



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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May 30, 2024, 8:50pm 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: This assessment has been updated to reflect that the settlement in Donetsk Oblast should be written as Kalynivka, not Kalynove.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30pm ET on May 30. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 31 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

US President Joe Biden reportedly approved a policy change that will permit Ukraine to use US-provided weapons, including GMLRS rockets — but not longer-range ATACMS missiles — to strike within Russian territory near the border with Kharkiv Oblast. US officials and people familiar with the policy told Western media on May 30 that the Biden administration quietly gave Ukraine permission to use US-provided weapons for "counter-fire purposes" against the Russian forces conducting assaults in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[1] An unnamed US official clarified that the Biden administration has not changed its policy restricting Ukraine from using US-provided weapons to conduct long-range strikes, such as ATACMS, elsewhere into Russia. Several of Biden's advisors told *The New York Times* (NYT) in a story published on May 29 that a limited reversal of the US policy restricting strikes in Russia was "inevitable" and correctly assessed that the policy reversal would likely come with restrictions on how Ukraine could use US-provided weapons against military targets and forces just within Russia's borders that are actively involved in attacks and strikes on Ukraine.[2] *The Washington Post* reported that another unnamed US official stated that the US has placed no restriction on Ukraine's use of US-provided air defenses to shoot down Russian missiles or fighter jets over Russian territory "if they pose a threat to Ukraine." [3] NYT reported on May 22 that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been urging Biden to lift these restrictions on Ukraine.[4] It is unclear how far into Belgorod Oblast the US is permitting Ukrainian forces to strike with US-provided weapons, or if Ukraine would be allowed to strike Russian force and equipment concentrations in Kursk and Bryansk oblasts. Russian military targets outside the immediate border area with Kharkiv Oblast are also legitimate military targets, however, and continued restrictions on Ukraine's ability to strike targets elsewhere in Russia hinder Ukraine's ability to defend

itself against Russian aggression. Russia still enjoys some sanctuary in which the Russian military can shield military forces before they get close enough to Kharkiv, or enter other parts of Ukraine. Russia will continue to benefit from any partial sanctuary so long as Western states continue to impose restrictions on Ukraine's ability to defend itself. ISW continues to assess that the US should allow Ukraine to strike all legitimate military targets in Russia's operational and deep rear with US-provided weapons.

Ukraine's European allies continue to announce their support for allowing Ukraine to use Western-provided weapons to strike military targets in Russia. Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen confirmed during a press conference on May 30 in Brussels that Denmark will allow Ukraine to use Danish-provided weapons and promised F-16 fighter jets to strike military targets in Russia.[5] Rasmussen stated that this is not a new position and that Denmark has long made its support for Ukraine's right to strike military targets in Russia clear. Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide stated during a NATO ministerial meeting on May 30 that Ukraine should have the right to strike military targets in Russia.[6] *Politico* reported on May 29 that sources familiar with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's positions stated that Scholz is now in favor of granting Ukraine permission to use Western weapons to strike military targets in Russia.[7] ISW assesses that the reversal of the policy will play a critical role in Ukraine's defense of its territory and future counteroffensive operations.[8]

Senior Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces are transferring forces to northern Kharkiv Oblast from other sectors of the frontline, indicating that the Russian military continues to prioritize efforts to draw and fix Ukrainian forces in northern Kharkiv Oblast. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi and the Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 30 that the Russian military is transferring elements of an unspecified number of additional regiments and brigades from other unspecified areas of the frontline and from training grounds to the Strilecha-Lyptsi (north of Kharkiv City) and Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City) areas in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[9] Syrskyi reported that the Russian military does not have enough forces in northern Kharkiv Oblast to conduct a full-scale offensive and break through Ukrainian defenses, however. Kharkiv Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Synehubov also reported that Russian forces are transferring reserves to the Lyptsi and Vovchansk directions to draw and fix as many Ukrainian forces in northern Kharkiv Oblast as possible and maintain the current tempo of Russian offensive operations in the area.[10] Synehubov stated that Russian forces have not concentrated a "strike group" near Zolochiv Hromada, Kharkiv Oblast (northwest of Kharkiv City) but that Russian forces could redirect forces in the Lyptsi and Vovchansk directions to the Zolochiv direction. Several Russian milbloggers purposefully misreported Synehubov's statements about possible evacuations in the event of Russian attacks and claimed that he had stated that Russian forces are preparing offensive operations in the Zolochiv direction.[11] The Russian military's transfer of reinforcements to Kharkiv Oblast indicates that the Russian military likely continues to prioritize efforts to draw and fix Ukrainian forces from critical sectors of the frontline in eastern Ukraine and establish a "buffer zone" in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[12] Russian forces likely intend to launch the second phase of their offensive operation in northern Kharkiv Oblast following their intended seizure of Vovchansk, although positional fighting and possible Ukrainian counterattacks could require Russian forces to conduct another wave of intensified assaults in the area to complete the seizure of the settlement. ISW continues to assess that Russian forces are likely holding back many of the reserves from the Northern Grouping of Forces, which is staffed with elements of the 11th Army Corps (AC), 44th AC, and 6th Combined Arms Army (CAA) — all part of the Russian Leningrad Military District (LMD) — until the Northern Grouping of Forces is closer to its reported

planned end strength of 50,000 to 70,000 personnel.[13] The Northern Grouping of Forces, even at the upper limit of its reported end strength, will lack the necessary manpower needed to conduct a successful operation to envelop, encircle, or seize Kharkiv City.

French officials reportedly may soon announce that France is sending military trainers to Ukraine. *Reuters* reported on May 30 that three unspecified diplomatic sources stated that France may announce the measure during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's visit to France on June 6.[14] Two diplomats reportedly stated that France would send a limited number of personnel to Ukraine to assess the situation before sending several hundred trainers, according to the current proposal.[15] *Reuters'* diplomatic sources added that the French personnel would offer training focused on demining and maintaining Western equipment and that France also intends to finance, arm, and train a new Ukrainian mechanized brigade.[16]

Western countries continue efforts to increase artillery production and procurement for Ukraine. The *Financial Times* (FT) reported on May 30 that the Czech-led initiative to purchase artillery ammunition for Ukraine is struggling to compete with Russia to purchase ammunition from non-NATO countries.[17] Czech Governmental Envoy for Ukraine's Reconstruction Tomas Kopečný stated that some unspecified countries are supplying ammunition to both Russia and Western procurement efforts for Ukraine.[18] Kopečný suggested that Russia can make cash pre-payments to ammunition suppliers faster than the West and that this could allow Russia to purchase millions of rounds from the same suppliers. The owner and chairperson of Czech domestic arms producer Czechoslovak Group (CSG), Michal Strnad, stated that about half of the components CSG acquired from countries in Africa and Asia for the Czech-led initiative required more work before CSG could send it to Ukraine and that some of the shells had missing components.[19] 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 will arrive in Ukraine within "days." [20] The *New York Times* (NYT) reported on May 30 that US defense company General Dynamics will open a new facility in Mesquite, Texas that will make 30,000 artillery shells each month once it reaches full capacity.[21] The NYT reported that US production facilities in Pennsylvania produce about 35,00 artillery shells per month and that IMT, an Ohio-based defense firm, will reportedly produce about 34,000 artillery shells per month. The NYT noted that this would allow the US to reach the US Department of Defense's (DoD) production target of 100,000 shells per month by the end of 2025.

NATO member states reportedly lack sufficient air defense capabilities to protect members of the Alliance in Central and Eastern Europe in the event of a full-scale attack. The *Financial Times* (FT) reported on May 29, citing people familiar with confidential 2023 NATO defense plans, that NATO countries can provide "less than five percent of air defense capacities deemed necessary" to protect NATO members in Central and Eastern Europe against a full-scale attack." [22] A senior NATO official told *FT* that NATO currently does not have the ability to defend against missile and air strikes in Eastern Europe, but that these capabilities are a "major part" of NATO's plan to defend Eastern Europe from a potential invasion. Another NATO official stated that air defense is "one of the biggest holes [that NATO has]." ISW continues to assess that NATO rearmament is necessary to deter — and if necessary, defeat — any future Russian attack on NATO's eastern flank, given that Kremlin officials are increasingly threatening NATO member states, and NATO and its member states are increasingly warning of Russian sabotage and hybrid operations against NATO members in their territory.[23] Continued Western military support for Ukraine directly contributes to pushing Russia's air defense network east and away from NATO members, given that a Russian military

victory in Ukraine would allow Russian forces to station long-range systems in occupied Ukraine to further threaten NATO's eastern flank.[24]

The Russian government approved a package of amendments to the Russian tax code on May 30 that will introduce a progressive income tax scale starting in 2025, marginally placing some of the financial burdens of Russia's long-war effort in Ukraine onto Russia's wealthy elite.[25] The Russian Ministry of Finance announced the tax reform on May 29, which will introduce a progressive income tax scale for those that make over 2.4 million rubles (\$26,600) a year, raise the current corporate income tax rate from 20 percent to 25 percent, and remove existing tax benefits for some Russian businesses.[26] Russian previously had a flat income tax rate of 13 percent, with some high-income earners paying a 15 percent income tax.[27] The new progressive income tax scale will raise taxes from 13 percent to 15 percent on yearly income between 2.4 million rubles and five million rubles (\$55,400), from 15 percent to 18 percent on income between five million rubles and 20 million rubles (\$221,600), from 15 percent to 20 percent on income between 20 million rubles and 50 million rubles (\$554,000), and from 15 to 22 percent on income over 50 million rubles.[28] The new tax measures will generate an additional 2.6 trillion rubles (\$28.8 Billion) in 2025, roughly eight percent of the current planned 33.55 trillion rubles (\$371.7 Billion) federal budget for 2025.[29] Russia is currently spending a record amount on defense and has been heavily relying on oil revenues to mitigate growing budget deficits.[30] The costs of the Kremlin's long war effort in Ukraine will likely produce greater budget deficits in the coming years, and the Kremlin likely understands that it must raise its fiscal revenue as the war continues.[31] The new tax reform is a measured and relatively marginal burden on Russia's wealthy elite, likely meant to enlist Russia's oligarchs further into shouldering the costs of Russia's war effort without causing pronounced discontent. The tax reform also allows the Kremlin to deliver on Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent populist economic promises about a fairer Russian economy and persuade the wider Russian public that all Russians, no matter their wealth or status, are equally sharing the costs of the war in Ukraine.[32] The Kremlin's desired restrained approach to increasing fiscal revenue does not provide the funds needed for a large-scale mobilization of Russia's economy and manpower, and even the gradual expansion of Russia's defense industrial base (DIB) and the financial requirements of ongoing force generation efforts will likely compel the Kremlin to place greater financial burdens on wealthy Russians as the war prolongs.[33]

Russian President Vladimir Putin continued efforts to address Russia's ongoing demographic crisis as part of the "Year of the Family" 2024 domestic policy initiative. Putin held a video conference on May 30 with large families from several Russian regions and occupied Donetsk Oblast, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia for Social Policy, Labor, Health Care, and Pension Provision Tatyana Golikova, and Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova, during which he discussed the state's vision for Russian families.[34] Putin stated that that Russian families with three or more children should become a norm and that Russian parents should be confident that the state is ready to provide support for them and their children. Putin stated that Russian state policy's fundamental task is to create the necessary conditions to stimulate an increase in the number of large families and claimed that the number of large families in Russia has increased by 26 percent in recent years. Putin also demonstratively awarded the order of "Parental Glory" to parents who are raising more than seven adoptive children and the title "Mother Heroine" to mothers who have birthed 10 or more children. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev established the order of "Parental Glory" in 2008, claiming that this order was first introduced in Russia in 1914.[35] Putin resurrected the Soviet honorary title of "Mother Heroine" — which was originally introduced in July 1944 and later discontinued in 1991 — in August 2022.[36] Putin signed a decree on

January 23 officially defining families with three or more children as “large families” and establishing various social support measures for “large families.”[37] ISW previously assessed that Putin’s focus on 2024 as the “Year of the Family” is likely meant to provide an ideological underpinning to Russian efforts to increase Russian birthrates and remedy Russian demographic issues.[38] Russia had been facing a demographic crisis since the beginning of the 1990s, and Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine has further exacerbated this crisis with large Russian casualties in Ukraine and the mass migration of Russian men from Russia.[39] The Kremlin likely hopes to increase Russian birth rates in the coming generations by offering parents financial and state incentives but is unlikely to achieve the dramatic improvements in standard of living necessary to rectify decades-long demographic crisis.[40]

Russian peacekeepers in Moldova's Russian-backed breakaway republic of Transnistria are reportedly conducting a month-long unauthorized inspection of their armored vehicles and may conduct further provocations in the coming months. Moldova's delegation to the Joint Control Commission (JCC) — a trilateral peacekeeping force and joint military command structure from Moldova, Transnistria, and Russia that operates in a demilitarized zone on the border between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine — announced in a statement on May 17 that Russian peacekeepers informed Moldovan military officials that Russian forces will conduct an internal inspection of Russian armored vehicles stationed at peacekeeping posts in Transnistria from May 17 to June 17 shortly after a recent JCC meeting.[41] The Moldovan delegation noted that conducting military exercises within the security zone between Moldovan — and Transnistrian — controlled territory without prior discussion and approval violates the JCC's protocols and called on the peacekeeping forces to cancel the inspections to avoid destabilizing the region. The Moldovan delegation to the JCC noted in a statement on May 30 that Russian peacekeepers failed to inform Moldovan authorities before conducting a rapid response group training exercise using armored vehicles near Bender, Transnistria and using "imitation means" at a nearby peacekeeping post on May 28.[42] The Moldovan delegation criticized the peacekeepers' actions as "provocative" and denied the Russian delegation's reported claim that Russian forces are not obligated to notify the JCC before military exercises. Russian peacekeepers similarly conducted unauthorized military exercises in late December 2023 and April 2024.[43]

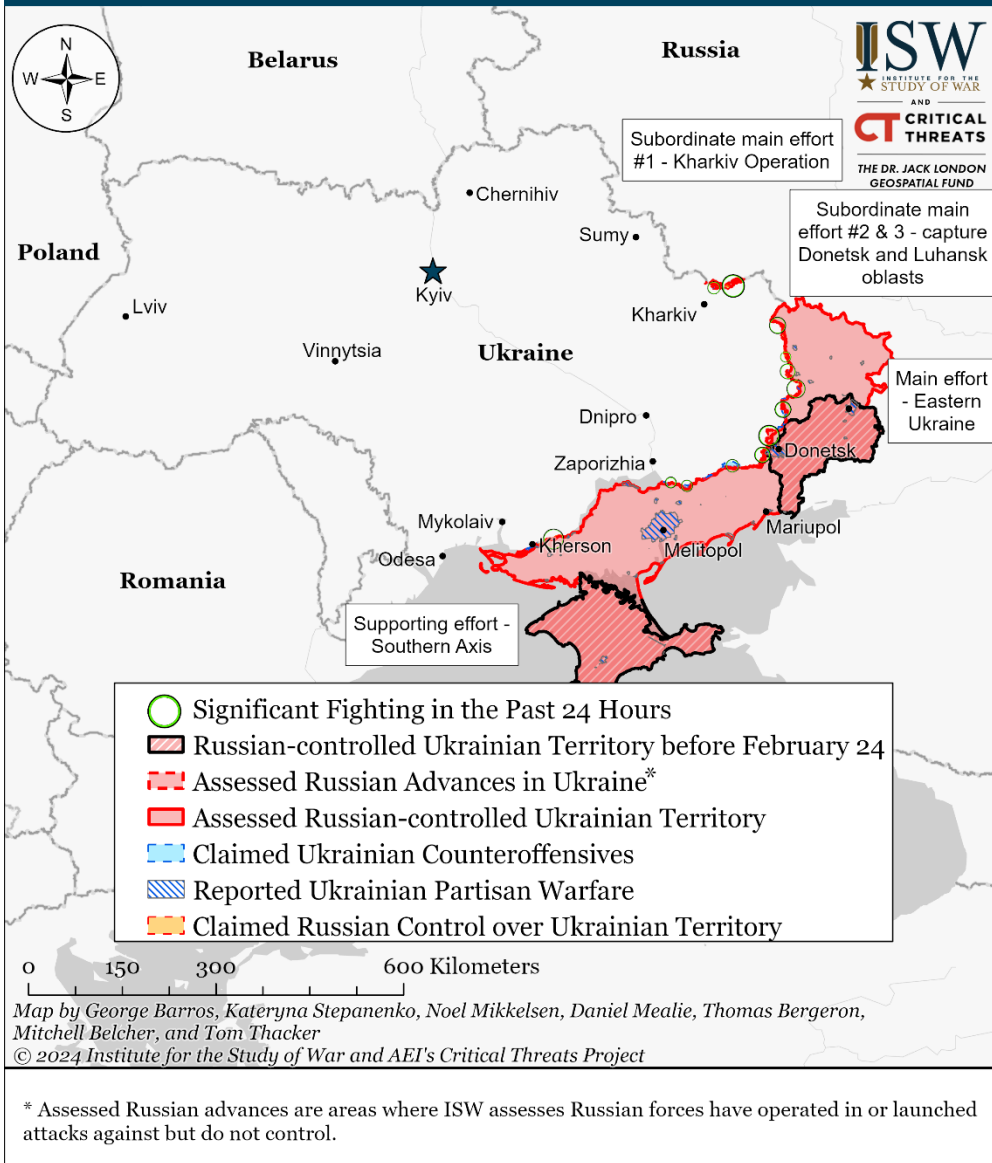
Head of the Transnistrian delegation to the JCC Oleg Belyakov in turn recently accused Moldovan forces and authorities of attempting to escalate the Transnistrian conflict and increasing "militarization" along the security zone. Belyakov claimed on May 28 that Moldovan forces are accumulating military equipment, including heavy weaponry and armored personnel carriers, at a training ground near Bulboaca (southeast of Chisinau), and claimed on May 30 that 120 Moldovan paratroopers arrived in Vadul-lui Voda (northeast of Chisinau) and criticized Moldovan authorities for not notifying the JCC of these troop deployments.[44] Belyakov claimed that the Russian peacekeepers' May 28 training exercise was part of their scheduled activities and that it is "puzzling" that Moldova is concerned about standard Russian training while conducting full-scale NATO exercises. Belyakov characterized the recent NATO exercises in Moldova and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's and German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius' visits to Moldova as "alarming" and indicative of perceived Moldovan aggression and militarization.[45] Belyakov's accusations against Moldova are likely part of an ongoing Kremlin information operation justifying Russian aggression and subversive involvement in Moldova under the guise of protecting Russian citizens and pro-Russian "compatriots abroad." *Deutsche Welle* reported on May 22 that the negotiations regarding Moldova's accession to the European Union (EU) will most likely start on June 25, 2024 during the upcoming European Council summit.[46] Pro-Russian actors may intend to conduct an unspecified provocation ahead of

the reported negotiations and Moldova's upcoming presidential election and EU accession vote in October 2024. ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin is engaged in efforts to destabilize Moldova and prevent Moldova's EU accession and is likely trying to exploit Transnistria and Gagauzia — Moldova's other pro-Russian autonomous region — as part of these wider efforts.[47]

Key Takeaways:

- **US President Joe Biden reportedly approved a policy change that will permit Ukraine to use US-provided weapons, including GMLRS rockets — but not longer-range ATACMS missiles — to strike within Russian territory near the border with Kharkiv Oblast.**
- **Ukraine's European allies continue to announce their support for allowing Ukraine to use Western-provided weapons to strike military targets in Russia.**
- **Senior Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces are transferring forces to northern Kharkiv Oblast from other sectors of the frontline, indicating that the Russian military continues to prioritize efforts to draw and fix Ukrainian forces in northern Kharkiv Oblast.**
- **French officials reportedly may soon announce that France is sending military trainers to Ukraine.**
- **Western countries continue efforts to increase artillery production and procurement for Ukraine.**
- **NATO member states reportedly lack sufficient air defense capabilities to protect members of the Alliance in Central and Eastern Europe in the event of a full-scale attack.**
- **The Russian government approved a package of amendments to the Russian tax code on May 30 that will introduce a progressive income tax scale starting in 2025, marginally placing some of the financial burdens of Russia's long-war effort in Ukraine onto Russia's wealthy elite.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin continued efforts to address Russia's ongoing demographic crisis as part of the “Year of the Family” 2024 domestic policy initiative.**
- **Russian peacekeepers in Moldova's Russian-backed breakaway republic of Transnistria are reportedly conducting a month-long unauthorized inspection of their armored vehicles and may conduct further provocations in the coming months.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Vovchansk and Russian forces recently advanced near Chasiv Yar, Avdiivka, and Donetsk City and in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast.**
- **Russia formed a new unnamed airborne (VDV) regiment based in occupied Crimea, which currently operates in the Zaporizhia direction.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 30, 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

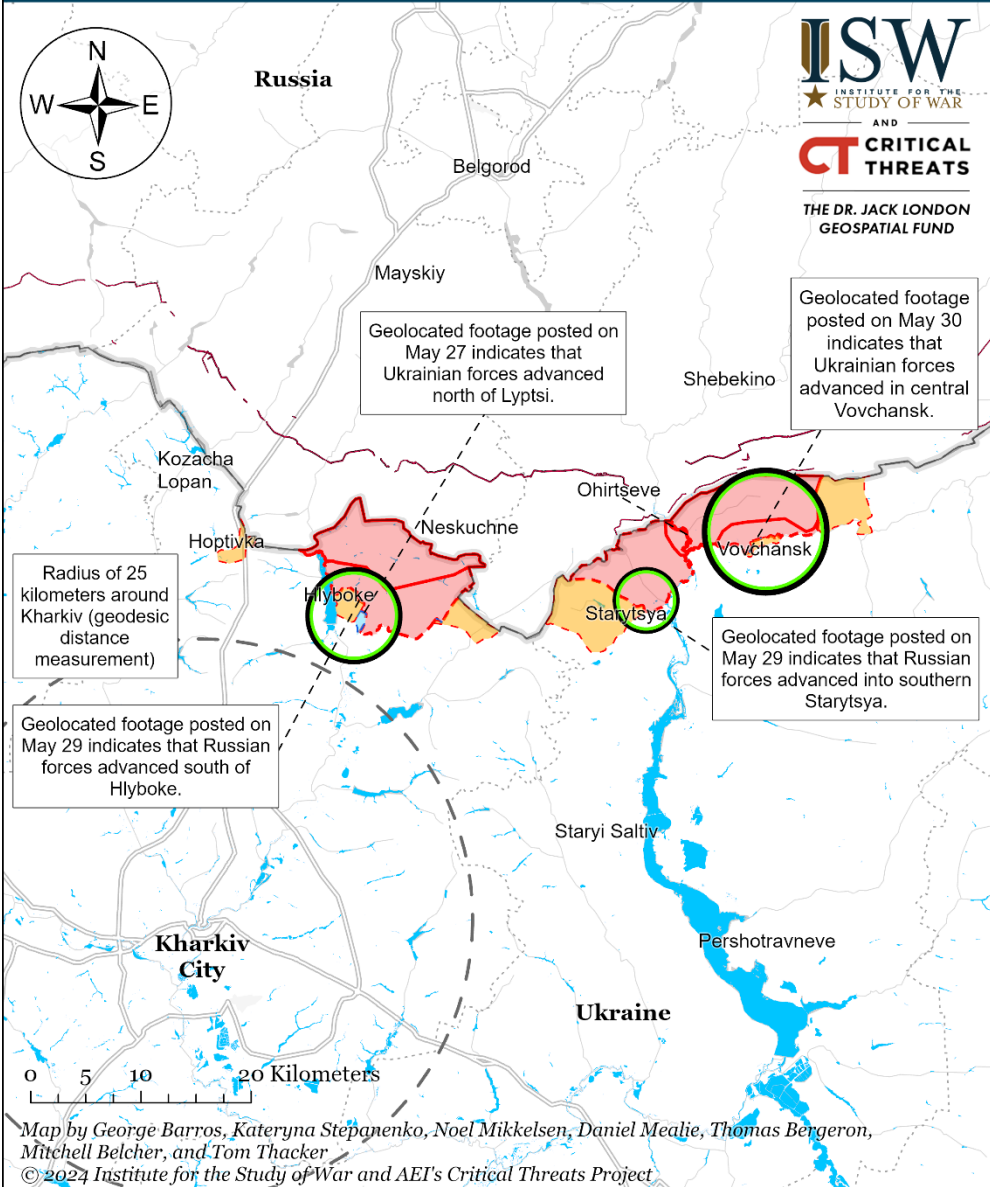
Russian Main Effort — Eastern Ukraine

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 continued offensive operations near Lyptsi (north of Kharkiv City) on May 30, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in the area. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced up to 150 meters deep in the Lyptsi direction and up to 700 meters south of Hlyboke (north of Lyptsi), although ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[48] Fighting occurred near Lyptsi and Hlyboke within the past day.[49]

Ukrainian forces recently regained positions within Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City) amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on May 30. Geolocated footage published on May 30 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently regained positions within central Vovchansk.[50] Russian Kharkiv Oblast occupation administration head Vitaly Ganchev claimed that Russian forces control about half of Vovchansk and that Ukrainian forces continue counterattacking in the settlement.[51] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Nazar Voloshyn stated that Ukrainian forces control most of Vovchansk and that Russian forces are using airstrikes to support ground assaults to advance.[52] ISW continues to assess that Russian forces have not been able to establish positions on the south bank of the Vovcha River within Vovchansk. Russian sources amplified footage on May 30 purportedly showing a Russian airstrike destroying a bridge along Soborna Street over the Vovcha River in Vovchansk.[53] Fighting occurred near Vovchansk, within the settlement, and near Starytsya (southwest of Vovchansk) on May 29 and 30.[54] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that intense Russian and Ukrainian drone usage is hindering movement within Vovchansk and forcing both sides to operate in small groups.[55] A Russian milblogger who reportedly recently visited Vovchansk claimed that Russian forces often travel on foot, motorcycles, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) in frontline areas in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[56]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of May 30, 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

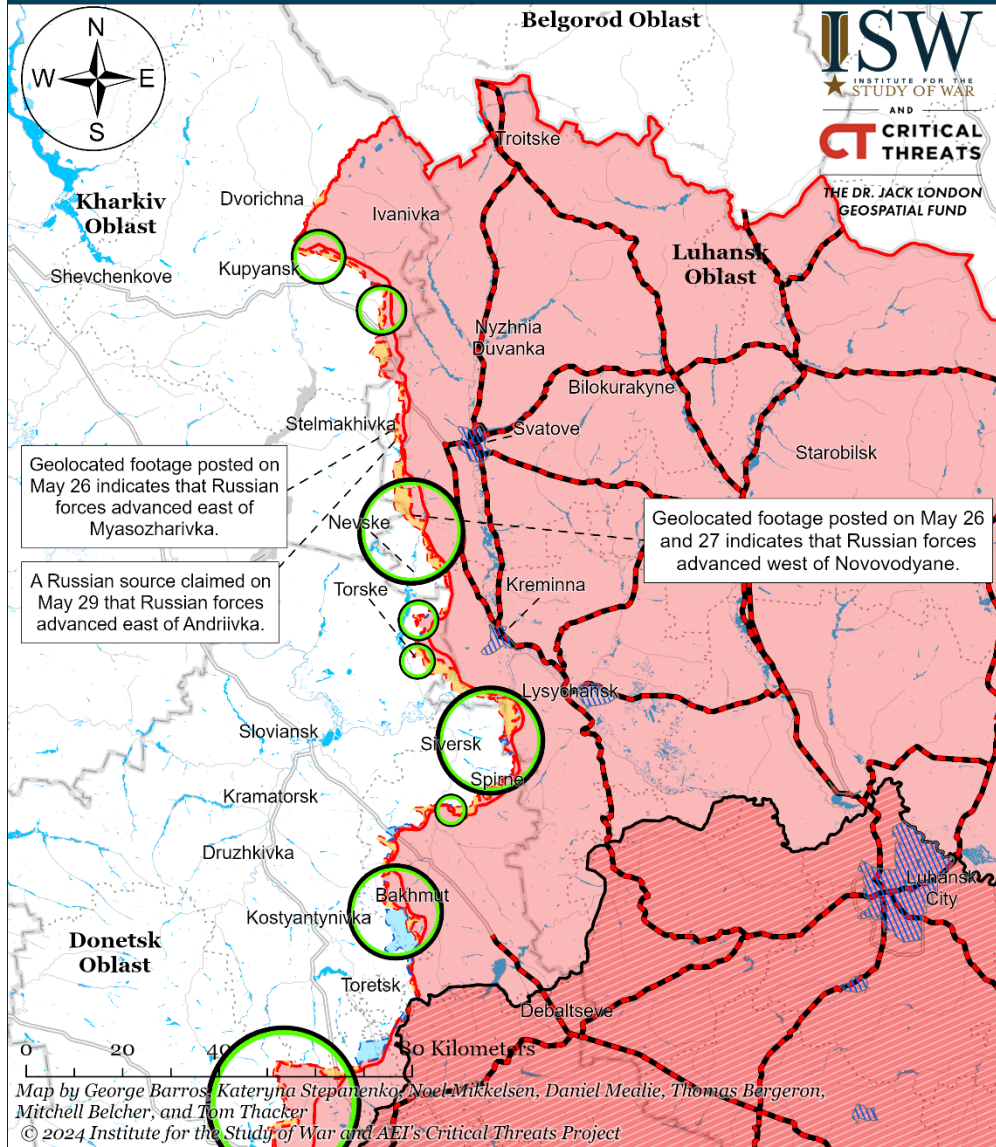
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on May 30 that Russian forces advanced 150 meters deep in the Lyptsi direction. 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 continued assaults along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on May 30, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Russian forces conducted assaults east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Ivanivka and Stepova Novoselivka; west of Svatove near Myasozharivka and Andriivka; southwest of Svatove near Druzhelyubivka and Nevske; west of Kreminna near Terny and Torske; southwest of Kreminna near Dibrova, Hryhorivka, and the Serebryanske forest area; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka on May 29 and May 30.[57] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked within northern Ivanivka.[58]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of May 30, 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

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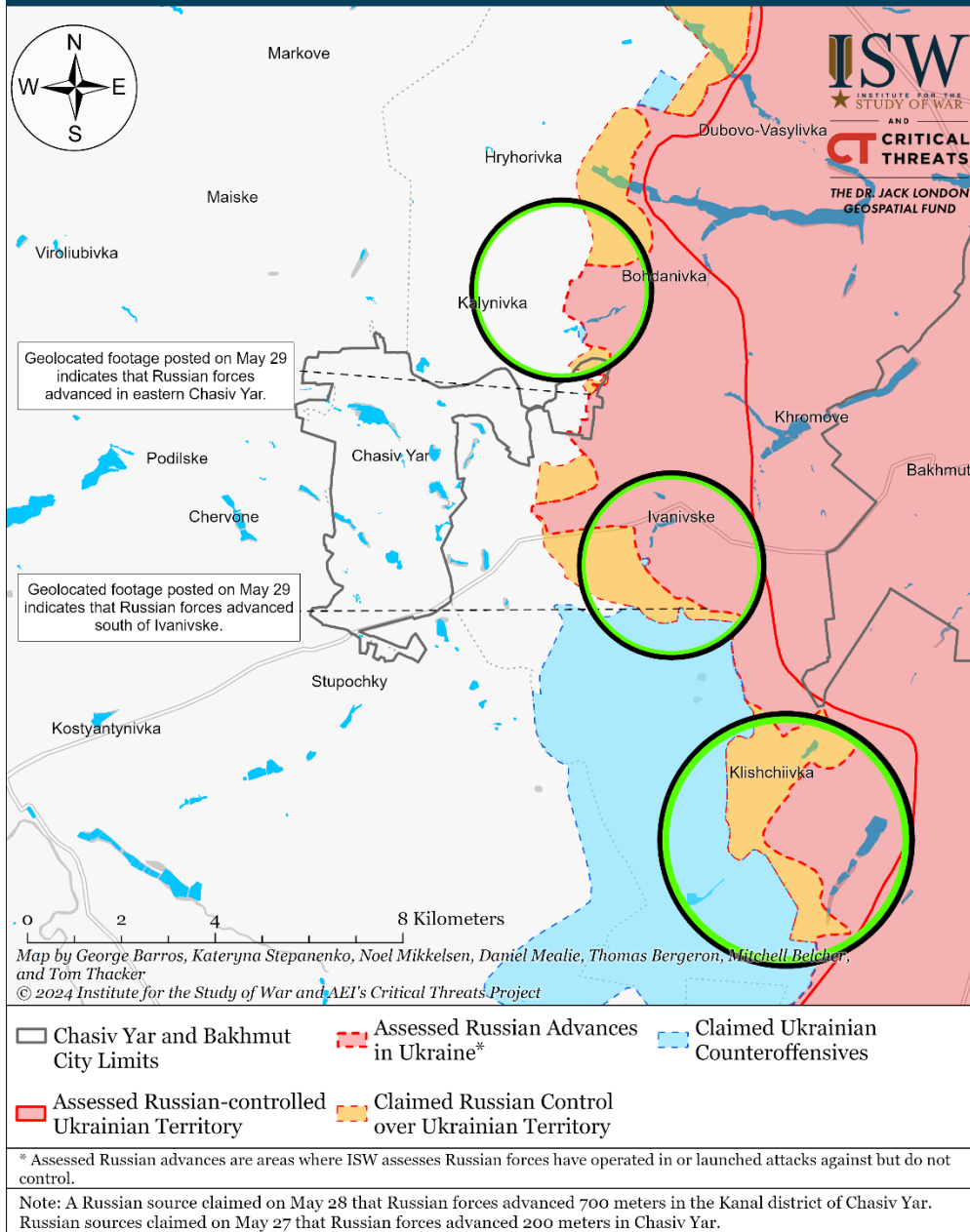
Note: Russian sources claimed on May 28 that Russian forces advanced between one and 1.43 kilometers near Myasozharivka. A Russian source claimed on May 28 that Russian forces advanced 400 meters near Berestove.

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 ground attacks in the Siversk direction near Rozdolivka and Vyimka (south of Siversk) on May 29 and 30.[59]

Russian forces recently marginally advanced near Chasiv Yar amid continued offensive operations in the area on May 30. Geolocated footage published on May 29 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced on the northern outskirts of the Kanal Microraiion in easternmost Chasiv Yar.[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced into central Kalynivka (north of Chasiv Yar) and near Andriivka (southeast of Chasiv Yar), although ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[61] Russian forces continued assaults in the Novyi and Kanal microraiions; east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske; and southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka, Andriivka, and Kurdyumivka over the past day.[62] Elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division, 58th Spetsnaz Battalion (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Army Corps [AC]), and the "Sever-V" Brigade (Russian Volunteers Corps) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.[63]

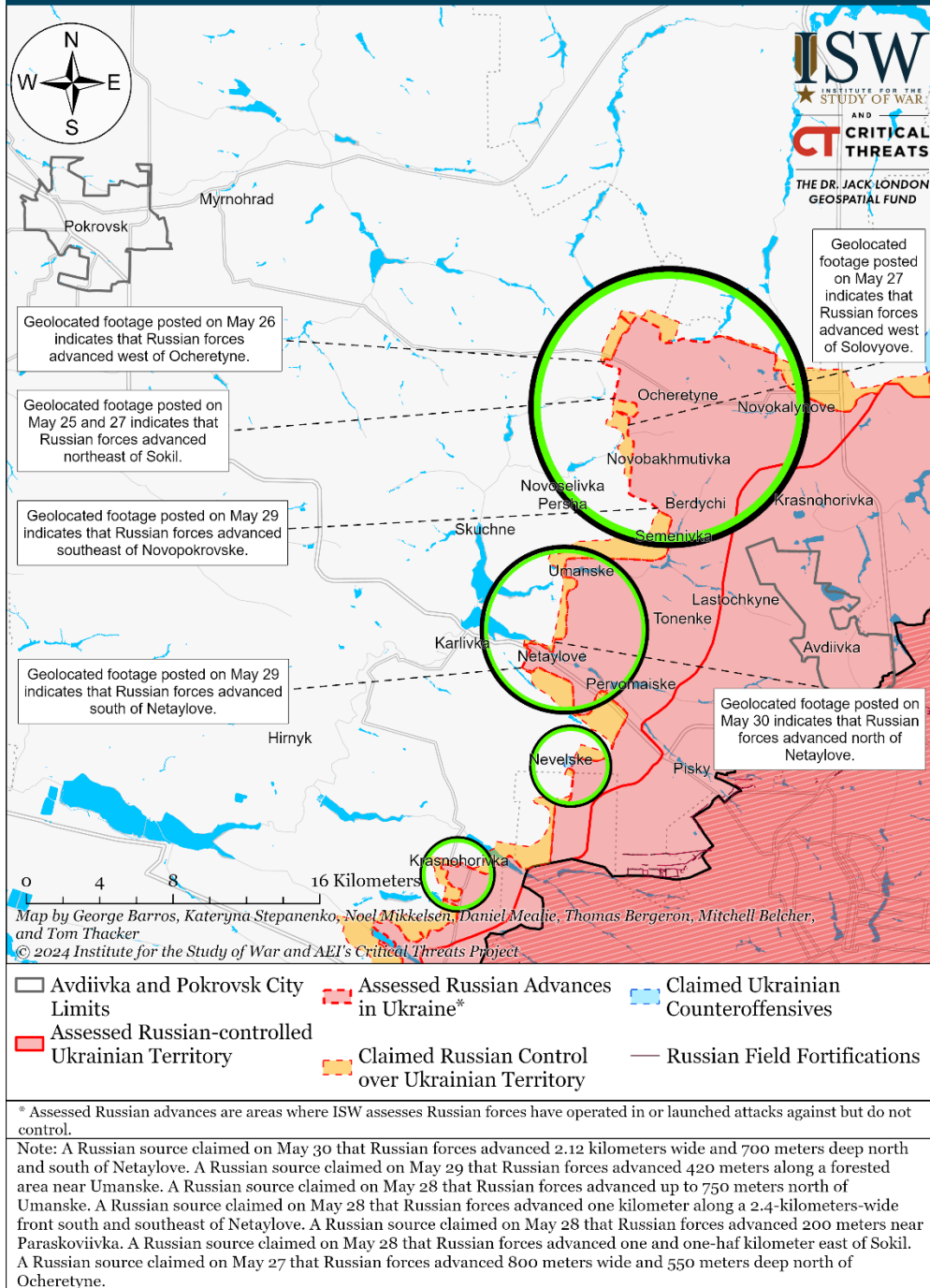
Assessed Control of Terrain near Chasiv Yar as of May 30, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced west of Avdiivka amid continued offensive operations on May 30. Geolocated footage published on May 30 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced westward along the S-051801 highway north of Netaylove (west of Avdiivka).[64] Russian milbloggers claimed on May 29 and 30 that Russian forces advanced north and south of Netaylove in an area up to 2.12 kilometers in width and 700 meters deep.[65] Russian milbloggers claimed on May 30 that Russian forces seized positions along the Karlivka Reservoir north of Netaylove and are attempting to advance south of Netaylove to bypass Nevelske (southwest of Avdiivka) to approach areas north of

Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City).[66] ISW has not observed confirmation of these Russian claims. Russian forces continued offensive operations northwest of Avdiivka near Sokil, Novooleksandrivka, Prohres, Kalynivka, Solovyove, and Yevhenivka; west of Avdiivka near Umanske, Novoselivka Persha, Semenivka, Netaylove, Yasnobrodivka, Novopokrovske, and Karlivka; and southwest of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske and Nevelske on May 29 and May 30.[67] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian counterattacks near Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka) and Novopokrovske, and a Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have been consistently counterattacking west of Ocheretyne over the past day.[68] Elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR AC) are reportedly operating near Netaylove, elements of the "Amur" Battalion of the "Volga" Cossack Brigade are reportedly operating near Ocheretyne, and elements of the Russian 24th Spetsnaz Brigade (Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian General Staff [GRU]) are reportedly operating in the Avdiivka direction.[69]

Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of May 30, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

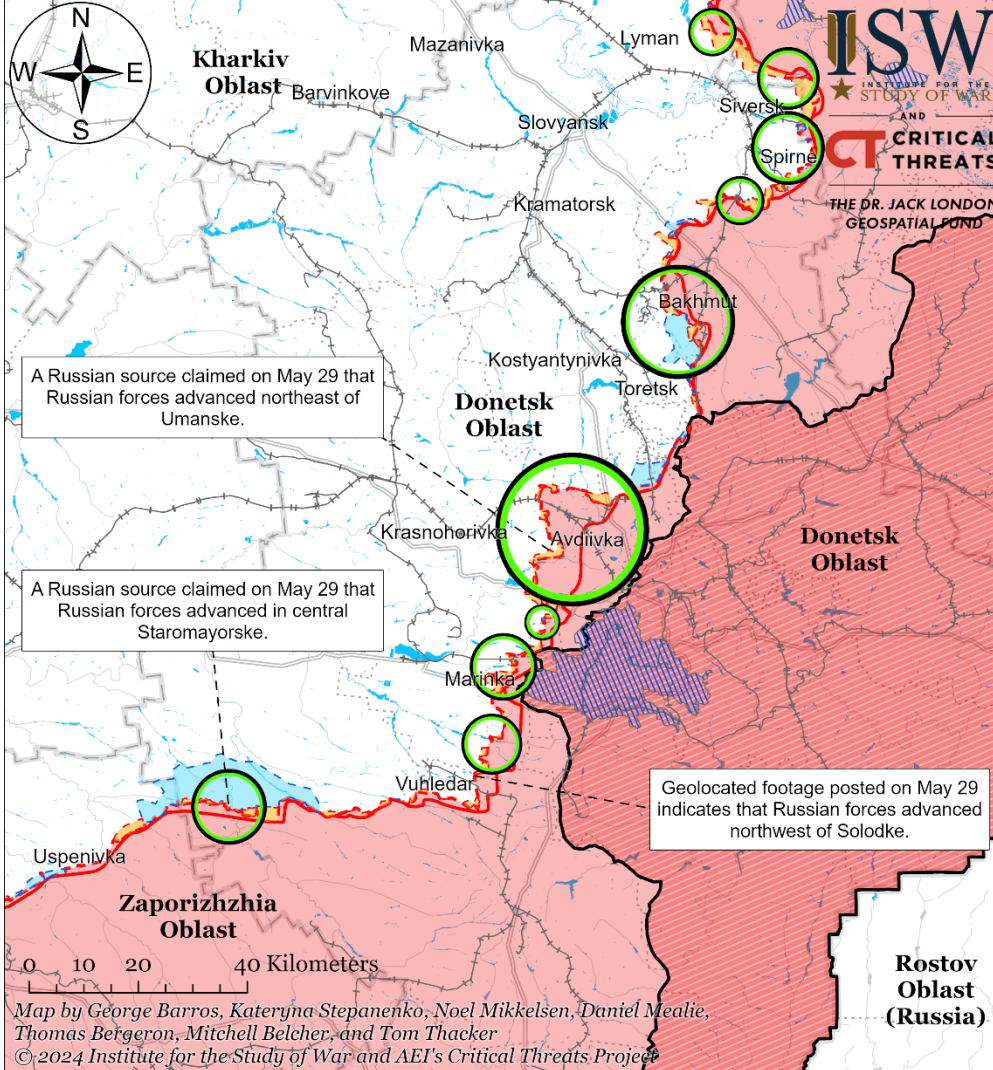


Russian forces recently advanced southwest of Donetsk City amid continued offensive operations on May 30. Geolocated footage published on May 29 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced to windbreaks northwest of Solodke (southwest of Donetsk City).[70] Russian forces continued offensive operations west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City

near Kostyantynivka, Heorhiivka, and Paraskoviivka in the past day.[71] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian counterattack near Volodymyrivka (southwest of Donetsk City) on May 30.[72] Elements of the Russian 238th Artillery Brigade (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Kurakhove direction.[73]

Russian forces reportedly recently advanced within Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka) amid continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area. Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 218th Tank Regiment and 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment (both of the 127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) recently seized central Staromayorske in the past day and now hold 70 percent of the settlement, although ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[74] A Russian milblogger claimed on May 29 that elements of the Russian 5th Tank Brigade (36th CAA, EMD) advanced on the southern outskirts of Urozhaine (south of Velyka Novosilka).[75] Russian forces continued offensive operations near Staromayorske and Urozhaine on May 30.[76] Elements of the Russian 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, EMD) and elements of the 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces [VKS] and EMD) are reportedly operating near Urozhaine.[77]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 30, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



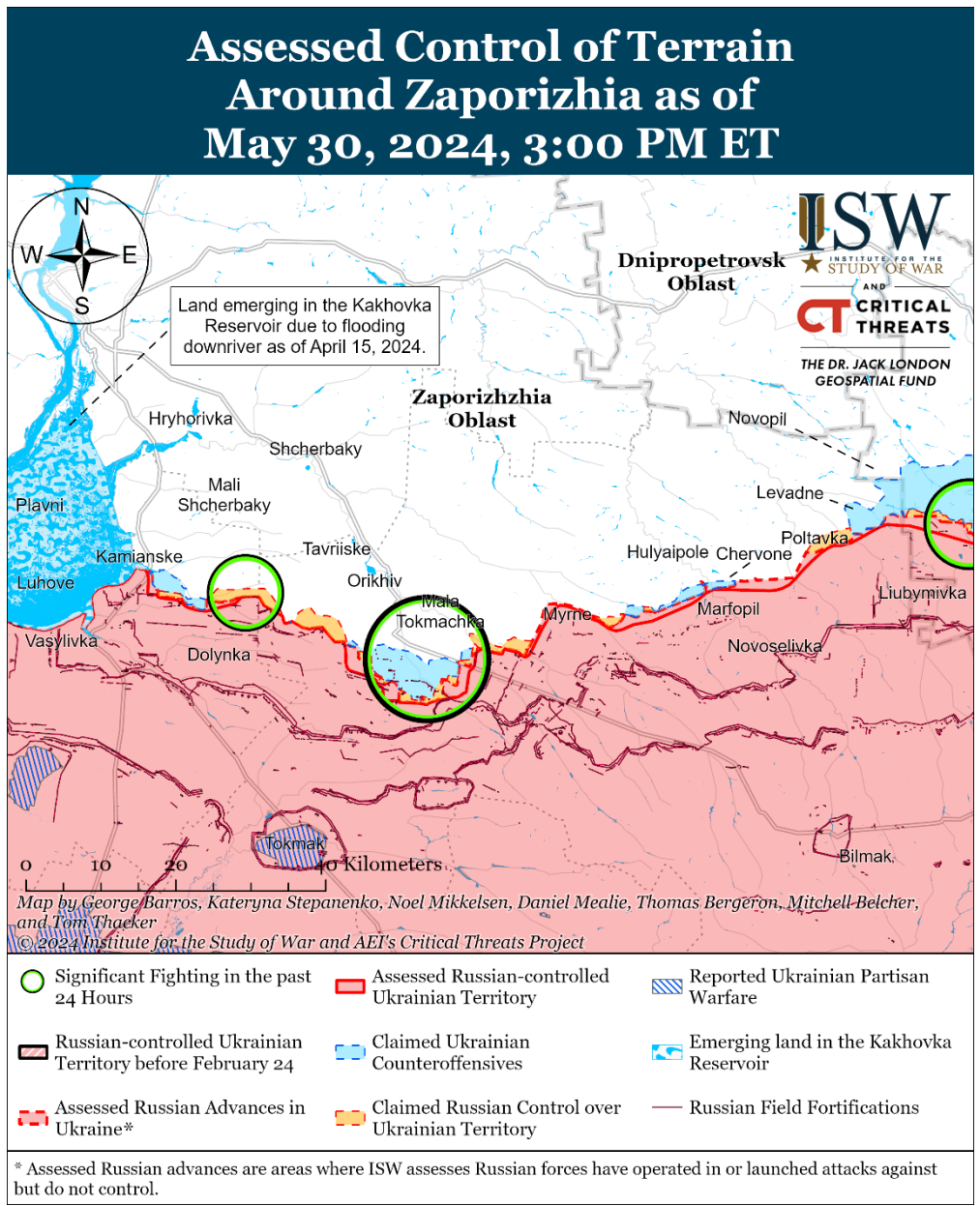
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- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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

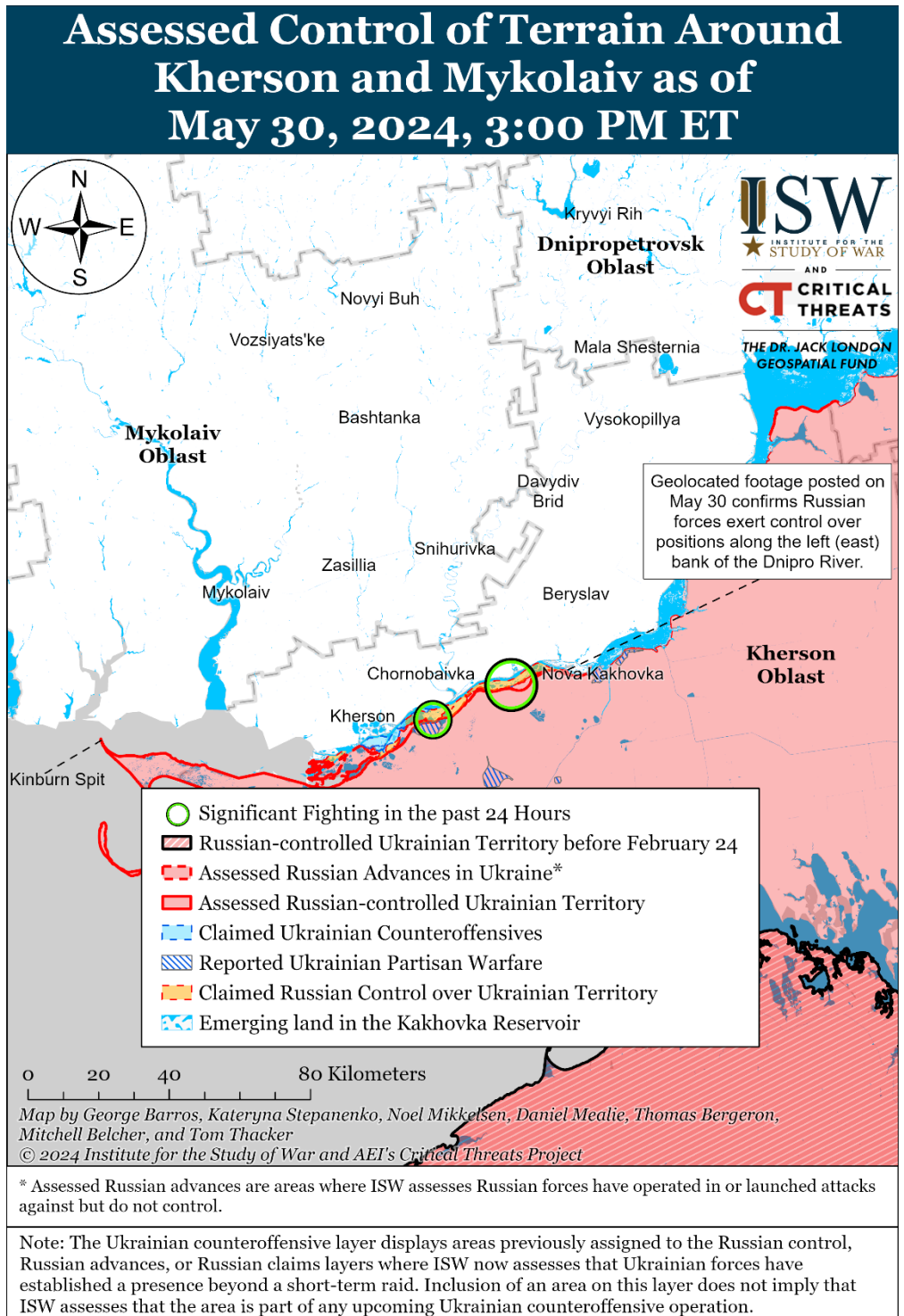
Note: A Russian source claimed on May 30 that Russian forces seized 70 percent of Staromayorske. A Russian source claimed on May 29 that Russian forces established a foothold west of Staromayorske and advanced along a 700 meter deep and two kilometer wide frontline into the settlement. A Russian source 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 Supporting Effort — Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Positional engagements continued in western Zaporizhia Oblast on May 30, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in the area. Positional engagements occurred near Robotyne, Verbove (east of Robotyne), Mala Tokmachka (northeast of Robotyne), Mali Shcherbaky (northwest of Robotyne), and Novoandriivka (northwest of Robotyne) within the past day.[78] Elements of the Russian 58th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Verbove; elements of the "Saturn" Drone Operator Group are reportedly operating in the Orikhiv direction; and elements of the 35th Air Defense Brigade (36th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating in the Zaporizhia direction.[79]



Russian forces recently marginally advanced in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast, amid continued positional engagements in the area on May 30. Geolocated footage published on May 30 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced north of Dniproany (northeast of Kharkiv City on east bank Kherson Oblast).[80] Russian forces also conducted assaults in east bank Kherson Oblast near Krynky and the Oleshky Sands National Nature Park and near Nestryha Island in the Dnipro River Delta between May 29 and 30.[81]



Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on May 30 that forces conducted naval drone strikes against Russian military ships in occupied Vuzka Bay, Crimea (Chornomorske). The GUR reported that the strikes destroyed two Project Ks-701 "Tunets" high-speed amphibious transport boats and damaged another two.[82] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command and Navy Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk stated that Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) border guards typically use "Tunets" ships.[83] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces destroyed four Ukrainian naval drones in the northwestern part of the Black Sea.[84]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted missile and drone strikes against occupied Crimea on the night of May 29 to 30. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces destroyed eight ATACMS over the Sea of Azov and eight drones over the Black Sea near the Crimean coast.[85] Advisor to the Crimean Occupation Head Oleg Kryuchkov claimed that Ukrainian missile fragments damaged two pilot boats, a car, and a section of railway near Kerch.[86] Russian opposition outlet *Astra* reported, citing its own sources, that a Ukrainian missile strike sunk the *Mechta* pilot boat in Kerch.[87]

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 missile and drone strikes against targets in Ukraine on the night of May 29 to 30. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched eight S-300/400 air defense missiles against Kharkiv Oblast, 11 Kh-101/Kh-555 cruise missiles from Saratov Oblast, and 32 Shahed-136/131 drones from Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea.[88] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian air defenses destroyed seven Kh-101/Kh-555 missiles and all 32 Shahed drones over Khmelnytskyi, Dnipropetrovsk, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Zaporizhia, Odesa, Kherson, Kyiv, and Vinnytsya oblasts. Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces also struck targets in Mala Danylivka, Kharkiv Oblast, including a children's equestrian school, with five S-300/400 missile later in the day on May 30.[89]

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

Russia formed a new unnamed airborne (VDV) regiment based in occupied Crimea, which currently operates in the Zaporizhia direction.[90] The press service of Russian President Vladimir Putin's People's Front (*Narodnyi Front*) political coalition revealed on May 20 that elements of the new VDV regiment are already starting to participate in combat operations but did not name the regiment's parent formation or name. People's Front (formerly known as the All-Russia People's Front) monitors the implementation of Putin's decrees and is providing aid to Russian servicemen in occupied Ukraine in support of the Russian war effort. The head of the People's Front regional executive committee Alla Vertinskaya also claimed that the coalition gathered various weapons, military equipment, and supplies for the new VDV regiment within just one day with help from Crimean residents.[91]

The new VDV regiment may be the third regiment of the Russian 44th VDV Division but is unlikely to be a real airborne regiment. Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets told *Radio Svoboda's* Crimean service *Krym.Realii* that the newly-formed 44th VDV Division is currently operating in the Zaporizhia direction and is composed of only two regiments — the 111st Motorized Rifle

Regiment (former 111st Mobile Reserve Regiment of the Donetsk People’s Republic [DNR] 1st Army Corps [AC]) and the 387th Motorized Rifle Regiment.[92] A VDV division usually has three airborne regiments, and Mashovets did not rule out the possibility that the Russian military could staff the third regiment with volunteers or mobilized men from occupied Crimea. These men are very likely not airborne qualified or equipped with standard VDV equipment. Mashovets added that the 44th VDV Division is essentially a conglomerate of units that could best be considered territorial troops or a mobilization reserve formation, rather than true airborne-qualified VDV units. Mashovets added that the Russian military command “abundantly” staffed the 387th VDV Regiment’s command staff with officers from the Ryazan Guards Higher Airborne Command School, but that this regiment lacked the organizational structure, weapons, and additional training and combat coordination necessary to raise a real VDV regiment with the VDV’s specialized capabilities.

Former Wagner Group detachment commander Boris “Zombie” Nizhevenok announced that he assumed the role of the commander of the newly-formed “Vostok-V” Volunteer Reconnaissance-Assault Brigade under Rosgvardia.[93] Nizhevenok published a video in which he identified himself as the commander of Vostok-V Brigade and stated that the brigade was recently removed from the frontline and is undergoing reformation.[94] “Vostok-V” Brigade previously operated in the Chasiv Yar direction, and a Russian insider source recently claimed that Nizhevenok was hoping to recruit about 3,500 former Wagner personnel for the brigade.[95] The insider source assessed that Nizhevenok would be unable to achieve this recruitment goal, however.

Russian officials reportedly recruited female prisoners to fight in combat operations under deceptive premises starting in late 2022. *Radio Svoboda’s* northwestern Russia service *Sever.Realii* reported that Russian human rights activists observed Russian officials deploying around 1,000 female prisoners to Ukraine since late 2022.[96] One recruited female prisoner claimed that Russian recruiters originally offered women a one-time payment of 500,000 rubles (\$5,535) and a 200,000 rubles (\$2,214) monthly salary, but only paid 250,000 rubles (\$2,767) as one-time payment and around 100,000 rubles (\$1,107) per month. One Russian human rights activist reported that the Russian MoD failed to successfully recruit female prisoners because recruited women lacked discipline and morale and noted that the Russian military command deployed 90 percent of women to assault groups despite promising them positions as medics and snipers.

A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger indicated that Russia continues to involve members of the “Night Wolves” Motorcycle Club in combat operations near occupied Bakhmut.[97] The milblogger noted that the “Night Wolves” detachment of the “Pyatnashka” Volunteer Brigade use motorcycles to retrieve some fallen Russian drones in the Bakhmut direction. The “Night Wolves” Motorcycle Club was founded in 1989 and was composed of motorcycle enthusiasts and rock music fans, which began receiving state sponsorship from the Putin regime in the 2010s.[98] The “Night Wolves” Motorcycle Club participated in Russia’s initial invasion of Ukraine and routinely express ultranationalist sentiments.[99]

Russia reportedly launched a new program to educate IT-specialists in an effort to address the 900,000 deficit of IT personnel in Russia.[100] The Kremlin-affiliated milblogger reported that Russia introduced a new test that will allow interested participants to find an IT specialty and obtain necessary training.

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

Russian milbloggers continued to criticize the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) for failing to develop and sponsor concrete hangars to protect Russian military aircraft.[101] A Russian milblogger, who routinely analyzes Russian aviation trends, claimed that Russian forces are hastily constructing new hangars at airfields across Russian in an effort to disguise the location and quantity of aircraft stationed at airfields and protect Russian aircraft from Ukrainian drones and Western-provided weapons.[102] The milblogger noted that these hangars are poorly designed because they do not have enough space for aircraft to taxi on their own and need tractors to pull them into the hangars. The milblogger added that some unspecified officials in the Russian MoD are reluctantly considering and negotiating the construction of 150 light hangars, but it is unclear if the MoD has enough funds to support this project. The milblogger noted that 150 hangars would be sufficient to cover Russian tactical and army aviation aircraft at all main Russian military airfields near Ukraine. The milblogger noted that unnamed sponsors can only build light hangars whereas Russian airfields have long needed reinforced concrete hangars. Another milblogger noted that Russian forces have been constructing these light hangars since 2022 at the Marinovka Air Base, Volgograd Oblast and that these hangars intended to protect Russian aircraft from relevant threats in 2022 before mass Ukrainian drone strikes and the Ukrainian use of cruise missiles.[103] The milblogger noted that there are no discussions within the Russian government about the need for centralized construction of hangars and other shelters at Russian airfields.

The press service of the Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec announced on May 30 that Russian developers are testing a newly developed MGP-4 “Shmel” demining unmanned ground vehicle on minefields in occupied Ukraine.[104] Russian state media claimed that MGP-4 “Shmel” has a remote-control system with external cameras and sensors, which reportedly will allow Russian forces to carry out demining remotely at a distance of up to 1,000 meters without exposing sappers to risks on the minefield.[105] Rostec’s director of conventional cluster weapons and special chemicals Bekhan Ozdov claimed that MGP-4 “Shmel” recently received a new anti-mine trawl, which is effective against small-sized anti-personnel mines.[106]

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

The Kremlin continued to use nuclear blackmail in an effort to dissuade the West from providing Ukrainian forces with F-16 aircraft. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov claimed on May 30 that Russia will consider the supply of F-16s to Ukraine as NATO’s “deliberate signal action” in the “nuclear sphere.” Lavrov claimed that F-16s have long been the main delivery vehicle for NATO’s joint nuclear missions and that Russia will destroy these planes in Ukraine, just like other Western-provided military

equipment. Lavrov had also previously made similar groundless threats about Western pledges of F-16s to Ukraine.[107]

BBC reported on May 29 that the Russian government is using pro-war comics to indoctrinate Russian youth to support Russia's war efforts in Ukraine.[108] *BBC* reported that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Education Ministry began distributing tens of thousands of comics that praise Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in schools in Russia and occupied Ukraine in April 2024. *BBC* reported that Russian officials aim to distribute these comics to every school under Russian control, and that these comics show 22 short stories amplifying false Kremlin narratives about Russian forces preventing a "genocide" in Ukraine. *BBC* observed that the comics heavily employ anti-Western, anti-NATO, and anti-Ukrainian rhetoric that Kremlin officials routinely amplify in Russia and occupied Ukraine. *BBC* reported that prominent Russian milblogger and member of the Russian Presidential Council on the War in Ukraine, Mikhail Zvinchuk (also known as Rybar) launched a series of 23 war-themed comics in September 2023 that were translated into English, Arabic, and Chinese. Zvinchuk's comics similarly echo the Kremlin's false narratives and illustrate some combat operations in Ukraine. The Russian MoD-backed "the Power of Truth" art exhibition that travelled across more than 75 cities between Moscow and Russia's Far East by train showcased Zvinchuk's comics.

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

Nothing significant to report.

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

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