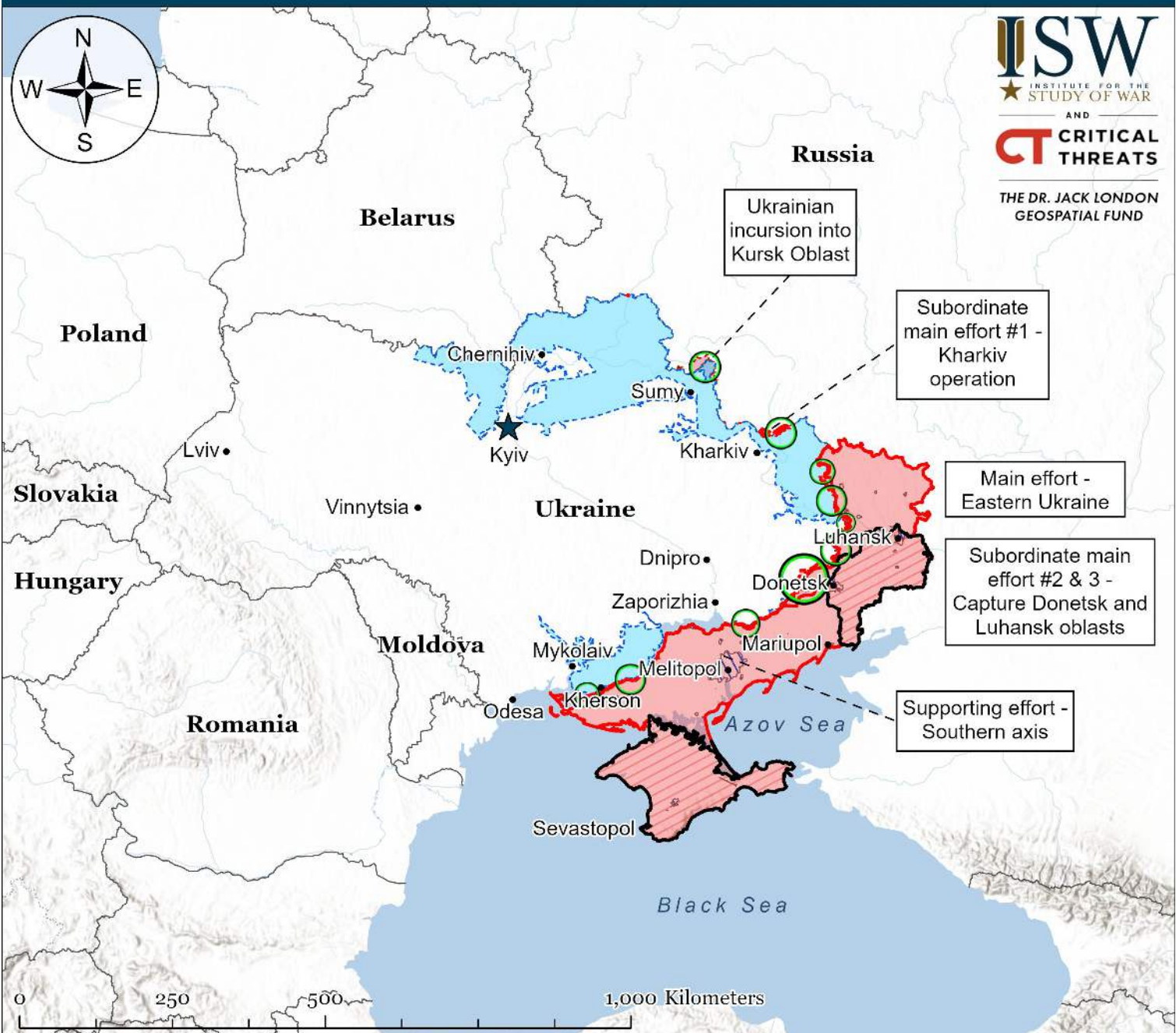


Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST

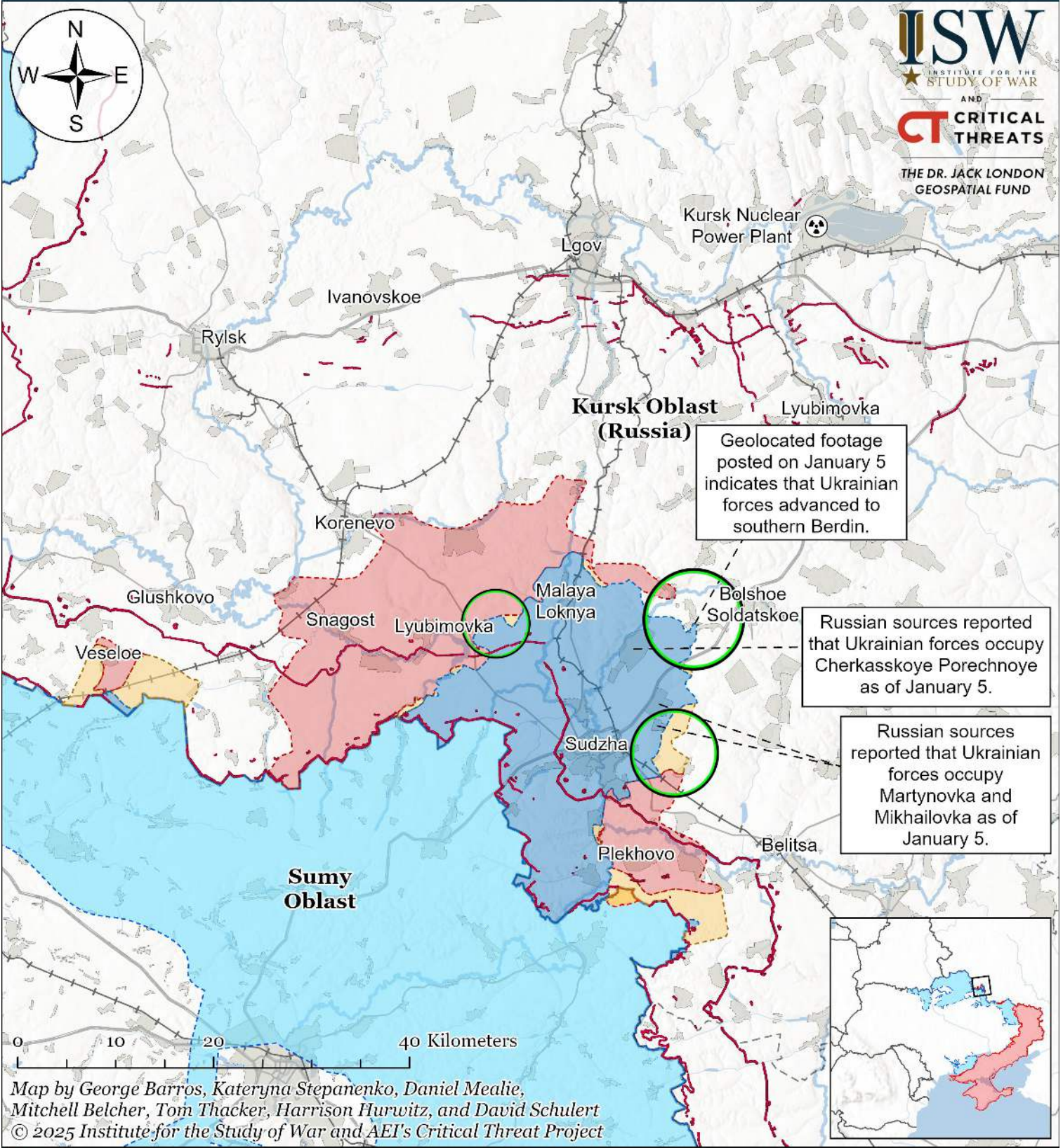


Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, and David Schulert
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- | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Significant Fighting in the Past 24 Hours | Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine | Russian Advances in Russia |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before 24 February 2022 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Claimed Russian Advances in Russia |
| Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives | Ukrainian Advances in Russia |
| | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare | |

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction

5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



- Russian Advances in Russia
- Ukrainian Advances in Russia
- Claimed Russian Advances in Russia
- Russian Field Fortifications

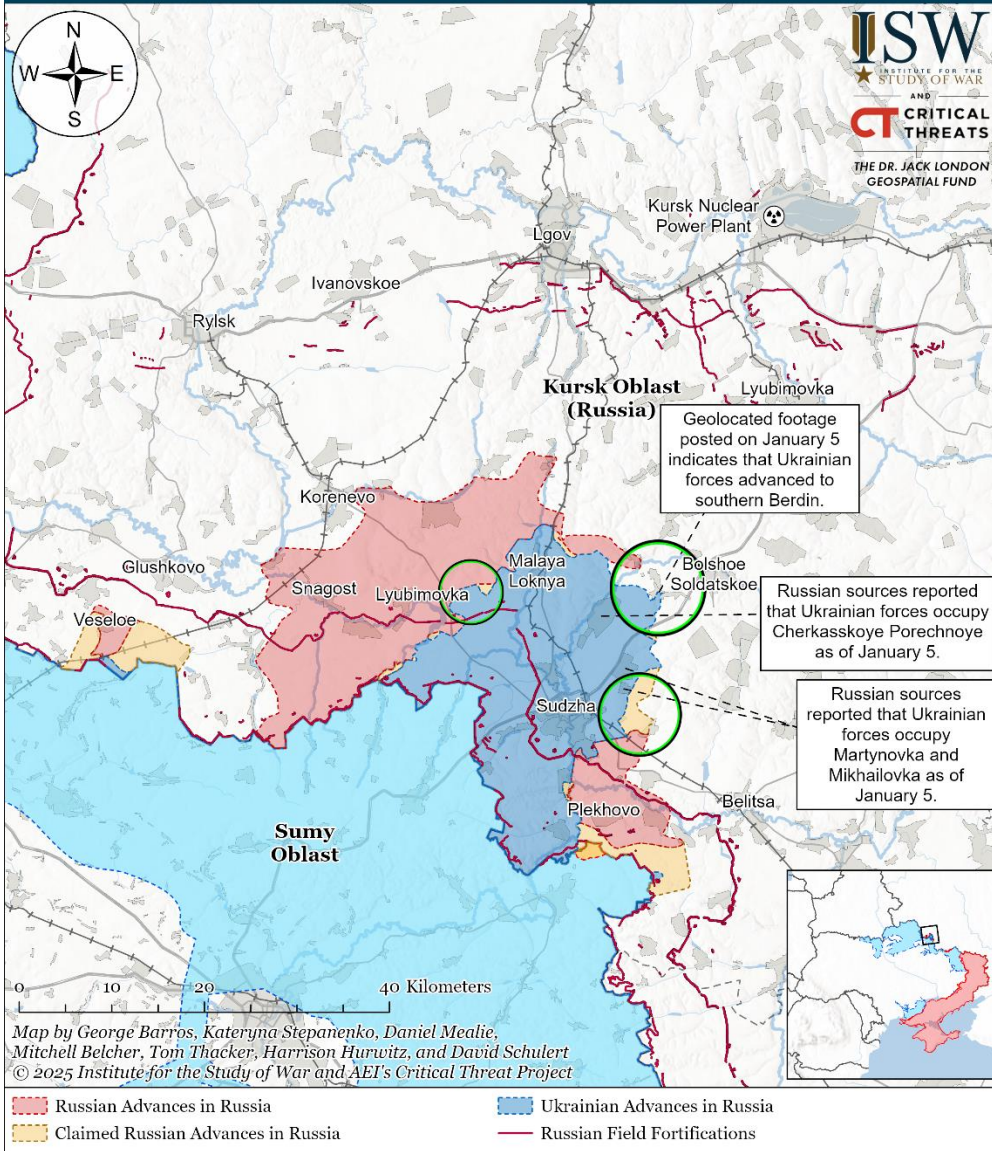
Nicole Wolkov, Angelica Evans, Grace Mappes, Olivia Gibson, Nate Trotter, and George Barros

January 5, 2025, 7:30 pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12pm ET on January 5. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the January 6 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces resumed offensive operations in at least three areas within the Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast and made tactical advances on January 5. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted multiple roughly company-sized mechanized assaults in the Berdin-Novosotnitsky direction (northeast of Sudzha) in three waves of attack using roughly a battalion's worth of armored vehicles.[1] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces also intensified offensive operations in the direction of Leonidovo (southeast of Korenevo) and conducted a reinforced platoon-sized mechanized assault near Pushkarnoye (east of Sudzha).[2] Geolocated footage published on January 5 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced in fields southwest and south of Berdin and entered the southern part of the settlement.[3] Russian milbloggers published updated maps of the Kursk area of operations that indicate that Ukrainian forces also occupy Cherkasskoye Porechnoye, Martynovka, and Mikhaylovka (all northeast of Sudzha and southwest of Berdin) as of January 5 and reported that Ukrainian forces recently entered Novosotnitsky (just east of Berdin); and advanced in fields west of Yamskaya Step (immediately northwest of Berdin) and west of Novaya Sorochina (north of Sudzha and northwest of Berdin).[4] Russian milbloggers reported that Ukrainian forces also conducted offensive operations near Nikolskiy and Alexandriya (east and southeast of Leonidovo, respectively) and north of Russkaya Konopelka (east of Sudzha) towards Pushkarnoye in small infantry groups but did not provide details about the extent of any possible Ukrainian advances in these areas.[5] Russian milbloggers largely expressed concern that the renewed Ukrainian effort in Kursk Oblast may be a diversionary effort and claimed that it is too early to determine whether these operations in Kursk could be part of a future main effort.[6]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction 5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces also advanced southeast of Sudzha and counterattacked against intensified Ukrainian attacks southeast of Korenevo and north of Sudzha on January 5.

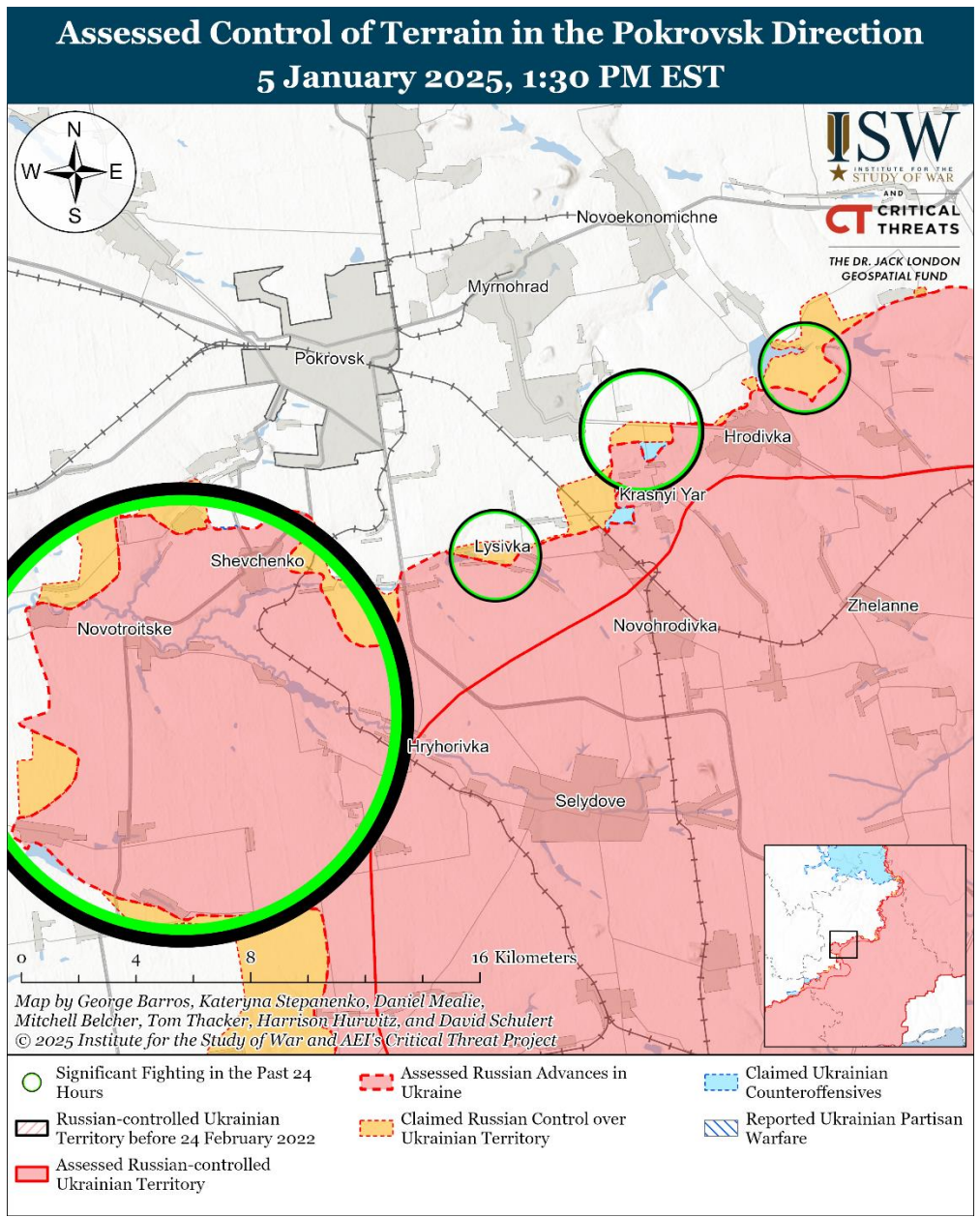
Geolocated footage published on January 5 shows that Russian forces advanced in western and southern Makhnovka (just southeast of Sudzha).[7] Russian milbloggers claimed that unspecified Russian airborne (VDV) elements pushed Ukrainian forces from Makhnovka and Dmitryukov (immediately northeast of Makhnovka).[8] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces may have advanced into Makhnovka "some time ago, however.[9] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on January 4 that Russian and North Korean forces lost up to a battalion of infantry near Makhnovka on January 3 and 4.[10] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also advanced southeast of Makhnovka and along a road into southeastern Kurilovka (immediately

southwest of Makhnovka).[11] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims, however. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also advanced during counterattacks against Ukrainian assaults east of Leonidovo towards Nikolskiy and in the direction of Malaya Loknya (northeast of Sudzha) on January 5.[12] Another Russian milblogger claimed that a Russian mechanized column unsuccessfully attempted to advance towards Malaya Loknya, however.[13] The milblogger complained that Ukrainian forces destroy most Russian mechanized columns in Kursk Oblast. Elements of the Russian 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, Eastern Military District [EMD]), Chechen Akhmat "Aida" Spetsnaz group, former Wagner Group personnel, and unspecified BARS (Russian Combat Army Reserve) units reportedly defended against the Ukrainian effort in Kursk Oblast.[14]

Russian sources expressed concern about the Russian military's ability to react to Ukraine's ongoing combined arms efforts to integrate electronic warfare (EW) and long-range strike capabilities with ground operations. Several Russian milbloggers claimed on January 5 that Ukrainian EW interference during Ukrainian assaults in Kursk Oblast prevented Russian forces from operating drones in the area, degrading Russian forces' ability to defend against Ukrainian mechanized attacks.[15] Russian milbloggers claimed that drones with fiber optic cables are one of the few Russian drone variants that consistently resist Ukrainian EW countermeasures, although some Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces were able to use some first-person view (FPV) and Lancet drones.[16] Russian officials claimed on January 5 that Russian forces downed three unspecified Ukrainian missiles over Kursk Oblast, suggesting that Ukrainian forces may be attempting to integrate longer-range strike capabilities with ground operations and tactical EW systems.[17] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted HIMARS strikes near Bolshoye Soldatskoye and other unspecified areas in Kursk Oblast to prevent Russian forces from deploying reinforcements, artillery systems, and drone operators.[18] Widespread Russian concern over Russia's ability to respond to improved Ukrainian EW technology and long-range strike capabilities indicates that Russian forces may be struggling to quickly adapt to Ukrainian battlefield innovations. Reports that Ukrainian forces are using long-range fires to interdict Russian rear areas and EW to degrade Russian drones in support of Ukrainian mechanized advances indicate that Ukrainian forces operating in Kursk are employing more effective combined arms tactics.

Russian forces recently advanced east of Pokrovsk amid renewed offensive operations in the area likely aimed at supporting the envelopment of Pokrovsk from the northeast. The tempo of Russian offensive operations has remained low east of Pokrovsk near Myrnohrad, along the Hrodivka-Novohrodivka (southeast of Pokrovsk) line, and further east near Novooleksandrivka and Arkhanhelske since September 2024 when Russian military command reprioritized offensive operations aimed at seizing Selydove (southwest of Pokrovsk), Kurakhove, and Vuhledar over efforts to seize Pokrovsk.[19] A Russian milblogger claimed on December 29 that Russian forces began intensifying offensive operations east of Pokrovsk, and geolocated footage published on January 1 indicates that Russian forces recently seized Vozdvyzhenka (east of Pokrovsk).[20] Geolocated footage published on January 5 indicates that Russian forces have likely also seized Svyrydonivka and Tymofiivka (both east of Pokrovsk) in recent days and advanced into southeastern Yelyzavetivka (south of Pokrovsk) during a platoon-sized mechanized assault.[21] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian

sabotage and reconnaissance units consolidated positions north of Tymofiivka and along the T-0504 Pokrovsk-Kostyantynivka highway and that Russian forces advanced north of Vozdvyzhenka toward Baranivka, Vodyane Druhe, and Zelene Pole.[22] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on January 5 that Russian forces recently resumed attacks in the Mykolaivka-Promin and Mykolaivka-Myrnohrad areas (both east of Pokrovsk) and reinforced the Russian grouping in this area with elements of the 589th Motorized Rifle Regiment (27th Motorized Rifle Division, 2nd Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) and the 137 Motorized Rifle Brigade (reportedly subordinated to the 41st CAA, CMD).[23]



The recent intensification in the Russian 41st CAA's area of responsibility (AoR) east of Pokrovsk indicates that the Russian military command is still considering the envelopment of Pokrovsk as one of their key operational objectives in this area. A Russian milblogger claimed on January 5 that Russian forces intensified offensive operations east of Pokrovsk over the last week (since December 29), and ISW started observing reports of renewed Russian activity in the area on December 27.[24] Recent Russian advances near Vozdvyzhenka and Yelyzavetivka and claims that Russian forces are advancing further north towards Vodyane Druhe and Baranivka indicate that Russian forces may be forming a salient that they intend to leverage to envelop Pokrovsk from the northeast. Elements of the Russian 41st CAA have reportedly been regrouping and reconstituting in this area for several months, and Mashovets assessed in late December 2024 that the Russian military command was preparing to activate elements of the 41st CAA east and northeast of Pokrovsk.[25] ISW previously assessed that Russian forces will have to make significant and rapid advances toward Novoekonomichne (northeast of Pokrovsk) or towards and into Myrnohrad (east of Pokrovsk) if Russian forces intend to envelop Pokrovsk from both the northeast and southwest in the near future.[26] The Russian military command may assess that advancing through the fields and small settlements along the Vozdvyzhenka-Yelyzavetivka-Myrne-Razine line will be an easier path of advance than attempting to fight through the more urban and heavily defended settlements of Novoekonomichne and Myrnohrad closer to Pokrovsk.

Russian forces may also be exploiting comparatively weaker Ukrainian defensive positions further east and south of Pokrovsk as part of an ongoing effort to seize any territory, regardless of such territory's relative tactical insignificance. ISW previously assessed that Russian President Vladimir Putin may have instructed the Russian military command to delay the seizure of Pokrovsk in favor of making further gains through open fields and small settlements, particularly as Russian forces advance closer to the Donetsk-Dnipropetrovsk Oblast administrative boundary.[27] Russian advances east of Pokrovsk may be opportunistic, aimed at seizing additional territory regardless of its tactical significance, and the beginning of a concerted Russian effort to envelop Pokrovsk from the northeast. Russian advances towards the Donetsk-Dnipropetrovsk Oblast administrative boundary may also be part of an opportunistic exploitation of weaker Ukrainian positions south of Pokrovsk, while also contributing to Russia's long-term objective of advancing to the administrative boundaries of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts.[28] The Russian military command likely intends to exploit opportunities to advance east and south of Pokrovsk so long as such advances remain expedient and Ukrainian forces continue to repel Russian attacks immediately near and into Pokrovsk itself.

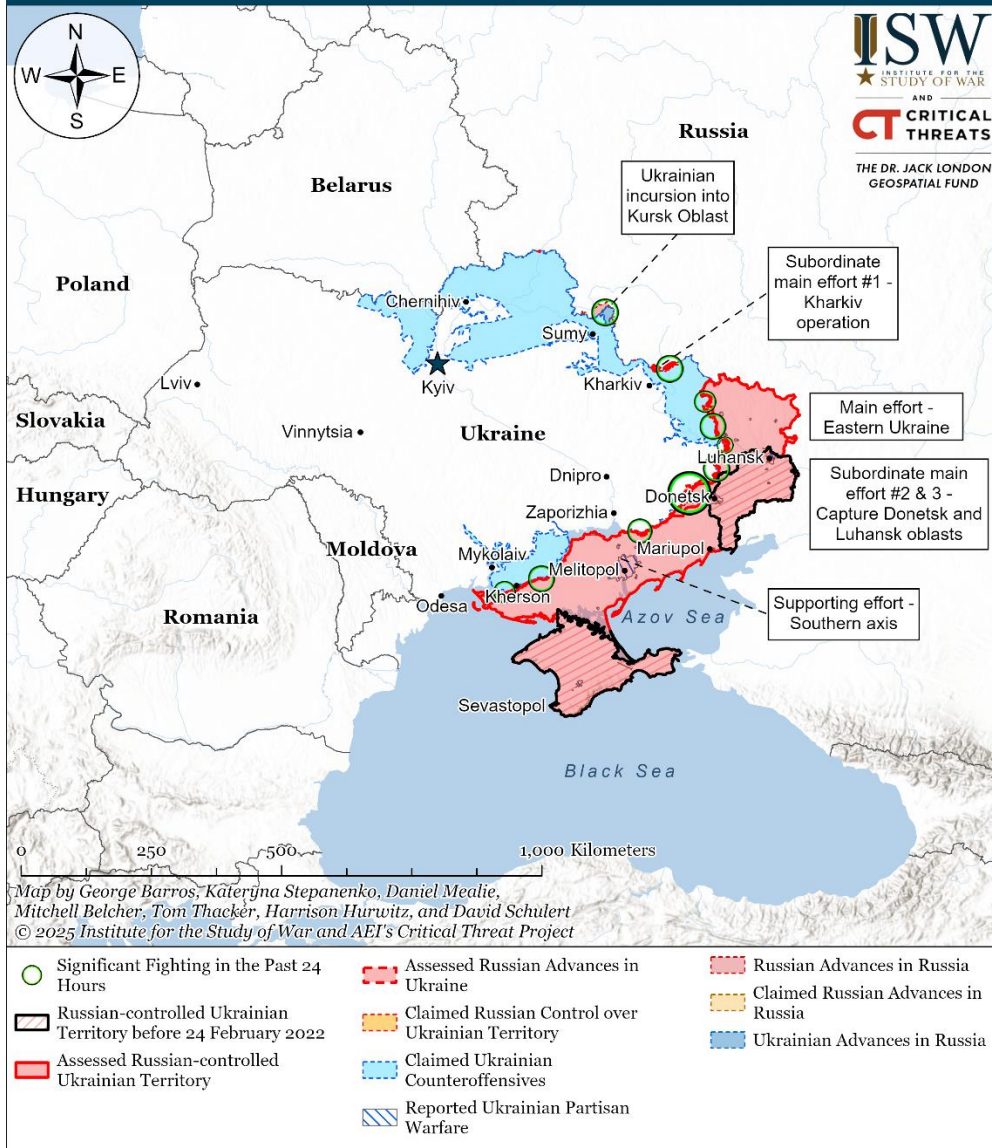
Elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps) are reportedly split between the Pokrovsk and Kurakhove directions — Russia's two most prioritized sectors of the frontline. Geolocated footage published on January 5 indicates that elements of the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade recently advanced to southeastern Yelyzavetivka and seized Svyrydonivka and Tymofiivka (all east of Pokrovsk).[29] Elements of the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade also reportedly participated in the seizure of Vozdvyzhenka as of January 2.[30] The 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade reportedly also participated in the seizure of Kurakhove and the Kurakhivske Thermal Power Plant (TPP) and is conducting clearing operations within the settlement, indicating that elements of the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade are currently split between at least two sectors of the frontline.[31] ISW has not observed reports of other

elements of the Russian 51st CAA operating east of Pokrovsk in the 41st CAA's AoR within the past month. The Russian military's decision to split the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade along two prioritized sectors of the frontline and reports of their participation in the seizure of several settlements indicates that the Russian military may be using elements of the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade as a tactical penetration force.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces resumed offensive operations in at least three areas within the Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast and made tactical advances on January 5.**
- **Russian forces also advanced southeast of Sudzha and counterattacked against intensified Ukrainian attacks southeast of Korenevo and north of Sudzha on January 5.**
- **Russian sources expressed concern about the Russian military's ability to react to Ukraine's ongoing combined arms efforts to integrate electronic warfare (EW) and long-range strike capabilities with ground operations.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced east of Pokrovsk amid renewed offensive operations in the area likely aimed at supporting the envelopment of Pokrovsk from the northeast.**
- **The recent intensification in the Russian 41st CAA's area of responsibility east of Pokrovsk indicates that the Russian military command is still considering the envelopment of Pokrovsk as one of their key operational objectives in this area.**
- **Russian forces may also be exploiting comparatively weaker Ukrainian defensive positions further east and south of Pokrovsk as part of an ongoing effort to seize any territory, regardless of such territory's relative tactical insignificance.**
- **Elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps) are reportedly split between the Pokrovsk and Kurakhove directions — Russia's two most prioritized sectors of the frontline.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced near Borova, Toretsk, Pokrovsk, and Kurakhove.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Kursk salient and regained lost positions near Chasiv Yar.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War 5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



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)

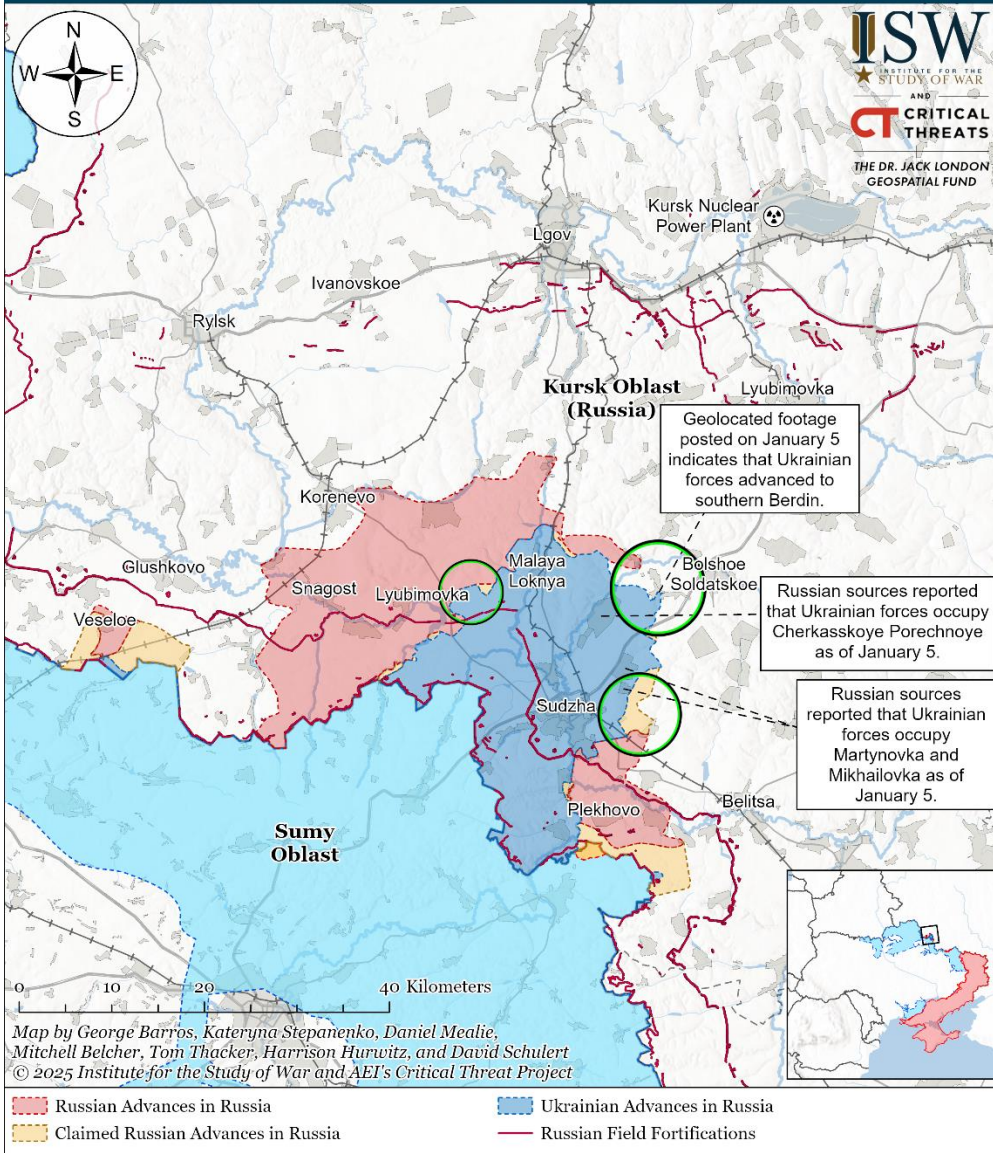
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast 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

See topline text for updates on Ukrainian ground operations in Kursk Oblast.

Ukrainian forces conducted drone strikes against Taganrog and Millerovo, Rostov Oblast on the night of January 4 to 5. Russian and Ukrainian sources published footage of Russian air defenses activating near Taganrog and Millerovo and reported that Ukrainian forces may have targeted nearby airfields.[32] Rostov Oblast Acting Governor Yuri Slyusar claimed that Russian forces intercepted 37 Ukrainian drones over Rostov Oblast overnight and that falling drone debris damaged residential areas.[33]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction 5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST

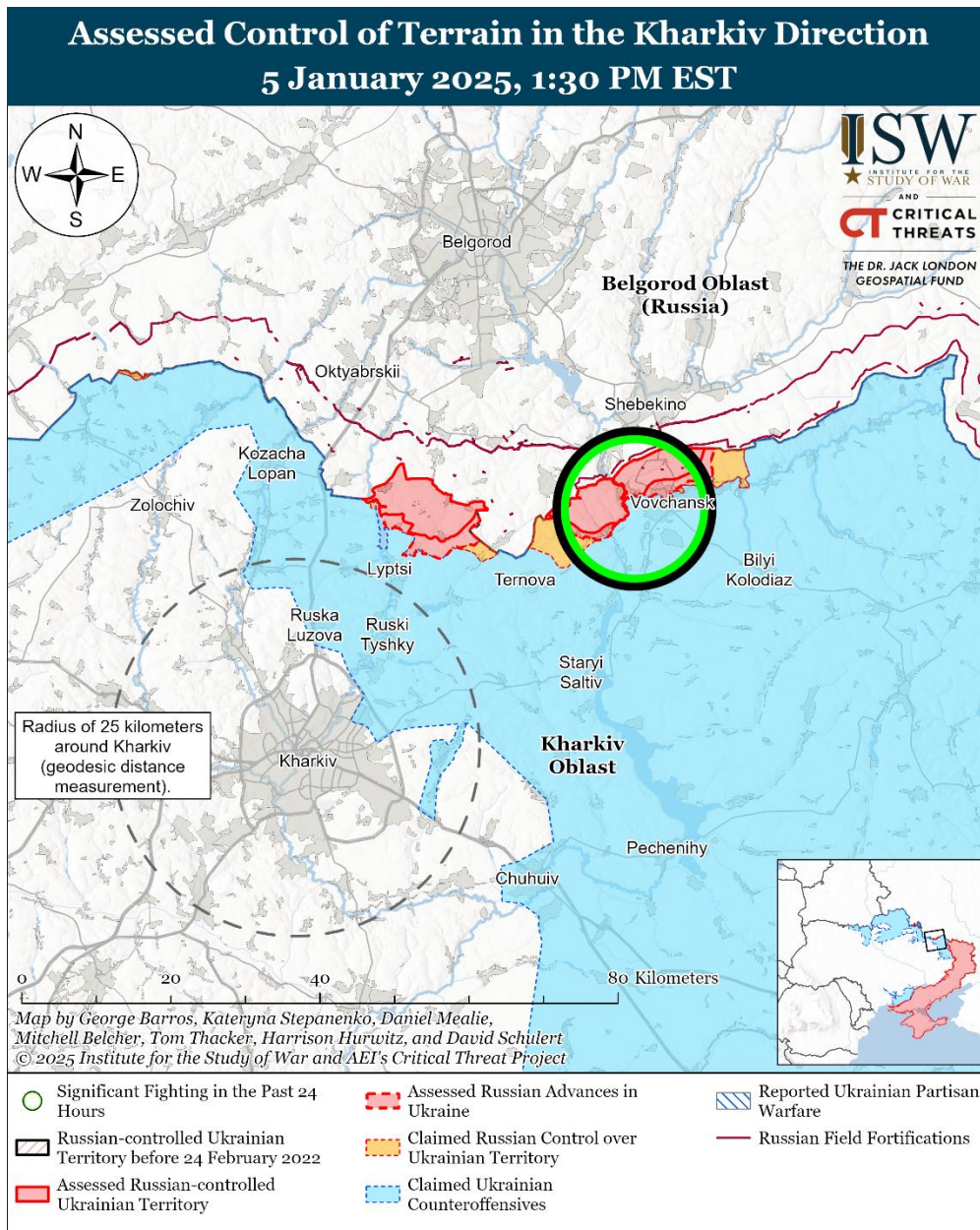


A Russian source claimed on January 5 that a Ukrainian missile strike near Lgov, Kursk Oblast killed Russian 76th Airborne (VDV) Division's Communications Head Lieutenant Colonel Valery Tereschchenko on December 30.[34] A Ukrainian source stated that Ukrainian forces launched an unspecified number of Storm Shadow missiles at a 76th VDV Division command post and killed eight senior commanders and wounded 20 personnel.[35]

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 continued limited offensive operations northeast of Kharkiv City near Starytsya and Vovchansk on January 4 and 5.[36] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated on January 5 that Russian forces are attacking and consolidating positions in small groups near Vovchansk.[37]



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)

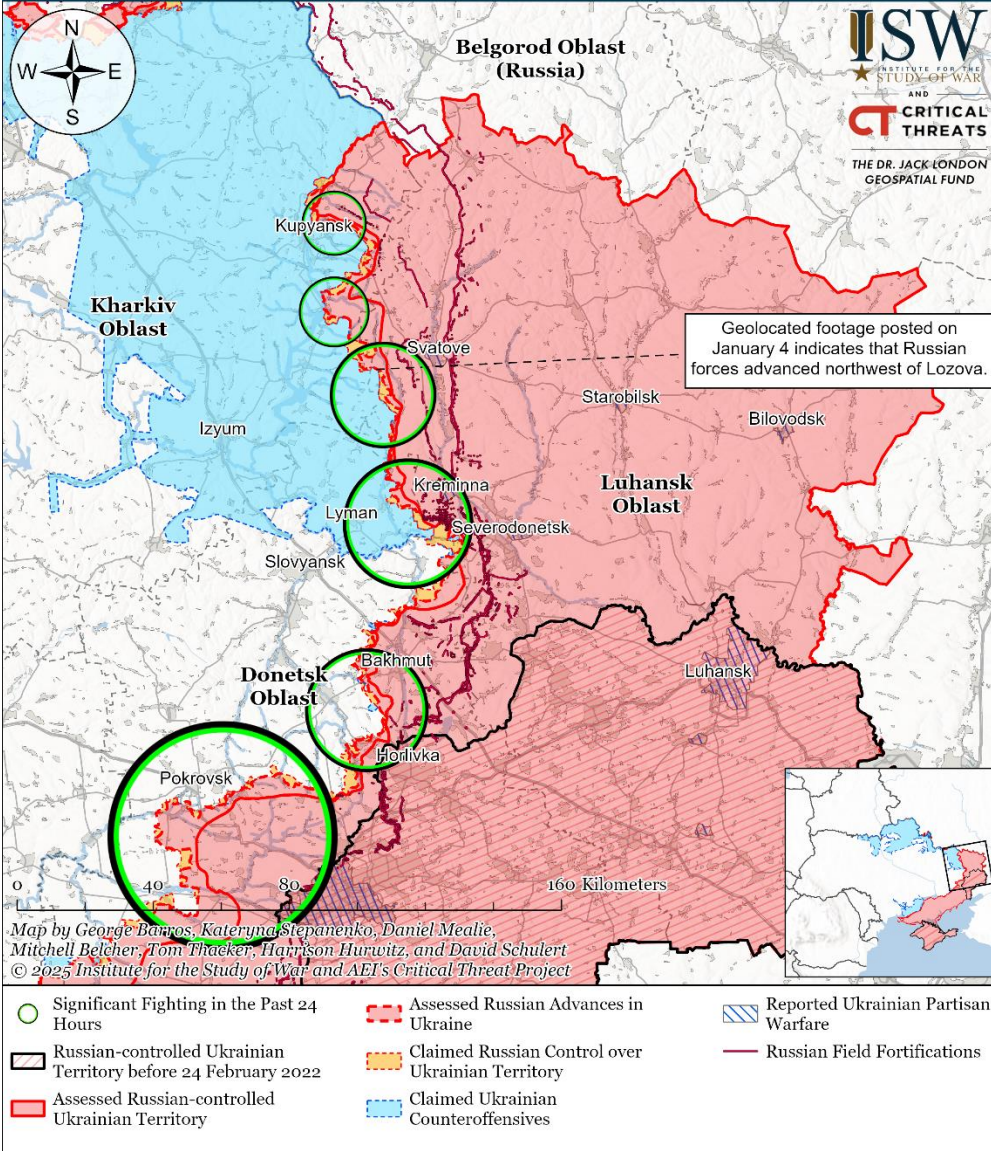
Note: ISW is now orienting Russian activity along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line in the Kupyansk, Borova, and Lyman directions to reflect Russian forces' priority operational goals in these areas.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on January 5 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Zapadne (north of Kupyansk), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this.[38] Russian forces attacked northeast of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka on January 4 and 5.[39] Ukrainian Kupyansk City Administration Head Andriy Besedin stated on January 4 that Russian forces are conducting glide bomb, multiple launch rocket system (MLRS), and drone strikes on Kupyansk and that the frontline is approximately two kilometers from the city's center.[40]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Borova direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 5. Geolocated footage published on January 4 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in the fields northwest of Lozova (northeast of Borova) during a roughly company-sized mechanized assault.[41] The Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces reported on January 5 that Russian forces conducted a mechanized assault of an unspecified echelon near Zahryzove (north of Borova) and that Ukrainian forces damaged two armored vehicles while repelling the assault.[42] Russian forces attacked north of Borova near Zahryzove; east of Borova near Nadiya, Pershotravneve, Novoserhiivka, Novoyehorivka, and Tverdokhlibove; and southeast of Borova near Makiivka on January 4 and 5.[43]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on January 5 but did not make confirmed advances. Russian forces attacked northwest of Kreminna near Yampolivka and Terny, west of Kreminna near Zarichne, and southwest of Kreminna in the Serebrianske forest area on January 4 and 5.[44]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast 5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST

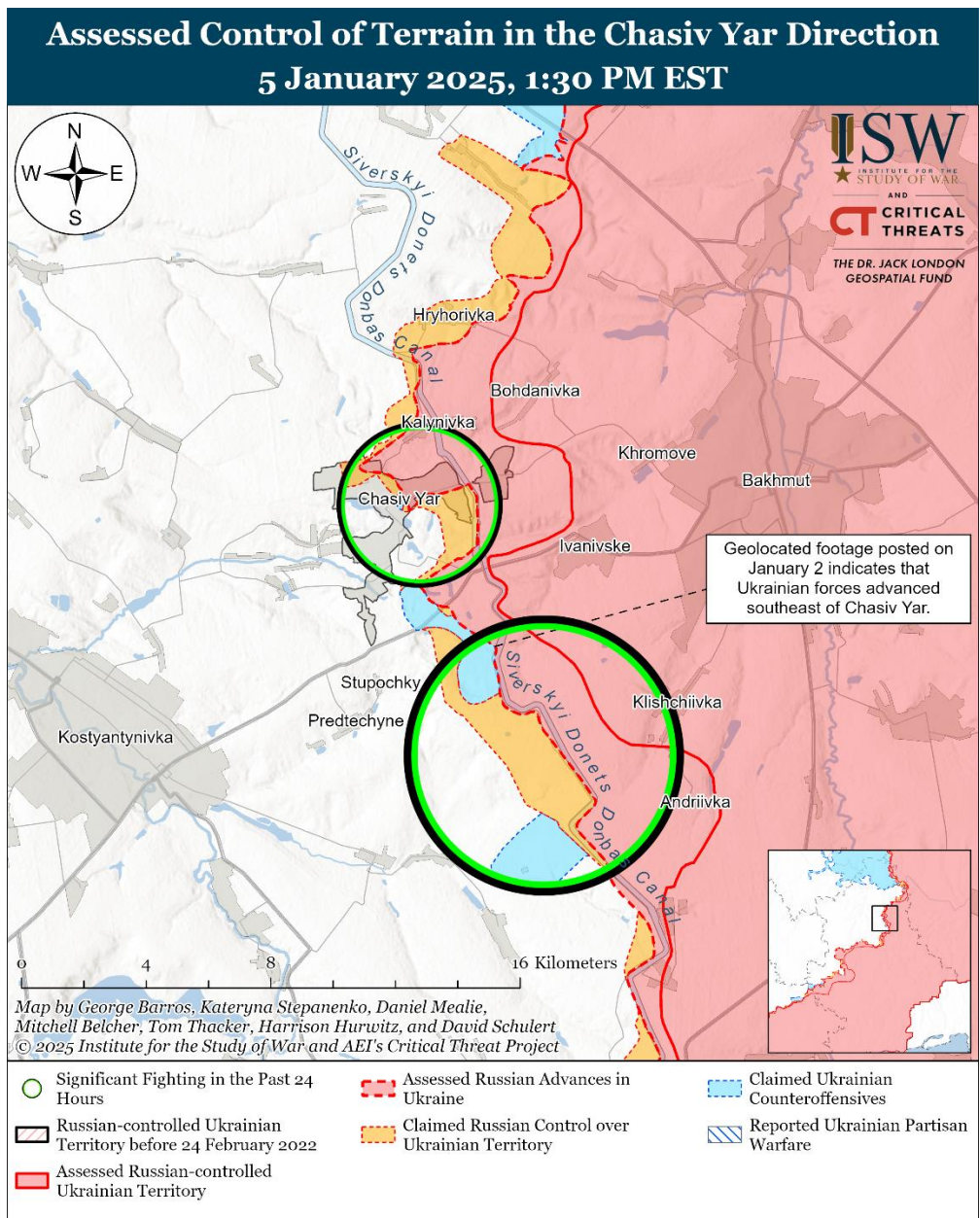


Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

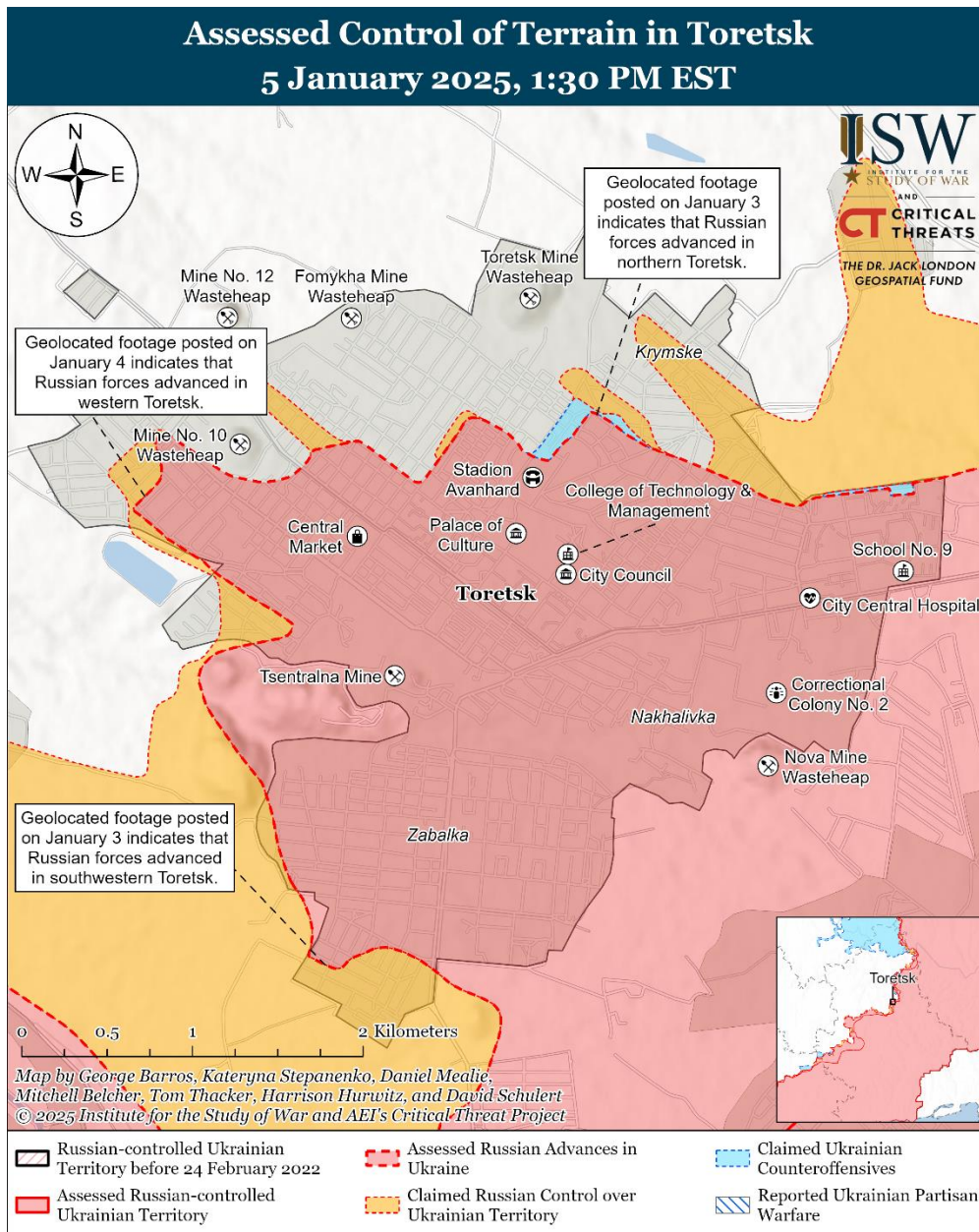
Note: ISW will be incorporating data previously reported as the Vuhledar direction as part of the Kurakhove direction moving forward to reflect the shifting operational situation in this area.

Russian forces attacked in the Siversk direction on January 5 but did not advance.[45]

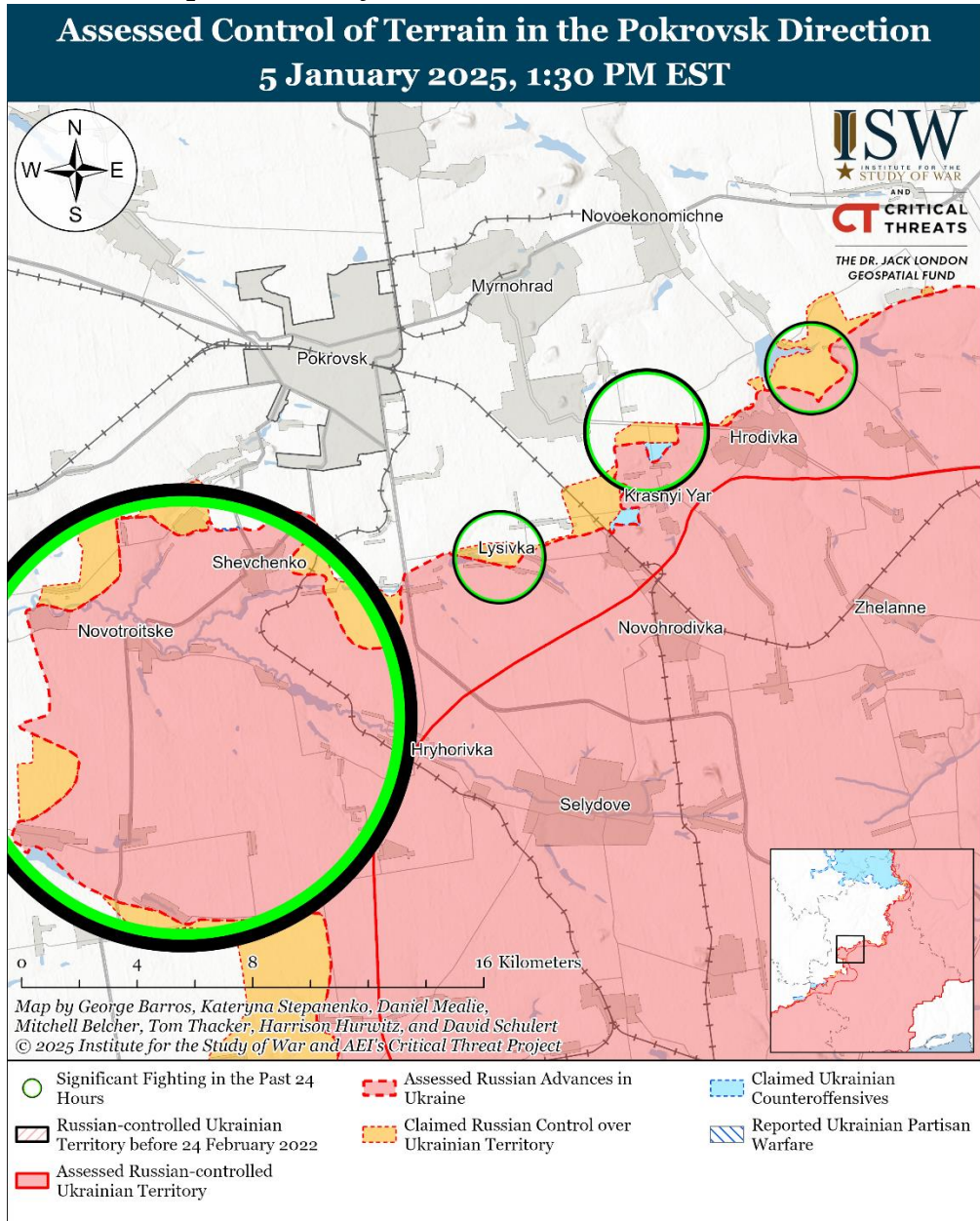
Ukrainian forces recently regained positions near Chasiv Yar amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on January 5. Geolocated footage published on January 2 shows that Ukrainian forces recaptured positions along a section of the Siverskyi Donets Donbas Canal southeast of Chasiv Yar.[46] Russian forces conducted offensive operations within and near Chasiv Yar itself, southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka, and south of Chasiv Yar near Bila Hora and Stupochky on January 4 and 5.[47] A Russian milblogger claimed on January 5 that Russian forces may intensify efforts to push Ukrainian forces from the Chasiv Yar Refractory Plant in central Chasiv Yar in the coming days.[48] Elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division reportedly continue to operate in Chasiv Yar.[49]



Russian forces recently marginally advanced in Toretsk amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 5. Geolocated footage published on January 3 and 4 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced along Kutuzova Street in western Toretsk, Saratovksa Street in northern Toretsk, and Kosmonavtiv Street in southwestern Toretsk.[50] Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Toretsk itself, northeast of Toretsk near Dyliivka and Krymske, and west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka on January 4 and 5.[51] A spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Toretsk direction reported on January 5 that Russian forces are now attacking in platoons of up to 20 soldiers after previously attacking in teams of roughly five personnel.[52] The Ukrainian officer reported that Russian forces are attempting to attacking under fog cover and that poor weather is inhibiting Russian logistics in the Toretsk direction.

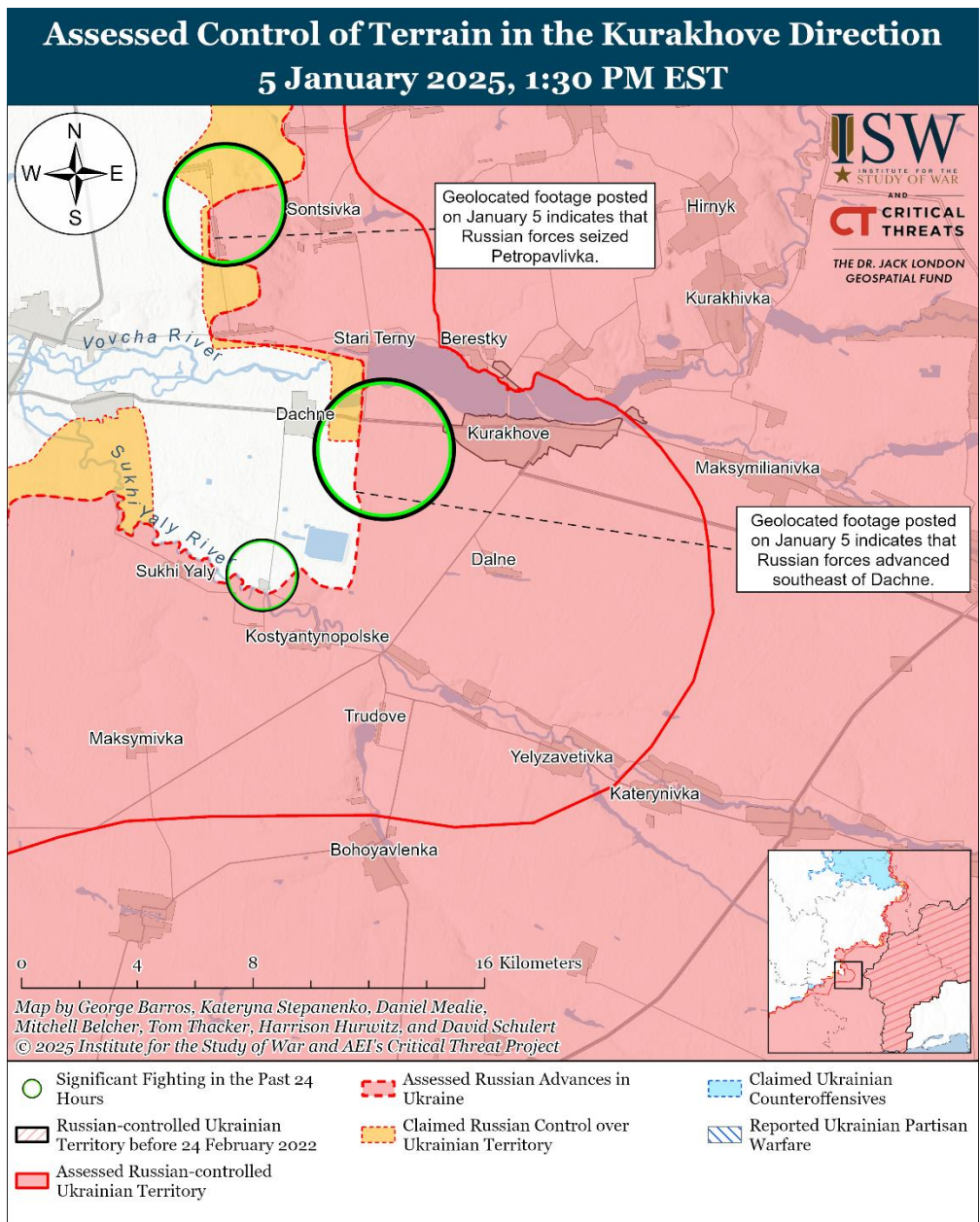


See topline for Russian advances east of Pokrovsk.



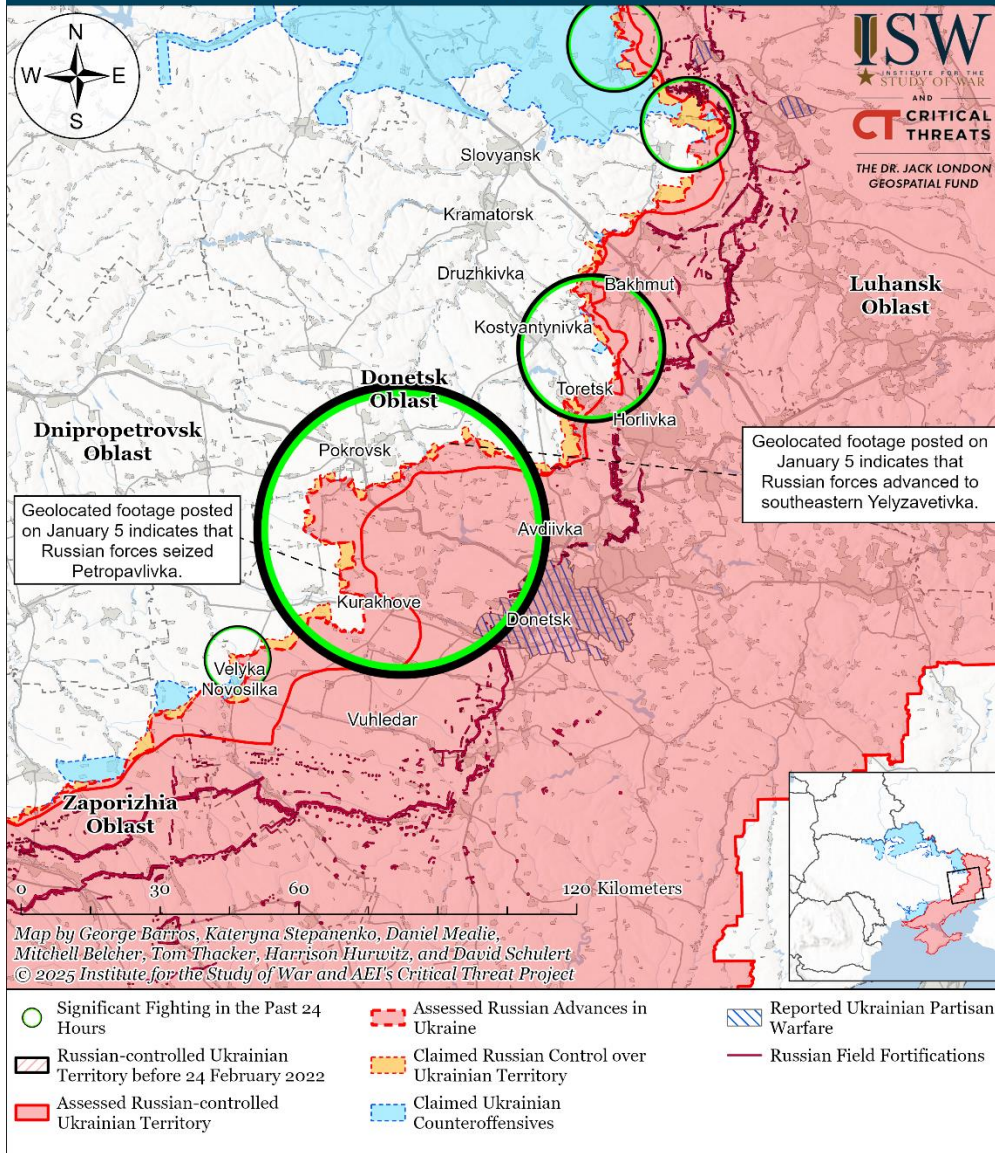
Russian forces continued offensive operations south of Pokrovsk on January 5. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing southwest of Pokrovsk towards Novooleksandrivka, along the Sribne-Novoandriivka line from Novoyelyzavetivka, and towards Yasenove from Ukrainka.[53] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim, however. Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Russian forces advanced within one kilometer of Kotlyne (southwest of Pokrovsk) and are attempting to interdict the T-04-06 Pokrovsk-Mezhove highway.[54] Fighting continued near Pokrovsk itself; northeast of Pokrovsk near Baranivka, Myrne, Yelyzavetivka, and Tymofiivka; east of Pokrovsk near Promin, Novooleksandrivka, Vozdvyzhenka, and Myrolyubivka; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Zelene, Novyi Trud, Shevchenko, and Pishchane; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Solone, Novoolenivka, Kotlyne, Uspenivka, Novovasylivka,

and Novoyelyzavetivka on January 4 and 5.[55] A Ukrainian intelligence officer serving in a Ukrainian National Guard brigade operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated that Russian forces are suffering up to 400 personnel casualties per day in the Pokrovsk direction but are not decreasing their tempo of assaults, noting that Russian forces are conducting these assaults with personnel who received only a few weeks of training.[56] The Ukrainian officer stated that Russian forces are conducting heavy artillery and air strikes against infrastructure and residential buildings in Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad (immediately east of Pokrovsk).[57] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated on January 5 that windy and snowy weather is complicating Russian drone operations and that Russian forces are actively using fiber optic drones in the area.[58]



Russian forces recently advanced in the Kurakhove direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 5. Geolocated footage published on January 5 showing elements of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) raising a flag in central Petropavlivka (northwest of Kurakhove) indicates that Russian forces likely recently seized the settlement.^[59] Additional geolocated footage published on January 5 indicates that Russian forces advanced in the fields southeast of Dachne (west of Kurakhove).^[60] Russian forces continued offensive operations near Kurakhove itself, northwest of Kurakhove near Petropavlivka and Slovyanka, west of Kurakhove near Dachne and in the direction of Kostyantynopil, south of Kurakhove towards Yantarne, and southwest of Kurakhove near Kostyantynopolske and Zelenivka on January 4 and 5.^[61] Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated on January 5 that Russian forces are only using armored vehicles in the Vuhledar and Kurakhove directions to transport infantry and are not using such vehicles in assault operations or for fire support.^[62] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kurakhove direction stated that Russian forces are using fiber-optic drones in the area.^[63] Elements of the Russian 346th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) and 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) are reportedly clearing the westernmost outskirts of Kurakhove.^[64] Elements of the Russian 255th Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Kurakhove direction. ^[65]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast 5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST

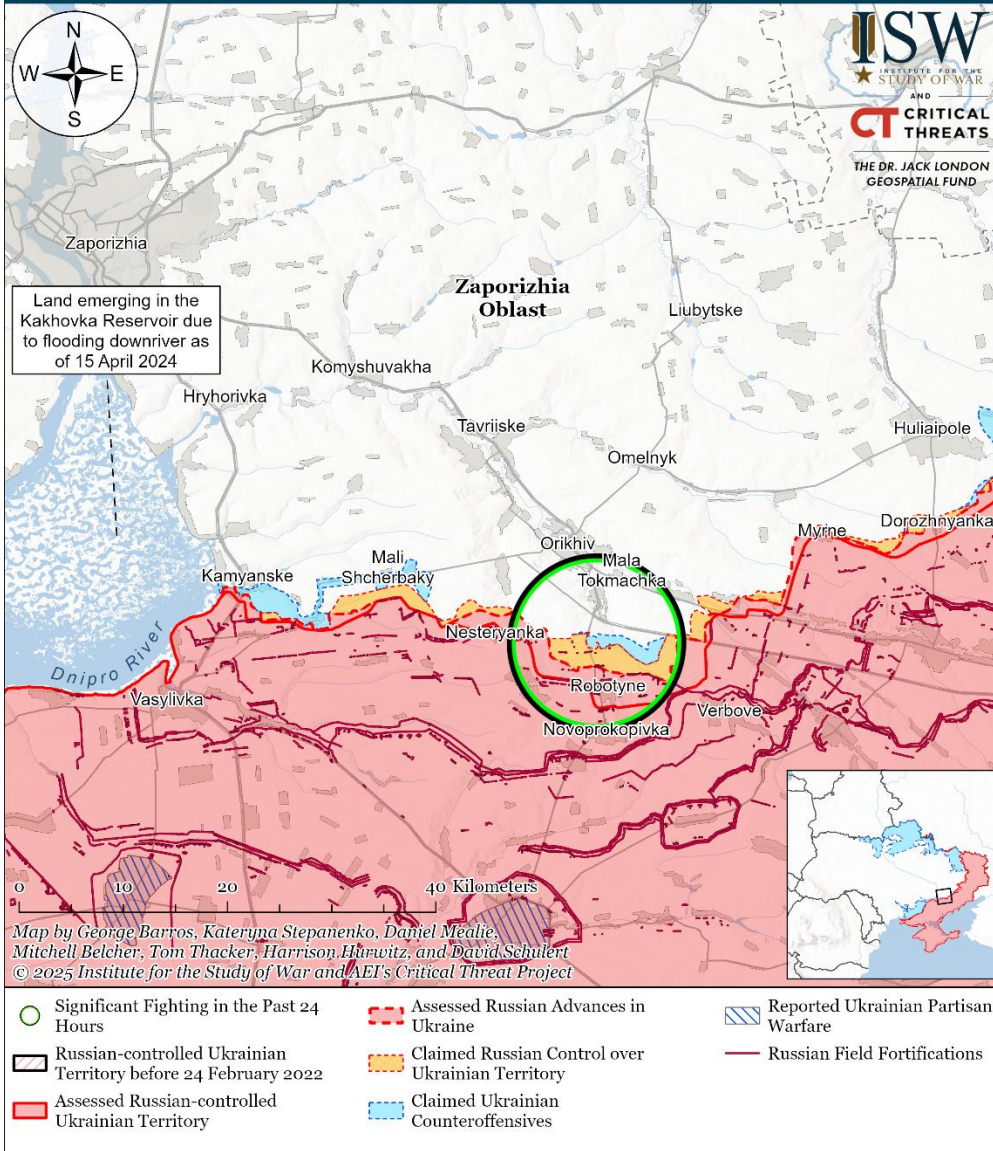


Russian forces continued offensive operations near Velyka Novosilka on January 5 but did not make confirmed advances. Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Regiment and 218th Tank Regiment (both of the 127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) are attacking along the Velyka Novosilka-Hulyaipole road.[66] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced south of Velyka Novosilka near Neskuchne, but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[67] Russian forces also continued assaults north of Velyka Novosilka near Novyi Komar on January 5.[68]

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

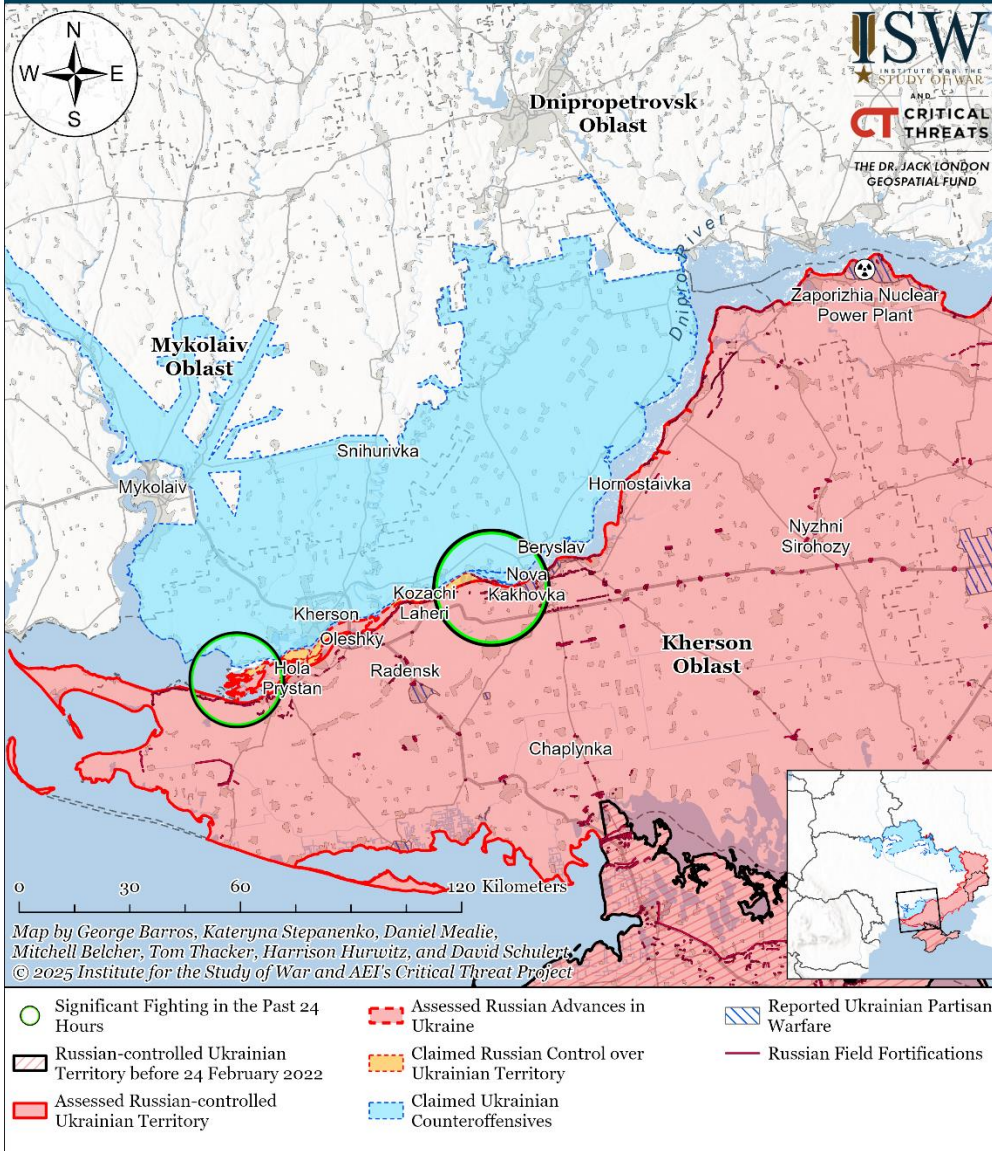
Russian forces continued ground attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on January 5 but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced near Novodanylivka (north of Robotyne), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[69] Russian forces also continued ground attacks near Bilohirya (northwest of Robotyne) and Mala Tokmachka (northeast of Robotyne) on January 4 and 5.[70] Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on January 5 that a GUR drone strike killed Sergey Melnikov, Chief of Staff of the North Ossetian "Storm Ossetia" volunteer battalion (reportedly of the 429th Motorized Rifle Regiment, 19th Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) while driving on the Vasylivka-Tokmak highway on December 29, 2024.[71] The Storm Ossetia volunteer battalion confirmed on December 30 that Melnikov was killed in action.[72]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction 5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Dnipro direction near the Zabych and Kozatskyi islands (southwest and east of Kherson City, respectively) on January 4 and 5 but did not advance.^[73] Elements of the Russian 81st Artillery Regiment and drone elements of the 26th Motorized Rifle Regiment (both of the 70th Motorized Rifle Division, 18th CAA, SMD) reportedly continue operating in the Kherson direction.^[74]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction 5 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



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

Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the afternoon and evening on January 4 and overnight on January 4 to 5. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 30 Shahed and decoy drones from the northeastern direction during the afternoon and evening on January 4.[75] The Ukrainian Air Force stated that Ukrainian forces downed 14 drones and that 16 drones were "lost," likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference, as of 2000 local time. The Ukrainian National Police reported on January 5 that a Russian drone strike damaged an infrastructure facility in Zaporizkyi Raion, Zaporizhia Oblast during the day on January 4.[76] The Ukrainian Air Force reported on January 5 that Russian forces launched 103 Shahed and decoy drones

from Bryansk and Oryol oblasts and Millerovo, Rostov Oblast overnight on January 4 to 5.^[77] The Ukrainian Air Force stated that Ukrainian forces downed 61 drones over Poltava, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr, and Khmelnytskyi oblasts and that 42 drones were "lost" as of 0900 local time. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that debris from downed drones damaged several houses in Kharkiv Oblast overnight.

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

Nothing significant to report.

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 reporting on 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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