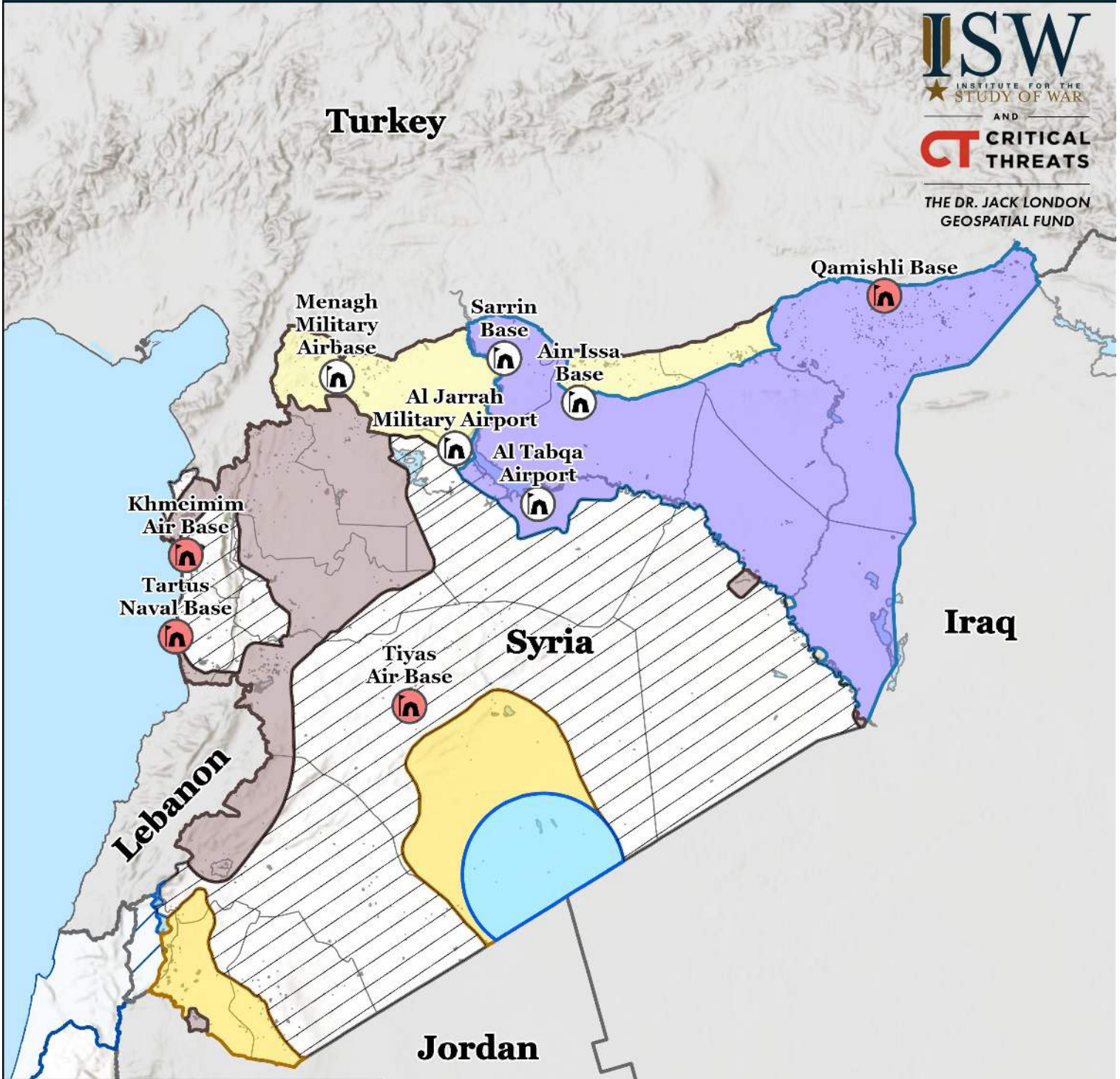


Status of Russian Bases in Syria

As of December 14, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET

ISW
INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF WAR
AND
CT CRITICAL
THREATS
THE DR. JACK LONDON
GEOSPATIAL FUND



- HTS-led Opposition Forces
- Lost Regime Territory
- Turkish-backed SNA
- SDF
- Al Tanf Deconfliction Zone
- Unidentified Opposition Groups
- HTS-SDF Contested
- Israel Defense Forces

0 50 100 200 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Daniel Mealie, Noel Mikkelsen, Tom Thacker, Mitchell Belcher, Harrison Hurwitz, Derik Durbin, Brian Carter, Johanna Moore, Andie Parry, Kelly Campa, Carolyn Moorman, Siddhant Kishore, Annika Ganzeveld, Kitaneh Fitzpatrick, Alexandra Braverman, Katherine Wells, Ria Reddy, and Ben Rezaei
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- Active Russian Presence
- Russian Withdrawal or Seized by Opposition Forces

The Unidentified Opposition Group layer displays areas previously assigned as Regime-controlled where ISW now assesses that local opposition groups have established control beyond mere presence. Inclusion of a town under this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the town is part of any organized frontline. ISW cannot assess with confidence that these opposition groups control areas between these towns, however.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, David Schulert, and Spencer Scoresby
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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.

**Nicole Wolkov, Christina Harward, Angelica Evans,
Grace Mappes, Olivia Gibson, and Frederick W. Kagan**

December 14, 2024, 5:45 pm 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 interactive map of Ukraine's offensive in Kursk Oblast.

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.

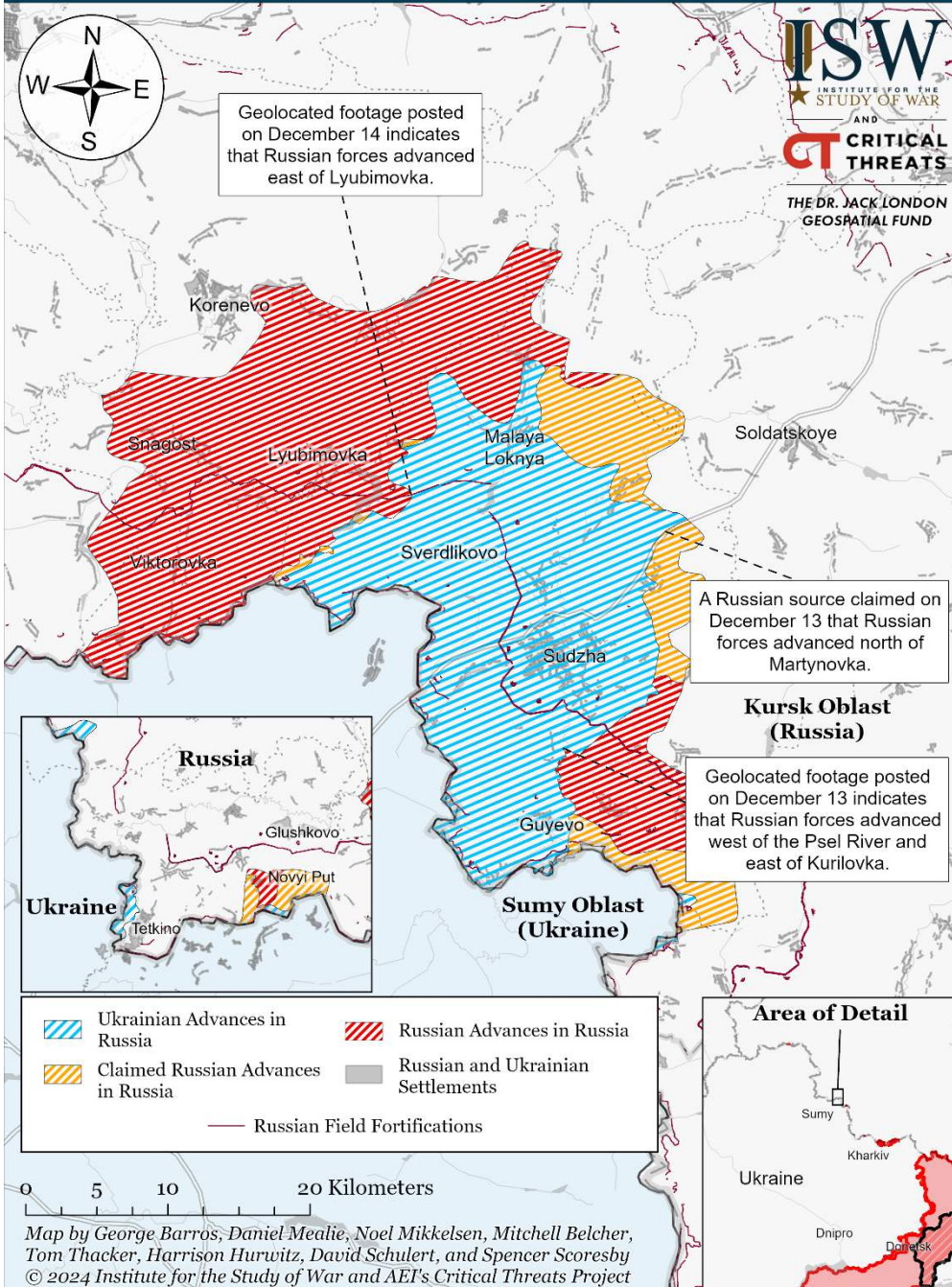
Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:30pm ET on December 14. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the December 15 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on December 14 that the Russian military had deployed North Korean soldiers in infantry assaults in Kursk Oblast.^[1] Zelensky stated that the Russian military is incorporating "a significant number" of North Korean soldiers into Russian units operating in Kursk Oblast and that North Korean soldiers have already sustained "noticeable" losses. Zelensky noted that Russian forces have only deployed North Korean soldiers to offensive operations in Kursk Oblast but may use them in other unspecified areas of the frontline in the future. This is the first time a Ukrainian official has reported that North Korean forces are conducting assault operations since Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov announced in an interview with South Korean national broadcaster *KBS* on November 5 that Ukrainian forces engaged in "small-scale" clashes with North Korean troops in Kursk Oblast.^[2] Russian milbloggers recently acknowledged that North Korean forces are involved in assaults in Kursk Oblast and claimed on December 12 and 13 that North Korean soldiers participated in the seizure of Plekhovo (south of Sudzha) on December 6.^[3] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that North Korean special forces seized Plekhovo with no assistance from Russian forces, but one milblogger characterized the assault as a joint Russian-North Korean operation.^[4] Geolocated footage published on December 14 shows roughly 40 infantry personnel conducting an assault east of Kremyanoye (east of Korenevo), and some sources claimed that the footage shows North Korean troops, although ISW cannot independently verify if the footage shows North Korean or Russian personnel.^[5] A Russian milblogger claimed on December 14 that elements of the Russian 1427th Motorized Rifle Regiment (a mobilized element of the Russian Territorial Troops) advanced near Russkoye Porechnoye (north of Sudzha) with support

from North Korean personnel.[6] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 22nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (72nd Motorized Rifle Division, 44th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]), 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet [BSF], Southern Military District [SMD]), and "Arbat" Special Purpose Battalion (Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] "Pyatnashka" International Volunteer Brigade, 51st Combined Arms Army [CAA]) trained North Korean personnel operating in Kursk Oblast for "many weeks." [7] Ukrainian defense outlet *Militarnyi* amplified several Ukrainian sources on December 14 claiming that North Korean soldiers conducted infantry assaults across open terrain in groups of 20 to 30 personnel in unspecified areas in Kursk Oblast. [8] ISW cannot independently verify any of these claims, however. ISW previously noted that North Korea's ability to learn and integrate lessons from fighting alongside Russia is likely to be significantly degraded if the Russian military command uses North Korean troops in the same highly attritional infantry-led assaults that it uses most Russian personnel.

Ukrainian Incursion into Kursk Oblast as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



The prospects for Russia's continued military presence in Syria remain unclear as reports that Russia is evacuating its military assets from Syria continue. Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) stated on December 14 that "hundreds" of Russian soldiers cannot reach Hmeimim Air Base from Homs Governorate out of fear that Russian forces will come

under fire from unspecified actors.[9] The GUR stated that the Russian Ministry of Defense's (MoD) Africa Corps arrived in Syria to protect Russian forces moving towards Russia's bases on the western coast and that Russian Colonel Dmitry Motrenko is negotiating with military contingents in Syria from other unspecified states in order to secure guarantees of "immunity" for Russian soldiers waiting at the Tiyas Air Base west of Palmyra. The GUR also stated that roughly 1,000 Russian personnel left Damascus on December 13 in a column heading towards the Port of Tartus and Hmeimim Air Base, and ISW observed footage on December 13 of Russian military convoys moving from Damascus and other areas in southern Syria, likely towards the two main Russian bases.[10] *Reuters* reported on December 14 that a "Syrian security official" stationed near Hmeimim Air Base stated that at least one cargo plane flew out of the base on December 14 bound for Libya.[11] Syrian military and security sources reportedly stated that Russia is withdrawing some heavy equipment and senior officers from the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) to Moscow but is currently not planning to permanently pull out of the Port of Tartus or Hmeimim Air Base. A Russian milblogger posted photos and footage on December 14 purportedly showing Russian military assets still operating at the Russian helicopter base at Qamishli in northeastern Syria, and a Russian source claimed on December 14 that Russian forces have withdrawn from their base in Kobani in northern Syria.[12]

The complex nature of the interim Syrian government is likely resulting in conflicting reports about whether Russia is engaged in talks with Syrian opposition groups. Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) controls the Syrian interim government, but HTS and the interim government do not yet have complete control over the disparate groups that helped overthrow the Assad regime. Russian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Mikhail Bogdanov stated on December 12 that Russia has established contacts with HTS.[13] *Reuters* reported on December 14 that a Russian source stated that discussions between Russia and the interim Syrian government are ongoing.[14] A "senior rebel official close to the new interim administration" told *Reuters*, however, that the issue of Russia's military presence in Syria and Russia's previous agreements with the Assad regime are "not under discussion" and that talks at an unspecified time in the future will address this matter. The official reportedly stated that the "Syrian people will have the final say." Kremlin newswire TASS reported on December 13 that Mohammed Sabra, a Syrian politician who represented the Syrian opposition's High Negotiations Committee at the 2016 Geneva peace talks on the Syrian Civil War, similarly stated that there should be a referendum in the future to allow the Syrian people to approve any foreign military presence in Syria.[15] It is unclear if *Reuter's* "senior rebel official close to the new interim administration" who denied talks between Russia and the interim government is a member of HTS or another Syrian opposition group.[16] It remains unclear if Russia is in contact with all the Syrian opposition groups necessary to guarantee the short- and long-term safety of its military bases and select opposition groups may be unaware that Russia is in discussion with other groups. Russian state media has notably not differentiated between different opposition groups when reporting on the situation in Syria, possibly as part of efforts to present the interim government as more united so as to increase the legitimacy of any agreements Russia reaches with one or some of the groups.[17]

Ukrainian forces struck an oil depot in Oryol Oblast on the night of December 13 to 14. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that units of Ukraine's Special Operations Forces (SSO) and the Ukrainian Armed Forces struck the "Steel Horse" Oil Depot near Oryol City and caused a fire at the facility.[18] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the oil depot supplies products to the Russian military and noted that Ukrainian forces are still conducting a battle damage assessment (BDA).

Footage published on December 13 and 14 shows the aftermath of the strike and the fire at the facility, and Russian officials acknowledged the strike and the resulting fire.[19]

The new Georgian Dream-dominated parliament and other government bodies elected Georgian Dream's candidate, Mikheil Kavelashvili, as Georgian President on December 14.[20] Kavelashvili received the votes from the members of parliament and other government bodies required to meet the two thirds threshold to be president despite Georgian the fact that opposition parliament members boycotted the vote.[21] Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili continues to contest the legitimacy of the Georgian Dream party's parliamentary electoral victory and stated that "nobody elected anyone" in response to Kavelashvili's election.[22]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on December 14 that the Russian military has deployed North Korean soldiers in infantry assaults in Kursk Oblast.**
- **The prospects for Russia's continued military presence in Syria remain unclear as reports that Russia is evacuating its military assets from Syria continue.**
- **The complex nature of the interim Syrian government is likely to result in conflicting reports about whether Russia is engaged in talks with Syrian opposition groups.**
- **Ukrainian forces struck an oil depot in Oryol Oblast on the night of December 13 to 14.**
- **The new Georgian Dream-dominated parliament and other government bodies elected Georgian Dream's candidate, Mikheil Kavelashvili, as Georgian President on December 14.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced in Kursk Oblast and near Torestk, Pokrovsk, Kurakhove, and Robotyne.**
- **Ukrainian forces regained lost positions near Vovchansk within the past several weeks.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to exalt the "Time of Heroes" veteran program and use it to militarize the Russian government and society.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



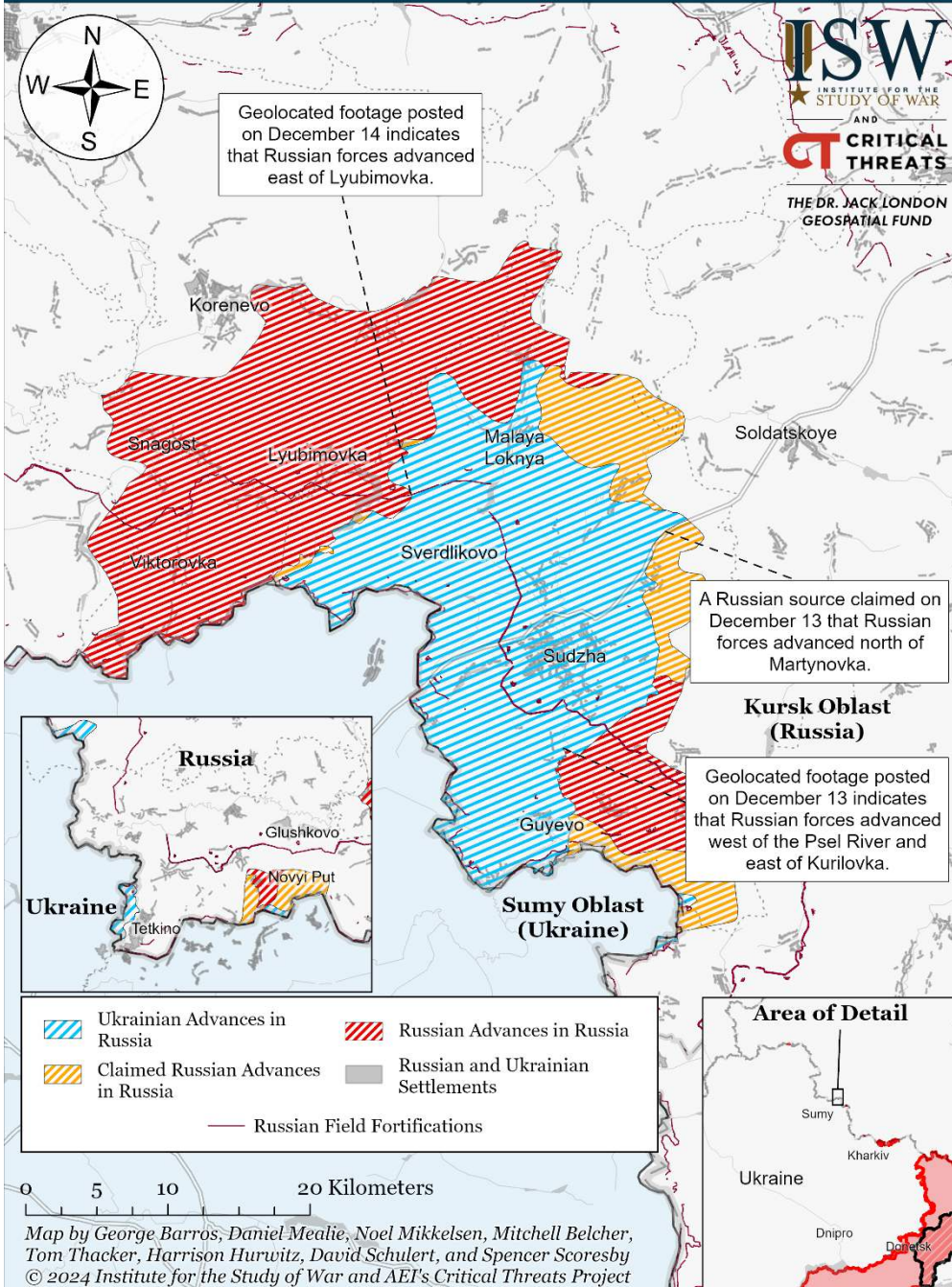
We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military 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.

- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- 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
- Significant Activity in Belarus

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Russian forces recently advanced in the main Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast amid continued offensive operations in the area on December 14. Geolocated footage published on December 14 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced during a reinforced platoon-sized mechanized assault east of Lyubimovka (southeast of Korenevo).[23] The Ukrainian brigade that repelled the assault reported that Ukrainian forces destroyed six Russian armored vehicles during the assault. Additional geolocated footage published on December 13 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced east of Kurilovka (south of Sudzha).[24] A senior non-commissioned officer of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kursk direction reported that Ukrainian forces repelled another reinforced platoon-sized mechanized assault in an unspecified area of Kursk Oblast on December 12.[25] The senior non-commissioned officer reported that Russian forces are attacking in squads of 10 to 12 soldiers in Kursk Oblast. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces crossed the Psel River near Kurilovka, advanced north of Martynovka (northeast of Sudzha), and are advancing in the windbreaks east of Novoivanovka and near Darino (both southeast of Korenevo).[26] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking in unspecified areas of Kursk Oblast.[27] Elements of the Russian 106th Airborne (VDV) Division are reportedly operating near Novoivanovka, and elements of the Russian 56th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) and 11th VDV Brigade reportedly continue to operate in Kursk Oblast.[28] Elements of the Russian 1427th Motorized Rifle Regiment (formed during 2022 partial reserve call up) and the "Pyatnashka" International Volunteer Brigade are reportedly operating along the Naidenov-Nechayev line (north of Sudzha).[29]

Ukrainian Incursion into Kursk Oblast as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



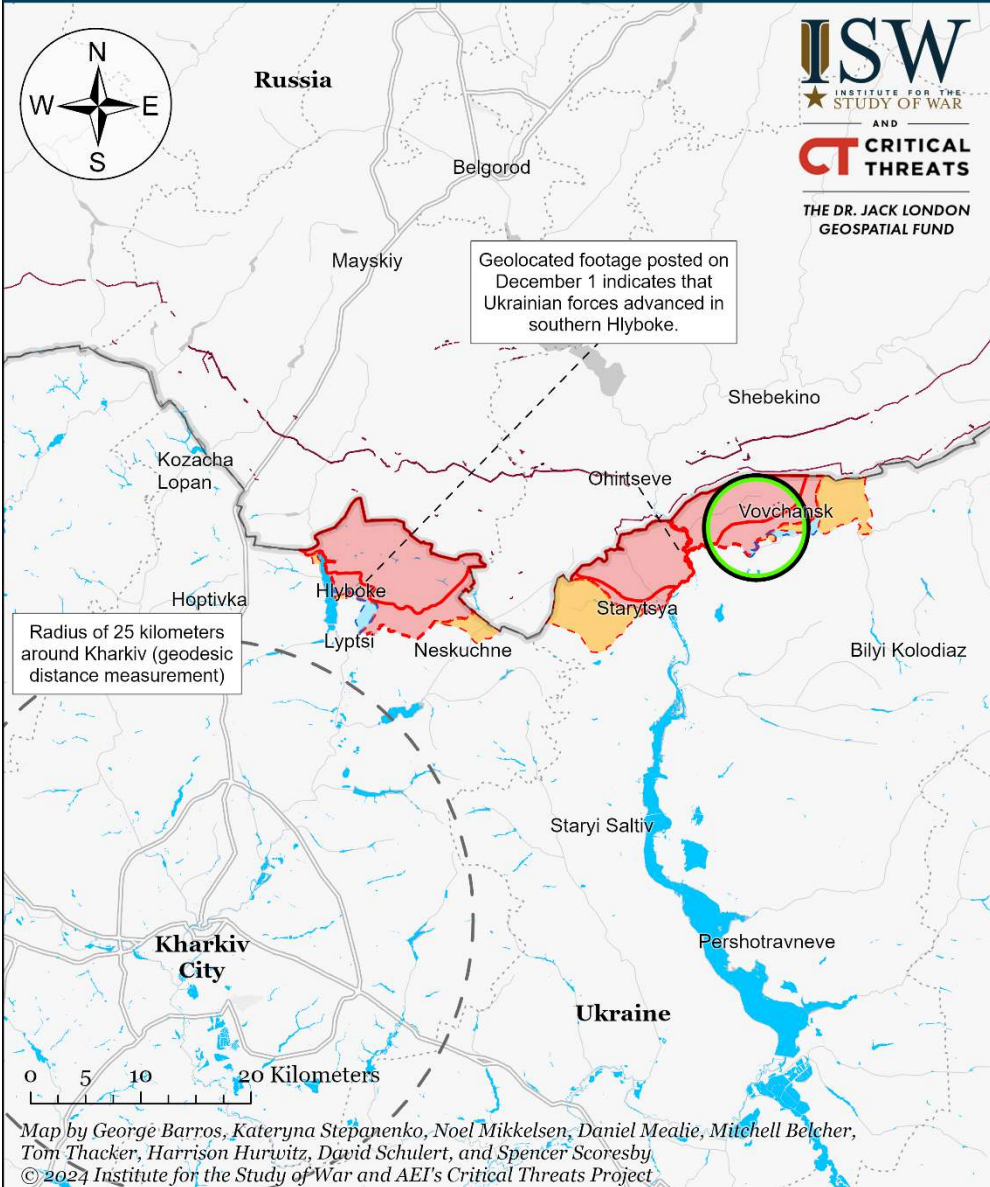
Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported that unspecified actors set fire to an Su-30 aircraft at a military airfield near Krymsk, Krasnodar Krai on December 14 and disabled three locomotives near Krasnodar City on December 13.[30]

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)

Ukrainian forces advanced in northern Kharkiv Oblast within the past several weeks amid continued Russian offensive operations northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on December 13 and 14.[31] Geolocated footage published on December 1 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced in southern Hlyboke (north of Kharkiv City), but this advance is not recent and likely occurred in the past several weeks.[32]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



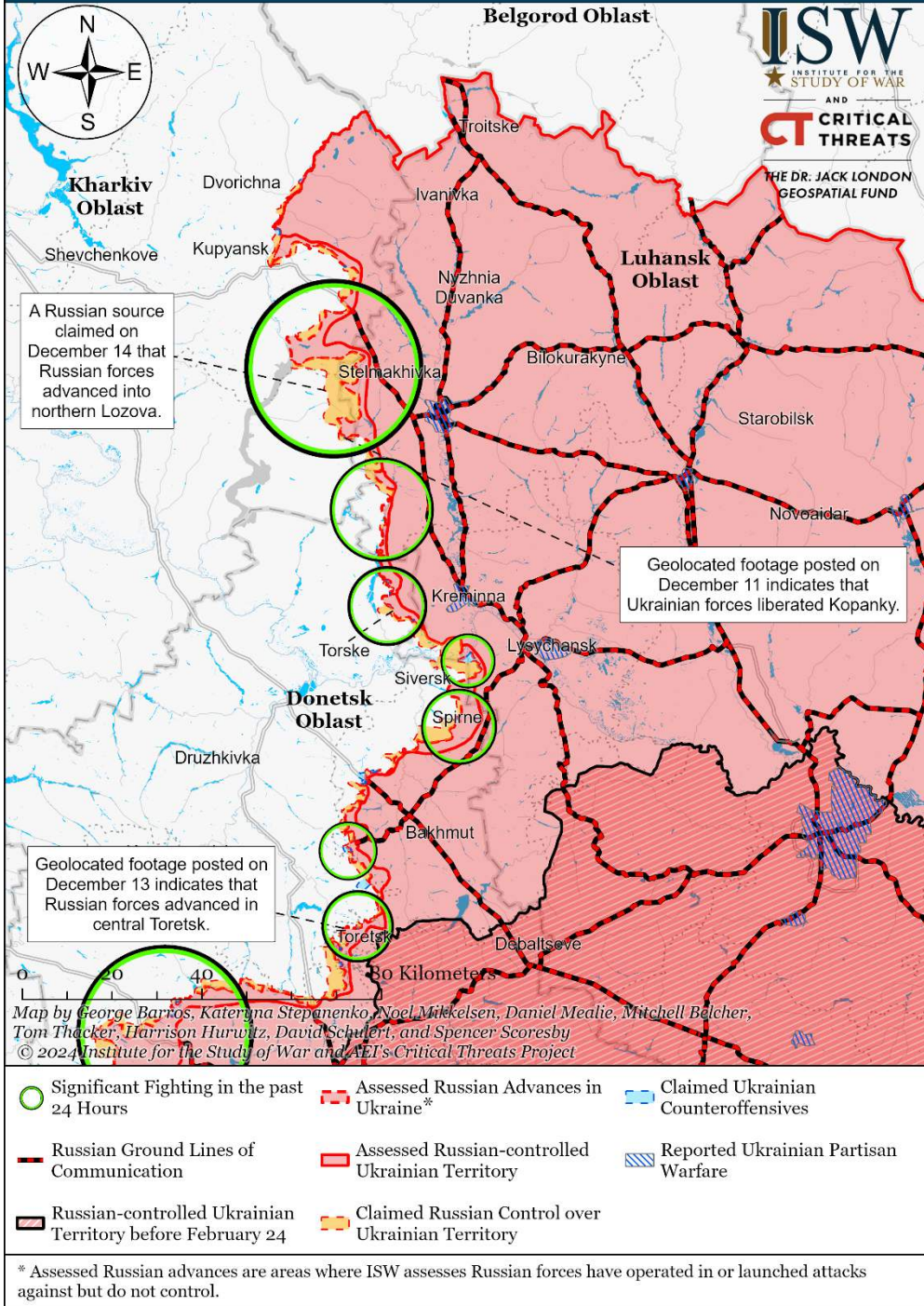
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▬ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▬ Reported Ukrainian 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.

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 continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on December 14 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 27th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Guards Tank Army, Moscow Military District [MMD]) advanced in northern Lozova (northwest of Svatove), although ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[33] Ukrainian military observer Yurii Butusov stated on December 13 that a brigade operating in the Lyman direction noted that Russian forces have started conducting assaults in squads of 10 to 15 personnel instead of teams of two to three personnel.[34] Russian forces continued attacking southeast of Kupyansk near Kolisnykivka, Bohuslavka, and Zahryzove; west of Svatove near Pershotravneve, Nadiya, Kopanky, Lozova, Zelenyi Hai, and Shyikivka; southwest of Svatove near Cherneshchyna, Hrekivka and Novoyehorivka; northwest of Kreminna near Makiivka and Terny; west of Kreminna near Torske and Zarichne; and southwest of Kreminna near Hryhorivka and Dibrova on December 13 and 14.[35] Elements of the Russian 31st Motorized Rifle Regiment (67th Motorized Rifle Division, 25th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) reportedly continue operating in the Lyman direction.[36]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET

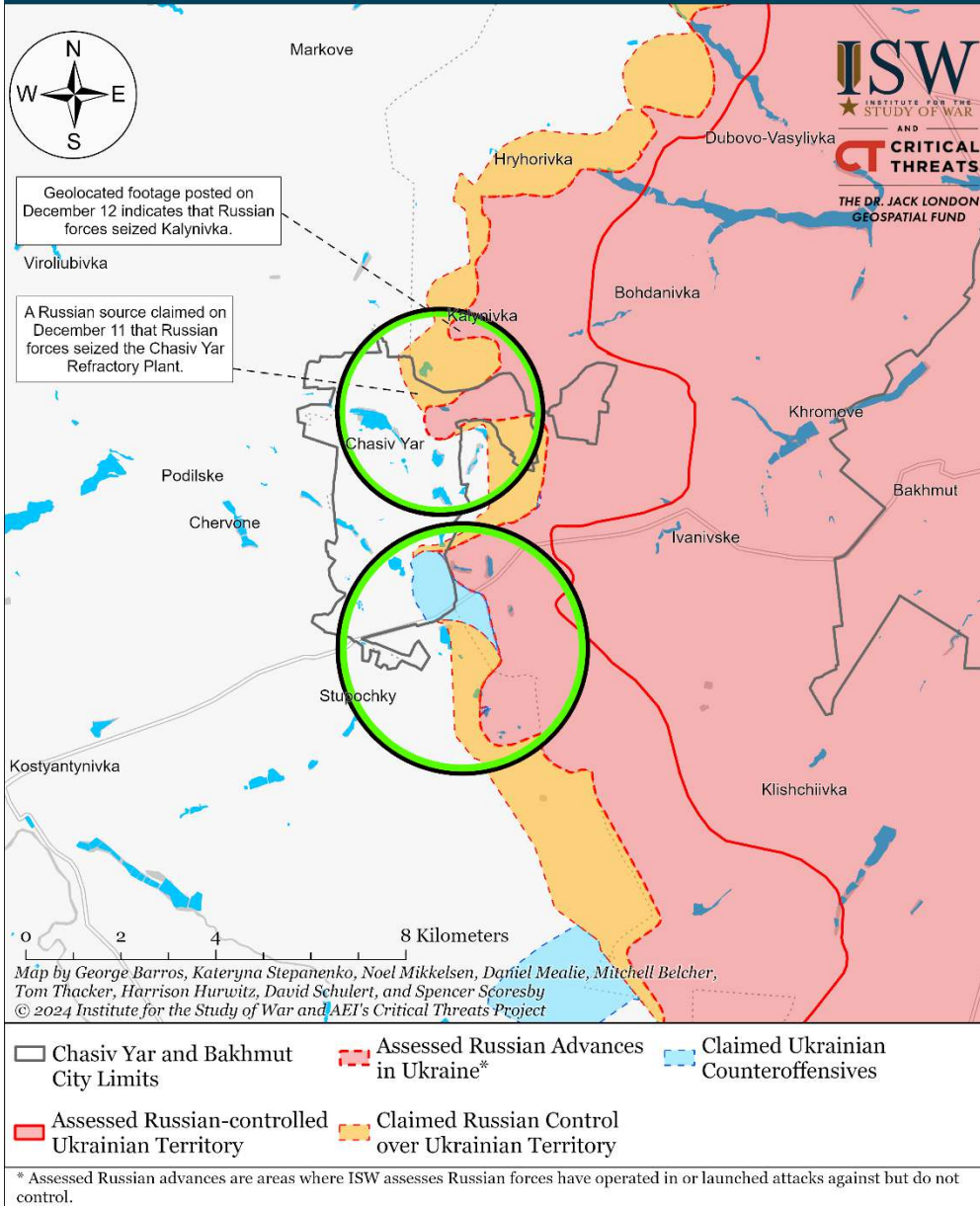


Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued offensive operations northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka, east of Siversk near Verknokamyanske, and southeast of Siversk near Spirne and Vyimka on December 13 and 14 but did not make any confirmed advances.[37]

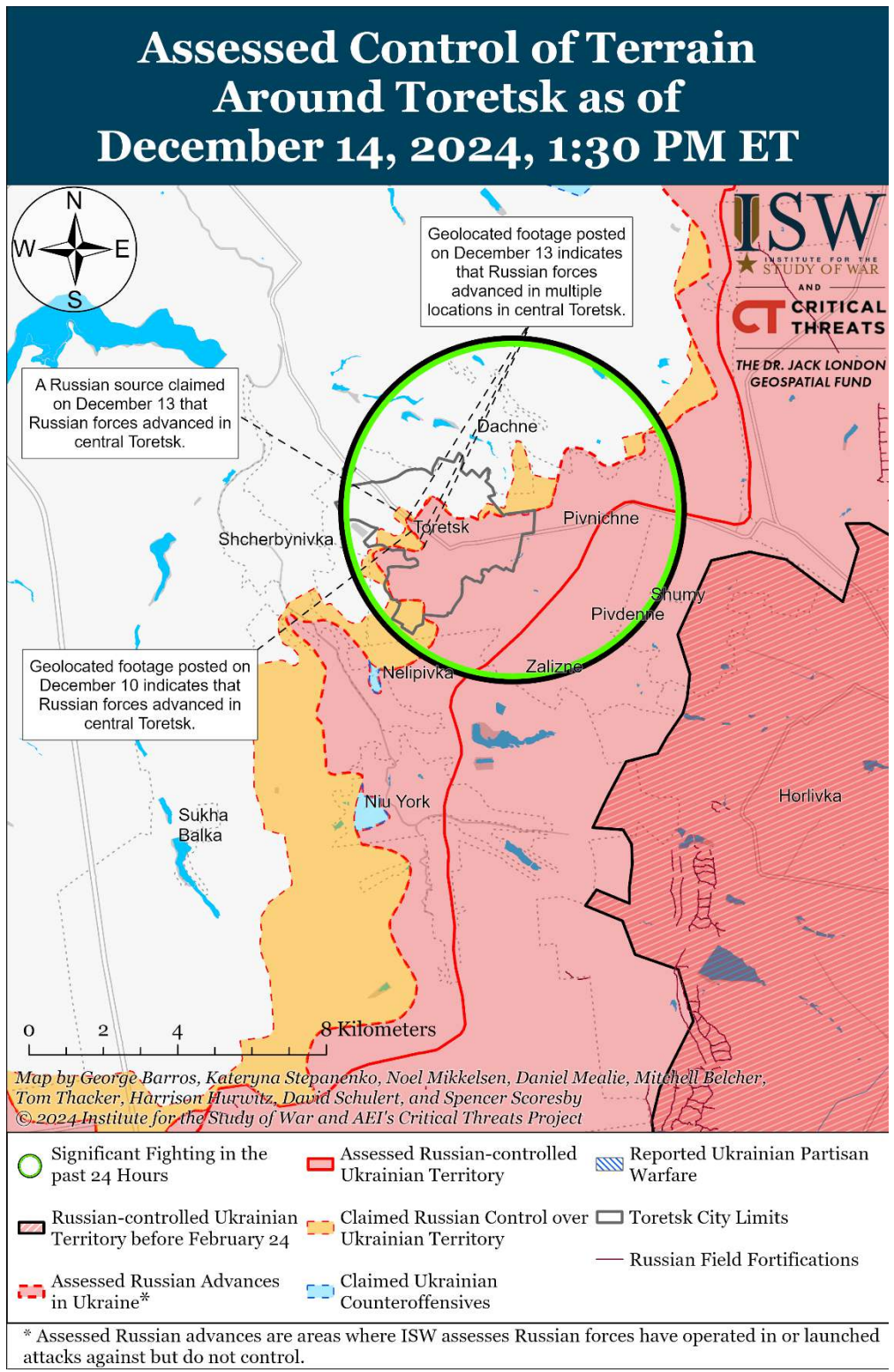
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on December 14 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian sources claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces from additional areas of the Refractory Plant in central Chasiv Yar, and that Ukrainian forces withdrew from some positions elsewhere in central Chasiv Yar and on the settlement's outskirts.[38] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims. Russian forces continued offensive operations in Chasiv Yar itself and Stupochky (south of Chasiv Yar) on December 13 and 14.[39] Footage published on December 13 shows that Russian forces have draped nets over the O0508 Bakhmut-Chasiv Yar road to protect Russian vehicles from Ukrainian drone strikes.[40] Russian drone operators from the 98th Airborne (VDV) Division and elements of the Russian 78th "Sever-Akhmat" Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]), and the 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd CAA, formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] AC, purportedly of the Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.[41]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Chasiv Yar as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced within central Toretsk amid continued offensive operations in the Toretsk direction on December 13 and 14. Geolocated footage published on December 13 indicates that Russian forces advanced northwestward at the Tsentralna Mine and to the market in central Toretsk, and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces aim to secure a foothold at the market.[42] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces further advanced northwestward along 3rd Travnevyi Lane approaching the waste heap adjacent to mine number ten in central Toretsk.[43] Russian forces continued assaults in Toretsk itself, north of Toretsk near Dyllivka, and northeast of Toretsk near Krymske on December 13 and 14.[44] Ukrainian Luhansk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major

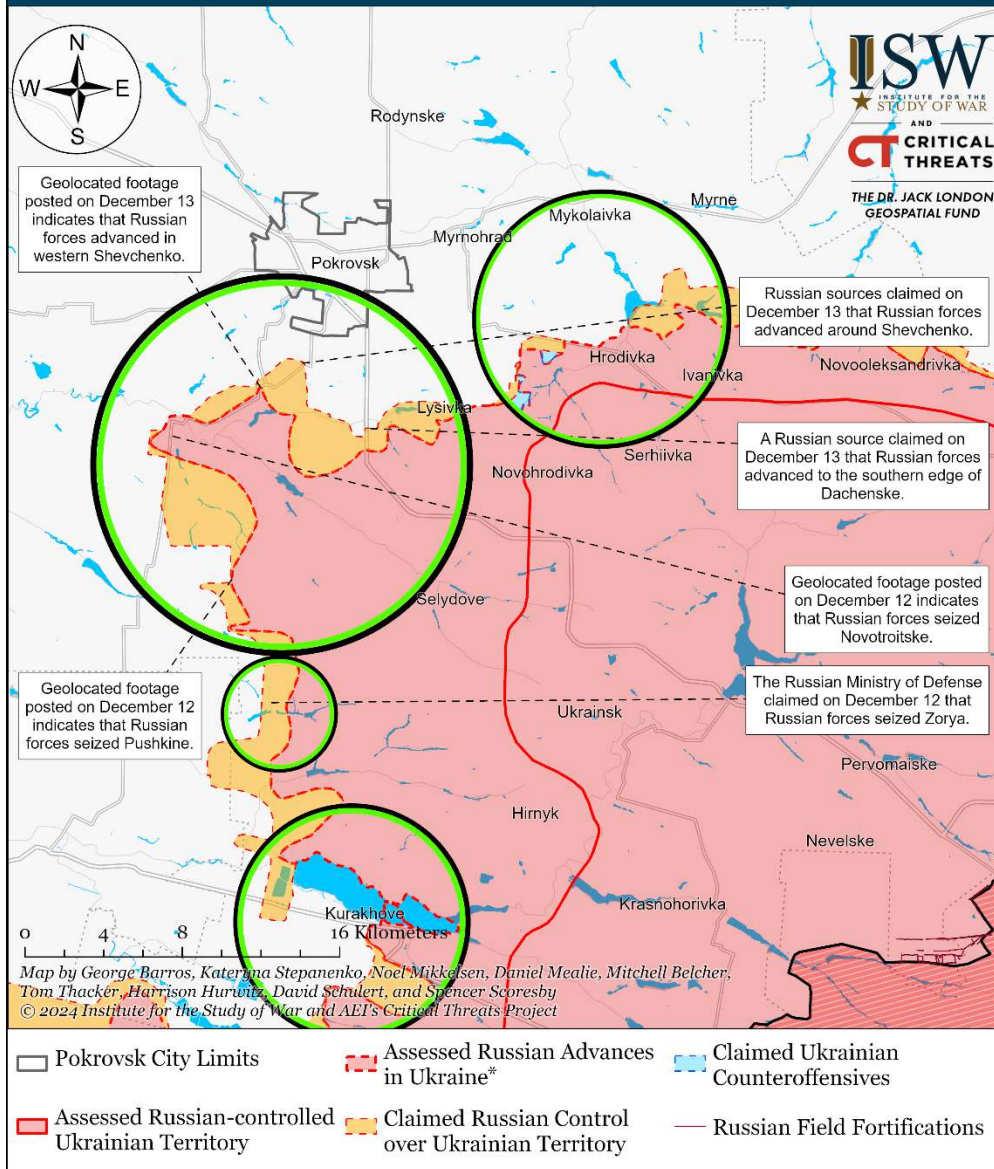
Anastasiya Bobovnikova stated that Russian forces are concentrating personnel for infantry assaults within basements and destroyed buildings in Toretsk to avoid Ukrainian detection and artillery fire.[45]



Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Nazar Voloshyn stated on December 13 that Ukrainian forces have an artillery advantage in some unspecified areas of the front of 1.5 to one or three-to-one.[46] Voloshyn stated on December 10 that Russian forces had a three to one artillery advantage over Ukrainian forces.[47] Voloshyn is likely referring to unspecified areas in the Khortytsia Group of Forces' area of responsibility (AoR) in eastern Ukraine.

Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on December 14. Geolocated footage published on December 13 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in western Shevchenko (south of Pokrovsk) and in southern Novotroitske (southwest of Pokrovsk).[48] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced 500 meters deep in eastern Shevchenko, near Mykolaivka (east of Pokrovsk), up to the outskirts of Pishchane (northwest of Shevchenko) and the southern edge of Dachenske (south of Pokrovsk), and towards Novovasylivka (west of Novotroitske).[49] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces conducted offensive operations east of Pokrovsk near Myrolyubivka and Promin; southeast of Pokrovsk near Sukhyi Yar and Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Dachenske, Shevchenko, Zelene, Novyi Trud, and Puhskine; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Novoolenivka and Pishchane on December 13 and 14.[50] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Novotroitske and Shevchenko.[51] The deputy commander of a Ukrainian drone detachment operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated that the Russian military command is sending the least trained soldiers on the first wave of assaults and then following up with better trained professional personnel.[52] A Ukrainian servicemember operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated that Russian forces are relying on drone operations and infantry assaults to compensate for an insufficient quantity of equipment and armored vehicles in this direction and are using small infantry groups to probe Ukrainian defenses.[53] Elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating near Novotroitske; elements of the 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st CAA, CMD) are reportedly operating near Shevchenko; and elements of the 27th Motorized Rifle Division (2nd CAA, CMD) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[54]

Assessed Control of Terrain East of Pokrovsk as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



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

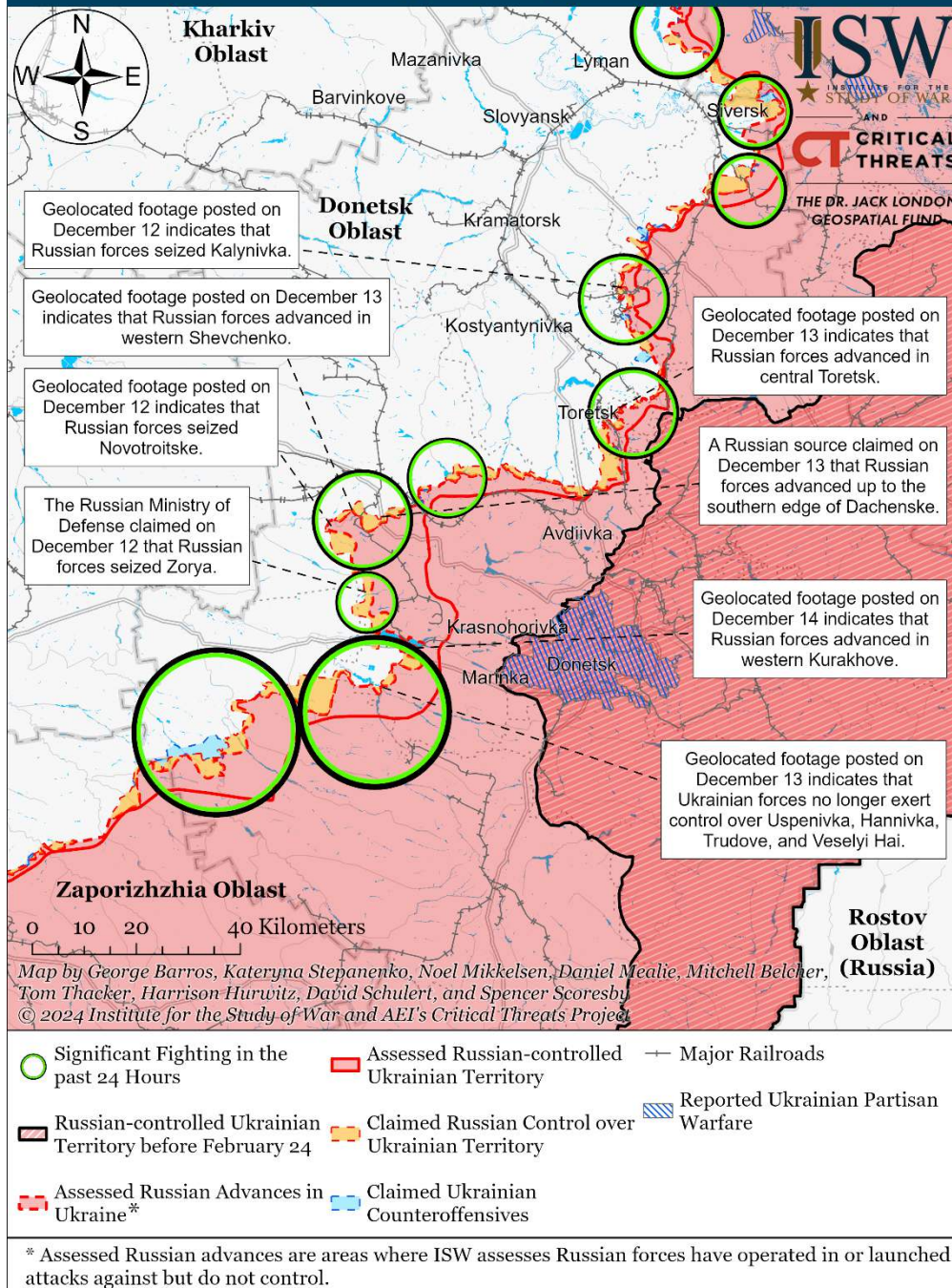
Russian forces recently advanced in the Kurakhove direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on December 14. Geolocated footage published on December 14 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced to the Kurakhove City Council building along Mechnikova Street in western Kurakhove.[55] Russian milbloggers credited elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC]) with advancing to the city council building.[56] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also advanced towards Slovyanka (northwest of Kurakhove and west of Zorya) and to Shevchenko (northwest of Kurakhove and west of Stari Terny), but ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[57] Russian forces conducted

offensive operations near Kurakhove itself; northwest of Kurakhove near Sonstivka, Zorya, and Stari Terny; west of Kurakhove near Dachne; and south of Kurakhove near Dalne on December 13 and 14.[58] Elements of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) are reportedly operating in Shevchenko.[59]

DNR Head Denis Pushilin claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian missile strike against Donetsk City on the evening of December 13 but that fragments of the downed missiles damaged apartment buildings in Kyivskyi Raion.[60] ISW has not observed additional reporting on the alleged Ukrainian missile strike.

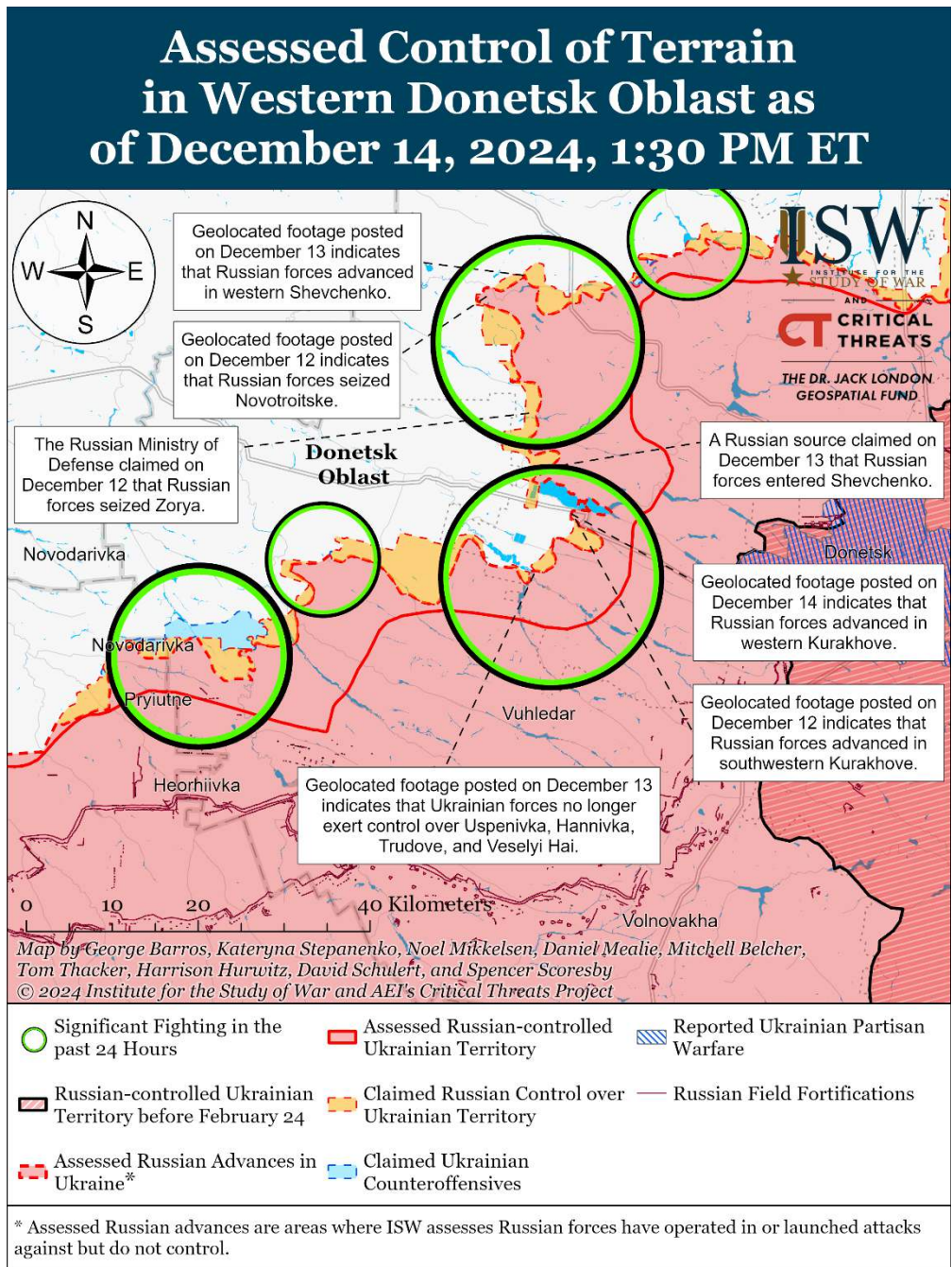
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Vuhledar direction on December 14 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Vuhledar near Yelizavetivka and Veselyi Hai; north of Vuhledar near Hannivka, Uspenivka, and Trudove; and northwest of Vuhledar near Kostyantynopolske and Sukhi Yaly on December 13 and 14.[61] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces have almost completely seized Uspenivka but that the situation in the western part of the settlement remains unclear.[62] Russian sources claimed that elements of the Russian 57th Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) raised a flag in Yelizavetivka and established positions in the settlement.[63] An officer in a Ukrainian brigade operating near Uspenivka stated that Russian forces are using different assault tactics, first sending small groups on motorcycles on assaults followed by assaults in large columns of armored vehicles the following day.[64] Elements of the 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, EMD) are reportedly operating near Veselyi Hai and Kostyantypolske.[65]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



Russian forces continued offensive operations near Velyka Novosilka on December 14 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Storozheve and Neskuchne (both south of Velyka Novosilka), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[66] Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Velyka Novosilka near Rozdolne;

north of Velyka Novosilka near Novyi Komar; south of Velyka Novosilka near Blahodatne, Storozheve, and Neskuchne; and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Novodarivka and Novopil on December 13 and 14.[67] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking near Velyka Novosilka.[68] Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting recently resumed in Novyi Komar after Russian forces retreated from the settlement as of December 7.[69] Elements of the Russian 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, EMD) are reportedly operating near Rozdolne, and elements of the 143rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Brigade, 5th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating in the Velyka Novosilka direction.[70]



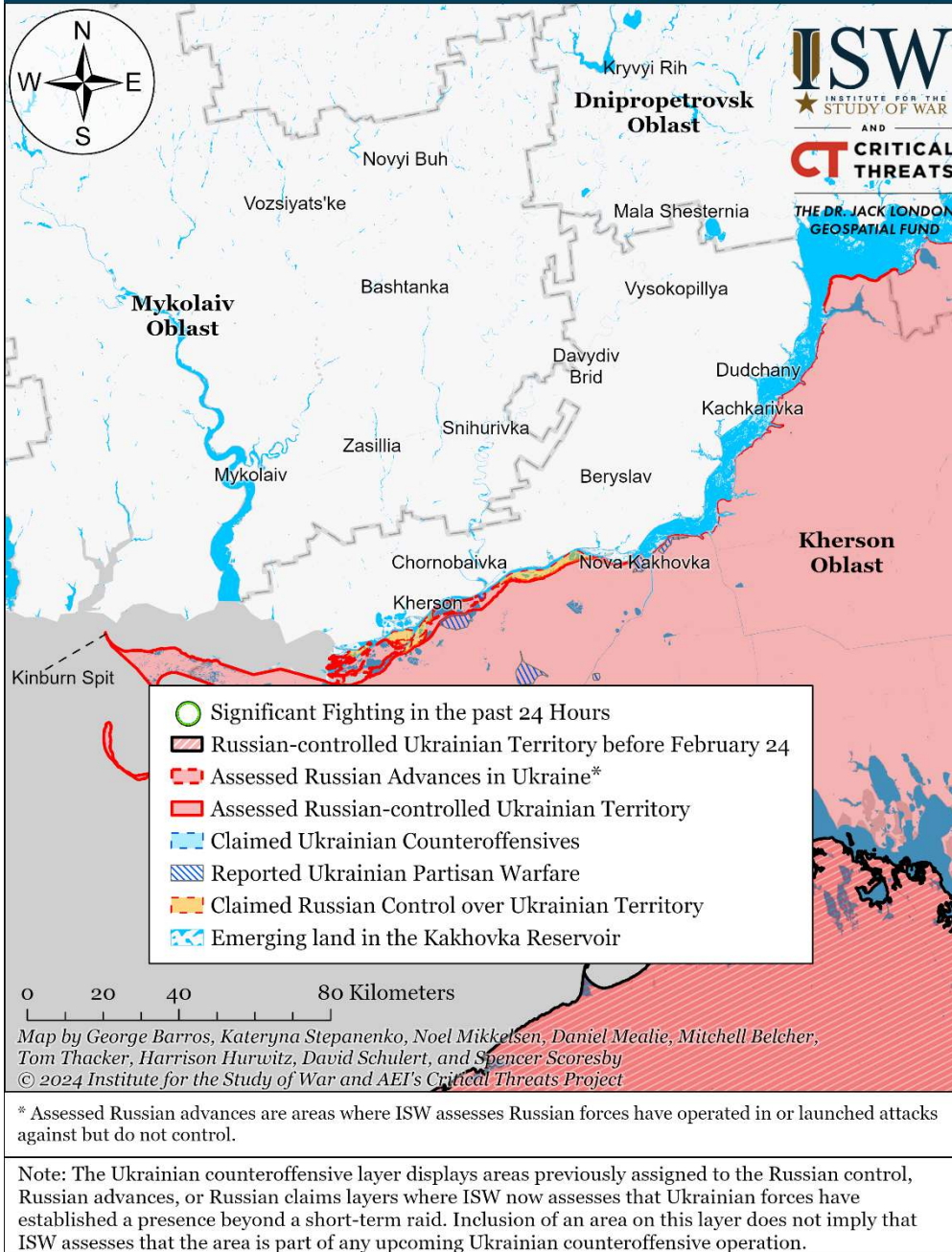
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces recently marginally advanced in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast in the Orikhiv area amid continued fighting in the area on December 14.[71] Geolocated footage published on December 14 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced northeast of Nesterianka (northwest of Robotyne).[72]



Russian forces continued ground attacks in the Dnipro direction in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast on December 13 and 14, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline.[73] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger amplified a claim that the Russian military is attempting to confiscate vehicles that Russian volunteers are using to transport military personnel and supplies in occupied Kherson Oblast.[74]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of December 14, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



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

Russian forces conducted drone strikes against Ukraine overnight on December 13 to 14. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 132 Shahed and other drones from Kursk, Oryol, and Bryansk oblasts; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; and Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai overnight.[75]

The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 58 drones over Chernihiv, Sumy, Kyiv, Poltava, Cherkasy, Vinnytsia, Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kirovohrad oblasts; 72 drones did not reach their targets and became "lost;" and two drones returned to Russian airspace. Ukrainian officials reported that Russian drones damaged residential areas in Chernihiv Oblast and an enterprise and two warehouses in Kyiv Oblast.[76] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian strikes also hit Ukrainian military facilities in Odesa Oblast.[77]

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

Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to exalt the "Time of Heroes" veteran program and use it to militarize the Russian government and society. Putin spoke at the ruling United Russia party's congress on December 14 and called on United Russia to expand the Time of Heroes program into more Russian federal subjects and broaden applications so more Russian veterans can apply to the program.[78] The Time of Heroes program notably provides job training for Russian military veterans, and the Kremlin has recently appointed Time of Heroes alumni to positions within various Russian federal, regional, and local government structures.[79] Putin also emphasized the importance of national unity and rhetorically connected this unity to patriotic programs including Time of Heroes and Russian youth military-patriotic organizations Yunarmia and Movement of the First, all of which United Russia sponsors.[80]

Some Russian sources speculated that the Kremlin aims to reorganize Russian military-patriotic youth organizations to support long term force generation and veterans integration efforts. Russian insider sources claimed on December 13 and 14 that the Russian Presidential Administration and United Russia party approved Yunarmia Deputy Head Alexander Amelin, a Russian veteran who fought in Ukraine with the BARS-Kaskad detachment (Russian Combat Army Reserve), to lead Yunarmia.[81] One of the sources speculated that Amelin's appointment indicates that authorities will transform Yunarmia to provide volunteer assistance to Russian veterans and soldiers in Ukraine as well as promote contract recruitment.[82] Another source criticized Amelin's appointment as an indication that Russian authorities continue to struggle to reintegrate Russian combat veterans back into Russian society.[83]

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

The Russian defense industrial base (DIB) continues efforts to counter Ukrainian drones. Russian Center for Unmanned Systems and Technologies Chairperson Andrei Bezrukov claimed on December 14 that the center developed the "Kalinka" monitoring system to detect drones that connect to satellite systems, including Starlink.[84] Bezrukov claimed that Russian forces are currently testing the system in Ukraine and that the system is able to detect Ukrainian aerial and maritime drones up to 15 kilometers away.

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 activities in Russian-occupied areas today.

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

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko arrived in Oman on December 14 to meet with Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq Al Said to discuss trade, economic, industrial, and agricultural cooperation.[85]

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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**Christina Harward, Grace Mappes, Angelica Evans, Olivia Gibson, Nate Trotter,
William Runkel, and Frederick W. Kagan**

December 13, 2024, 7:45 pm 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 interactive map of Ukraine's offensive in Kursk Oblast.

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 pm ET on December 13. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the December 14 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces conducted their largest series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine since the start of the war overnight on December 12 to 13, largely targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 94 missiles and 193 Shahed and other drones at Ukraine, including four Kh-47M2 "Kinzhal" aeroballistic missiles; two Iskander-M ballistic missiles, one KN-23 ballistic missile, 55 Kh-101 and Kh-55SM cruise missiles, 24 Kalibr cruise missiles, seven Iskander-K cruise missiles, and one Kh-59/69 cruise missile.[1] The Ukrainian Air Force noted that Ukrainian forces downed 80 Kh-101, Kh-55SM, Kalibr, and Iskander-K cruise missiles; one Iskander-M; and 80 drones and that 105 other drones became "lost" due to Ukrainian countermeasures and six drones flew into Russian and Belarusian airspace as of 1130 local time.

Ukrainian energy operator DTEK reported that the strike caused severe damage to DTEK's thermal power plants (TPPs), and Ukrainian authorities reported that the Russian strikes targeted energy and critical infrastructure in Kyiv, Odesa, Chernihiv, Vinnytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, and Ternopil oblasts.[2] Ukrainian authorities reported rolling blackouts throughout much of the country following the strike.[3] The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated that five of the nine nuclear reactors in Ukrainian-controlled territory reduced their output due to the Russian strikes, of which two nuclear reactors were already producing power at a reduced output due to the residual effects of Russian strikes in late November 2024 and the remaining three returned to full capacity on December 13.[4]

Russia's strike series targeting Ukrainian energy facilities is part of a broader campaign aimed at freezing out Ukraine in Winter 2024-2025 and compelling Ukraine and the West to self-deter into making policy decisions that benefit Russia. Russia has repeatedly targeted Ukrainian infrastructure during the fall and winter since launching the full-scale invasion in 2022 and conducted large-scale strikes against Ukrainian infrastructure on November 16 to 17 and 25 to 26.[5] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces conducted the December 12 to 13 strike in retribution for a Ukrainian strike against Taganrog, Rostov Oblast on December 11 using Western-provided ATACMS, although Russian forces were likely planned to conduct such a strike regardless and are conveniently using the December 11 strike to justify ongoing Russian strikes against Ukrainian critical infrastructure.[6] This Russian messaging is likely aimed at assuaging the Russian ultranationalist community's calls for retribution for Ukrainian strikes into Russia and intended to support the Kremlin's reflexive control campaign aimed at compelling Western countries to make decisions about Ukraine's use of Western-provided weapons and future peace negotiations that benefit Russia.[7]

Ukrainian strikes against military airfields in Russia and Russian air defense systems in near rear areas may be prompting a decrease in Russian air operations and glide bomb strikes against Ukraine. Russian forces launched a total of 431 glide bombs in the first 12 days of December 2024 according to data from the Ukrainian General Staff after reportedly launching 1,472 glide bombs in the first 12 days of November 2024 and over 3,300 glide bombs total throughout November 2024.[8] Russian forces are thus currently on track to launch only a third of the total number of glide bombs that Russian forces launched in November 2024 this month.

Russian opposition news outlet *Agentstvo* noted on December 12 that Russian glide bomb strikes significantly decreased after Ukraine conducted its first strikes into Russia using Western-provided long-range weapons systems in mid-November 2024.[9] Ukrainian forces conducted the first ATACMS strike on Russian territory on the night of November 18 to 19 and a Storm Shadow strike on Russian territory on the night of November 19 to 20, and data from the Ukrainian General Staff indicates that Russian forces began consistently launching fewer than 100 glide bombs per day on November 22.[10]

The threat of Ukrainian strikes against Russian airfields within ATACMS and Storm Shadow range may be forcing the Russian military to base aircraft at airfields further within Russia and complicating Russia's ability to conduct glide bomb strikes on Ukraine. Ukrainian forces have also undertaken a concerted campaign to strike Russian radars and air defense systems in occupied Ukraine and near rear areas of Russia since late October 2024.[11] This campaign could be degrading Russia's air defense umbrella, particularly over occupied Ukraine, to the point that Russian pilots are increasingly unwilling to operate and conduct glide bomb strikes against frontline areas and rear Ukrainian cities.

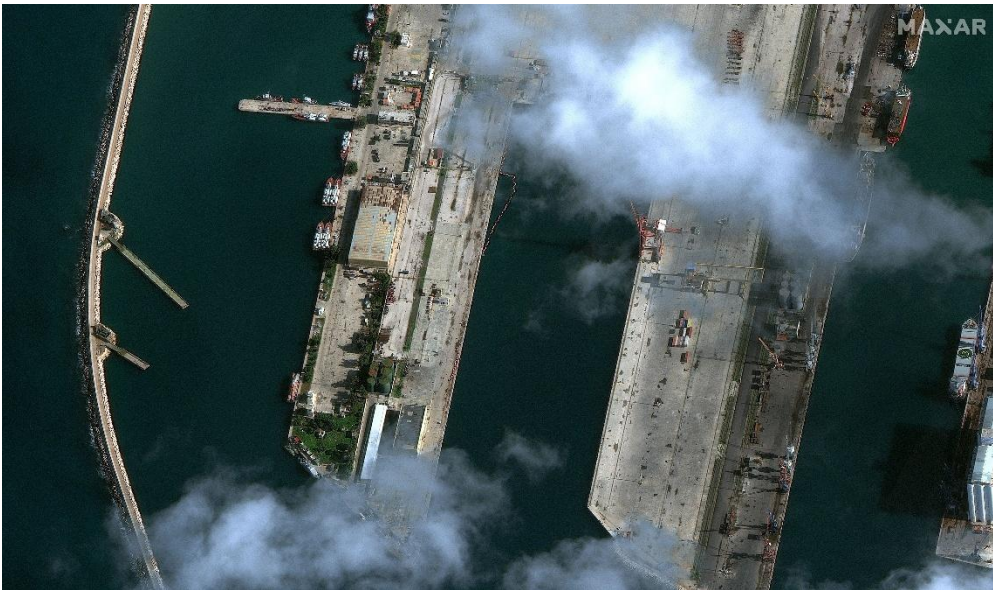
Ukrainian human rights organization Truth Hounds estimated in a recent report that Ukrainian forces destroyed at least 33 Russian Su-34 fighter aircraft between February 2022 and September 2024, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) previously estimated that Russia has approximately 112 various Sukhoi fighter aircraft.[12] ISW is unable to confirm or verify the Truth Hounds' report. The destruction of nearly 30 percent of Russia's Sukhoi aircraft, could, if true, also impact Russia's ability to conduct glide bomb strikes against Ukraine, although it is unclear when these losses took place relative to the recent drop in glide bomb attacks.

Russia is evacuating elements of its force grouping in Syria while continuing negotiations with select Syrian groups about Russia's longer-term military presence in the country. Kremlin newswire *TASS* reported on December 13 that an unspecified source familiar with the matter stated that Russia is currently negotiating with unspecified new Syrian "authorities" about maintaining Russia's military presence at Hmeimim Air Base and the Port of Tartus.[13] The source reportedly stated that Russia has only secured "temporary security guarantees" but that the two military bases are "functioning as usual." Russian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Mikhail Bogdanov stated on December 12 that Russia has established contacts with Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS), which currently controls the areas at Hmeimim and Tartus, and the *TASS* source is likely referring to ongoing Russian talks with HTS.[14]

Maxar satellite imagery from December 13 shows two Russian An-124 military transport aircraft preparing to load cargo while a Ka-52 helicopter and elements of an S-400 air defense system are likely undergoing preparations for transport at Hmeimim Air Base (see embedded imagery below). The Maxar imagery also shows two Russian frigates still offshore of the Port of Tartus. Drone footage reportedly of Hmeimim Air Base shows An-72, An-26, and Il-76 transport aircraft; Ka-52 and Mi-8 or Mi-17 helicopters; and at least four Su-34, seven Su-24M2, and four Su-35S fighter jets under hangars.[15] Geolocated footage published on December 13 shows a Russian military convoy moving from Hisyah (south of Homs) along the M5 highway.[16] Additional footage published on December 13 reportedly shows Russian military convoys moving from Talkalakh (west of Homs), Homs, and Damascus.[17]

It is unclear if the convoys are heading toward the Port of Tartus or Hmeimim Air Base, but the reported movement of Russian military assets indicates that Russia is pulling some of its forward assets in southern Syria to the western coast. At least four Russian landing ships and cargo ships are reportedly heading from Russian ports to the Port of Tartus but will likely not reach Syria for weeks.[18]

Russia is likely evacuating forces from its two main bases in Syria while negotiations are ongoing with new Syrian authorities as the outcome of these negotiations and Russia's longer-term presence at the bases are still unclear. Russia would be able to relatively quickly reestablish its military presence in Syria after evacuating from Hmeimim and Tartus should Moscow be able to secure more permanent agreements with the current Syrian authorities.



Overview of the Russian naval base at Tartus on December 13, 2024. Source: Satellite image ©2024 Maxar Technologies



Overview of the northern section of Russian Hmeimim Air Base on December 13, 2024. Source: Satellite image ©2024 Maxar Technologies

The status of Russia's helicopter base at Qamishli in northeastern Syria remains unclear, however. A Kurdish journalist stated on December 11 that Russian forces were withdrawing from the Qamishli base after unspecified authorities granted them safe passage out of Syria.[19] However, photos from December 12 show Russian equipment, helicopters, and personnel at the Qamishli base, and a Russian source claimed on December 12 that Russia maintains a presence at Hmeimim Air Base, the Port of Tartus, Qamishli, and other unspecified sites in Syria.[20] It is unclear if Russia is preparing

to withdraw assets from Qamishli in the near future. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) currently control Qamishli, and Russian officials have only stated that Moscow has established contacts with HTS, which controls the area of the Hmeimim Air Base and Port of Tartus.[21] ISW has not observed reports that Russia is trying to separately negotiate with the SDF about Russia's continued presence at the Qamishli base, and it is unclear if Russian forces intend to or will be able to remain at the base.

The US Department of Defense (DoD) announced on December 12 a new military aid package for Ukraine valued at \$500 million.[22] The package includes counter-drone munitions; High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) ammunition; 155mm and 105mm artillery ammunition; High-speed Anti-radiation missiles (HARMs); unmanned aerial systems (UAS); Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs); High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs); light tactical vehicles; Tube-launched, Optically-guided, Wire-tracked (TOW) missiles; and Javelin and AT-4 anti-tank equipment and munitions.

CNN reported on December 12 that a senior Biden administration official stated that the Biden administration is working to surge weapons deliveries to Ukraine before the administration leaves office in January 2024.[23] The official reportedly stated that the US DoD expects to deliver hundreds of thousands of artillery rounds, thousands of rockets, hundreds of armored vehicles, and other critical capabilities to Ukraine between mid-December 2024 and mid-January 2025. ISW continues to assess that sustained US assistance to Ukraine will empower Ukrainian forces to maintain the current tempo of operations across the theater of war, which is degrading Russian combat power and Russia's economy at a rate that Moscow will be unable to sustain long-term.[24]

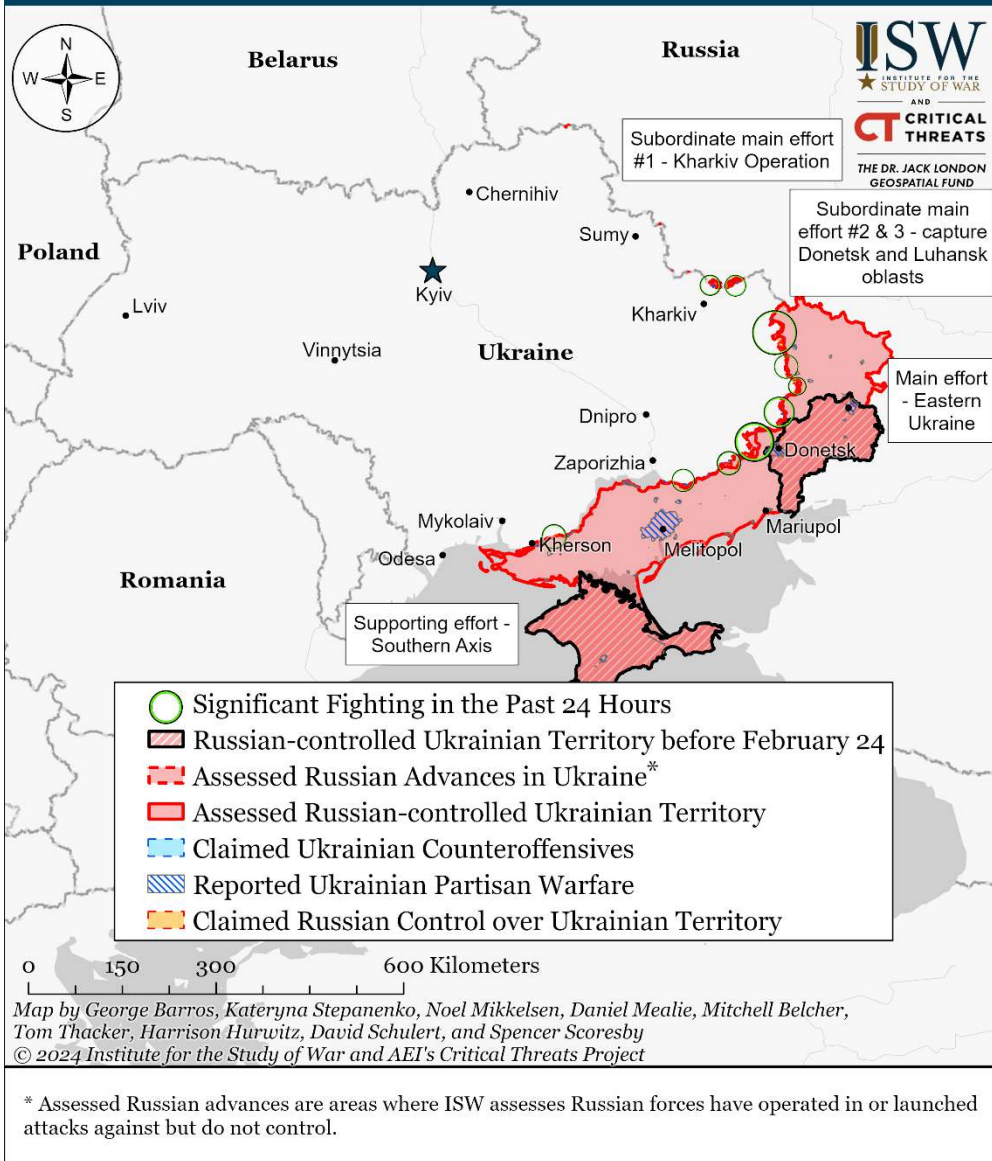
A Russian insider source who has previously correctly predicted command changes within the Russian military responded to recent claims that the Russian military command removed 3rd Combined Arms Army (formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps) commander Major General Dmitry Ovcharov.[25] The insider source claimed that some sources are falsely reporting that the Russian military command removed Ovcharov for lying to his superiors about the rate of Russian advances in his area of responsibility (AoR) but that the actual reason for his removal was due to the recent Ukrainian capture of a Russian T-90M tank in the Russian rear after a Russian crew allegedly abandoned the tank. The insider source claimed that Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov ordered an inspection of the Southern Military District (SMD), whose AoR includes the Siversk direction where the 3rd CAA, after the Russian military command became aware of the incident.[26]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage on December 13 of Belousov meeting with Eastern Grouping of Forces commander Lieutenant General Andrei Ivanayev – officially confirming Ivanayev's new position.[27] A source close to the Russian MoD told Russian state outlet *RBK* on November 26 that the Russian military command appointed Ivanayev as commander of the Eastern Military District [EMD] after the previous EMD commander, Lieutenant General Alexander Sanchik, became the SMD commander.[28] Ivanayev previously served as commander of the 20th Combined Arms Army (Moscow Military District [MMD]), which has been operating along the Kupyansk-Svatove line.[29]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces conducted their largest series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine since the start of the war overnight on December 12 to 13, largely targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure.**
- **Russia's strike series targeting Ukrainian energy facilities is part of a broader campaign aimed at freezing out Ukraine in Winter 2024-2025 and compelling Ukraine and the West to self-deter into making policy decisions that benefit Russia.**
- **Ukrainian strikes against military airfields in Russia and Russian air defense systems in near rear areas may be prompting a decrease in Russian air operations and glide bomb strikes against Ukraine.**
- **Russia is evacuating elements of its force grouping in Syria while continuing negotiations with select Syrian groups about Russia's longer-term military presence in the country.**
- **The status of Russia's helicopter base at Qamishli in northeastern Syria remains unclear, however.**
- **The US Department of Defense (DoD) announced on December 12 a new military aid package for Ukraine valued at \$500 million.**
- **A Russian insider source who has previously correctly predicted command changes within the Russian military responded to recent claims that the Russian military command removed 3rd Combined Arms Army (formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps) commander Major General Dmitry Ovcharov.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced near Pokrovsk and Vuhledar.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded Rosgvardia Head Viktor Zolotov with the Hero of Russia award.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



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.

- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- 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
- Significant Activity in Belarus

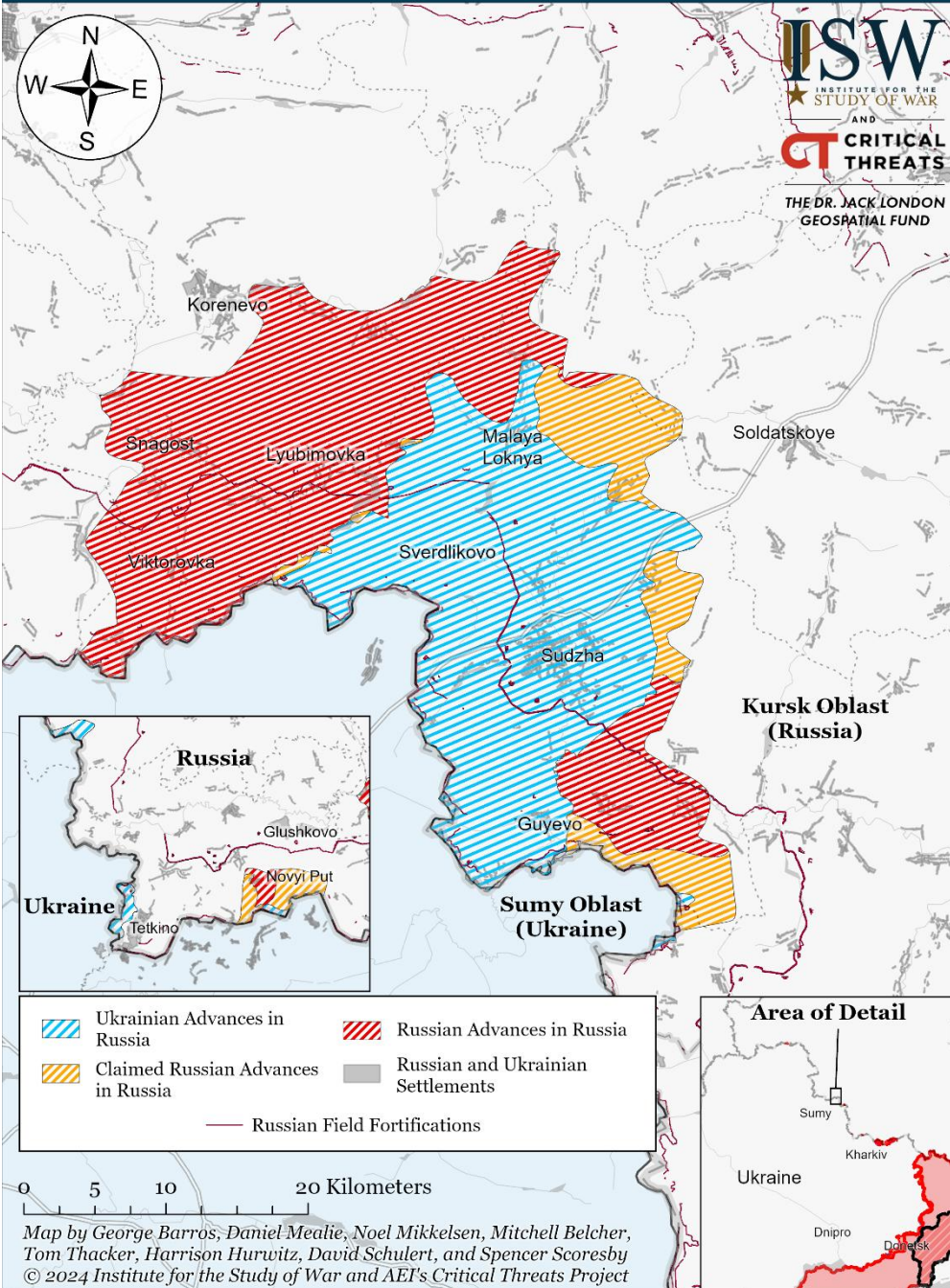
Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the main Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast on December 13 but did not advance. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in Nikolayevo-Darino (southeast of Korenevo), into the forested areas north of Martynovka (northeast of Sudzha), and near Kurilovka (south of Sudzha).[30] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Cherkasskaya Konopelka (southeast of Sudzha).[31] Russian forces continued assaults southeast of Korenevo near Novoivanovka and in Nikolayevo-Darino, northwest of Sudzha in the direction of Sverdlikovo, southeast of Sudzha near Cherkasskaya Konopelka, and south of Sudzha in the direction of Kurilovka and along the Psel River near Guevo.[32]

North Korean special operation forces reportedly participated in the recent seizure of Plekhovo, Kursk Oblast indicating that Russia may be utilizing North Korean forces in highly attritional infantry-led assaults. Russian milbloggers claimed on December 12 and 13 that North Korean soldiers participated in the seizure of Plekhovo on December 6 and advanced two kilometers through minefields in order to seize the settlement over the course of two hours (ISW assesses that Russian forces seized Plekhovo as of December 11).[33] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that North Korean special forces seized Plekhovo with no assistance from Russian forces, but one milblogger characterized the assault as a joint Russian-North Korean operation. Another milblogger claimed that elements of two unspecified Russian brigades are claiming responsibility for the seizure of Plekhovo despite only entering the settlement after North Korean forces seized it.[34] ISW has not observed confirmation that North Korean soldiers have participated in combat operations in Kursk either independently or jointly with Russian forces. Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on December 4 that

the Russian command subordinated the North Korean 92nd and 94th special operations brigades in Kursk Oblast to the Russian 22nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (72nd Motorized Rifle Division, 44th Army Corps (AC), Leningrad Military District [LMD]), the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet [BSF], Southern Military District [SMD]), and the 11th Airborne (VDV) Brigade.[35] ISW previously assessed that the North Korean military's ability to learn and integrate lessons from fighting alongside Russia is likely to be significantly degraded if the Russian military command uses North Korean troops in the same highly attritional infantry-led assaults in which it normally uses most Russian personnel, including the improperly utilized VDV and naval infantry units to which the North Korean special forces are reportedly subordinated.[36]

Ukrainian Incursion into Kursk Oblast as of December 13, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

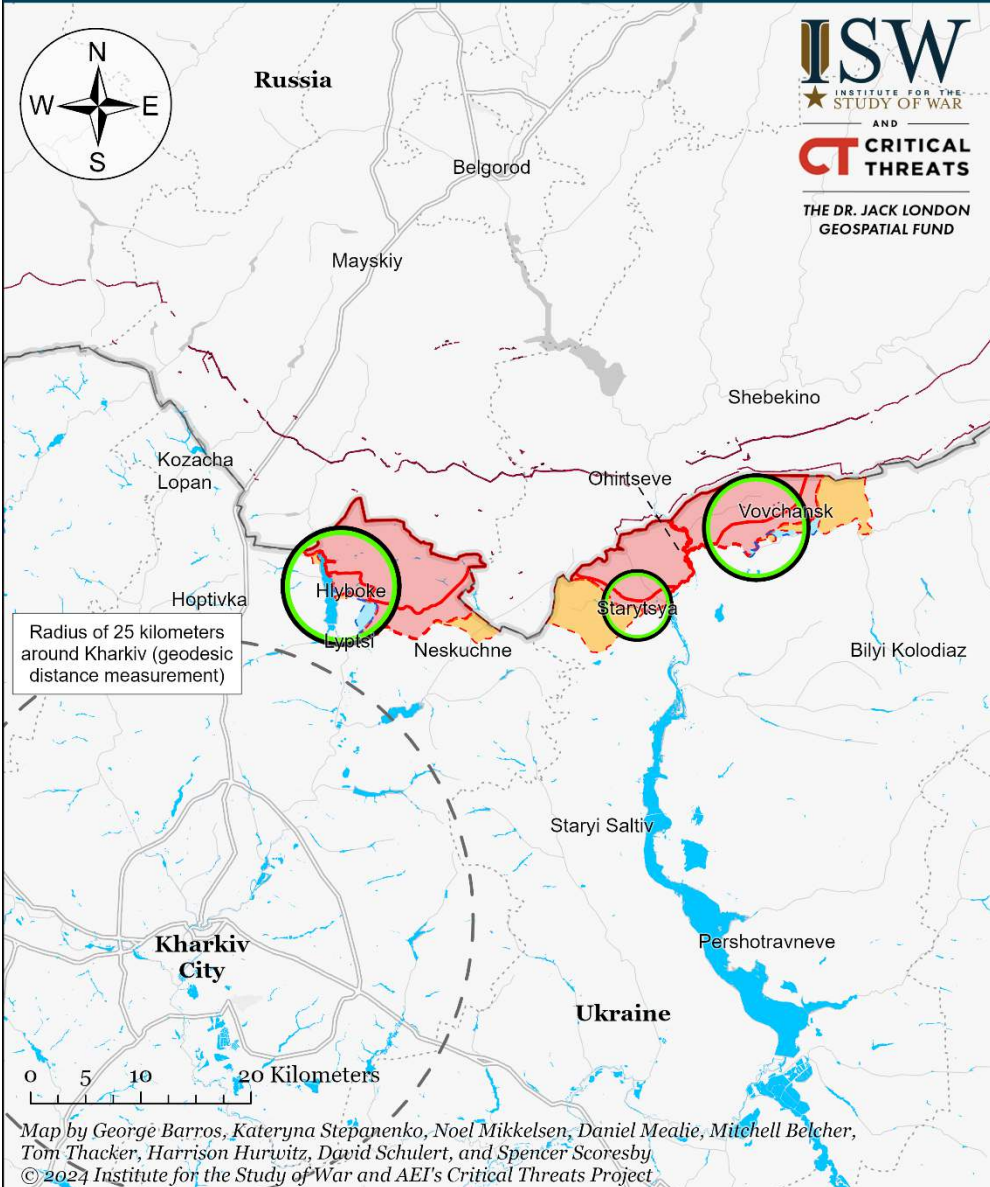


Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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)

Russian forces conducted ground attacks north of Kharkiv City near Hlyboke and Lyptsi and northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk and Starytsya on December 12 and 13 but did not advance.[37] A Russian milblogger claimed on December 13 that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian counterattack in the Lyptsi direction.[38]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



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THREATS**
THE DR. JACK LONDON
GEOSPATIAL FUND

Radius of 25 kilometers
around Kharkiv (geodesic
distance measurement)

0 5 10 20 Kilometers

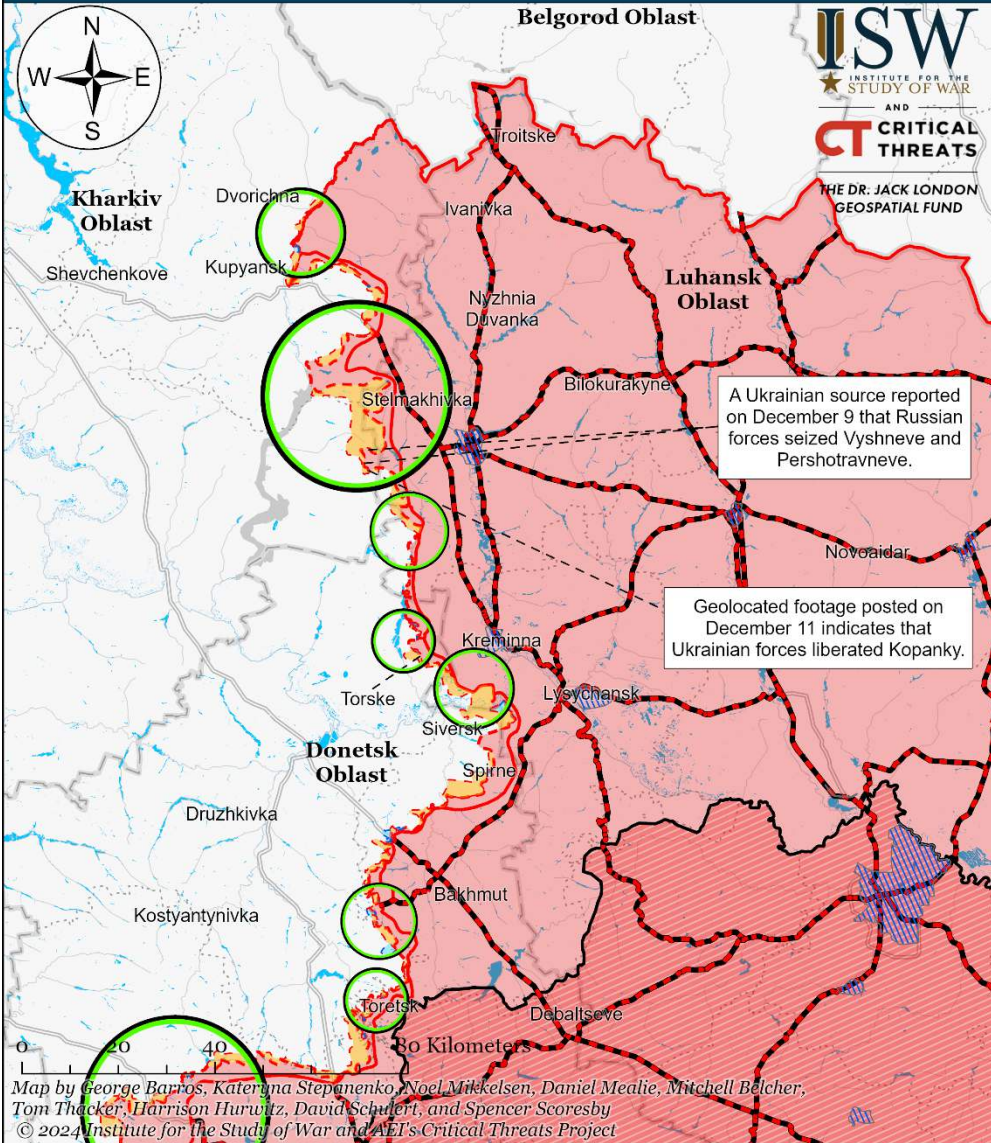
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- ▬ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▨ Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- ▭ Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- ▭ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▬ Russian Field Fortifications
- ▭ Assessed Russian-controlled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

* 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 – 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 December 13 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced on the west (right) bank of the Oskil River south of Dvorichna (north of Kupyansk).[39] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim, however. Russian forces continued assaults north of Kupyansk near Dvorichna; northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Kruhlyakivka, Kolisnykivka, Bohuslavka, Lozova, and Zahryzove; west of Svatove near Nadiya, Kopanky, Lozova, Zelenyi Hai, and Shyikivka; southwest of Svatove near Hrekivka and Novoyehorivka; northwest of Kreminna near Makiivka and Terny; west of Kreminna near Torske and Zarichne; and southwest of Kreminna near Hryhorivka, Dibrova, and in the Serebryanske forest area on December 12 and 13.[40] The spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Lyman direction reported on December 13 that Russian forces are accumulating forces in preparation for increased infantry assaults in the area in the coming weeks.[41] The brigade spokesperson added that Russian forces are conducting small probing assaults involving teams of between two and four soldiers to exploit vulnerabilities in Ukrainian defensive lines. Elements of the Russian 16th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly operating in the Serebryanske forest area.[42]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, David Schuler, and Spencer Scoresby
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- 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

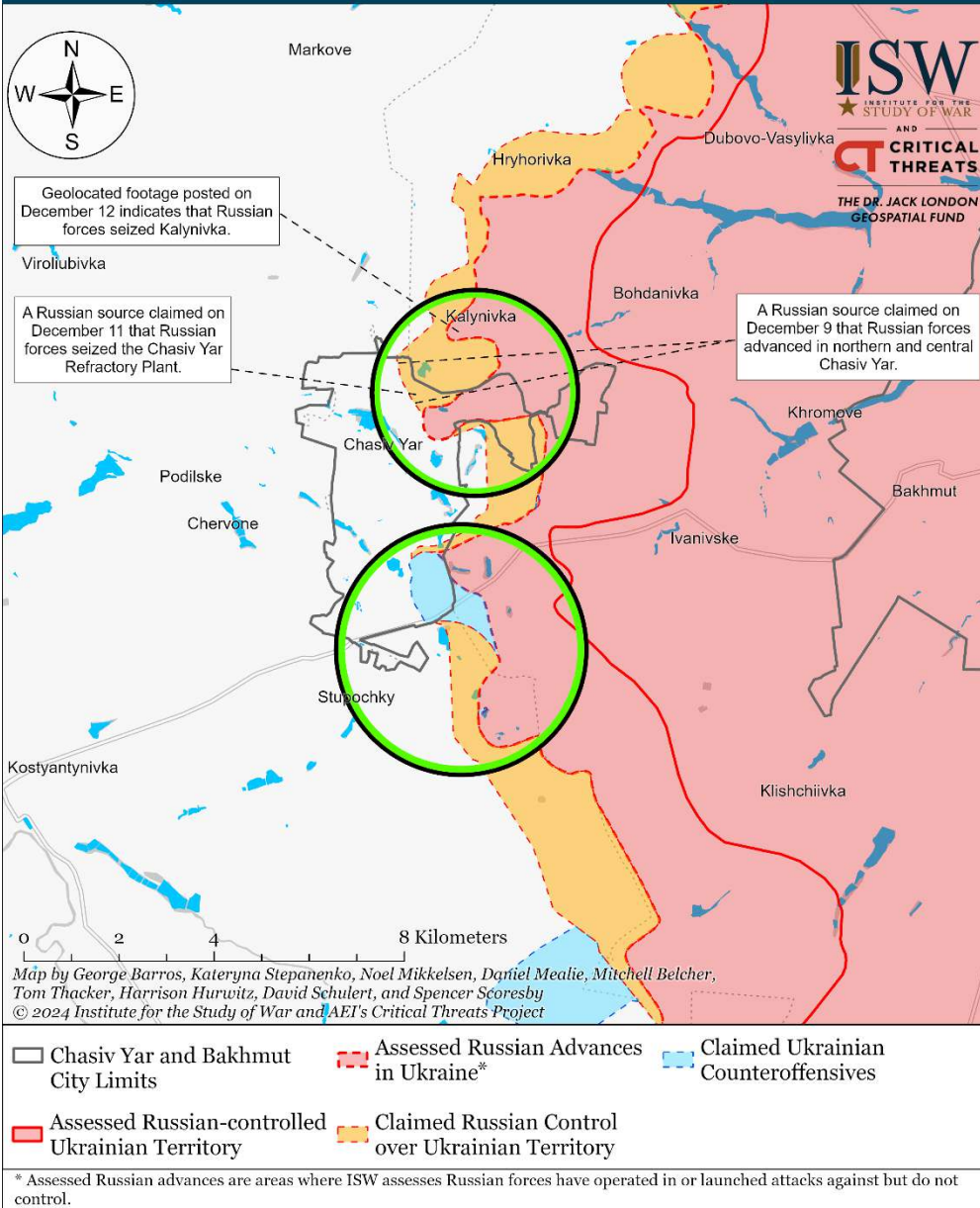
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bilohorivka (northeast of Siversk) on December 13 but did not make any confirmed advances.[43]

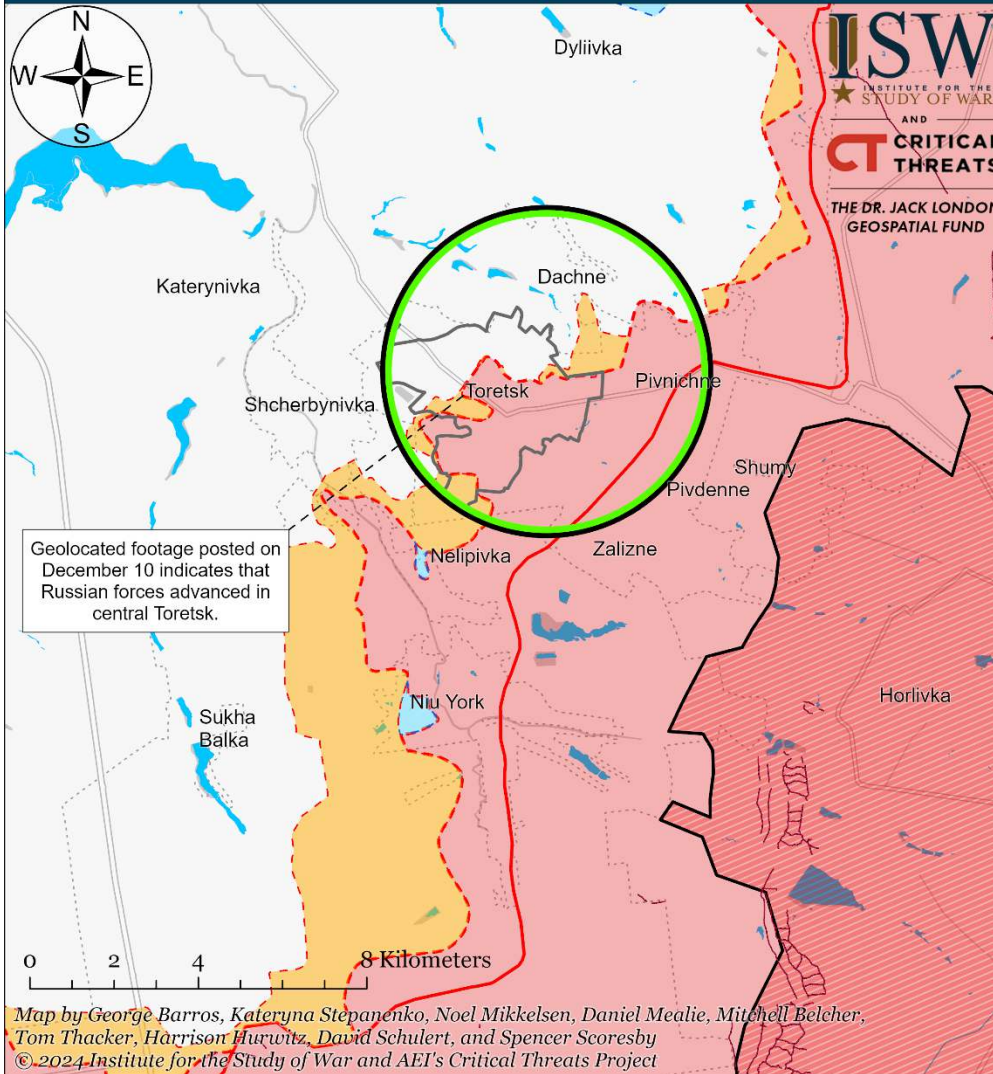
Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on December 13 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Chasiv Yar itself; north of Chasiv Yar near Hryhorivka; and south of Chasiv Yar towards Stupochky and Bila Hora on December 12 and 13.[44] Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting is ongoing on the northern and western outskirts of the Refractory Plant in central Chasiv Yar and that there are unconfirmed reports that Russian forces are clearing the rest of the plant.[45] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking at the plant.[46] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Chasiv Yar direction reported that Russian forces are trying to enter the Ukrainian rear in small infantry groups and that Russian forces have sufficient ammunition to conduct artillery preparation with each assault.[47] The spokesperson stated that Ukrainian minefields are repelling Russian mechanized assaults in the area.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Chasiv Yar as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Toretsk itself and north of Toretsk near Dylivka on December 12 and 13 but did not make any confirmed advances.[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Toretsk as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, David Schulert, and Spencer Scoresby ©.2024 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

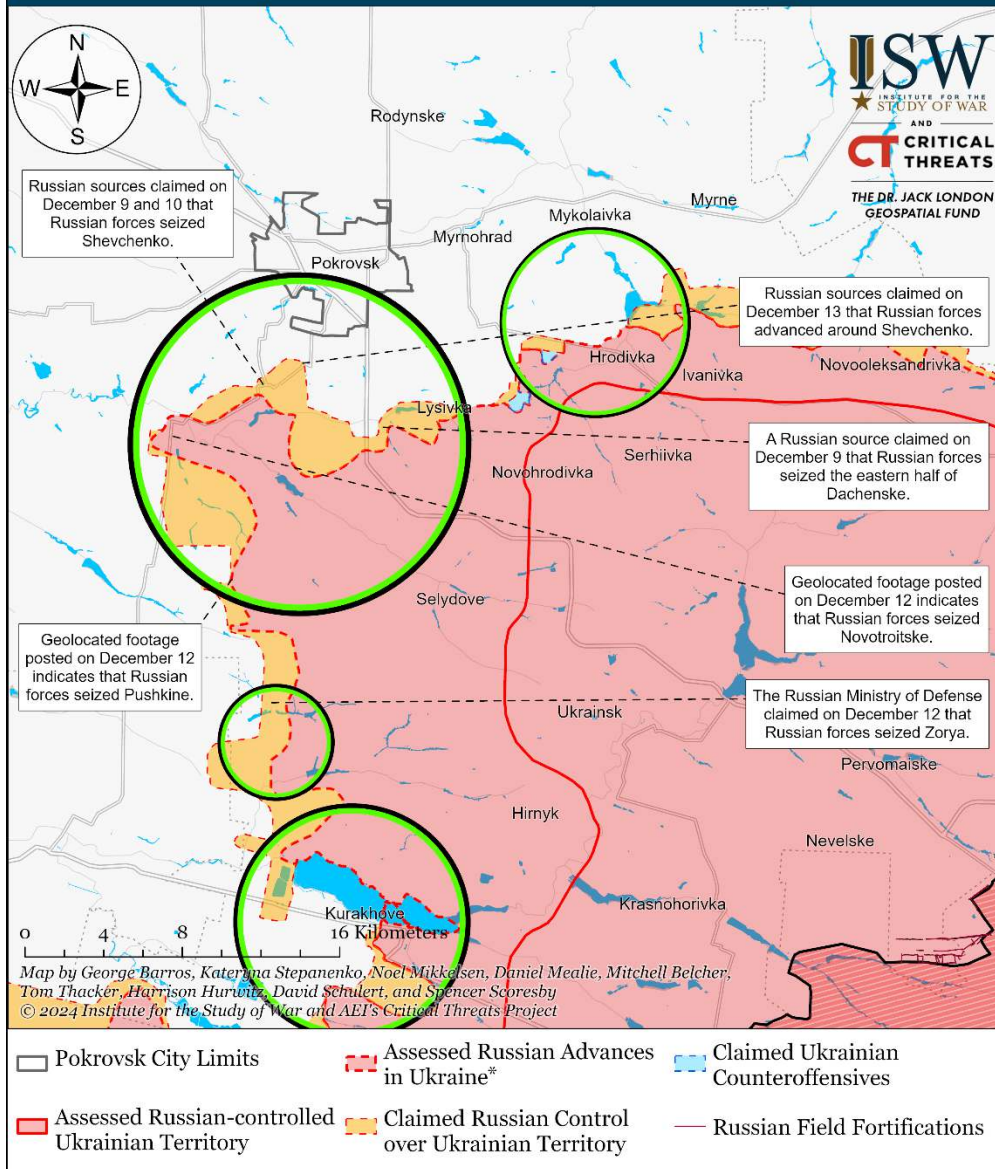
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Toret'sk City Limits
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- 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.

Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on December 13. Geolocated footage published on December 12 shows Ukrainian forces striking Russian forces in western Pushkine (south of Pokrovsk), indicating that Russian forces seized the settlement.[49] Additional geolocated footage published on December 12 indicates that Russian forces

recently advanced in southern Lysivka (southeast of Pokrovsk).[50] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are operating in the southwestern outskirts of Pushkine and advanced west of Novotroitske (southwest of Pokrovsk) and west and north of Shevchenko (south of Pokrovsk).[51] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces conducted offensive operations east of Pokrovsk near Myrolyubivka and Promin; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Dachenske, Shevchenko, Novyi Trud, Zelene, and Pushkine; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Pishchane on December 12 and 13.[52] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Novotroitske, Shevchenko, Novoolenivka (south of Pokrovsk).[53] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are currently roughly one kilometer from Pishchane and about 1.6 kilometers from Pokrovsk, but ISW has only observed geolocated footage indicating that Russian forces are roughly 1.8 kilometers from Pishchane and 3.8 kilometers from Pokrovsk.[54] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Nazar Voloshyn stated on December 13 that there are no Russian sabotage and reconnaissance groups in Pokrovsk.[55] Several Russian milbloggers claimed on December 12 that small Russian sabotage and reconnaissance groups had penetrated the southern outskirts of Pokrovsk.[56] Drone operators of the Russian 55th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[57]

Assessed Control of Terrain East of Pokrovsk as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



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

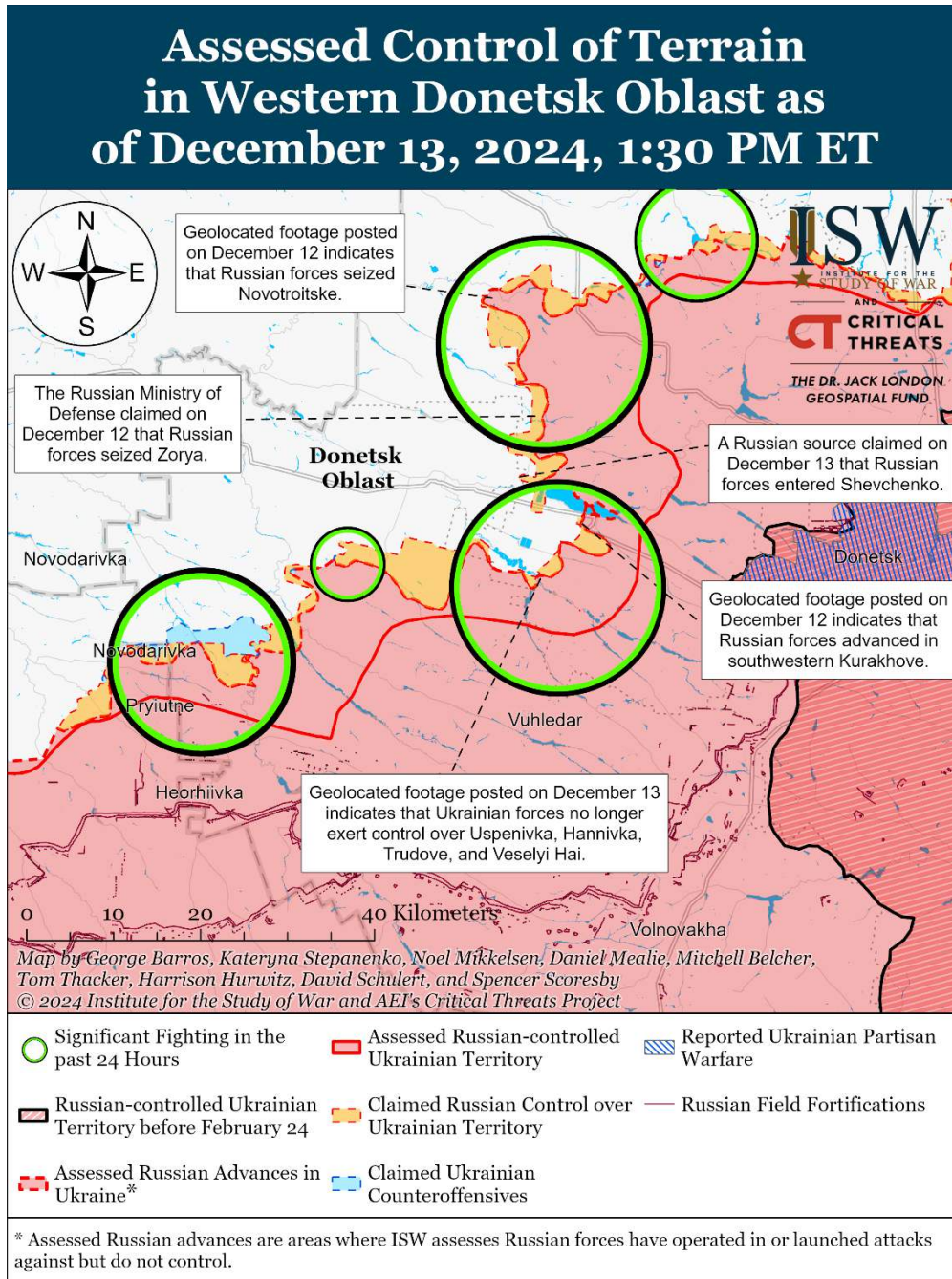
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on December 13 but did not make confirmed advances. The spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kurakhove direction stated that Ukrainian forces repelled a reinforced company-sized mechanized assault on Kurakhove's flank likely on December 12.[58] The spokesperson stated that Russian forces are constantly adjusting their tactics in this direction and are attacking in armored columns in some areas and small infantry groups, on foot, motorcycles, or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) in other areas. The spokesperson noted that Russian forces often attack during foggy weather conditions that complicate Ukrainian forces' ability to use reconnaissance drones. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces

advanced northwest of Kurakhove in southern Sontsivka, from Zorya (north of Sontsivka) towards Slovyanka (west of Sontsivka), and near Shevchenko (southwest of Sontsivka).[59] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC]) are advancing in central Kurakhove.[60] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims. Russian forces continued assaults northwest of Kurakhove near Zorya, Sontsivka, and Stari Terny; in Kurakhove itself; west of Kurakhove near Dachne; and south of Kurakhove near Dalne on December 12 and 13.[61] Elements of the Russian 110th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) are reportedly operating in Kurakhove.[62]

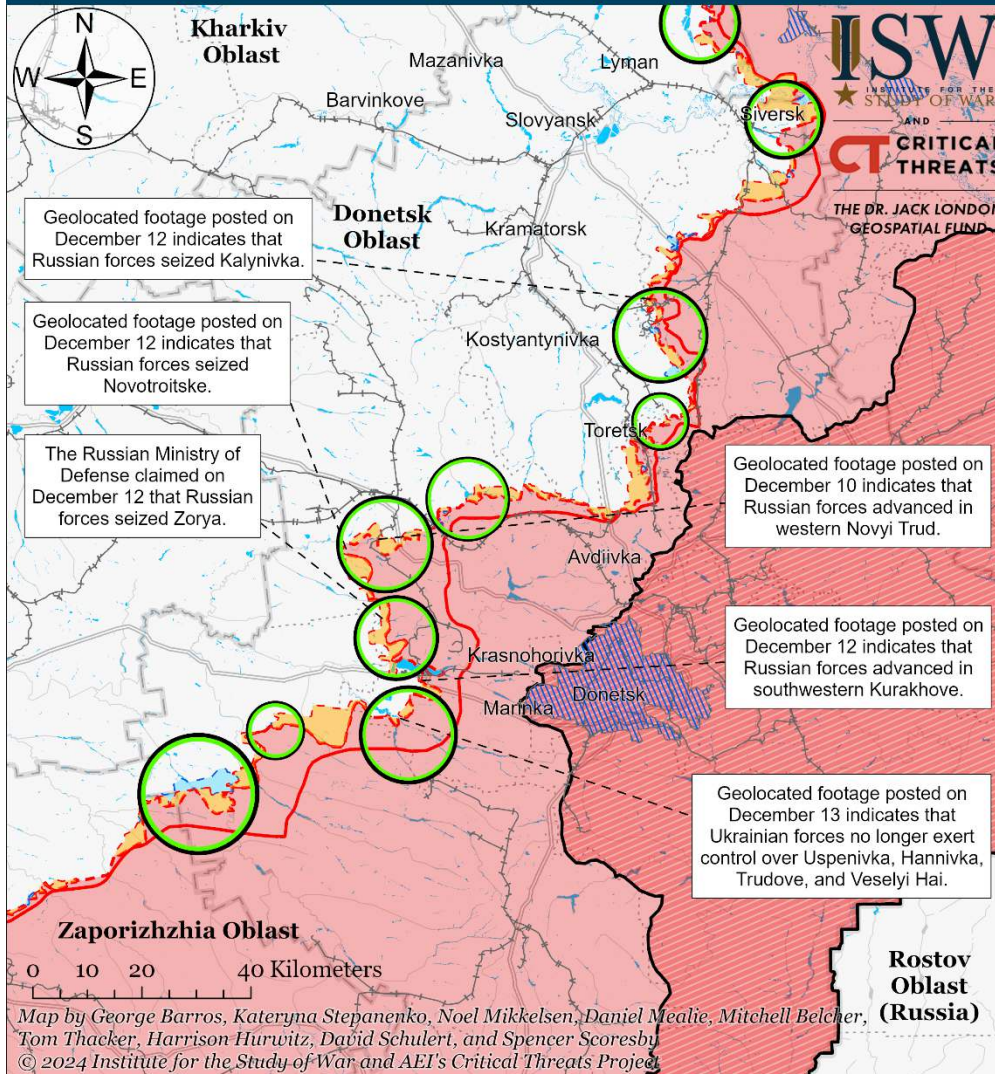
Russian forces recently advanced into Uspenivka and Hannivka (both northwest of Vuhledar) amid continued offensive operations in the Vuhledar direction on December 13. Geolocated footage published on December 13 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced into central Uspenivka and Hannivka and likely seized remaining Ukrainian positions in and near Romanivka, Veselyi Hai, Hannivka, Trudove, and Uspenivka.[63] Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 255th Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) advanced into Uspenivka and that elements of the 242nd Motorized Rifle Regiment's (20th Motorized Rifle Division) 3rd Battalion advanced into Hannivka and Veselyi Hai.[64] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces eliminated the Ukrainian pocket in this area and that Russian forces have encircled a limited number of Ukrainian forces defending this pocket.[65] The Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces denied claims that Russian forces encircled Ukrainian units in the area and stated that Ukrainian units were defending and taking necessary measures to avoid capture or encirclement.[66] The successful elimination of the Uspenivka-Hannivka pocket will allow Russian forces to level the frontline along the Kurakhove-Dalne-Uspenivka line and begin pushing further westward from Kurakhove towards Dachne and from Uspenivka towards Zelenivka. Russian forces also continued assaults northwest of Vuhledar near Kostyatinopolske and Sukhyi Yaly on December 12 and 13.[67] Elements of the 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating near Veselyi Hai and Kostyatinopolske.[68]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on December 23 but did not make confirmed advances. Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 5th Tank Brigade (36th CAA, EMD) advanced in an area four kilometers by 1.6 kilometers southeast of Velyka Novosilka and that Russian forces advanced southwest of Velyka Novosilka towards Storozheve and Neskuchne.[69] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. A Russian milblogger denied claims that Russian forces recently retreated from the southern outskirts of Velyka Novosilka and claimed that Russian forces are continuing to advance towards the settlement.[70] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Vladyslav Voloshyn stated that Russian forces are constantly attacking in the Vremivka (Velyka Novosilka) direction in small infantry groups and have air, drone, and armored vehicle support in this direction.[71] Voloshyn noted that Russian forces are suffering significant manpower losses in this area but assessed that the Russian military command will not abandon the objective of seizing Velyka Novosilka despite these losses.[72] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking north of Velyka Novosilka.[73] Russian forces continued offensive operations northeast of Velyka Novosilka near Rozdolne and southwest of Velyka Novosilka from Neskuchne and Novodarivka on December 12 and 13.[74] Drone operators of the Russian 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, EMD) are reportedly

operating near Rozdolne.[75] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces destroyed a bridge crossing over the Mokry Yaly River near Novoocheretuvate (north of Velyka Novosilka).[76]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



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

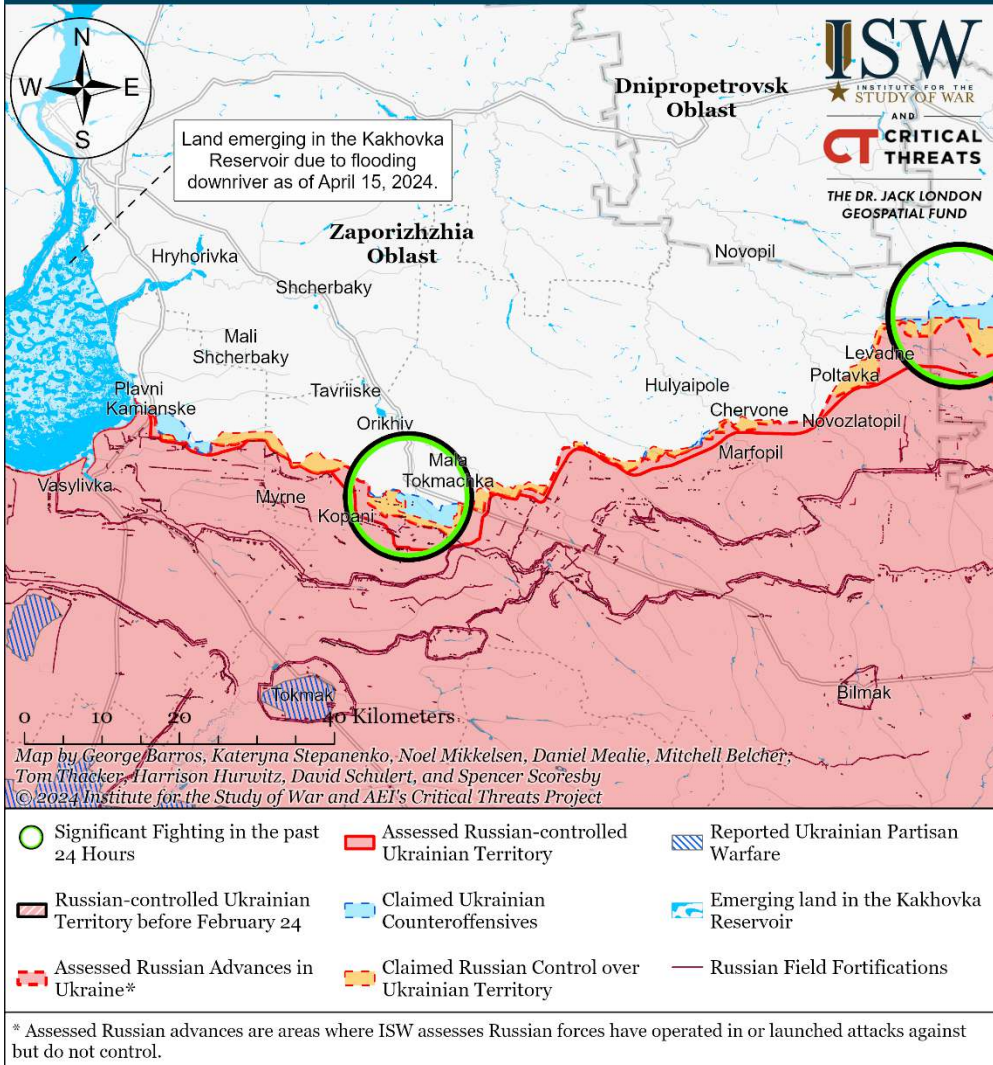
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Russian and Ukrainian sources did not report any ground activity in the Hulyaipole direction in far eastern Zaporizhia Oblast on December 13. Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Vladyslav Voloshyn reported that Russian forces are conducting rotations and preparing to conduct light infantry assaults in the Hulyaipole direction in the future.[77] Drone operators of the Russian 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating in the Polohy direction.[78]

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations in the direction of Novodanylivka (north of Robotyne) in western Zaporizhia Oblast on December 12 and 13 but did not make any confirmed advances.[79] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Vladyslav Voloshyn reported that Russian forces are attacking in the Orikhiv direction and are occasionally assaulting Ukrainian positions with armored vehicle support and using drones to drop munitions with toxic chemicals on Ukrainian forces.[80] Drone operators of the Russian "Trojan" Detachment (likely a volunteer unit) are reportedly operating southeast of Kamyanske (northwest of Robotyne and south of Zaporizhzhia City).[81]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 PM ET



Russian forces continued limited assaults in the Dnipro direction in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast on December 12 and 13 but did not make any confirmed advances.[82]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of December 13, 2024, 1:30 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.

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)

Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded Rosgvardia Head Viktor Zolotov with the Hero of Russia award.[83] A Russian insider source claimed that Zolotov's award demonstrates his increasing importance within the Kremlin and the Kremlin's confidence in his ability to manage Rosgvardia - a paramilitary security organization tasked with protecting Putin's regime from internal threats and safeguarding some critical infrastructure.[84]

The Kremlin continues efforts to militarize the Russian government with the "Time of Heroes" program. A Russian insider source claimed on December 13 that the Kremlin wants to appoint Vladislav Golovin, a veteran of the war in Ukraine and graduate of the "Time of Heroes" program, as the head of Yunarmiya (a military-patriotic movement that instills pro-Russian and militarized ideals in youth in Russia and occupied Ukraine).[85] The Russian insider source claimed that the Presidential Administration is likely delegating the supervision of Russia's youth policy to "Time of Heroes" graduates in order to test and train a "new generation of managers." The insider source claimed that former Rosgvardia personnel may also enter leadership positions in the Russian government through the Time of Heroes program in the future.[86]

The Kremlin continues to use financial incentives to increase military recruitment. Kremlin newswire TASS reported on December 12 that the Russian State Duma proposed a bill that would cancel the negative credit histories of Russians who sign military service contracts with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).[87]

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

Nothing significant to report.

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 activities in Russian-occupied areas today.

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

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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