



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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May 29, 2024, 7:15pm ET

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

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

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

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30pm ET on May 29. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 30 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Advisor to the Head of the Ukrainian President's Office Mykhaylo Podolyak stated that US-provided military aid has started arriving on the frontline but that it will take "weeks" for the gradual increase in US-provided military aid to reach "critical volumes."[1] Podolyak told *Bloomberg* in an article published on May 29 that Russian forces currently have the "absolute advantage" in shells and missiles and that Russian forces will continue to try to advance along the frontline presumably to take advantage of the time before US military assistance arrives in sufficient quantities at the front. Podolyak warned that Russia may be trying to force Ukraine and its allies to freeze the current frontline — a situation that ISW has long assessed would be advantageous to Russia by giving the Russian military time to reconstitute and prepare for renewed aggression against Ukraine.[2] Additional Western military assistance will also likely take time to reach the frontlines and to be properly integrated into Ukrainian frontline troop formations. Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala stated on May 28 that the first "tens of thousands" of 155mm artillery ammunition sourced through the Czech-led initiative for Ukraine will arrive in Ukraine within "days." [3]

Sweden announced its 16th and largest military aid package to Ukraine, worth 13.3 billion kronor (about \$1.25 billion), on May 29.[4] The Swedish Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that the package includes ASC 890 Airborne Surveillance and Control aircraft (the Swedish version of an airborne early warning and control [AWACS] airborne radar system) and RB 99-AMRAAM medium-range air-to-air missiles (that are also modified to be ground-to-air) to strengthen Ukrainian air defense capabilities, additional 155mm artillery ammunition, and "the entire Swedish stock" of Pansarbandvagn 302 armored vehicles among other provisions.[5]

Western officials are increasingly suggesting that they support Ukraine's right to use Western-provided weapons to strike military targets in Russia. French President Emmanuel Macron stated on May 28 at a joint press conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz that France supports Ukraine's use of French-provided weapons to strike Russian "military sites from which missiles are fired" and other Russian "military sites from which Ukraine is attacked" in Russian territory.[6] Macron noted that Ukraine should not strike "other military" or civilian targets in Russia, likely referring to Russian sites that are not actively involved in attacks on Ukraine. Scholz stated at the May 28 press conference that Germany recognizes Ukraine's right to defend itself against Russian strikes under international law as long as "regulations" on Ukraine's use of Western-provided weapons are "within the framework of international law." [7] Scholz's recognition of Ukraine's right to strike military targets on Russian territory is notable as it defines the issue in terms of international legal norms but ultimately does not reflect a change in Germany's position against providing Ukraine with long-range Taurus missiles or allowing Ukraine to strike military targets in Russia with German-provided weapons.[8]

Other Western countries have recently noted that they do not impose restrictions on Ukraine's ability to use weapons they have provided to strike military targets in Russia. Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly stated on May 29 that Canada "does not have any conditions for the use of arms supplied to Ukraine" and that Canada does not oppose Ukraine using Canada-provided weapons against military targets in Russia.[9] Polish Deputy Defense Minister Cezary Tomczyk stated that Poland also has no restrictions on Ukraine's use of Polish-supplied weapons on military targets in Russia.[10] Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen stated that Finland has not set "special restrictions" on its military assistance to Ukraine as Finland "assumes that it will be used in accordance with international law." [11] Thus far 10 countries have expressed support for Ukraine's use of weapons they have provided to strike military targets on Russian territory with some or no restrictions: the UK, France, Sweden, Czechia, Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Canada.[12] US Pentagon Spokesperson Sabrina Singh and US National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby both reiterated on May 28 that there is no change in the US position against using US-provided weapons to strike military targets in Russia.[13]

Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed Russian Presidential Aide Alexei Dyumin as Secretary of Russia's State Council on May 29. [14] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitri Peskov stated that Dyumin will "resolve issues" regarding the functions of the State Council, which is an advisory body that tasks and coordinates the implementation of domestic and foreign policy between Russia's federal, regional, and municipal authorities, including occupation administrations in occupied Ukraine, and assists in drafting Russia's "strategic goals." [15] Putin recently appointed Dyumin to the supervisory board of state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec and has specifically tasked Dyumin with assisting Russian efforts to provide the Russian military with its necessary weapons and equipment and oversee Russia's defense industrial base (DIB).[16] Some Russian milbloggers amplified the news of Dyumin's new position, and one Russian milblogger claimed that Dyumin has "all [the] best qualities" of the infamous Soviet director of the Soviet People's Commissariat for International Affairs (NKVD) Lavrentiy Beria.[17] The milblogger is likely referring to Beria's lesser-known role in expanding the Soviet Union's defense production by mobilizing slave labor in the Soviet Union's Gulag — a system of labor camps and prisons that imprisoned millions of criminals and political prisoners — insinuating that Dyumin will similarly succeed in expanding Russia's defense production.[18]

Russia blamed Ukraine for the recent several-month-long suspension of prisoner of war (POW) exchanges over the backdrop of reports of pervasive Russian abuses against Ukrainian POWs. Kremlin-appointed Russian Commissioner for Human Rights Tatiana Moskalkova accused Ukraine of making "far-fetched demands" that caused a pause in POW exchanges over the past several months and claimed that Russia has done its best to maintain a dialogue with the Ukrainian government and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) regarding POW affairs.[19] Representative for the Ukrainian Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of POWs Petro Yatsenko noted in November 2023 that Russia previously paused POW exchanges over the summer of 2023 for an unspecified reason.[20] The last POW exchange between Russia and Ukraine took place on February 8, 2024, with the facilitation of the United Arab Emirates.[21] *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)* noted on May 29 that Ukraine has had to open a third camp for Russian POWs due in part to "the actual blocking of exchanges by the Russian side," and in part due to the growing numbers of Russian deserters who become POWs, consistent with several recent Ukrainian statements that Russian officials are the ones resisting the continuation of POW exchanges.[22]

In recent months following the last POW exchange, Russia has perpetrated a series of apparent abuses against Ukrainian POWs, including summarily executing Ukrainian POWs and using POWs as human shields on the battlefield (both violations of the Geneva Convention on POWs) and purportedly operating a "black market" to sell Ukrainian POWs to Russian paramilitary groups.[23] Russia is also using a battalion comprised mainly of Ukrainian POWs to fight in Ukraine, another blatant violation of the Geneva Convention on POWs.[24] Moskalkova's accusation that Ukraine is the party responsible for the cessation of POW exchanges may be an attempt to rhetorically shift the blame towards Ukraine and obfuscate a litany of well-documented Russian abuses of Ukrainian POWs, potentially to stoke discontent in Ukrainian society or to discourage Western support for Ukraine. The Kremlin appears to be using the politics of POW exchanges as another rhetorical device to undermine Ukrainian decision-making.

Russian President Vladimir Putin continues his efforts to prepare the Russian population for a protracted war effort. Putin stated during a meeting of Russia's Council for Strategic Development and National Projects and the State Council commission for socio-economic development on May 29 that all Russians must understand that they are living through a unique and historical moment and must "work as if [they are] on the frontline" and "feel mobilized" for Russia to achieve its goals.[25] Kremlin officials often invoke the mythos of the Great Patriotic War (Second World War) to inspire support and confidence in Russia's war effort. Putin likely intended to invoke similar memories of Soviet sacrifice and full-scale social and economic mobilization.[26] ISW previously assessed that Putin's decision to appoint Andrei Belousov as Russian Defense Minister was a significant development in his efforts to mobilize Russia's economy for a protracted war effort against Ukraine and possibly prepare for a future confrontation with NATO, and Putin will likely continue various informational and rhetorical efforts to prepare Russian society for greater economic mobilization if he intends to pursue such an unpopular policy of further economic and social mobilization in the mid- to long-term.[27]

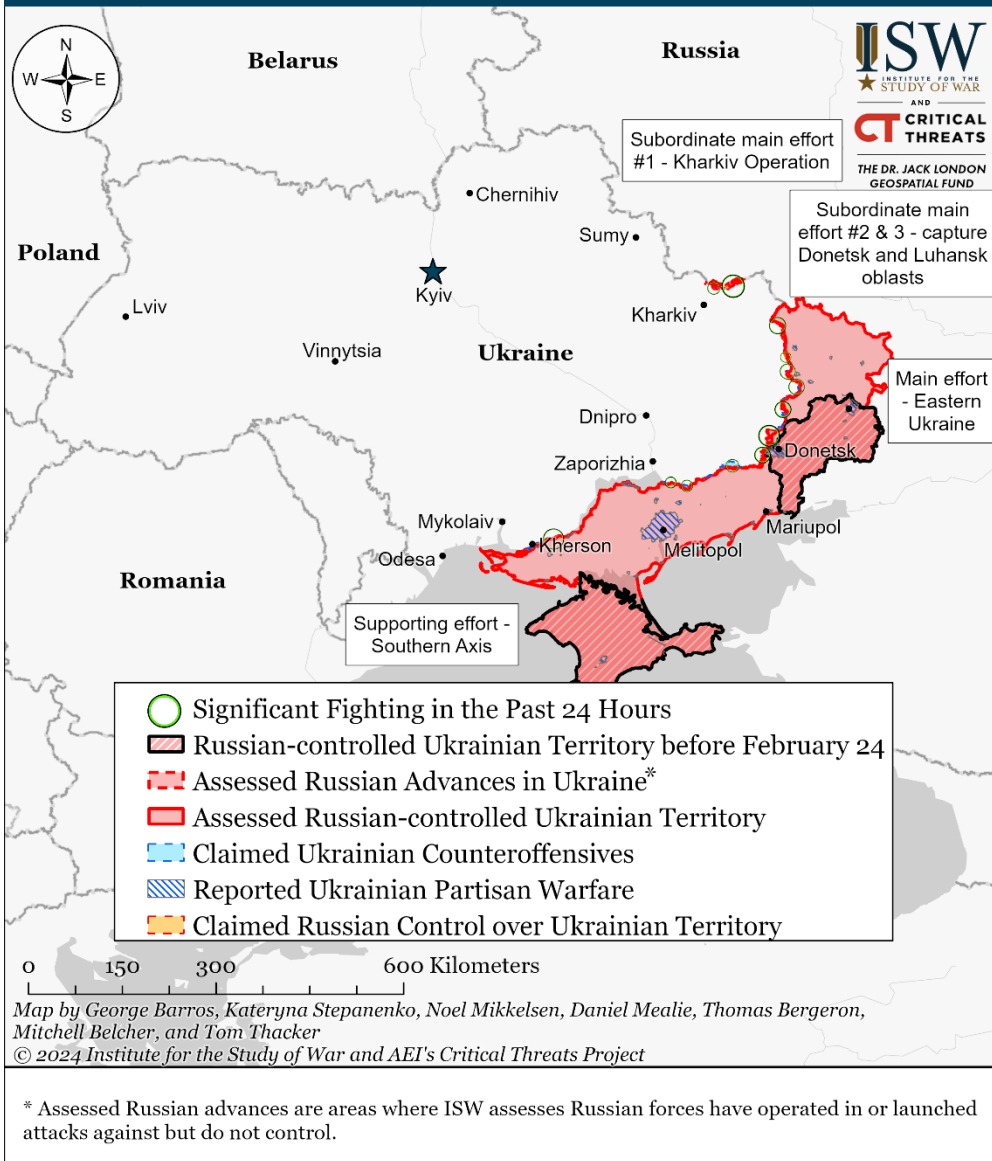
Belarus suspended its participation in the Cold War-era Conventional Armed Forces (CFE) in Europe Treaty on May 28.[28] The Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) claimed that Belarus would resume its implementation of the CFE Treaty if NATO member countries also implement the CFE Treaty.[29] Russia withdrew from the CFE Treaty in 2023, and Belarus' and Russia's respective suspension and withdrawal from the treaty are likely part of ongoing attempts to

deter the West from providing military aid to Ukraine and from allowing Ukraine to use Western-provided weapons to strike military targets in Russia.[30] Russian officials criticized Moldova's suspension of the CFE Treaty in March 2024 and claimed that it was against Russian interests.[31] Russian officials notably did not criticize Belarus for suspending the CFE Treaty, and Kremlin newswire *TASS* claimed that Belarus had "made every effort" to preserve the CFE treaty, although it is unclear what efforts *TASS* is referring to.[32]

Key Takeaways:

- **Advisor to the Head of the Ukrainian President's Office Mykhaylo Podolyak stated that US-provided military aid has started arriving on the frontline but that it will take "weeks" for the gradual increase in US-provided military aid to reach "critical volumes.**
- **Sweden announced its 16th and largest military aid package to Ukraine, worth 13.3 billion kronor (about \$1.25 billion), on May 29.**
- **Western officials are increasingly suggesting that they support Ukraine's right to use Western-provided weapons to strike military targets in Russia.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed Russian Presidential Aide Alexei Dyumin as Secretary of Russia's State Council on May 29.**
- **Russia blamed Ukraine for the recent several-month-long suspension of prisoner of war (POW) exchanges over the backdrop of reports of pervasive Russian abuses against Ukrainian POWs.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin continues his efforts to prepare the Russian population for a protracted war effort.**
- **Belarus suspended its participation in the Cold War-era Conventional Armed Forces (CFE) in Europe Treaty on May 28.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced north and northeast of Kharkiv City, near Kreminna, Chasiv Yar, and Avdiivka.**
- **Russia continues efforts to expand social benefits for Russian military personnel, veterans of the war in Ukraine, and their families.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 29, 2024, 3:00 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.

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

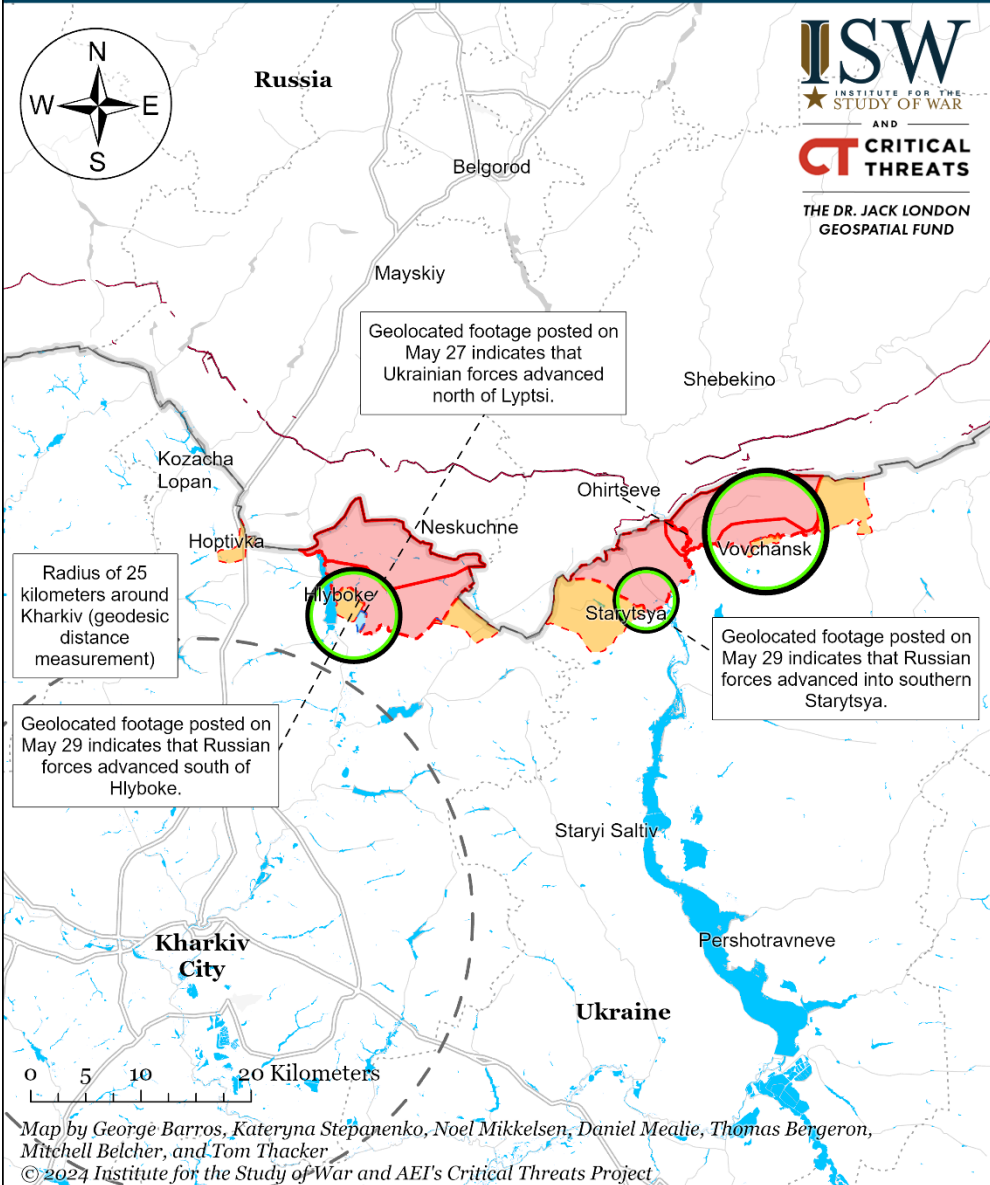
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces recently marginally advanced north of Kharkiv City near Lyptsi amid continued ground assaults in the area on May 29. Geolocated footage published on May 29 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced within southeastern Hlyboke (north of Lyptsi and Kharkiv City).[33] The commander of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Kharkiv direction stated that Russian forces are accumulating personnel near Hlyboke using light vehicles such as motorcycles and ATVs to bring infantry close to the frontline.[34] Russian milbloggers noted that the tempo of Russian offensive operations has increased near Lyptsi and claimed that Russian forces advanced up to 350 meters in the Lyptsi direction.[35] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 18th Motorized Rifle Division (11th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) have switched to "active defense" operations along the Hlyboke-Lukyantsi line (north of Kharkiv Oblast), however, suggesting that Ukrainian forces may have blunted some of the rate of Russian advances and forced Russian troops onto the tactical defensive.[36] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces also conducted assaults towards Zelene (east of Lyptsi).[37]

Russian forces recently advanced northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk as Russian forces continued assaults in the area on May 29. Geolocated footage published on May 29 indicates that Russian forces advanced within northeastern Starystya (southwest of Vovchansk and northeast of Kharkiv City).[38] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced up to 350 meters in the Vovchansk direction and that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking within Vovchansk.[39] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted assaults towards Synelnykove (just southwest of Vovchansk).[40] Mashovets stated that elements of the 25th and 138th motorized rifle brigades (both of the 6th Combined Arms Army [CAA], LMD), 2nd Motorized Rifle Division (1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]), and 47th Tank Division (1st GTA, MMD) are consolidating their positions near Buhruvatka (southwest of Vovchansk) in preparation for future assaults towards Vovchansk.[41] Mashovets noted that Russian forces do not seem to be transitioning to defensive operations in this direction in contrast with the Lyptsi direction.[42]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of May 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

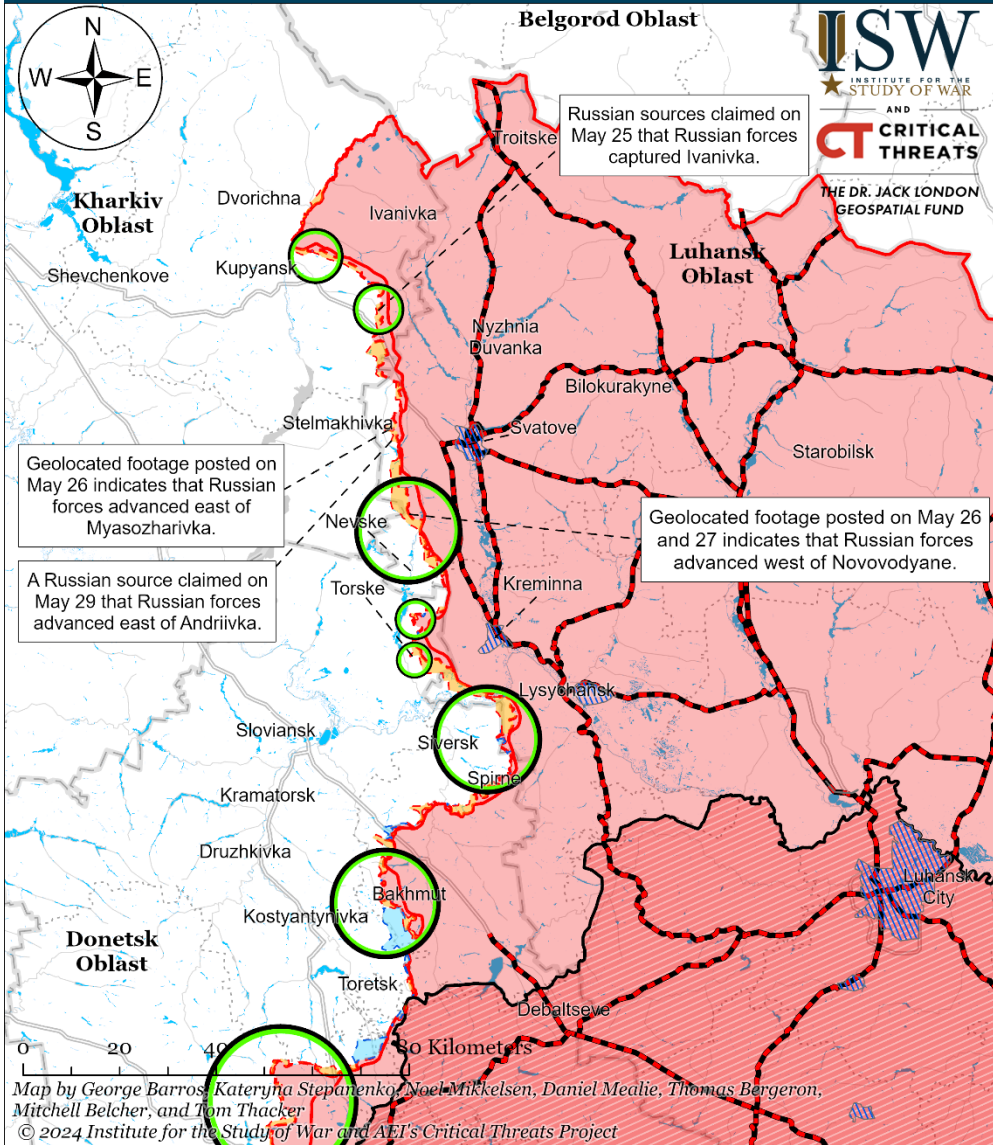
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on May 28 that Russian forces advanced up to 600 meters near Vovchansk. A Russian source claimed on May 28 that Russian forces advanced 200 meters near Lyptsi.

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 recently advanced near Kreminna amid continued Russian offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremina line on May 29. Geolocated footage published on May 29 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced east of Torske (west of Kreminna).[43] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced near Berestove (northeast of Svatove) and east of Andriivka (west of Svatove), although ISW has not observed visual evidence of these claims.[44] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; northwest of Svatove near Stepova Novoselivka; southwest of Svatove near Novoyehorivka, Druzhelyubivka, and Nevske; west of Kreminna near Terny and Torske; and south of Kreminna in the Serebrianske forest area and near Bilohorivka.[45] Elements of the Russian 47th Tank Division (1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) reportedly continue operating near Stepova Novoselivka.[46]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of May 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

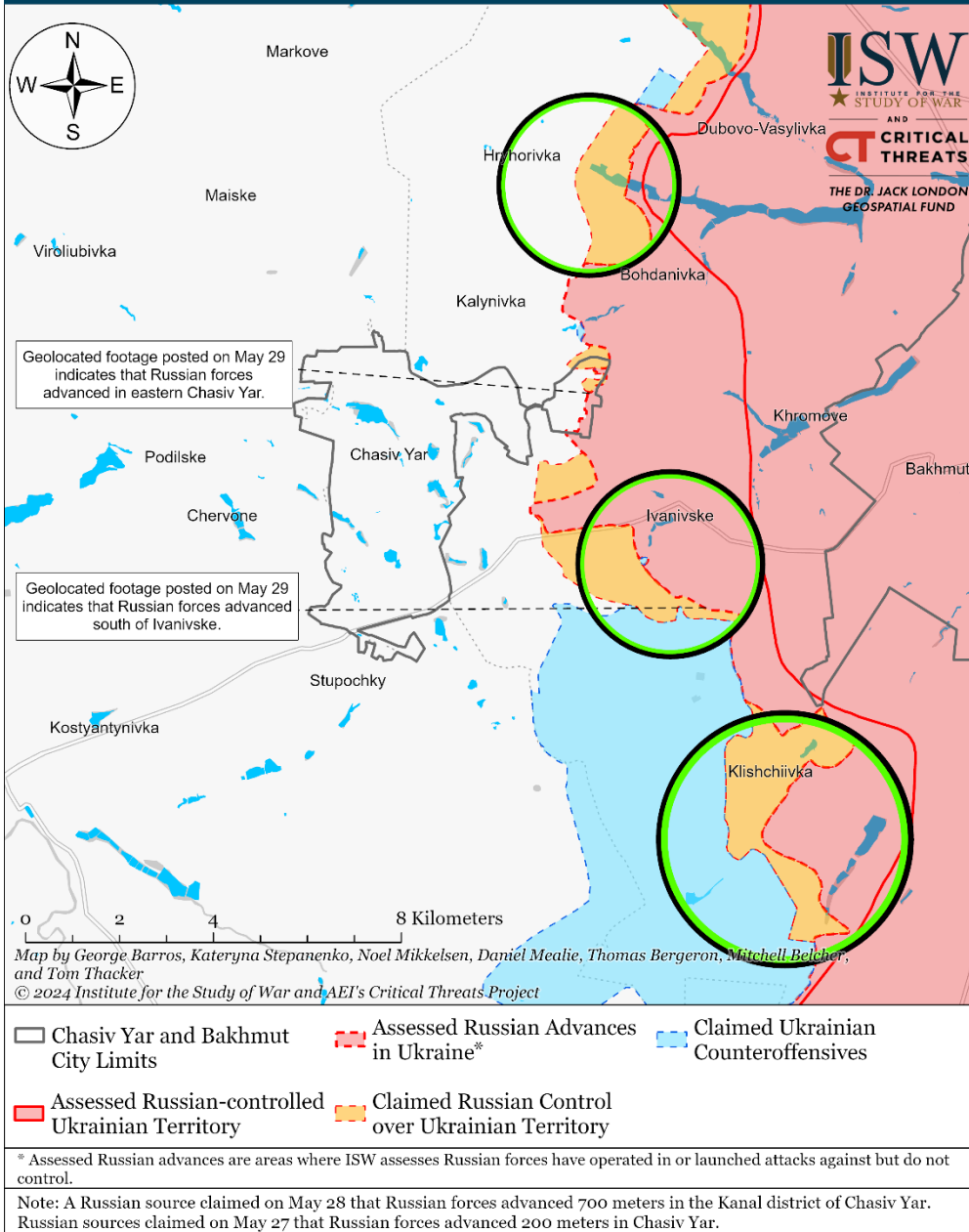
Note: Russian sources claimed on May 28 that Russian forces advanced between one and 1.43 kilometers near Myasozharivka. A Russian source claimed on May 28 that Russian forces advanced 400 meters near Berestove. A Russian source claimed on May 25 that Russian forces captured 70 percent of Berestove.

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

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted one ground attack in the Siversk direction (northeast of Bakhmut) near Vyimka on May 29.[47] Elements of the 2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps (LNR AC) continue to operate near Spirne (southeast of Siversk).[48]

Russian forces recently made marginal advances east and southeast of Chasiv Yar. Geolocated footage published on May 29 shows that Russian forces have advanced south of Ivanivske (southeast of Chasiv Yar) and within the Kanal Microraion in eastern Chasiv Yar.[49] Milbloggers reported that Russian forces have improved their tactical positions in the Kanal Microraion, consistent with the available geolocated footage.[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division established new footholds in the southern and eastern outskirts of the Novyi Microraion (also in eastern Chasiv Yar), although ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of Russian forces operating on or near the outskirts of the Novyi Microraion.[51] Another milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Leningrad Military District) are pushing Ukrainian troops out of their positions in forest areas north of Kalynivka (just north of Chasiv Yar).[52] The Ukrainian General Staff reported Russian ground attacks near the Novyi Microraion; north of Chasiv Yar near Hryhorivka; near Ivanivske; and southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[53] Elements of the Russian "Sever-V" Brigade (Russian Volunteer Corps) and BARS-13 Battalion (Russian Combat Reserve) reportedly continue operating near Chasiv Yar in addition to elements of the 98th VDV Division and 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade.[54]

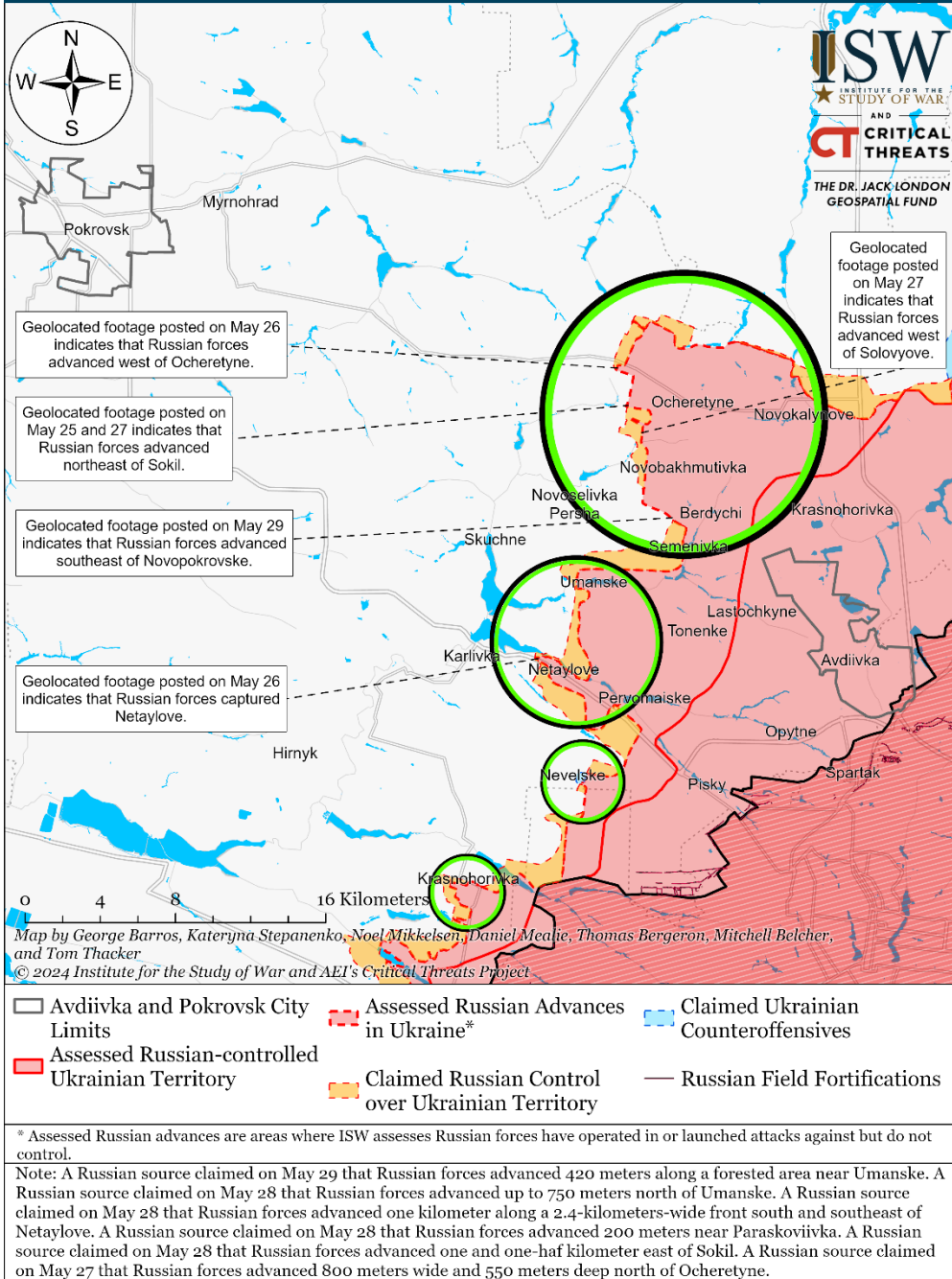
Assessed Control of Terrain near Chasiv Yar as of May 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Avdiivka. Geolocated footage published on May 29 shows that a Russian mechanized squad advanced to a windbreak just southeast of Novopokrovske (northwest of Avdiivka).[55] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces secured "partial success" in an unspecified area near Avdiivka on May 28 following assaults with Russian aviation support.[56] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in the Umanske area (west of Avdiivka), with one milblogger claiming that Russian forces advanced north and northeast of the settlement and another claiming that Russian forces advanced up to 420 meters deep in forested

areas near Umanske.[57] Milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are also attacking along the Sokil-Umanske-Karlivka line (northwest and southwest of Avdiivka) and that Russian forces have begun fighting for forest areas near the Karlivske Reservoir near Karlivka (southwest of Avdiivka).[58] The Ukrainian General Staff reported a high intensity of attacks in the Pokrovsk (west of Avdiivka) direction on May 29, including northwest of Avdiivka near Novoselivka Persha, Novooleksandrivka, Sokil, and Prohres; west of Avdiivka near Yasnobrodivka; and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske.[59] Elements of the Russian 41st Combined Arms Army (Central Military District [CMD]) and 24th Spetsnaz Brigade reportedly continue to operate in the Avdiivka area.[60]

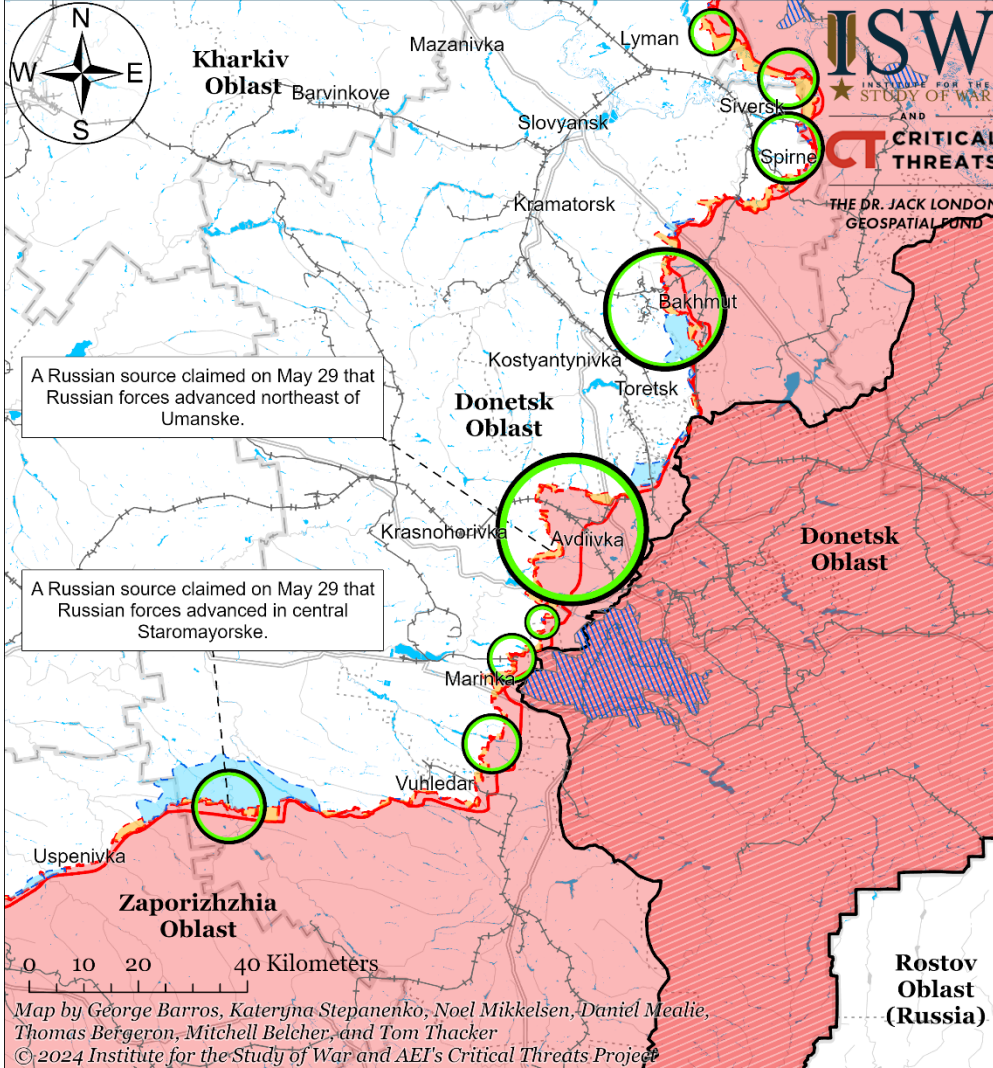
Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of May 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on May 29, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian sources amplified footage showing a Russian reinforced platoon-sized mechanized assault near Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City) and claimed that Russian forces managed to break through some Ukrainian defensive lines in the area.[61] Russian forces continued offensive operations in and near Krasnohorivka and southwest of

Donetsk City near Paraskoviivka, Kostyantynivka, and Vodyane.[62] Elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) reportedly continue operating near Kostyantynivka, and elements of the 14th Spetsnaz Brigade are operating near Vuhledar (southwest of Donetsk City).[63]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

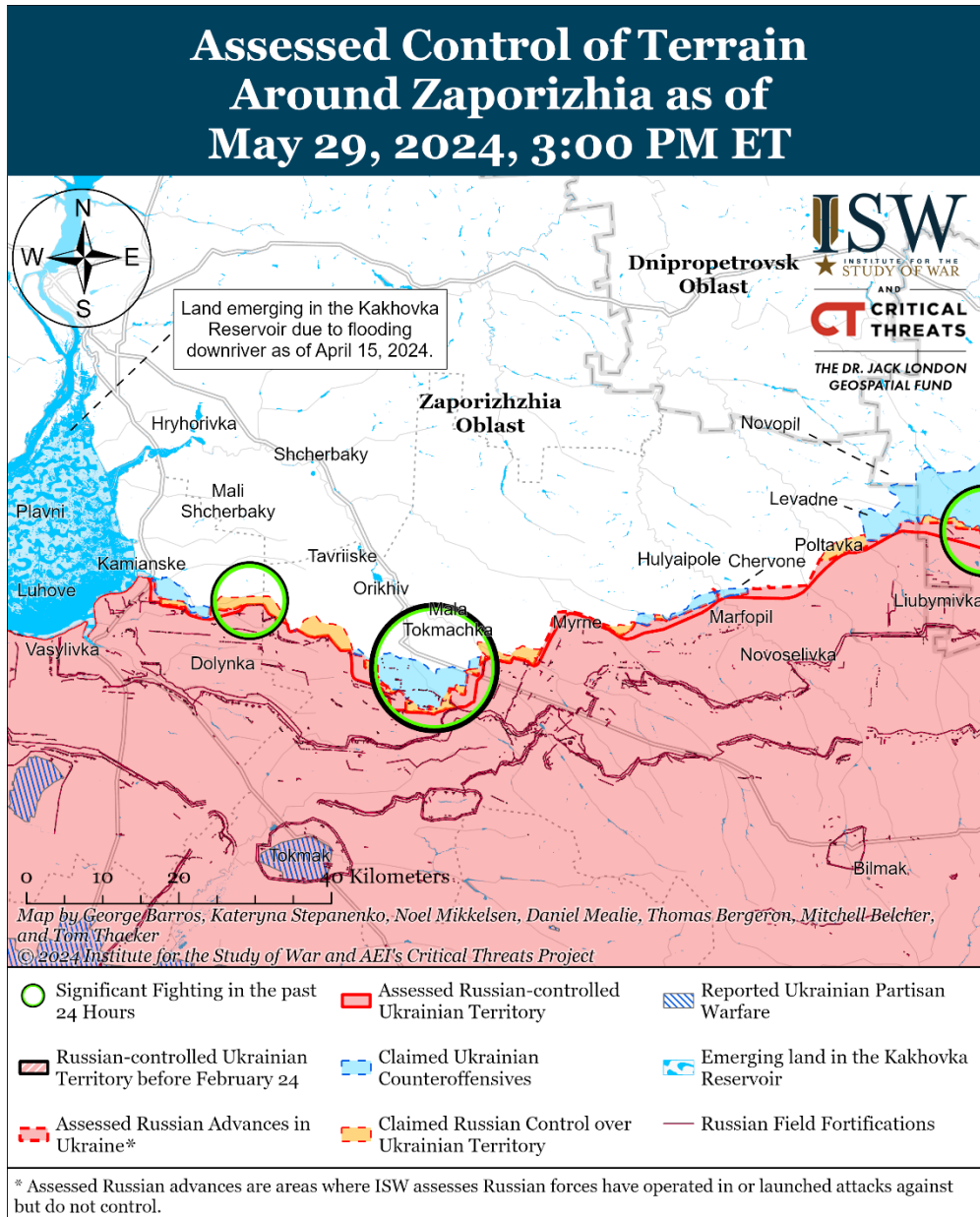


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- + Major Railroads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

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

Note: A Russian source claimed on May 29 that Russian forces established a foothold west of Staromayorske and advanced along a 700 meter deep and two kilometer wide frontline into the settlement. A Russian source claimed on May 28 that Russian forces advanced along a 100 meter deep and 200 meter wide frontline in Urozhaine and advanced 300 meters west of the settlement. A Russian source claimed on May 28 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer in the Siversk direction.

Russian forces reportedly recently advanced in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area. Several Russian milbloggers claimed on May 29 that elements of the Russian 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment and 218th Tank Regiment (both of the 127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) advanced into central Staromayorske and within Urozhaine (both south of Velyka Novosilka).[64] One milblogger claimed that Russian forces have advanced 100 meters deep along a 200-meter-wide front northward into Urozhaine and 100 meters deep along a 300-meter-wide front within Staromayorske.[65] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of these claimed advances but has observed footage of recent Russian reduced-company sized armored assaults in the Staromayorske area.[66] Russian forces may have made marginal advances during these assaults.

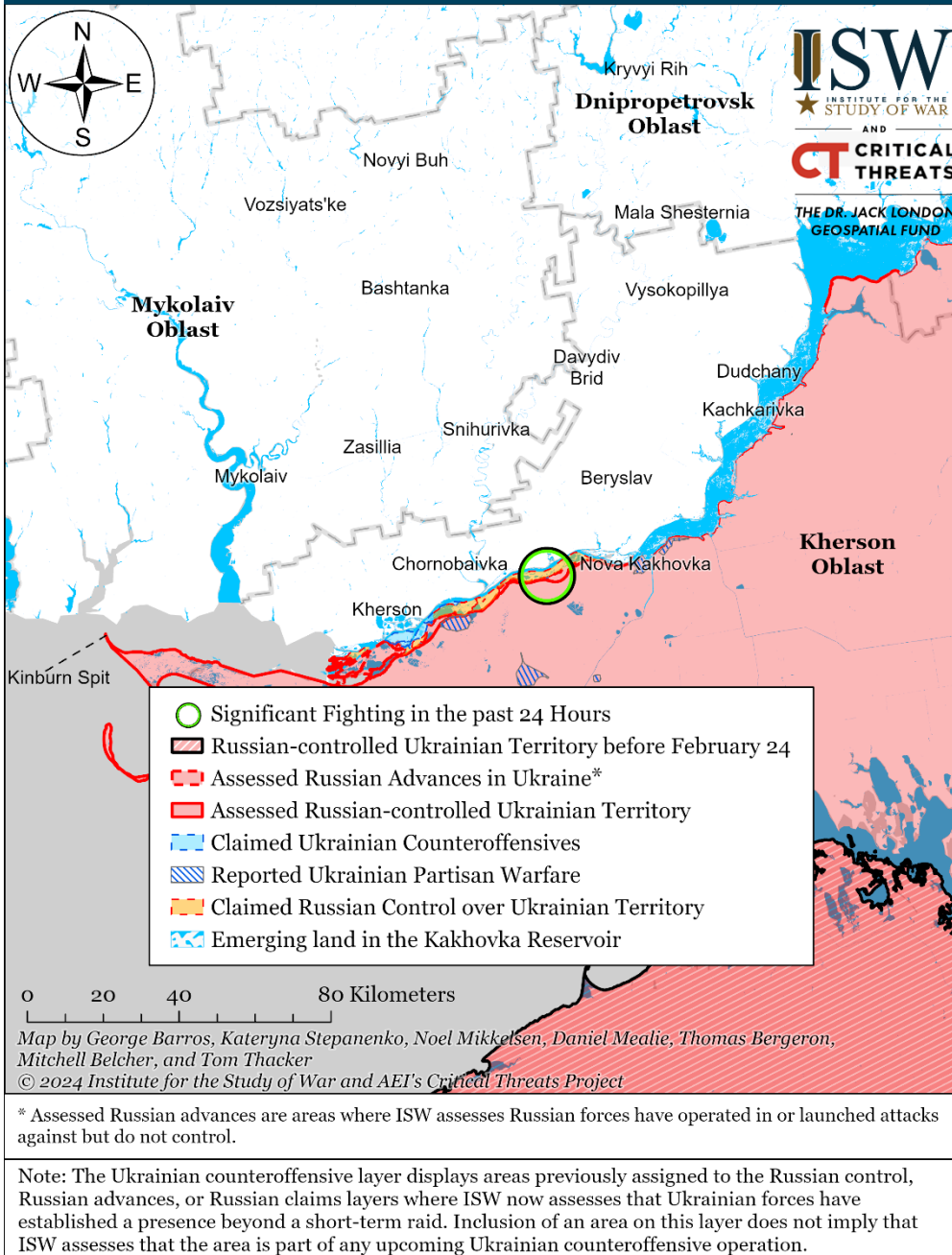


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Positional fighting continued in western Zaporizhia Oblast on May 29, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Russian forces continued attacks near Robotyne, Verbove (east of Robotyne), Mali Shcherbaky (northwest of Robotyne), and Mala Tokmachka (northeast of Robotyne).[67]

Positional fighting continued in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast near Krynky on May 29, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline.[68]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian naval aviation intercepted two Ukrainian naval drones headed toward occupied Crimea in the northwestern Black Sea on May 29.[69]

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 mid-sized Shahed-136/131 strike against Ukraine on the night of May 29, partially damaging energy infrastructure in Rivne Oblast. Ukrainian Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Mykola Oleshchuk reported that Russian forces launched 14 Shahed-136/131 drones from Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai, and that Ukrainian forces shot down 13 Shaheds over Mykolaiv, Kirovohrad, and Rivne oblasts.[70] Rivne Oblast Military Administration Head Oleksandr Koval reported that falling drone debris damaged energy infrastructure in Rivne Oblast.[71]

Russian milbloggers argued about a purported Russian strike on Lviv Oblast. Several milbloggers claimed that Russian forces conducted a Kinzhal ballistic missile strike against a Ukrainian military training ground in Yaroviv, Lviv Oblast.[72] A prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on May 29 that Russian sources are circulating various claims about the alleged strike for the second consecutive day but noted that they doubt that the strike actually occurred.[73] ISW has not observed confirmation of a recent strike in Lviv Oblast.

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

Russia continues efforts to expand social benefits for Russian military personnel, veterans of the war in Ukraine, and their families. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed decrees on May 29 that will allocate special cars to Russian military veterans who lost multiple limbs fighting in Ukraine and allow the families of dead Russian soldiers to collect two pensions simultaneously, one for the soldier's spouse and one for the soldier's children.[74] The Russian Ministry of Finance noted that recent proposed tax changes for 2024 only pertain to those with annual incomes of five million rubles or more and explicitly do not pertain to Russian military personnel.[75]

Ukraine-based open-source organization Frontelligence Insight confirmed prior Ukrainian government reports that personnel from multiple African states are fighting with Russian forces in Ukraine.[76] Frontelligence Insight reported that it observed multiple instances of personnel from African countries fighting with Russian forces in Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts.[77] ISW has recently observed reports from Ukrainian officials and commentators that "African mercenaries" and Russian personnel from the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD)'s "Africa Corps" are fighting in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[78]

Russian milbloggers continue to criticize the Russian MoD for inadequately protecting military assets from Ukrainian strikes. Russian milbloggers widely amplified satellite imagery of showing newly constructed hangars at the military airfield in Marinovka, Volgograd Oblast, and celebrated the decision to better conceal Russian military aircraft from Ukrainian strikes.[79] The milbloggers criticized the Russian MoD, however, because the Marinovka hangars are only an "isolated incident" because private donors paid for their construction and constructing hangars at airfields is not a country-wide initiative. Some milbloggers noted that the construction of these hangars began in 2022 and claimed that the hangars are therefore not adapted to defend against current threats to the airfield.[80]

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

Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* reported on May 29 that the Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade has allocated 897 million rubles (about \$10 million) to develop an automatic system for the "predictive interception" and interruption of drones.[81] *Verstka* reported that the system would intercept drones through two methods: directly shoot down drones and disable them with "special interceptors." [82] *Verstka* reported that the system must be able to detect and intercept drones weighing up to 50 kilograms and flying up to 200 kilometers per hour and begin testing in January 2026.[83]

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

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

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

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

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian officials continue to misrepresent the Ukrainian Constitution and Ukrainian domestic law as part of an information operation claiming that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is no longer the legitimate president of Ukraine. Chairperson of the Russian State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin and Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitri Peskov reiterated known and categorically false narratives intended to question and refute Zelensky's legitimacy and discourage Western support for Ukraine on May 29.[84]

Kremlin-affiliated Russian academic Dmitry Suslov published an op-ed in Russian outlet *Profile* on May 29 urging Russian authorities to conduct strategic-level nuclear exercises and consider conducting a "demonstrative nuclear explosion" in order to intimidate Western politicians during the ongoing debate regarding Ukraine's ability to use Western-provided weapons to strike targets in Russia.[85] Suslov claimed that the "political and psychological effects of a nuclear mushroom cloud live on all television channels in the world" and would remind Western politicians of nuclear war and discourage the West from allowing Ukraine to strike targets in Russia. Suslov is not a government official with decision-making power but is the deputy director of the Moscow-based Center for Comprehensive and European Studies at Russia's National Research University High School of Economics and a member of the Kremlin-affiliated Valdai Club.[86] Suslov's comments are part of an ongoing Kremlin information operation utilizing nuclear saber-rattling reflexive control campaign intended to influence Western decision-makers during key discussions of otherwise practical policies that would support Ukraine's war effort.[87]

The Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation warned on May 29 that Russian actors have launched an information campaign – entitled "Project Dozor" – that intends to recruit saboteurs in Ukraine to conduct sabotage activities and collect information about the Ukrainian military and military targets and logistics.[88]

A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger expressed concern and anger over Russia's waning influence in Armenia. Armenian Minister of High-Tech Industry Mkhitar Hayrapetyan announced on May 28 that Armenia temporarily suspended the Russian state TV channel *Pervyi Kanal* (Channel One) from broadcasting in Armenia due to outstanding debts to Armenia's broadcasting agency.[89] The milblogger criticized Russian authorities on May 29 for their apathy towards Russia's media presence in "strategically important" countries while Western media outlets, such as *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (RFE/RL), are extensively operating in these countries.[90] Hayrapetyan stated on April 10 that Armenia was considering terminating its agreement with Russia that allows Russia to broadcast state TV programs, including *Pervyi Canal*, in Armenia following the March 29 announcement that Armenia blocked two of Russian propagandist Vladimir Solovyov's TV shows.[91] Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov claimed on May 29 that the United States and European Union are also attempting to subvert Russia's influence in Central Asia.[92]

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

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MOD) reported on May 28 that elements of the Belarusian Air Force and Air Defense Forces and elements of the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) are conducting joint tactical flight exercises.[93]

Belarusian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin and Kazakh Defense Minister Colonel General Ruslan Zhaksylykov met on May 29 in Astana, Kazakhstan to discuss strengthening military cooperation.[94]

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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