Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 15, 2023

Angelica Evans, Grace Mappes, Nicole Wolkov, Kateryna Stepanenko, George Barros, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 15, 2023, 7:45pm 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 November 15. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 16 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The European Union (EU) appears poised to ban the export of precision machine tools and key weapons manufacturing equipment components to Russia. The ban, if enacted and effectively enforced, could deal a significant blow to Russia's defense industrial base (DIB) given precision machine tools' importance in industrial manufacturing. *Bloomberg* reported on November 15 that the EU's 12th sanctions package proposes a ban on the export of precision machine tools and machinery parts that Russia uses to make weapons and ammunition, such as welding machines, lithium batteries, thermostats, motors, and drone motors.[1] *Bloomberg* reported that Russia has been importing precision machines and precision machine tools from Europe to sustain its ammunition production and other DIB production efforts. *Bne Intellinews* reported in June 2021 that Russia's near total reliance on European- and US-produced precision machine tools makes Russia particularly vulnerable to such sanctions and noted that at the time Russia imported almost all of the precision machines it required.[2]

Russia has been increasingly attempting to develop import substitution solutions for sourcing Western-made precision machine tools in 2023, likely in preparation for Western sanctions targeting this vulnerability. The Russian government approved in May 2023 the "Concept of Technological Development until 2030," which encourages domestic production of high-tech products such as precision machine tools and mandates that domestic enterprises produce at least 75 percent of Russia's high-tech products by 2030.[3] Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec reported in August 2023 that Russia's STAN group, the country's largest domestic precision machine manufacturer, which Rostec purchased in 2019, is a major element of Russia's import substitution program.[4] Rostec subsidiary RT-Capital's head, Semyon Yakubov, told *Kommersant* on October 26 that Rostec hopes to use the STAN Group to meet Russia's "great need" for modern precision machines in the absence of Western imports.[5] Yakubov stated that Western sanctions and the war in Ukraine have sharply increased Russia's military and civilian demand for domestically produced machine tools. Yabukov noted that STAN was unable to meet even

a third of the total volume of Russia's orders for precision machines in 2023, worth around six billion rubles (approximately $67.1 million). Yabukov stated that Russia's demand for precision machines is "much greater" than its current production abilities.

Denmark will reportedly start inspecting and potentially blocking Russian oil tankers in an effort to enforce a price cap on Russian oil and the European Union's (EU) insurance regulations. The *Financial Times* (*FT*) reported on November 15 that the EU proposed measures that would allow Denmark to inspect and block Russian oil tankers traveling through the Danish straits. These measures are part of an EU effort to enforce a G7 cap demanding that Western insurers only provide coverage to Russian shipments where oil is sold for less than $60 per barrel.[6] An unnamed senior European government official told *FT* that "almost none" of the Russian maritime oil shipments in October 2023 were below the $60 barrel price cap.[7] *FT* also reported that the EU is concerned that Russian tankers are violating EU regulations by frequently traveling with falsified financial statements or non-Western insurance.[8]

The Ukrainian government reached a deal with international insurers that will provide affordable coverage to vessels carrying grain and other critical food supplies through the Black Sea corridor for civilian vessels, amid continued Russian efforts to deny navigation through the corridor. The *Financial Times (FT)* reported on November 15 that the Ukrainian government reached a deal with insurance broker giant Marsh McLennan to provide up to $50 million in hull and liability insurance from Lloyd's of London firms for each vessel carrying agricultural goods.[9] Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal stated that this agreement would allow Ukraine to "provide vital food supplies to the world at the same time as supporting the Ukrainian economy and keeping the Black Sea open for international trade."[10] Russian forces have continually conducted strikes on Ukrainian port infrastructure and mined areas in the Black Sea to deny freedom of navigation in the corridor.[11]

Russian President Vladimir Putin stated during a meeting with Russian election commission representatives on November 15 that the Russian government will suppress any foreign or domestic election interference. Putin stated that the Russian government will "continue to do everything necessary to prevent any illegal intrusion into electoral processes."[12] Putin notably did not specifically reference the March 2024 presidential elections, nor did he announce his announce his presidential campaign.

Recent Russian opinion polls indicate that roughly half of Russians maintain support for the war in Ukraine and for Russia to engage in peace negotiations. The Levada Center – an independent Russian polling organization – reported on October 31 that 55 percent of respondents to a recent poll believe that Russia should begin peace negotiations while 38 percent favor continuing to conduct the war.[13] The Levada Center observed that while these numbers slightly increased between September and October by four percent, they have largely remained consistent since July 2023.[14] The Levada Center added that support for Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine remained high with 76 percent of respondents stating that they support Russian military operations in Ukraine. The Levada Center reported that 62 percent of surveyed Russians believe that the full-scale invasion is progressing well, while 21 percent of respondents believe that the war is going reasonably or very poorly for Russia.[15] The Levada Center reported on November 14 that two-thirds of respondents believe that Russia is headed in the right direction and of those who believe the opposite, 45 percent cited the war in Ukraine.[16] Opposition-leaning Russian research organization

Russian Field reported similar numbers supporting negotiations on November 15, noting that 48 percent of respondents said that Russia should engage in peace negotiations and that 74 percent would support Russian President Vladimir Putin if he signed a peace agreement "tomorrow."[17] Russian Field stated that 36 percent of respondents believe that the war is going well for Russia whereas 25 percent believe that the war is going poorly for Russia and that respondents who trust Telegram channels are twice as likely to believe that the war is going poorly for Russia as those who rely on Russian television.[18]

Yandex NV - the Dutch holding company of Russian internet technology company Yandex - reportedly aims to sell all its Russian assets by the end of 2023, allowing the Russian government to further increase its hold over the Russian information space. *Reuters* and *Bloomberg* reported on November 14, citing sources familiar with the matter, that Yandex NV likely aims to sell all its Russian assets, not just a controlling stake, by the end of 2023.[19] One of *Reuters'* sources claimed that Yandex NV seeks a complete break from Russia while another source stated that a complete exit is likely but undecided. *Reuters* and *Bloomberg* reported that Yandex NV will host a board meeting on the deal in late November and hopes to finalize a deal by December 2023.[20] The Kremlin has been attempting to crypto-nationalize Yandex through coercive measures since at least the summer of 2023 and reportedly approved a prior deal to sell Russian Yandex holdings to an affiliate of Russian Presidential Administration First Deputy Head Sergey Kiriyenko.[21] The Yandex crypto-nationalization effort likely supports the Kremlin's preparations for the 2024 Russian presidential elections.

Key Takeaways:

- **The European Union (EU) appears poised to ban the export of precision machine tools and key weapons manufacturing equipment components to Russia.**
- **Denmark will reportedly start inspecting and potentially blocking Russian oil tankers in an effort to enforce a price cap on Russian oil and the European Union's (EU) insurance regulations.**
- **The Ukrainian government reached a deal with international insurers that will provide affordable coverage to vessels carrying grain and other critical food supplies through the Black Sea corridor for civilian vessels, amid continued Russian efforts to deny navigation through the corridor.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin stated during a meeting with Russian election commission representatives on November 15 that the Russian government will suppress any foreign or domestic election interference.**
- **Recent Russian opinion polls indicate that roughly half of Russians maintain support for the war in Ukraine and for Russia to engage in peace negotiations.**
- **Yandex NV - the Dutch holding company of Russian internet technology company Yandex - reportedly aims to sell all its Russian assets by the end of 2023, allowing the Russian government to further increase its hold over the Russian information space.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas.**

- **A Russian insider source claimed that Kremlin-created Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation, which presented a limited number of former Wagner fighters with the certificates of their combat veteran status, is coercing former Wagner fighters into signing contracts with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).**
- **Russian and occupation authorities continue efforts to indoctrinate Ukrainian students in occupied Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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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 two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
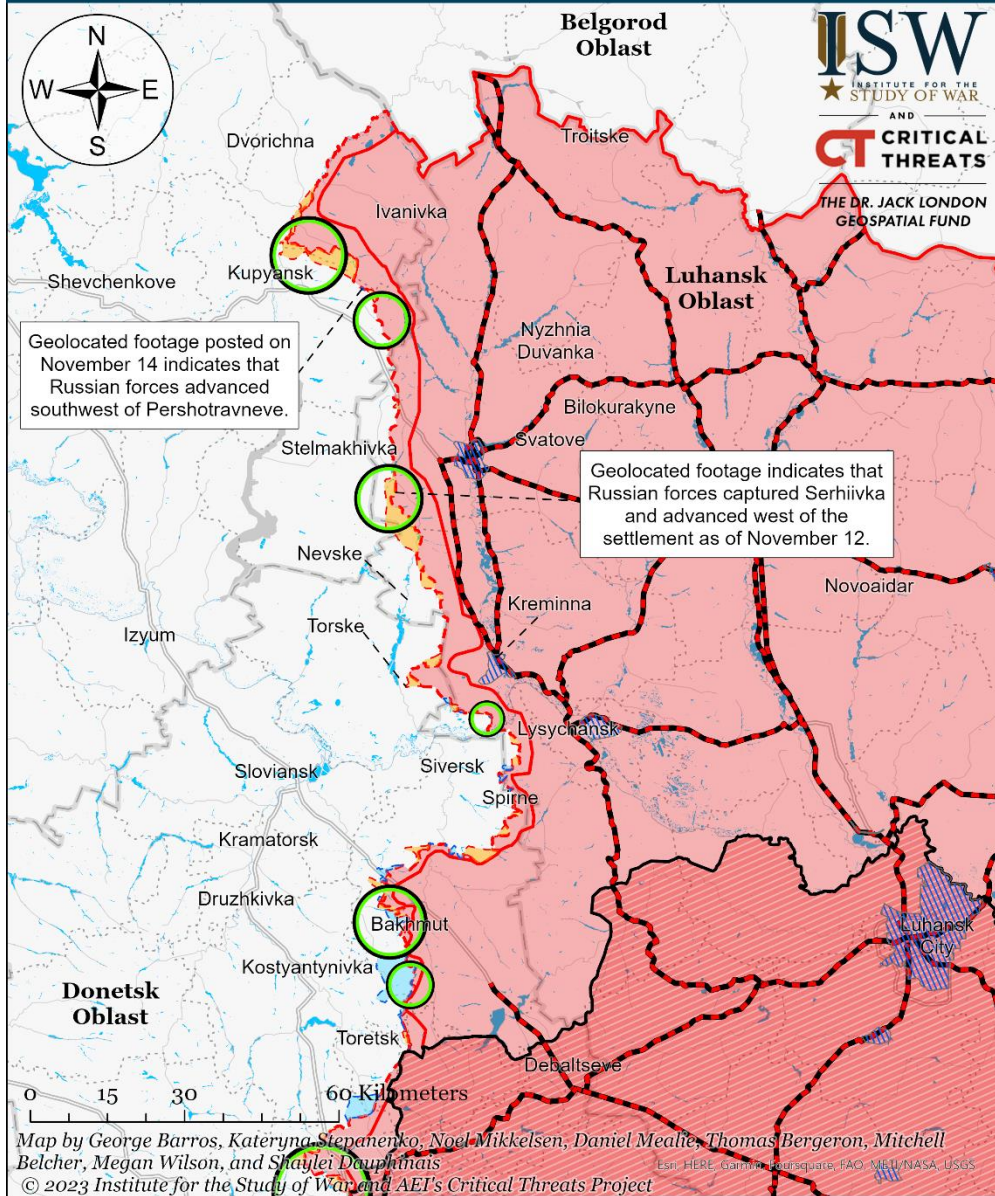- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 15 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 14 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced east of Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and west of Volodymyrivka (19km northwest of Svatove).[22] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced to the outskirts of Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk) and around Tymkivka (19km east of Kupyansk) to encircle the settlement.[23] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing near Lyman Pershyi (12km northeast of Kupyansk), Kyslivka (22km southwest of Kupyansk), and Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna).[24] ISW has not observed visual evidence that would confirm these claimed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Kupyansk direction near Synkivka, Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), and Ivanivka and in the Lyman direction near Nadiya (16km west of Svatove) and the Serebryanske forest area.[25]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted assaults along the Kupyansk-Kreminna line on November 15 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka, the former village of Zahoruykivka (a village 16km east of Kupyansk that was disincorporated in 1980) in Kharkiv Oblast, Hyrhorivka (10km south of Kreminna), and Serebyanka (11km southwest of Kreminna) in Donetsk Oblast.[26] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked in the forest area west of Kreminna and are attempting to push Russian forces from Torske (15km west of Kreminna).[27]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Pershotravneve.

Geolocated footage indicates that Russian forces captured Serhiivka and advanced west of the settlement as of November 12.

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Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS

- ○ 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
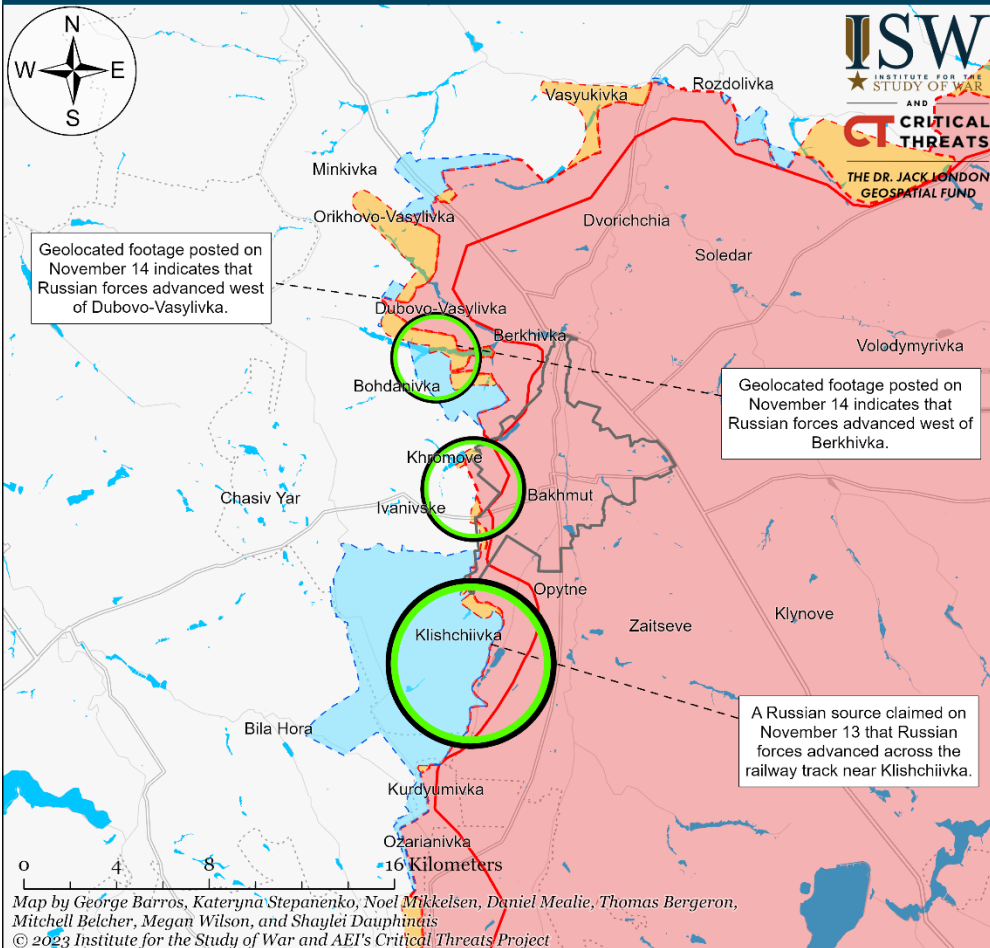- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued to attack along Bakhmut's northern and southern flank on November 15. Geolocated footage published on November 14 shows Russian forces operating on Bakhmut's southwestern outskirts, and Russian forces have likely been operating on the approaches to the Bakhmut prior to November 14.[28] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced on Bakhmut's northern flank near Berkhivka (4km north of Bakhmut) and Yahidne (2km north of Bakhmut) and consolidated new positions near the Berkhivka reservoir.[29] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that unspecified Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) elements are attempting to regain lost positions and advanced 500 meters in an unspecified area south of the Berkhivka reservoir, and another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces lost nearly all territory that they captured in spring-summer 2023 in the vicinity of Berkhivka and Yahidne.[30] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced in forest areas near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and gained a foothold on the settlement's northern outskirts.[31] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian and Ukrainian forces are actively fighting for control of key heights near Klishchiivka and claimed that Ukrainian forces still hold the key heights west of the settlement.[32] A Russian milblogger claimed that Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) remains contested while Russian forces maintain control of Kurdyumivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut).[33] Another Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian "Sibir" Spetsnaz detachment are operating near Klishchiivka.[34] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled all Russian assaults near Bohdanivka (5km northwest of Bakhmut), Ivanivske (5km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[35] Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Russian forces are likely preparing to launch new assaults by intensifying artillery fire around Bakhmut.[36]

Ukrainian forces launched localized attacks south of Bakhmut on November 15 and made confirmed territorial gains. Geolocated footage published on November 15 indicates that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced southeast of Toretsk (23km southwest of Bakhmut).[37] A Russian milblogger amplified footage published on November 14 purportedly showing Russian Spetsnaz elements repelling a group of Ukrainian forces attempting to advance near Andriivka.[38] Another Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces are unsuccessfully counterattacking near Klishchiivka.[39] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue to launch assaults on Bakhmut's southern flank.[40]

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Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Dubovo-Vasylivka.

Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Berkhivka.

A Russian source claimed on November 13 that Russian forces advanced across the railway track near Klishchiivka.

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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☐ Bakhmut City Limits

▬ 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.
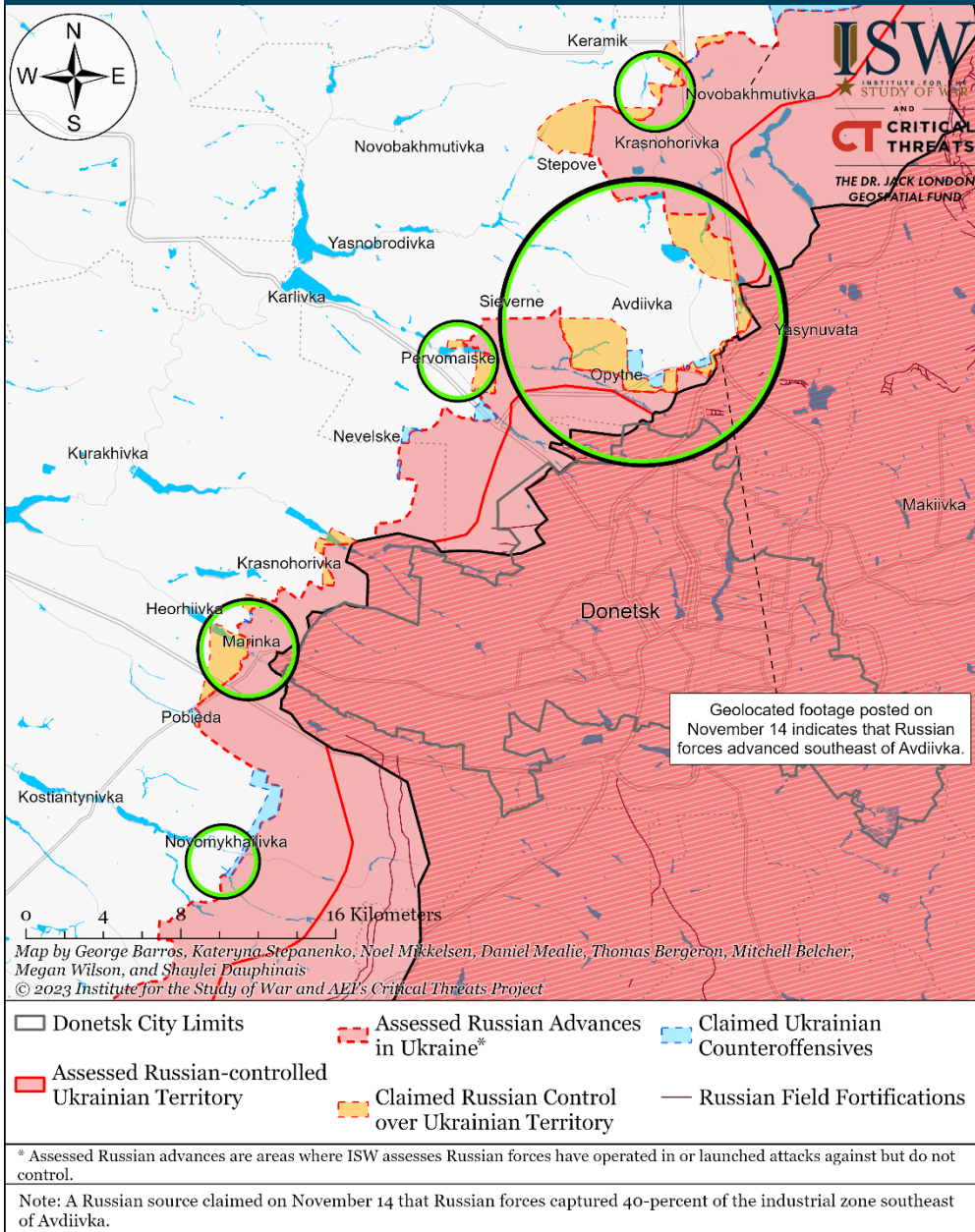
Note: Multiple Russian sources claimed on November 13 that Russian forces advanced 500 meters near Berkhivka as of November 13.

Russian sources made unconfirmed claims that Russian forces continued advancing around Avdiivka on November 15. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces from their positions near the waste heap north of Avdiivka and that Russian forces seized at least 60 percent of the industrial area south of Avdiivka.[41] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced south of the waste heap and seized several unspecified Ukrainian positions.[42] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces from Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka) and that the settlement is currently contested.[43] The milblogger added that Russian forces advanced north of Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), drove Ukrainian forces from unspecified treatment facilities southeast of the waste heap, and consolidated control over

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Stepove's eastern outskirts by advancing along the railway track.[44] The milblogger noted that Russian forces have not advanced towards Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) or Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka) and are not directly attacking Avdiivka or the Avdiivka Coke Plant.[45] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces are not rushing to advance north of Avdiivka so as to avoid taking unnecessary losses.[46] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted simultaneous offensive operations near Stepove, Sieverne, and Pervomaiske; west of Kamianka (5km northwest of Avdiivka); near the water treatment plant; and on the industrial site.[47] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks east of Novokalynove (11km northwest of Avdiivka) and Pervomaiske and near Avdiivka, Sieverne, Tonenke, and Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka).[48]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked in the Avdiivka direction on November 15 but did not advance. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to attack Russian positions near the waste heap and in the industrial area south of Avdiivka.[49] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack with an infantry fighting vehicle near Stepove.[50] Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Ukrainian forces maintain control over the Avdiivka Coke Plant northwest of Avdiivka.[51]
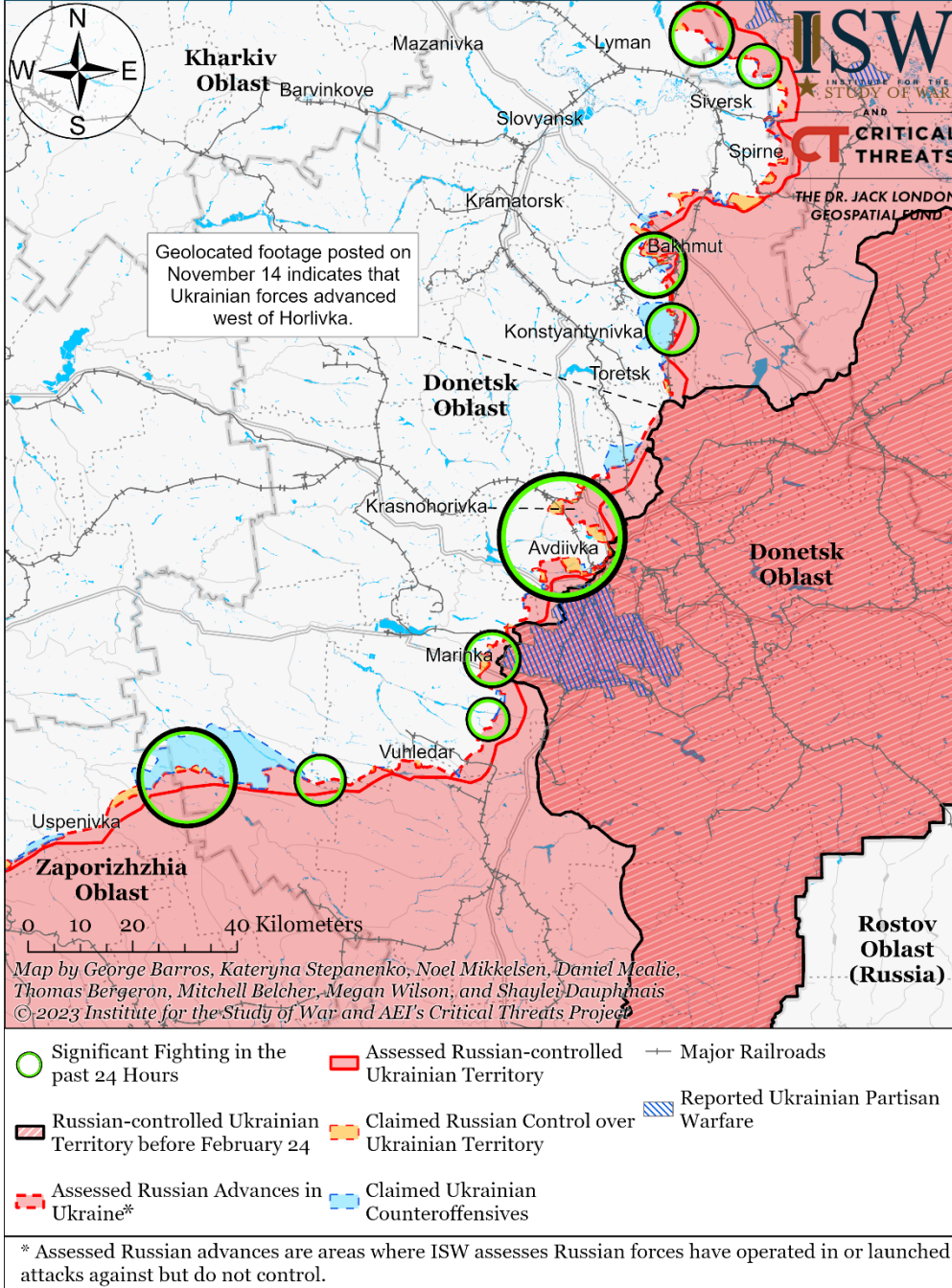
Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Russian forces advanced southeast of Avdiivka.

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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- ☐ Donetsk City Limits
- ☐ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ⌁ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ☐ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ☐ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- — Russian Field Fortifications

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

Note: A Russian source claimed on November 14 that Russian forces captured 40-percent of the industrial zone southeast of Avdiivka.

Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 15 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian attacks near Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City) and near Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces continued assault operations near Marinka and that the frontline had not significantly changed.[53]

Russian forces are continuing to establish new military bases in and near occupied Mariupol. Ukrainian Mariupol Mayor Advisor Petro Andryushchenko reported that Russian forces continue to establish military bases outside of the industrial zones in occupied Mariupol.[54] Andryushchenko stated that these military bases include ammunition stores and barracks housing 100 to 150 personnel. The Crimea-based Ukrainian partisan group "Atesh" reported that Russian forces established a military base in Manhush (14km southwest of Mariupol) containing a fuel depot, at least 10 armored fighting vehicles, four air defense systems, a command post, and a headquarters.[55]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced west of Horlivka.
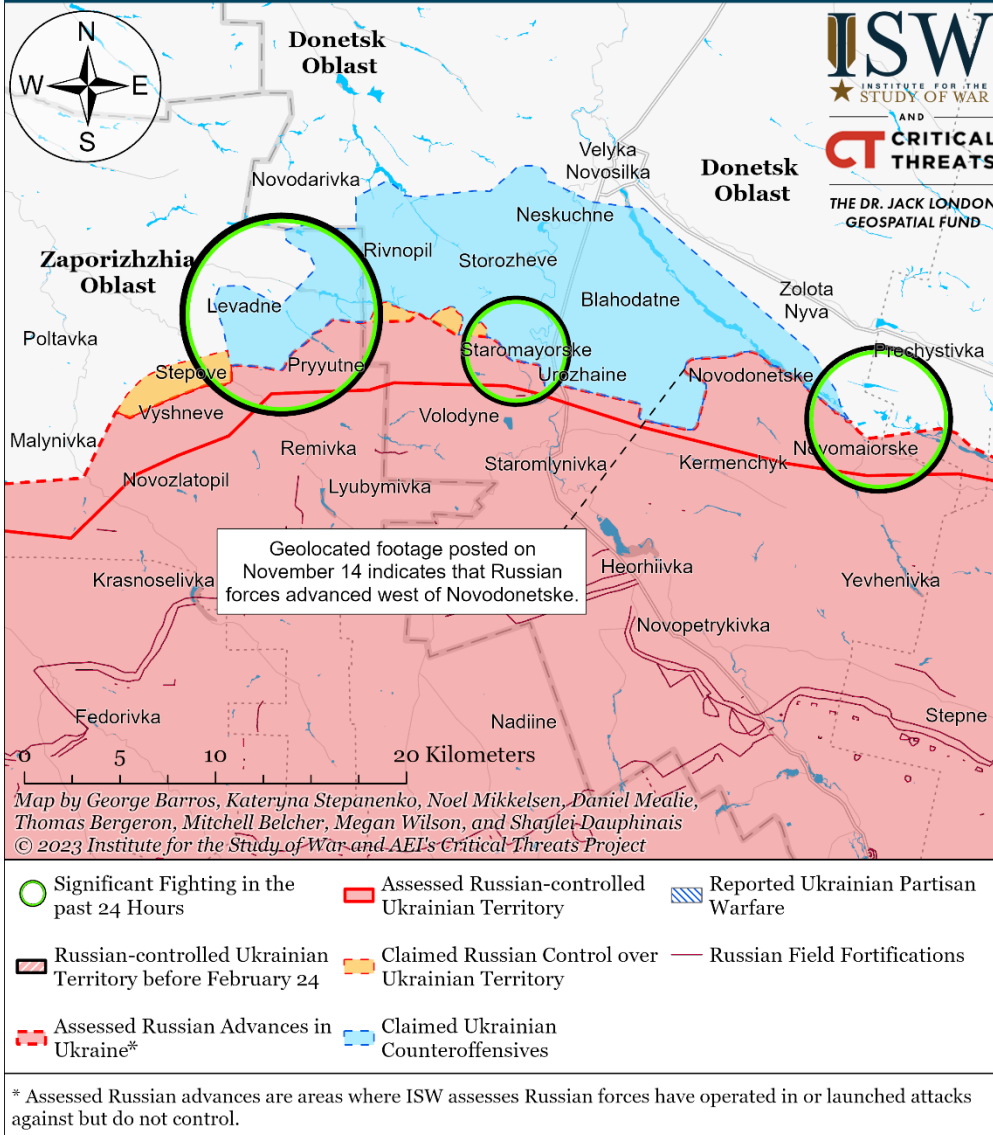
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Neither Russian nor Ukrainian sources reported Ukrainian ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 15.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area and did not advance on November 15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka), Novodarivka (13km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), and Prechystivka (17km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[56] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also attacked near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka), Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), and Novomayorske (18km southeast of Veylka Novosilka).[57] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on November 14 that elements of the Russian 5th Combined Arms Army (CAA) have been unsuccessfully attempting to advance near Staromayorske since November 11 and that elements of the 37th Motorized Rifle Brigade (36th CAA, Eastern Military District) also recently tried to attack between Urozhaine and Novodonetske.[58]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Novodonetske.

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

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.
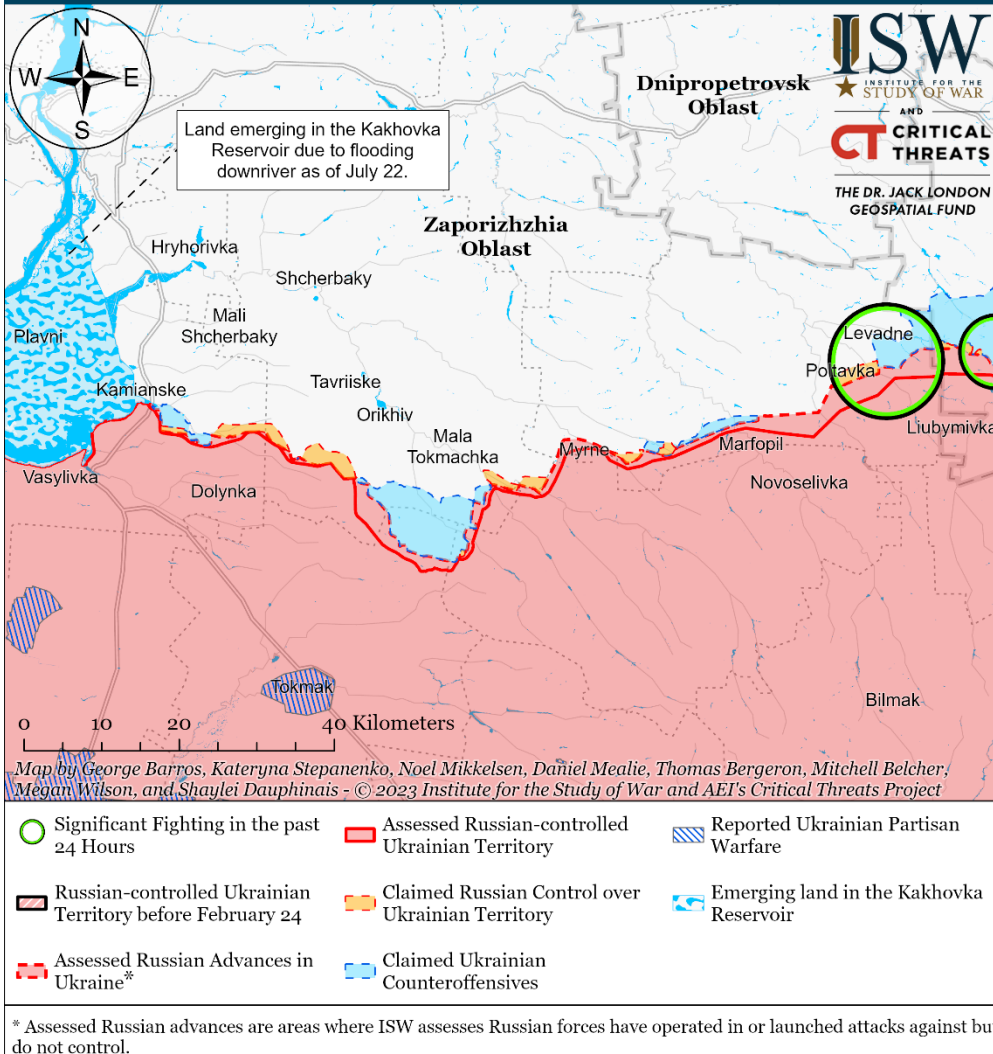
Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 15 and reportedly advanced. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces made some advances in an unspecified area of western Zaporizhia Oblast but that Russian forces are already counterattacking to recapture the positions.[59] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks between Robotyne and Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne) and near Verbove (10km east of Robotyne) and Novofedorivka (15km northeast of Robotyne).[60] Another milblogger claimed that the nature of the fighting west of Robotyne is largely direct infantry contact.[61] Russian milbloggers noted that inclement weather is impeding offensive operations in the Orikhiv area.[62]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 15 and reportedly recently advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced 700 meters into a forest area near Robotyne and to the outskirts of Pyatykhatky (27km northwest of Robotyne) on November 13-15.[63] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on November 14 that Russian forces failed to suppress Ukrainian firing positions on the heights surrounding Pyatykhatky after Russian forces entered Pyatykhatky from the south.[64]
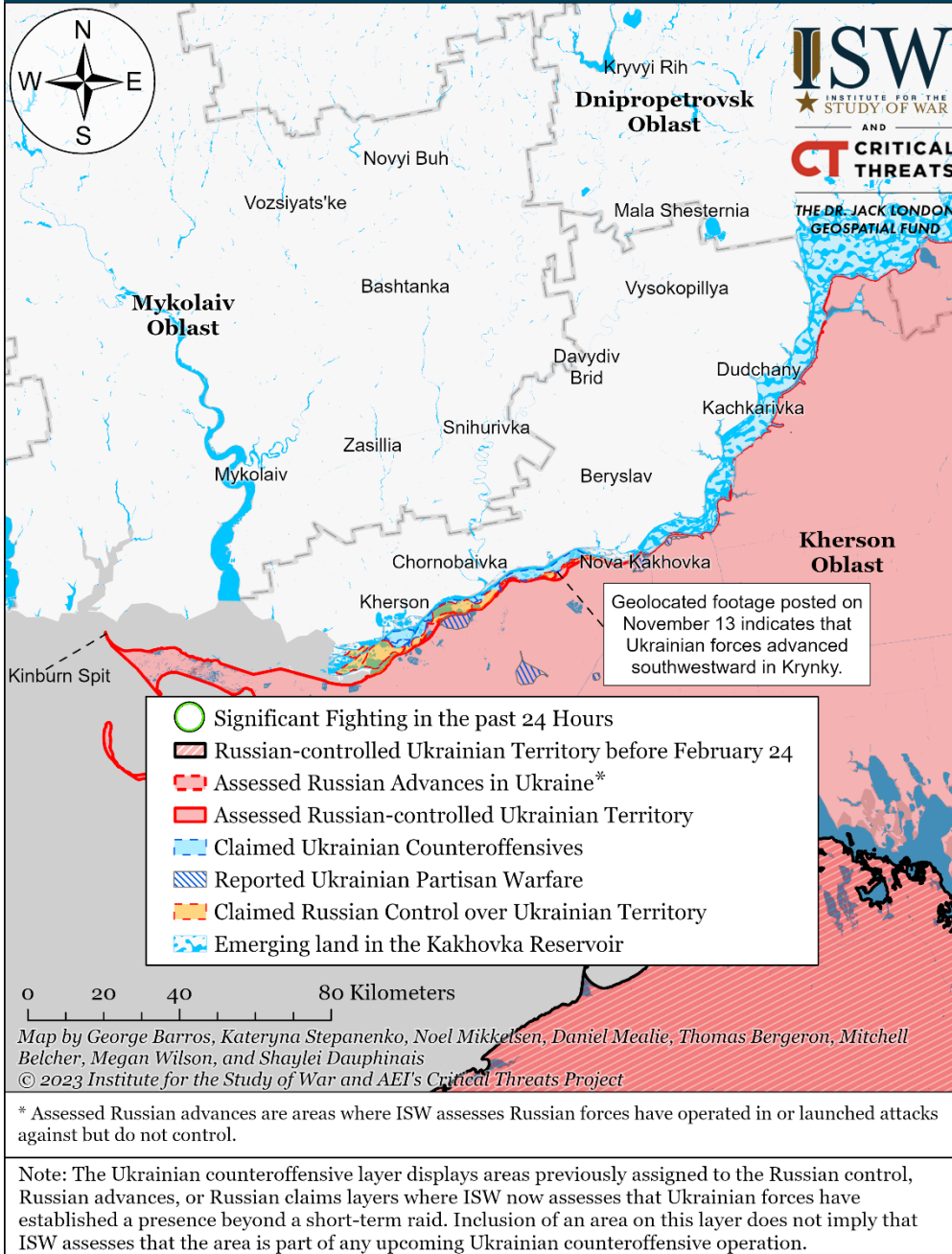

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced northwest of Verbove.

○ Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours

▭ 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

◂ Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir

— Russian Field Fortifications

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

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Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Land emerging in the Kakhovka Reservoir due to flooding downriver as of July 22.

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

○ Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours

▭ 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

↩ Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir

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

Ukrainian forces continued larger-than-usual operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 15. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks from central Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City, 2km from the Dnipro River, and about 3.6 km north of the E-58 highway) and that Ukrainian forces are also attacking near Poyma (11km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and Pishchanivka (15km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River).[65] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces prevented Ukrainian forces from conducting casualty evacuation and deploying additional Ukrainian personnel to the east bank near the Antonivsky road bridge.[66] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Ukrainian forces are pushing Russian forces three to eight kilometers from the Dnipro River's east bank in Kherson Oblast.[67] The geographic extent of this described effort is significantly larger than what any available open-source evidence currently shows.

Russian forces made a recent confirmed advance in a Ukrainian-held area in the east bank of Kherson Oblast amid continued operations against Ukrainian east bank positions on November 15. Geolocated footage published on November 14 shows that Russian forces made some advances into Krynky.[68] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked and forced Ukrainian forces to withdraw from some areas south of Krynky, near Kozachi Laheri (23km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River), and near the Antonivsky bridge, but ISW is unable to confirm these claims.[69] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Russian forces have likely developed a plan to eliminate Ukrainian positions on the east bank by forming three tactical groups.[70] Mashovets stated that Russian forces plan to use two groups to flank the Oleshky-Nova Kakhovka road and the Krynky area from the Korsunka (45km northeast of Kherson City and 1km from the Dnipro River) and Kozacha Laheri areas, while the third group will attack south of Krynky and advance north.[71] The *Wall Street Journal,* citing Ukrainian soldiers who fought on the east bank, reported that Russian forces are employing heavy mines, infiltration tactics, snipers, and heavy artillery, multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), and airstrikes to defend against Ukrainian advances on the east bank.[72]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on November 13 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced southwestward in Krynky.

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

0   20   40   80 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

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

A Russian insider source claimed that Kremlin-created Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation, which presented a limited number of former Wagner fighters with combat veteran status certificates, is coercing former Wagner fighters into signing contracts with the Russian Ministry of Defense

(MoD). The insider source claimed on November 15 that Wagner Group representatives advertised to Wagner fighters applying for government assistance through the Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation that they should sign contracts with the MoD and told them that the Moscow Oblast military registration and recruitment head would explain to them the benefits of service under the Russian MoD.[73] ISW cannot verify the insider source's claims, although ISW continues to observe reports that the Russian MoD continues attempting to recruit Wagner fighters.[74]

Russian authorities continue to target migrant communities as part of crypto-mobilization efforts across Russia. Russian sources reported on November 15 that Russian authorities physically issued about 50 summonses to attendees of a birthday celebration at a restaurant in Voronezh Oblast, demanding that these attendees appear at military enlistment centers.[75] Russian sources reported that the majority of people accosted with summonses were recently naturalized Russian citizens originally from Azerbaijan.[76]

Russian federal subjects continue to recruit volunteers to support the war effort in Ukraine. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* affiliate *Idel Realii* reported that Mari El Republic Head Yuri Zaitsev signed a decree that increased the one-time payment to individuals who sign contracts with the Russian military from 100,000 rubles (about $1,120) to 250,000 rubles (about $2,800) and that Udmurt Republic Head Alexander Brechalov announced that those who sign a Russian military contract will receive a one-time payment of 50,000 rubles (about $660).[77] The Moscow Oblast government announced on November 15 the creation of an elite unit of over 2,000 volunteers from Moscow Oblast and advertised one-time payments of one million rubles (about $11,200).[78] Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin claimed that 47,000 people from Moscow have signed contracts with the Russian military since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, including 22,000 people in 2023.[79]

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

The Institute for Science and International Security published satellite images on November 13 showing that Russian authorities are expanding the facilities that produce Shahed drones at the Alabuga Special Economic Zone in the Republic of Tatarstan. The Institute for Science and International Security found that Russian authorities have constructed an additional facility, likely consisting of motor test cells, since April 2023 and a new security perimeter and corridors connecting the facility's buildings since July 2023.[80]

Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that the Russian military is pulling Soviet-era T-62 tanks from long-term storage to use in combat in Ukraine. Fityo stated on November 15 that only about one in three T-62 tanks work but that they still pose a threat to Ukrainian forces because the additional armor forces Ukrainian forces to expend ammunition and loitering munitions to destroy them.[81]

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)

Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to indoctrinate Ukrainian students in occupied Ukraine. The Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation reported on November 14 that occupation authorities are enrolling Ukrainian first graders into the "Orlyata Rossii" ("Eagles of Russia") movement, which is the children's branch of the Kremlin-funded pseudo-volunteer "Dvizheniye Pervykh" ("Movement of the First") youth organization.[82] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on November 15 that employees of an unspecified Russian investigative department are raiding schools in occupied Kherson Oblast in search of teenagers who are helping the Ukrainian military and are encouraging other students to denounce "disloyal" classmates.[83] Former Ukrainian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights and founder of the *Save Ukraine* organization Mykola Kuleba announced that *Save Ukraine* helped four Ukrainian children and their families escape occupied Ukraine after Russian authorities coerced the children's parents into sending them to a Russian school, where Russian officials and armed Russian servicemen attempted to indoctrinate the children.[84]

Russian authorities continue efforts to artificially change the demographics of occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Mariupol City Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on November 15 that occupation authorities are allowing Russian minority group members and Central Asia migrants to move into and loot apartments in occupied Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast.[85] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that crime rates are rising in occupied southern Donetsk Oblast due to the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) encouraging newly settled Russian and Central Asian migrants to form criminal groups in occupied Ukraine.[86]

Russian authorities continue preparations for the 2024 Russian presidential elections in occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov reported on November 15 that Russian authorities are transporting ethnic Russian prosecutors, law enforcement officers, teachers, and other officials from Russia to occupied Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast, to form election commissions.[87]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Nothing significant to report.

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)

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko stated on November 14 that Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan should "not rush" or "make hasty decisions" following Pashinyan's refusal to attend the upcoming Russian-led Collective Treaty Security Organization (CSTO) summit in Minsk on November 23.[88]

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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