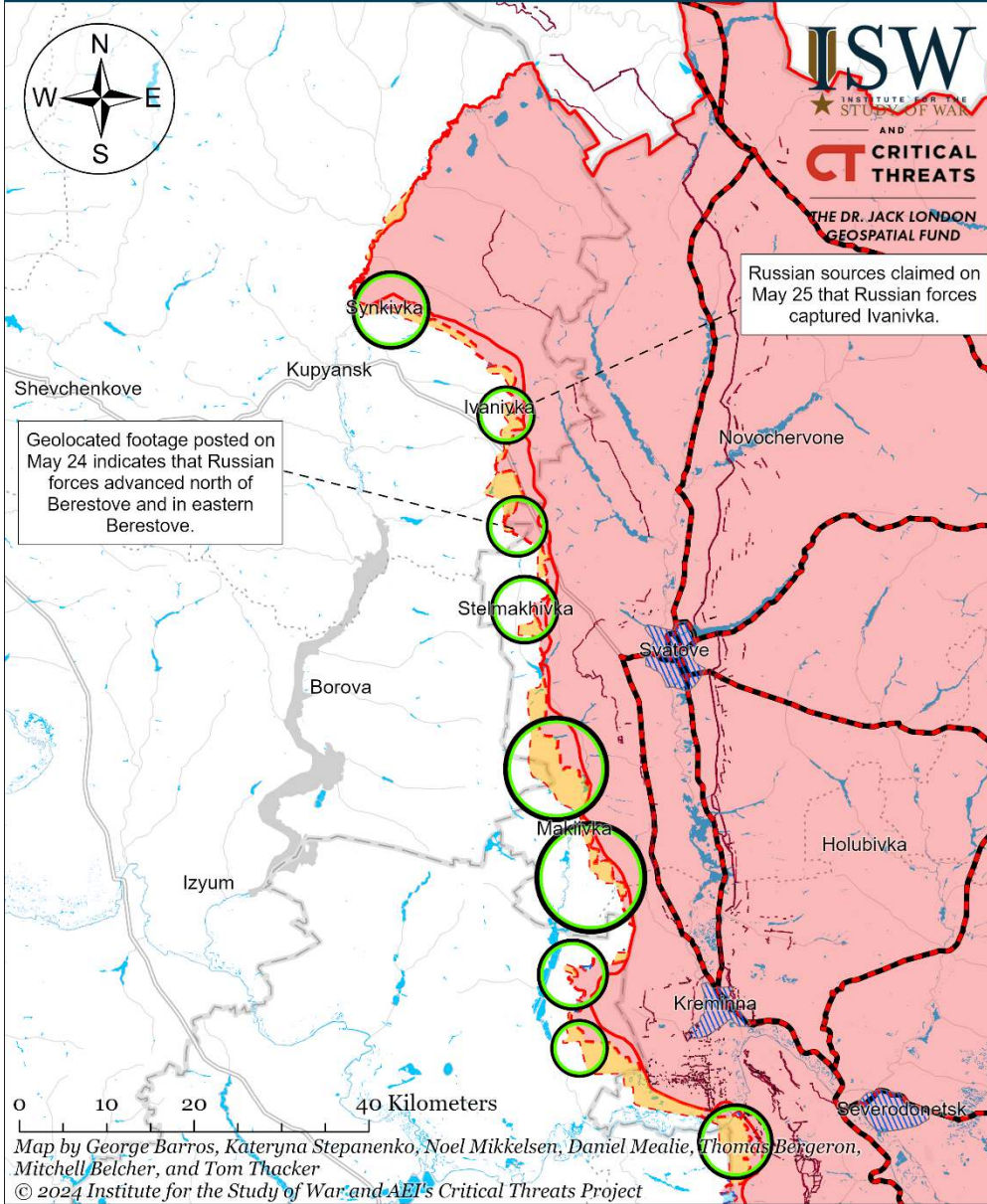
Note: A Russian source claimed on May 23 that Russian forces were advancing 500 meters per day in the Lyptsi direction. A Russian source claimed on May 22 that Russian forces advanced up to 280 meters in Starytsya. A Russian source claimed on May 22 that Russian forces advanced two kilometers near Tykhe. A Russian source claimed on May 22 that Russian forces advanced between 100 and 300 meters deep in the direction of Vovchansk. A Russian source claimed on May 22 that Russian forces advanced between 200 meters and 1.2 kilometers in the direction of Lyptsi. A Russian source claimed on May 21 that Russian forces advanced between 300 and 450 meters near Lyptsi. A Russian source claimed on May 21 that Russian forces advanced between 100 and 350 meters in Vovchansk.

Fighting continued near and within Vovchansk on May 25, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced 150 meters near the Vovchansk Medical College in central Vovchansk and 300 meters deep near Tykhe (east of Vochansk), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[47] Russian forces continued assaults near Starytsya (west of Vovchansk), Vovchansk, and Tykhe.[48] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian counterattacks near Vovchansk.[49] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces destroyed another bridge across the Vovcha River near Tykhe and that Ukrainian forces are establishing pontoon bridges across the Vovcha River in the Vovchansk direction.[50] Elements of the Russian 153rd Tank Regiment (47th Tank Division, Moscow Military District [MMD]) and 41st Motorized Rifle Regiment (72nd Motorized Rifle Division, 44th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly operating in the Kharkiv direction.[51]

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces reportedly advanced southeast of Kupyansk amid continued assaults along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on May 25. The Ukrainian General Staff acknowledged on May 24 that Russian forces achieved unspecified partial success near Petropavlivka (east of Kupyansk) and Ivanivka (southeast of Kupyansk).[52] Russian sources claimed on May 25 that elements of the Russian 47th Tank Division (1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) seized Ivanivka (southeast of Kupaynsk), although ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[53] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced one kilometer deep south of Berestove (southeast of Kupyansk) and that Russian forces control up to 70 percent of Berestove.[54] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also advanced 800 meters near Makiivka (southwest of Kreminna) and seized part of a road near Torske (west of Kreminna).[55] A Ukrainian intelligence officer operating in Kharkiv Oblast stated that Russian forces conduct surprise assaults on all-terrain vehicles in the Kupyansk direction.[56] Russian forces continued assaults northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Kyslivka, Novoselivka, Stelmakhivka; southwest of Svatove near Novoyehorivka, Druzhelyubivka, and Nevske; west of Kreminna near Terny, Yampolivka, and Torske; and south of Kreminna near the Serebryanske forest area and Bilohorivka.[57]

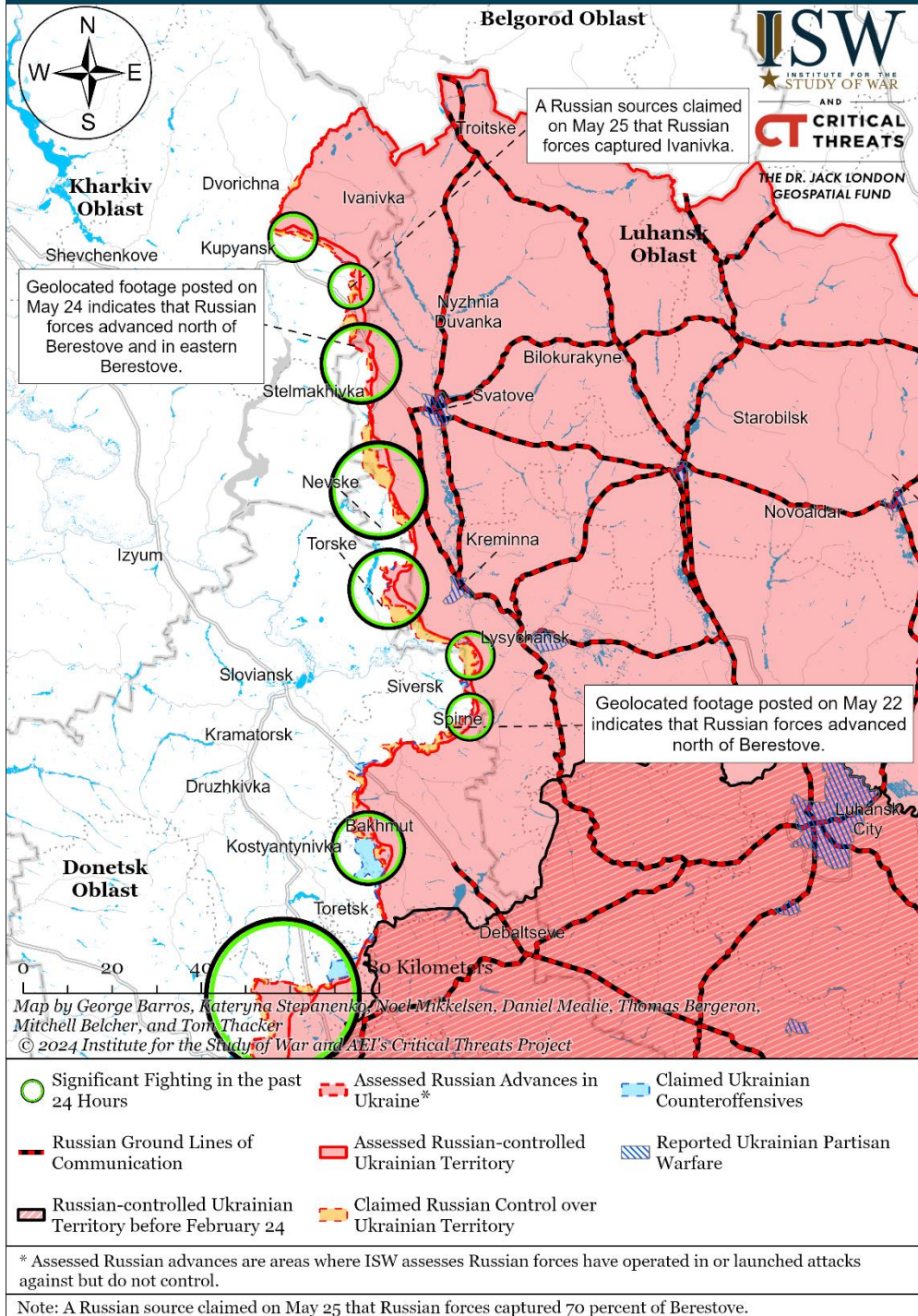
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kupyansk as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

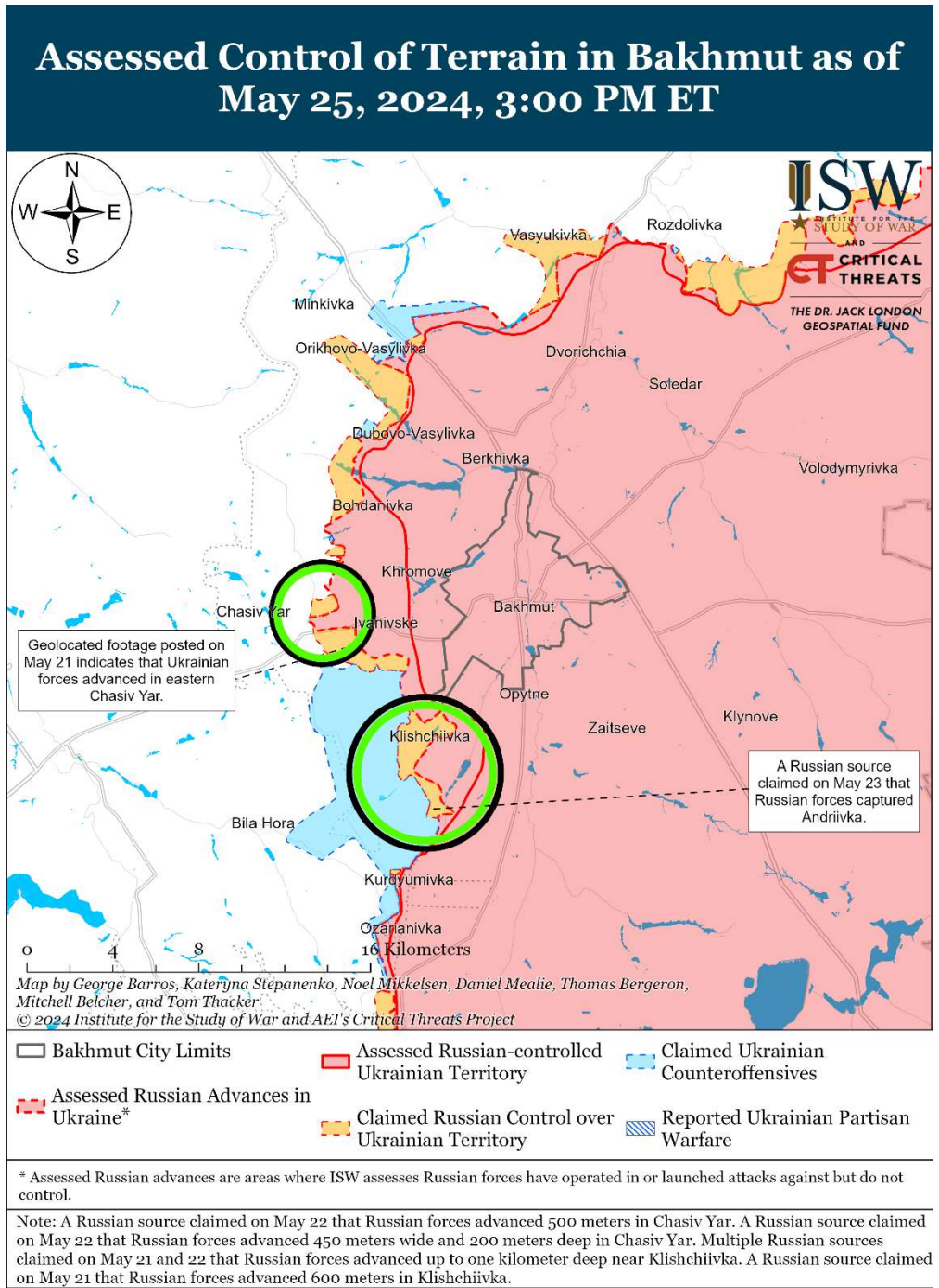
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



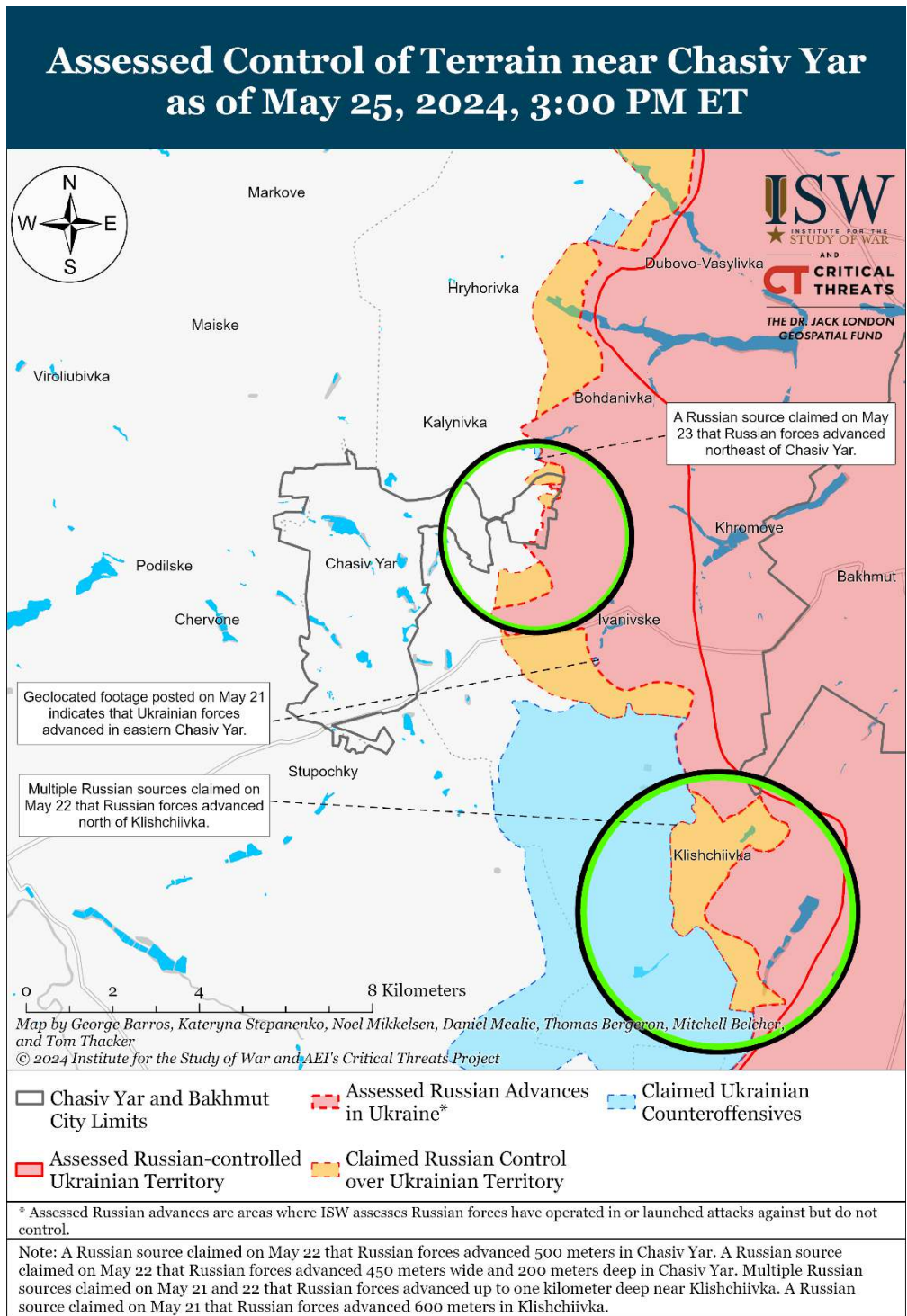
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Siversk direction near Vyimvka (south of Siversk) and near Verkhokamyanske and Spirne (both southeast of Siversk).[58]



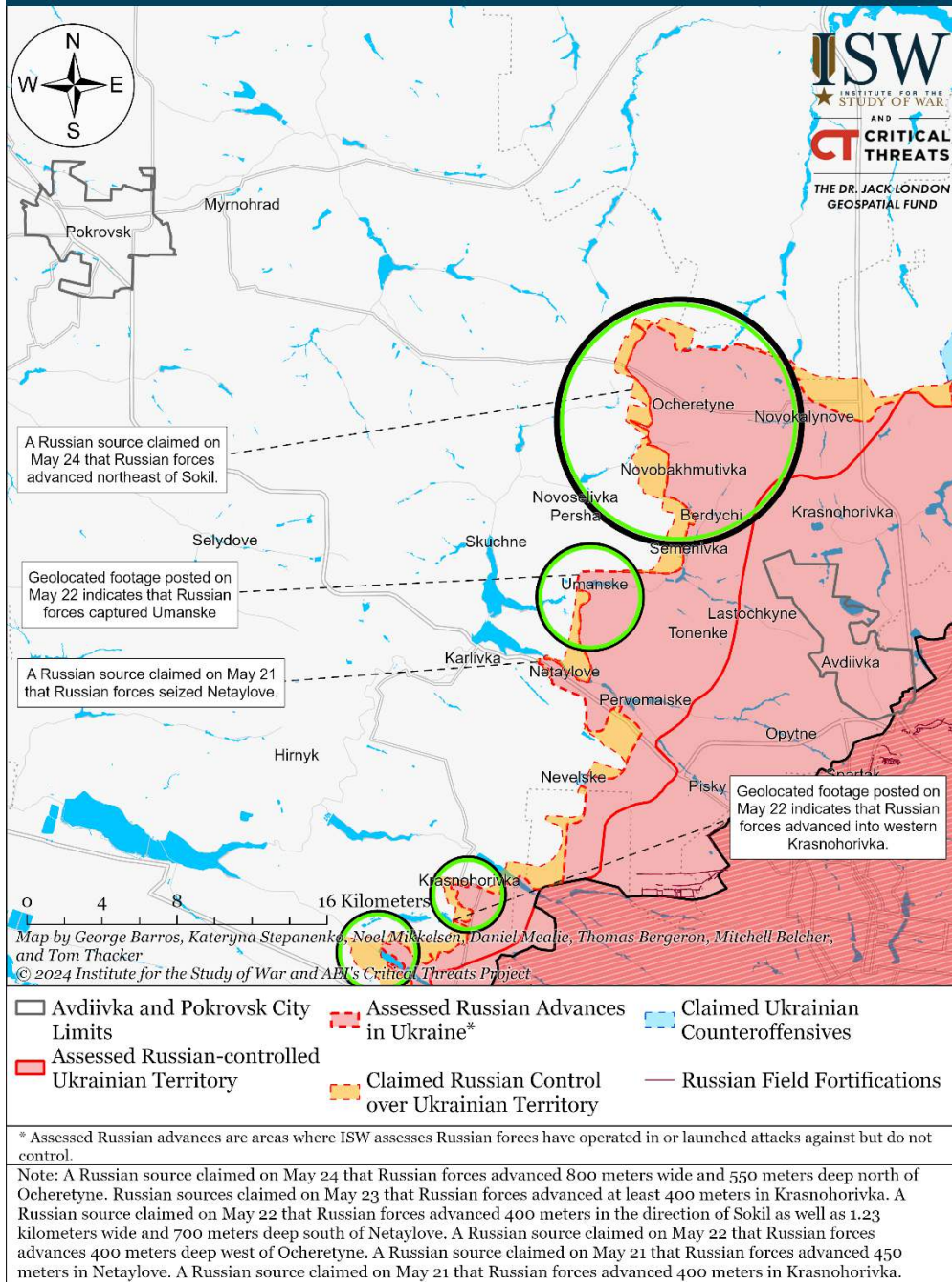
Russian forces continued offensive operations near Chasiv Yar on May 25, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian forces conducted offensive operations north of Chasiv Yar

near Kalynivka; in eastern Chasiv Yar near the Kanal and Novyi microraions; east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske; southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka and Andriivka; and south of Chasiv Yar near Shumy.[59] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces achieved unspecified success near Klishchiivka and are trying to enter the Kanal Microraion from the south.[60] Elements of the Russian 17th Artillery Brigade (3rd Army Corps) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.[61]



Russian forces continued offensive operations west of Avdiivka on May 25, but there were no confirmed Russian advances in the area. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces seized Arkhanhelske, although ISW assessed that Russian forces seized the settlement as of May 4.[62] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces advanced 350 meters towards the ponds north of Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[63] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 24 that Russian forces achieved unspecified success east of Yevhenivka (northwest of Avdiivka).[64] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces are clearing Netaylove (southwest of Avdiivka) and Umanske (west of Avdiivka).[65] Russian forces continued offensive operations northwest of Avdiivka near Kalynove, Novooleksandrivka, Ocheretyne, Solovyove, Sokil, Novopokrovske, and Novoselivka Persha; west of Avdiivka near Umanske and Yasnobrodivka; and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske and Netaylove.[66] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian ground attacks in the Pokrovsk (Avdiivka) direction increased threefold on May 25 compared to May 24.[67] Elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army, Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating near Sokil.[68]

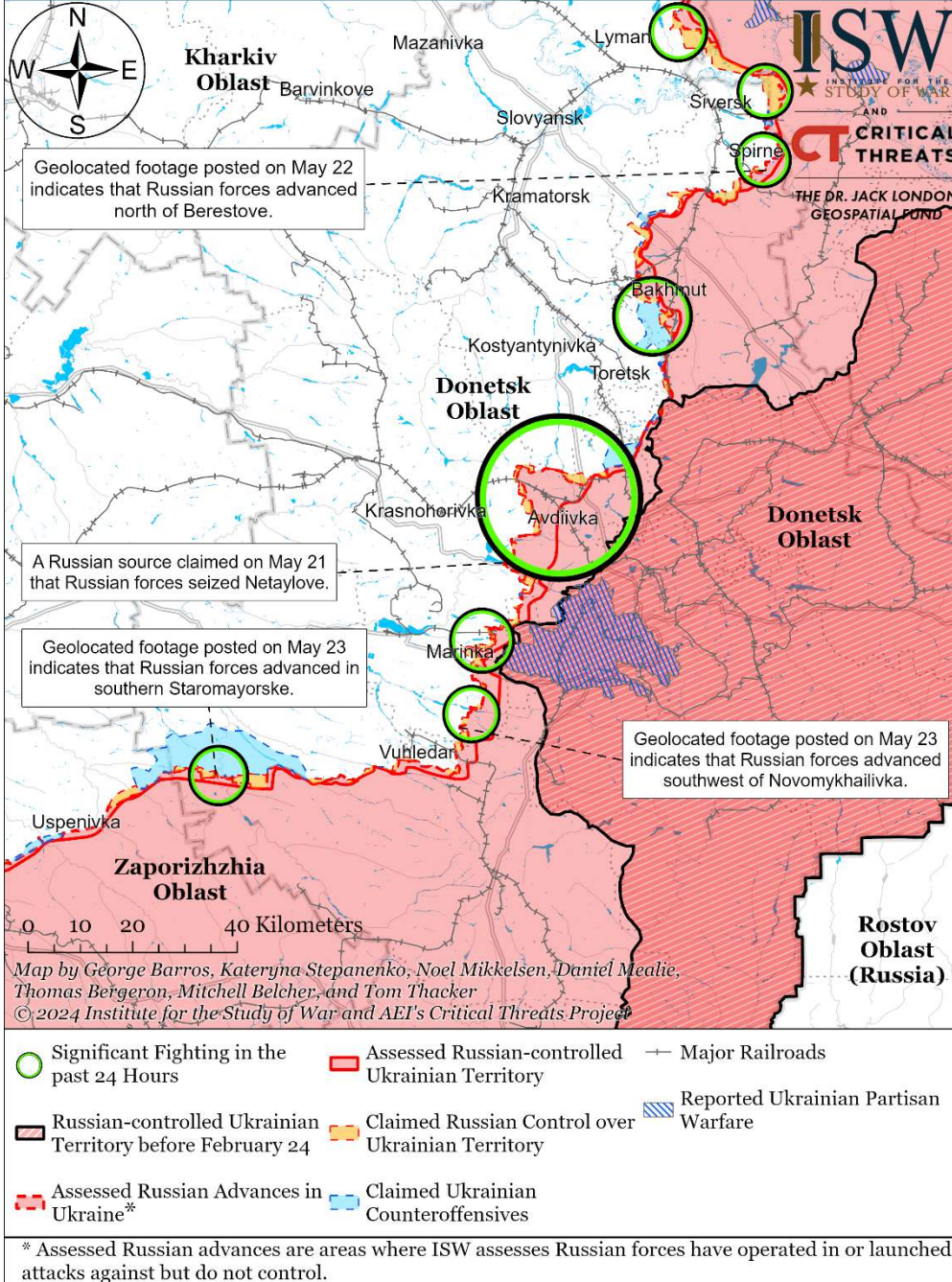
Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced west of Donetsk City amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on May 25. Geolocated footage published on May 24 indicates that Russian forces advanced within Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City).[69] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also advanced within Paraskoviivka (southwest of Donetsk City), near the central hospital in eastern Krasnohorivka, and 1.5 kilometers deep south of Kostyantynivka (southwest of Donetsk City).[70] ISW

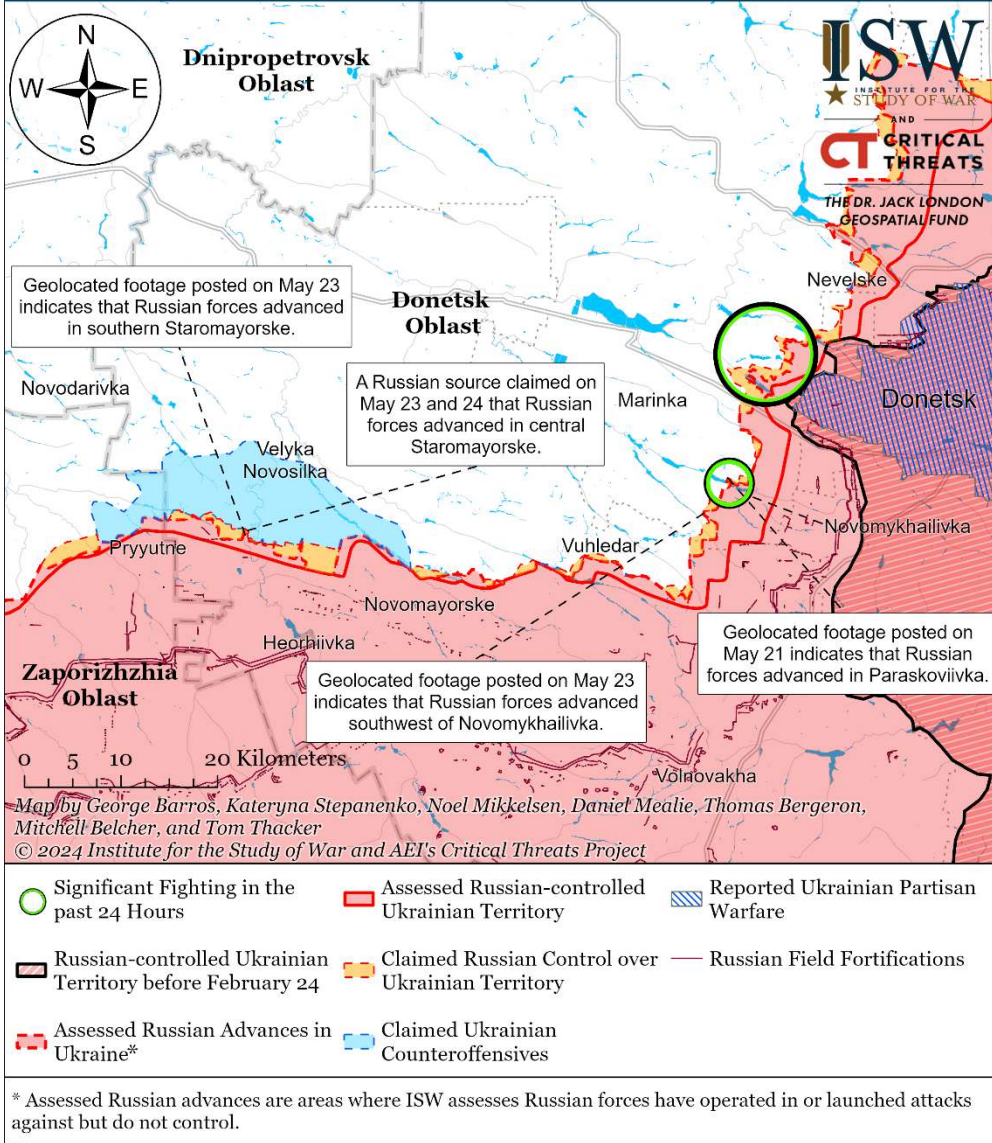
has not observed confirmation of these Russian claims, however. Russian forces continued offensive operations west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka; southwest of Donetsk City near Kostyantynivka, Paraskoviivka, and Novomykhailivka; and southeast of Vuhledar near Volodymyrivka.[71] Elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Army Corps) are reportedly operating within Krasnohorivka, and elements of the 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, Eastern Military District) are reporting operating near Kostyantynivka.[72]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional engagements continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area near Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka).[73]

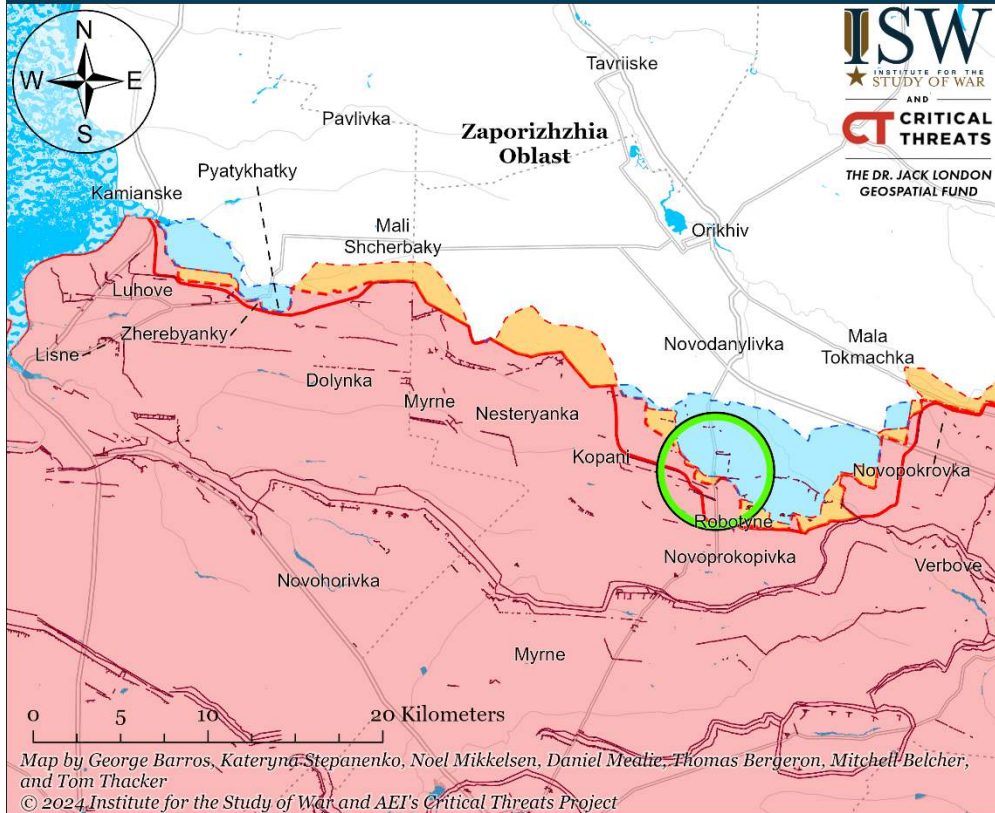
Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Donetsk Oblast as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian forces reportedly continued assaults in western Zaporizhia Oblast near Robotyne and Novoandriivka (northeast of Robotyne) and northwest of Verbove (east of Robotyne) on May 25.[74]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

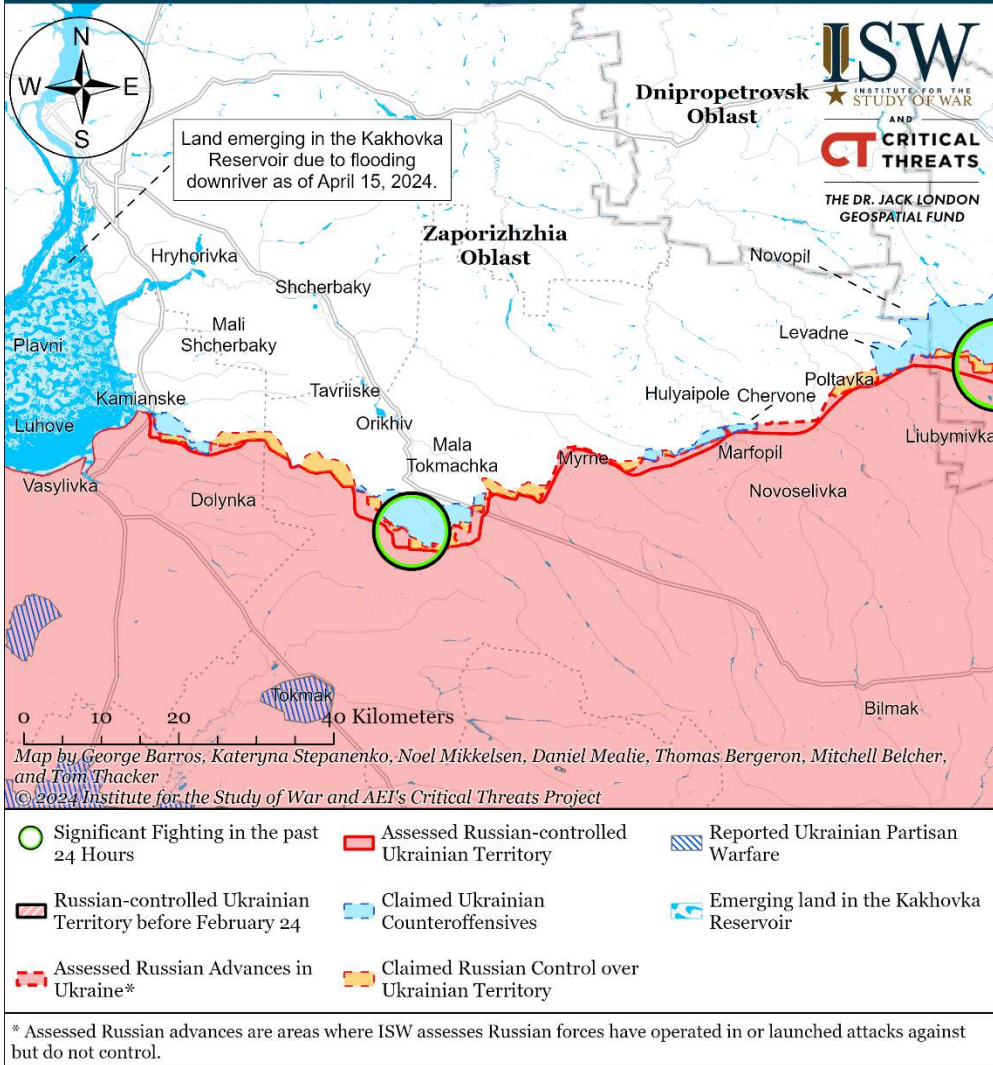


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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging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

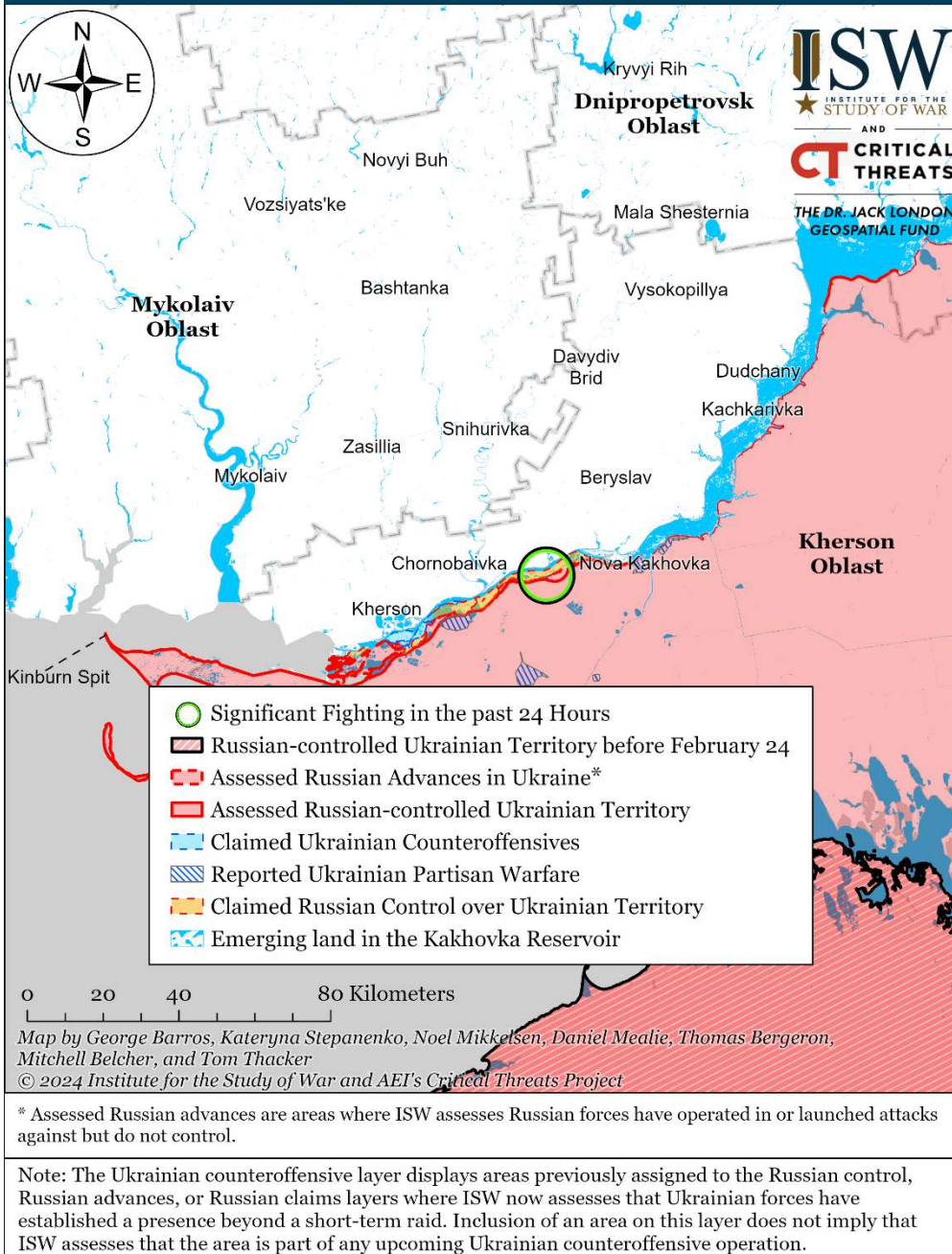
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



The Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 25 that Russian forces conducted several unsuccessful assaults in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast, including near Krynky.[75] A Ukrainian source denied recent claims that Ukrainian forces withdrew from Krynky.[76]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian authorities released a large amount of water from the Dniro Hydroelectric Power Plant's (DHPP) dam. Kherson Oblast occupation administration head Vladimir Saldo claimed on May 24 that Ukrainian authorities opened all of the DHPP's floodgates and released a large amount of water that could flood the islands in the Dniro River Delta.[77] Russian milbloggers widely amplified Saldo's claim and claimed that there was a significant increase in the water level near

Vasylivka in Zaporizhia Oblast and Sofiiivka in Kherson Oblast, but that it will likely take several days to fully determine the consequences of the flooding.[78] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov denied Saldo's claim on May 25 and stated that the DHPP's flood gates are closed but that the dam's spillway gates are open and have been open since the March 22 Russian strike on the DHPP.[79] It is unclear why there would be a large release of water at this time if the dam's spillway gates have been open for several months. A Ukrainian source warned that increased Russian discussion of the DHPP indicates that Russian forces may conduct another strike on the DHPP or intensify hostilities in the Kherson direction.[80] Ukrainian officials and media did not comment on claims about flooding from the DHPP, and ISW is unable to independently verify the veracity of the Russian claims.

Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign (Russian Objective: Target Ukrainian military and civilian infrastructure in the rear and on the frontline)

See topline text.

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

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has cancelled its annual "Army Games" international competition for the second year in a row, prompting celebration among critical Russian ultranationalist milbloggers. Kremlin-sponsored outlet *Izvestia* reported on May 24 citing three sources familiar with the situation that the Russian MoD has decided not to hold the Army Games in 2024 and cited military experts who stated that Russia needs the materiel and manpower in Ukraine.[81] *Izvestia* noted that then-Russian Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Fomin stated in 2023 that Russia would only hold the Army Games competitions every other year in even years due to the Russian war in Ukraine. Russian milbloggers celebrated the cancellations, claiming that the competition's Tank Biathlon alone is a waste of materiel, requiring 90-100 vehicles each year and destroying roughly a tank regiment's worth of vehicles.[82] Russian milbloggers claimed that the Tank Biathlon event only tests individual tank crews' abilities to operate a tank and fire on stationary targets rather than tactical maneuvers that are effective on the battlefield.[83]

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the JSC Tactical Missile Weapons Corporation in Korolev, Moscow Oblast on May 25, likely as part of ongoing efforts to mobilize the Russian defense industrial base (DIB) and economy following the appointment of new Defense Minister Andrey Belousov.[84] Putin requested reports from the enterprise on the fulfillment of state contracts, the status of advance payments, and whether the enterprise has any unsolved issues.[85] Putin claimed that Russia has increased its ammunition production by more than 14 times, drones by four times, and armored weapons and vehicles by 3.5 times from 2021 to 2023. Putin emphasized that Russia must effectively use Russia's economy to ensure victory in Ukraine.

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

The Russian defense industrial base (DIB) continues to test and deliver weapons and other military equipment with new technology for use in Ukraine. Russian milbloggers claimed that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) received a batch of 9M333 anti-aircraft missiles allegedly capable of bypassing heat traps that aircraft use to avoid being struck.[86] A milblogger claimed that Russian

forces are testing the "Oduvanchik" naval drone, which has a range of 220 kilometers, speed of 45 knots, and payload of 600 kilograms.[87] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces are also testing a variant of the "Titan" special purpose vehicle manufactured with domestically-produced components rather than foreign-produced components.[88]

Ukrainian Defense Industrial Efforts (Ukrainian objective: Develop its defense industrial base to become more self-sufficient in cooperation with US, European, and international partners)

ISW is not publishing coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts today.

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)

ISW is not publishing coverage of Russian-occupied areas today.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian ultranationalist mouthpieces portrayed a recent Ukrainian strike in Russia as escalatory, likely aimed at influencing Western debates about allowing Ukraine to use Western-provided weapons to strike within Russia. Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a drone strike against a Russian Voronezh-DM ground-based early warning radar system in Armavir, Krasnodar Krai on May 23, and geolocated imagery confirms damage to the system's southwest and southeast facing radars.[89] Russian milbloggers widely claimed that the West was involved or complicit in Ukraine's strike against the early detection radar system and broadly linked the system to Russia's nuclear capabilities.[90] Former Roscosmos (Russian space agency) head and ultranationalist figure Dmitry Rogozin claimed that this strike was part of a longstanding US effort to degrade Russia's early warning detection capabilities and that the US will "fully answer" for Ukraine's "past and future crimes." [91] Ukrainian officials have not yet commented on the strike.

A prominent Russian milblogger continued on May 25 to portray ongoing NATO Steadfast Defender 2024 military exercises as Western efforts to expand control into Moldova and threaten Russia.[92] The milblogger reamplified this information operation immediately after prominent Kremlin officials claimed on May 24 that Moldova is losing its sovereignty and national identity to the West and that NATO is "dragging" Moldova into a military confrontation.[93] ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin and its mouthpieces are attempting to destabilize Moldovan democracy and society, prevent Moldova's accession to the EU, and justify future hybrid or conventional military operations against Moldova.[94]

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)

Nothing significant to report.

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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