



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Christina Harward, Angelica Evans, Grace Mappes, Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan

April 29, 2024, 6:45pm 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.

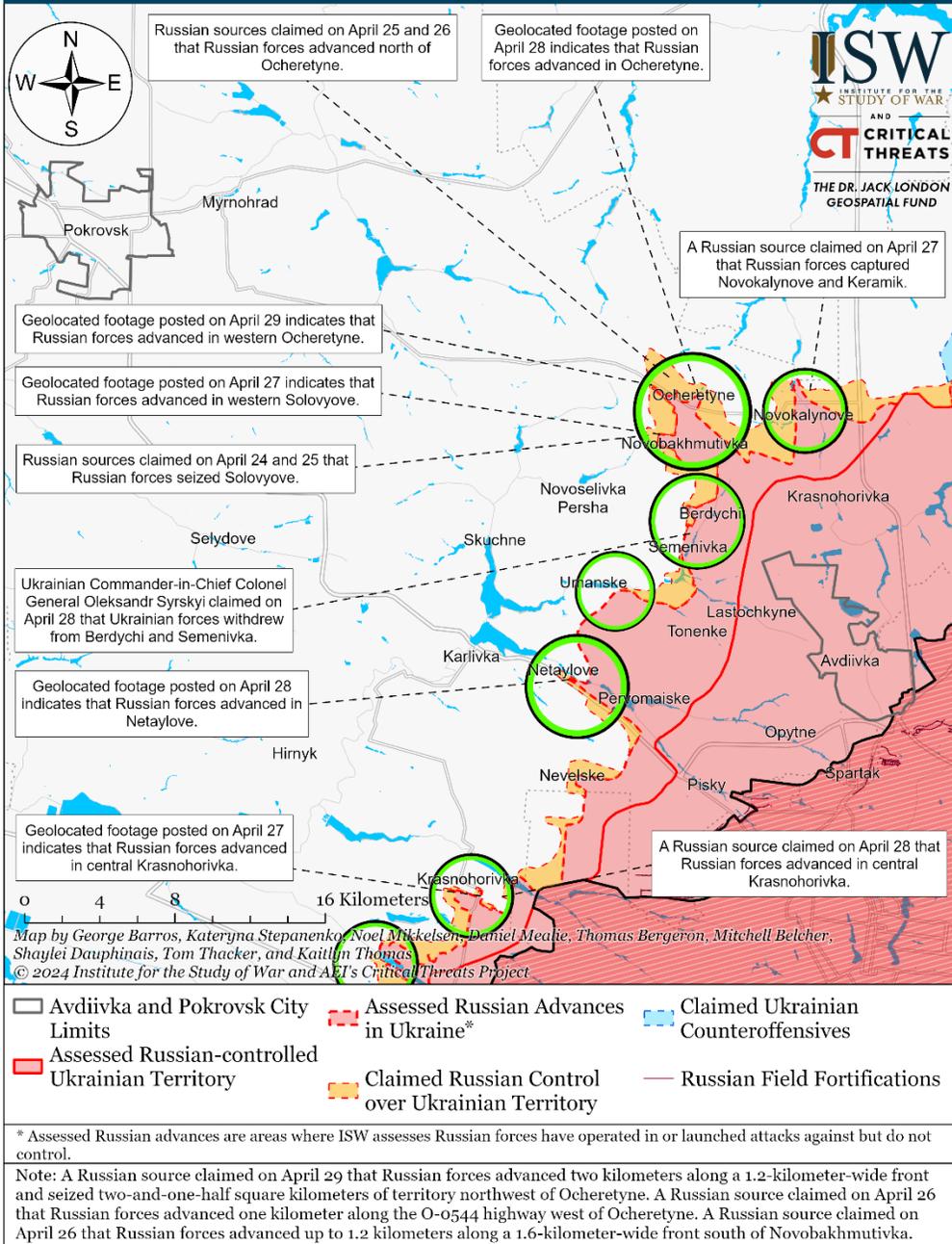
Click [here](#) to see ISW’s 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

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 12:30pm ET on April 29. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the April 30 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces secured additional marginal tactical gains northwest and southwest of Avdiivka as of April 29, but have not made significant advances in the Avdiivka direction over the last 24 hours. Geolocated footage published on April 28 and 29 indicates that Russian forces advanced in western and northeastern Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka), along the rail line to the northwestern outskirts of Ocheretyne, and in Netaylove (southwest of Avdiivka).[1] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also advanced northwest of Ocheretyne towards Novooleksandrivka in an area 1.2 kilometers wide and 1.7 kilometers deep.[2] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced 400–450 meters west of the C051801 (Orlivka-Netaylove) highway between Netaylove and Umanske (west of Avdiivka).[3] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claimed Russian advances, however. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) officially stated that Russian forces seized Semenivka (west of Avdiivka) following Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskiy’s April 28 statement that Ukrainian forces withdrew from the settlement.[4] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are conducting clearing operations in Berdychi (west of Avdiivka), and Ocheretyne, Novokalynove, and Keramik (both northwest of Avdiivka and east of Ocheretyne).[5] Fighting also continued northwest of Avdiivka near Kalynove, Arkhanhelske, Novobakhmutivka, Solovyove, Sokil, Novopokrovske, and Novoselivka Persha; and west of Avdiivka near Orlivka and Umanske.[6]

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



Russian forces have the opportunity to choose among multiple tactical directions for future offensive drives near Avdiivka, but it remains unclear where they will focus their efforts in the near future. Russian milbloggers speculated about which objectives Russian forces may pursue northwest of Avdiivka but offered no clear consensus. Several prominent milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are conducting offensive operations near Keramik to advance towards Arkhanhelske but are also trying to advance west from the Ocheretyne area towards Sokil and southwest towards the Novoprokovske-Novoselivka Persha line.[7] ISW continues to assess that the continued Russian stabilization of their salient northwest of Avdiivka presents the Russian command

with a choice of either continuing to push west towards its reported operational objective in Pokrovsk or trying to drive northwards to conduct possible complementary offensive operations with the Russian effort around Chasiv Yar.[8]

Investigations by both Ukrainian news agencies and Russian opposition outlets suggest that Russia is denying the legal guardians of forcibly deported and adopted Ukrainian children the ability to repatriate these children, further undermining the Kremlin’s claims that the deportation and adoption of Ukrainian children is a necessary humanitarian endeavor. *BBC Panorama* and Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* published investigations in November 2023 that detailed how “A Just Russia” Party leader Sergey Mironov and his wife Inna Varlamova deported a ten-month girl and a two-year old boy from an orphanage in Kherson Oblast in fall 2022.[9] Mironov and Varlamova adopted the girl and changed her name, surname, and birthplace on her new Russian birth certificate, and the whereabouts of the boy remain unknown. Ukrainian outlet TSN posted an investigation on April 28, 2024, that further details the circumstances of Mironov’s adoption of the girl and includes footage of Mironov and his wife attending a baptism for the child.[10] TSN alleged that Mironov and Varlamova brought both the girl and the boy to Moscow Oblast, but that the boy was ill and that Mironov and Varlamova abandoned him, which is why his whereabouts remain unknown.[11] TSN also reported that the Ukrainian Ombudsman’s Office found that the girl, who is now nearly three years old, actually has a legal guardian and a younger sister living in Greece and noted that the girls’ guardian is asking for her return.[12] Russian opposition outlet *TV Dozhd* similarly reported on April 27 that a Russian woman adopted a deported six-year-old boy from occupied Donetsk Oblast and changed his name and surname, which made it harder for journalists and the boy’s family to find him.[13] *TV Dozhd* noted that the boy’s sixteen-year-old sister attempted to find him and gain custody through the Russian court system, which denied her right to guardianship.[14]

The practice of changing the names and birthplaces of deported Ukrainian children and adopting them into Russian families is likely intended to erase the paper-trail of the circumstances of their deportations and their true identities to make it more challenging for the Ukrainian government or their guardians to find or repatriate them. Russian authorities, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kremlin-appointed Commissioner on Children’s Rights Maria Lvova-Belova, frequently try to justify the deportation and adoption of Ukrainian children on humanitarian grounds and cloak what is ultimately part of a genocidal enterprise to destroy Ukrainian identity in the guise of rescuing orphaned Ukrainian children.[15] Reports that some of these children have legal guardians who are asking for their return undermines the Russian effort to claim that the deportation of Ukrainian children is a humanitarian necessity and highlights the fact that Russian authorities seem intent on covering their tracks to make deported children harder to find and return to Ukraine.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated during an unexpected visit to Kyiv on April 29 that Ukraine’s Western allies must provide long-term, predictable military assistance to Ukraine and signal to the Kremlin that Russia cannot “wait out” Western support for Ukraine.[16] Stoltenberg stated during a press conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that serious delays in Western military support have resulted in serious battlefield

consequences. Stoltenberg noted that Ukrainian forces have been “outgunned” and have downed fewer Russian missiles over the last several months due to materiel shortages and that Russian forces are currently advancing in several areas of the frontline due to manpower and material shortages. Stoltenberg stated that he expects Ukraine’s Western allies to soon announce additional unspecified military assistance commitments and stressed that NATO member states need to make “major,” multi-year financial commitments to support Ukraine and emphasize to Moscow that Russia cannot win by “wait[ing] out” Western support for Ukraine. Zelensky noted during the press conference that NATO and Ukraine continue to work towards further interoperability of their forces, and Stoltenberg expressed confidence in Ukraine’s eventual accession to NATO.[17]

The consistent provision of key Western systems to Ukraine will play a critical role in Russia’s prospects in 2024 and beyond, as well as in Ukraine’s ability to contest the theater-wide initiative, conduct future counteroffensive operations, and liberate Ukrainian territory from Russian occupation.[18] US and European failures to sustain the timely provision of critical systems to Ukraine will not only continue to constrain Ukraine’s ability to plan and wage offensive and defensive operations, but also signal weakness and hesitancy in Western support for Ukraine to the Kremlin. These signals in turn strengthen the Kremlin’s belief that it can “wait out” Western support for Ukraine and achieve its objectives of destroying Ukrainian statehood and subjugating the Ukrainian people after the West abandons Ukraine thereby encouraging Putin to persist in his aggression. Recent Kremlin information operations targeting the West have specifically emphasized the idea that Russia can and will outlast Western military assistance to Ukraine and Ukraine’s will and ability to defend itself.[19]

The Kremlin is pursuing a hybrid campaign directly targeting NATO states, including using GPS jamming and sabotaging military logistics in NATO members’ territory.

Financial Times (FT) reported on April 29 that Baltic ministers are warning that Russia is behind recent cases of GPS jamming that have interfered with commercial navigation signals and forced two Finnair flights to turn back in the middle of flights from Helsinki to Tartu in the past week.[20] FT estimated that GPS jamming has affected “tens of thousands” of civilian flights in recent months. UK outlet the *Sun* also reported on April 23 that suspected Russian GPS jamming impacted over three thousand UK civilian flights over the Baltic region, and British officials also believe that Russia jammed the satellite signal of a Royal Air Force jet that was transporting British Defense Secretary Grant Shapps back to the UK from Poland in March.[21] Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna told FT that Estonia considers recent GPS jamming instances “part of Russia’s hostile activities” and a “hybrid attack.”[22] FT noted that there are three suspected sources — Russian electronic warfare (EW) assets in Kaliningrad; another source in Russia causing GPS disturbances in Estonia and Finland; and a third source that is active farther north and impacting the northern parts of Norway and Finland.[23] An open-source intelligence account focusing on GPS jamming in the Baltic region assessed that the GPS jammer affecting the Estonian flights is in Russia roughly halfway between St. Petersburg and Narva, Estonia.[24] ISW has observed widespread GPS disruptions across Poland and the Baltics since late December 2023.[25]

Russian investigative outlet *The Insider* published a report on April 29 detailing how agents of the Russian General Staff's Main Directorate (GRU) established a long-term presence in the Czech Republic and Greece to help agents of notorious GRU Unit 29155 — which previously conducted high-level assassination attempts with nerve agents and is reportedly responsible for nonlethal energy or acoustic attacks against US diplomatic, military, and intelligence personnel — conduct sabotage operations in European NATO states.[26] *The Insider* reported that two agents with Russian citizenship in particular helped GRU Unit 29155 facilitate attacks against ammunition depots in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, including destroying 150 tons of ammunition and killing two people in the Czech Republic in 2014, by providing intelligence about weapons shipments and a safehouse for GRU agents.[27] *The Insider* also implicated the two Russian agents in helping facilitate GRU Unit 29155's first assassination attempt against the head of the Bulgarian arms company EMCO, Emilian Gebrev, who provided ammunition to Ukraine in 2014. *The Insider* reported that Unit 29155 also attempted to poison Gebrev in 2015 after the first assassination attempt failed but did not implicate the other Russian agents in facilitating the second attack.[28]

The Kremlin has been waging this hybrid campaign to destabilize NATO for the past decade through these various assassination attempts, logistics sabotage, and allegedly acoustic and energy attacks against government personnel.[29] The recent GPS jamming incidents indicate that the Kremlin likely intends to continue this campaign.

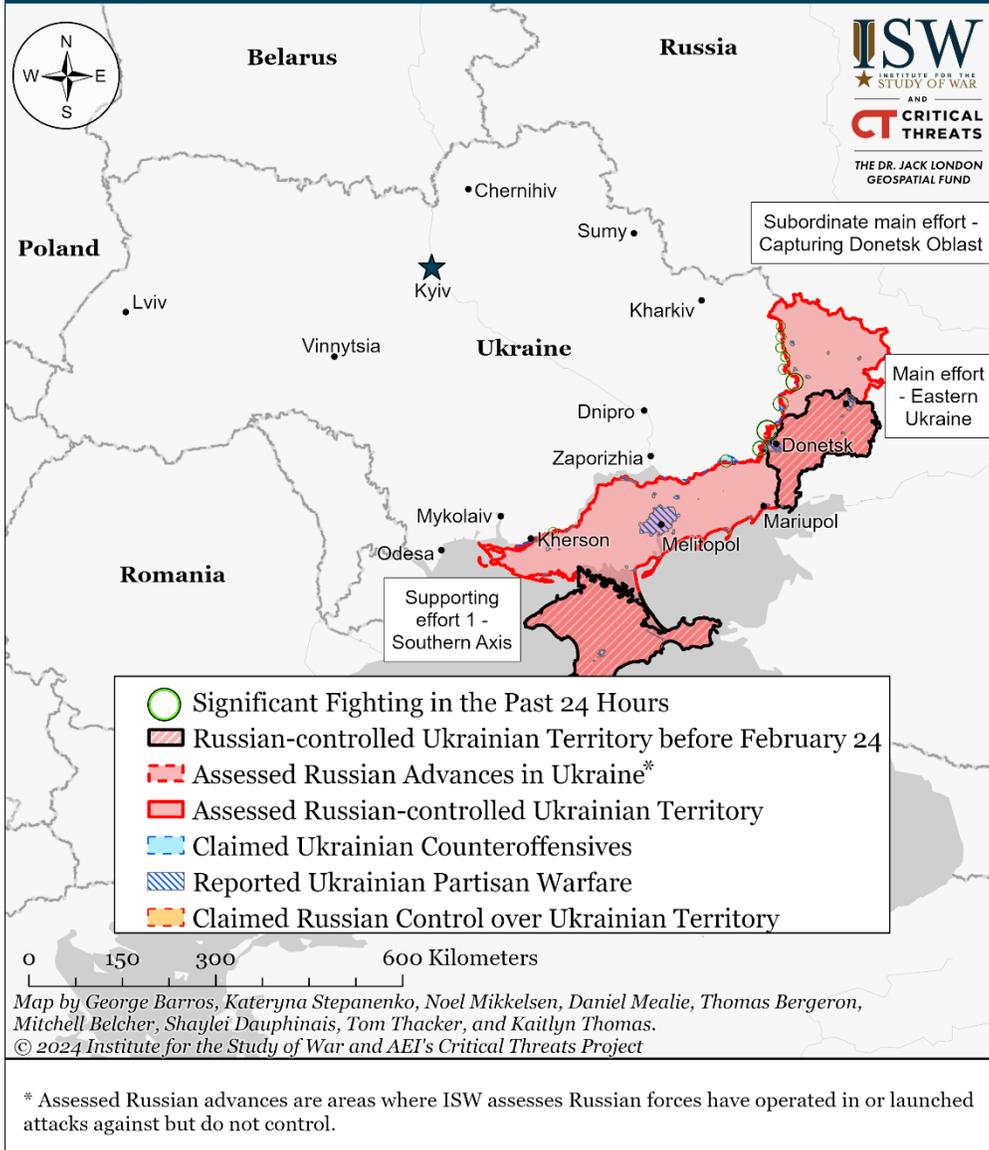
Telegram recently temporarily blocked chatbots meant to facilitate civilian reports on Russian military activity to official Ukrainian channels, including some channels run by Ukrainian security services. Telegram blocked the bots of Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR), Security Service (SBU), and Ministry of Digital Development as well as chatbots associated with the Ukrainian channel *Crimean Wind* and the Freedom of Russia Legion on August 27 and 28.[30] Ukraine's Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security reported on April 29 that Telegram had restored a number of channels' chatbots, including those belonging to the GUR and SBU.[31] *Reuters* reported that a Telegram spokesperson stated that Telegram had "temporarily disabled" the bots due to a "false positive" but had since reinstated them.[32] Telegram chatbots allow Telegram users to submit comments or questions to the administrators of certain Telegram channels, and Ukrainian authorities have used these chatbots to allow Ukrainians to submit questions or tips about Russia's war effort directly to the appropriate Ukrainian agencies.[33] Telegram founder Pavel Durov stated on April 24 that Telegram bans accounts and bots that collect information for military intelligence purposes and that Apple had sent Telegram requests to make unspecified changes to the platform for Telegram users using Ukrainian SIM cards.[34] Russian milbloggers initially expressed enthusiasm after reports emerged about Telegram banning the Ukrainian bots, and some later criticized Telegram for reversing the decision.[35] The Kremlin has previously pressured Telegram to censor certain content, including after the March 22 Crocus City Hall attack, but the Kremlin's possible role in the recent bot bans is unclear at this time.[36]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces secured additional marginal tactical gains northwest and southwest of Avdiivka as of April 29, but have not made significant advances in the Avdiivka direction over the last 24 hours.**

- **Russian forces have the opportunity to choose among multiple tactical directions for future offensive drives near Avdiivka, but it remains unclear where they will focus their efforts in the near future.**
- **Investigations by both Ukrainian news agencies and Russian opposition outlets suggest that Russia is denying the legal guardians of forcibly deported and adopted Ukrainian children the ability to repatriate these children, further undermining the Kremlin’s claims that the deportation and adoption of Ukrainian children is a necessary humanitarian endeavor.**
- **NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated during an unexpected visit to Kyiv on April 29 that Ukraine’s Western allies must provide long-term, predictable military assistance to Ukraine and signal to the Kremlin that Russia cannot “wait out” Western support for Ukraine.**
- **The Kremlin is pursuing a hybrid campaign directly targeting NATO states, including using GPS jamming and sabotaging military logistics in NATO members’ territory.**
- **Telegram recently temporarily blocked chatbots meant to facilitate civilian reports on Russian military activity to official Ukrainian channels, including some channels run by Ukrainian security services.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Avdiivka and Donetsk City.**
- **Ukrainian officials continue to report that Russian authorities are coercing Ukrainians in occupied Ukraine to join the Russian military.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of 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 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

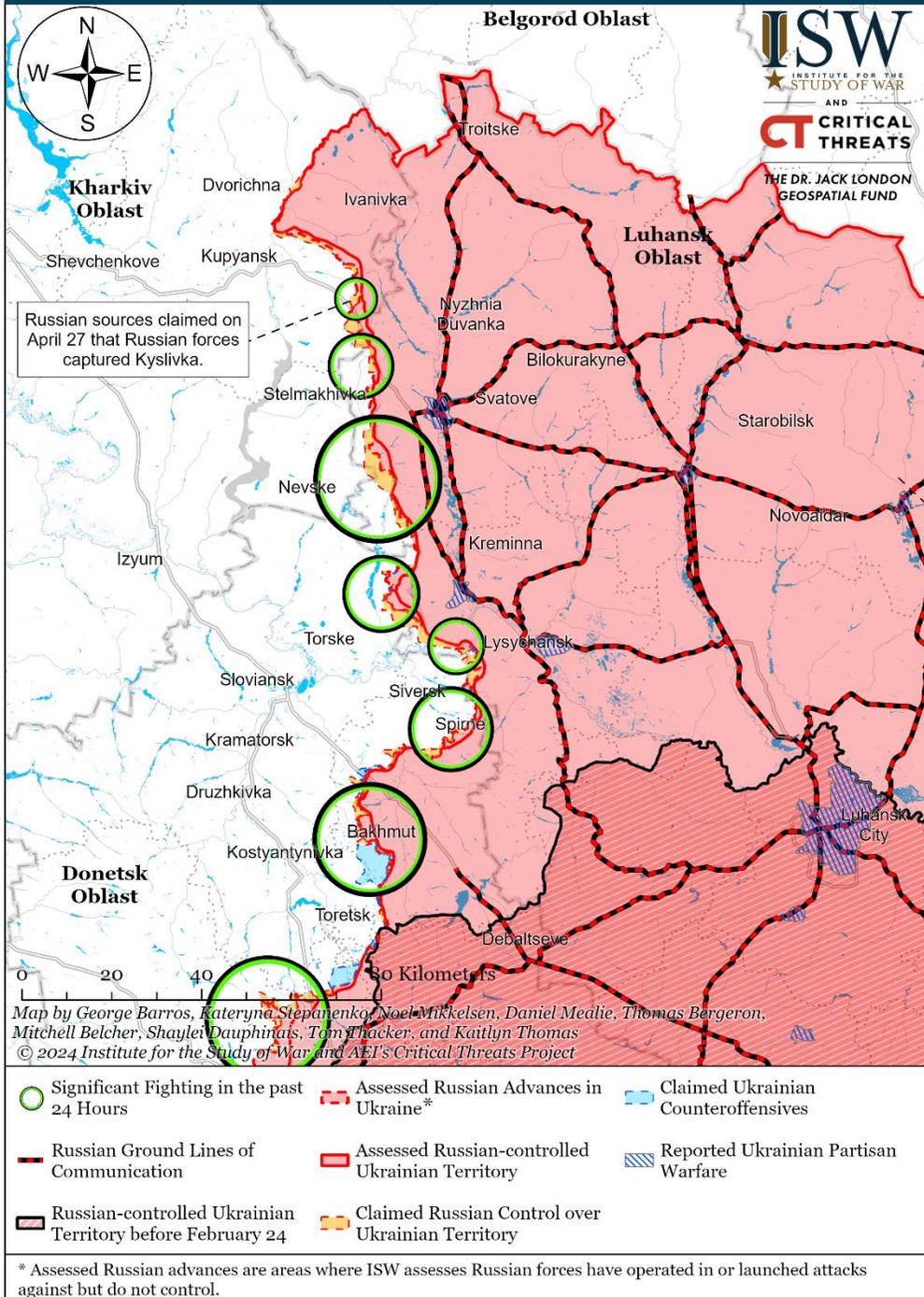
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Satellite imagery taken on April 27 shows that Russia is building an airfield that will likely be used for military purposes in Belgorod Oblast about 75 kilometers from the Ukrainian border area.[37] The imagery shows the construction of an 1,800-meter-long runway and surrounding infrastructure about nine kilometers west of Alekseevka, Belgorod Oblast, between July 2023 and April 2024. *Radio Liberty's* Russian service noted that the length of the runway suggests that Russian forces intend to operate Il-76 military transport aircraft from the new airbase.[38]

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line on April 29, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Ukrainian and Russian sources reported continued fighting northwest of Svatove near Berestove and Stelmakhivka; southwest of Svatove near Tverdohlibove, Kopanky, Novoserhiivka, Makiivka, and Nevske; west of Kreminna near Terny and south of Zarichne; southwest of Kreminna in the Serebryanske forest area; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[39] Russian milbloggers continued to disagree over the status of Kyslivka (northwest of Svatove), which some Russian sources claimed that Russian forces have seized in recent days, and one milblogger noted that Russian forces have only raised a flag in southern Kyslivka and do not yet control the northern part of the settlement.[40] A prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces continued offensive operations towards Makiivka and gained a foothold on the eastern outskirts of the settlement, although ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of Russian forces operating on the outskirts of Makiivka.[41] Ukrainian Kharkiv Oblast Head Oleh Synehubov reported on April 29 that Russian forces have resumed offensive operations in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions and stated

that the Russian command is planning to accumulate forces along the Kharkiv-Belgorod Oblast border, but that it is too early to forecast if and when Russian forces may open a new front in this area.[42] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of Russia's Western and Northern Grouping of Forces are intensifying combat activity, including air and artillery strikes, in the Kharkiv City direction.[43] Ukrainian officials have continuously warned that Russian forces may launch an offensive operation against Kharkiv City in summer 2024, although ISW assesses that Russian forces currently lack the forces necessary to seize Ukraine's second largest city.[44]

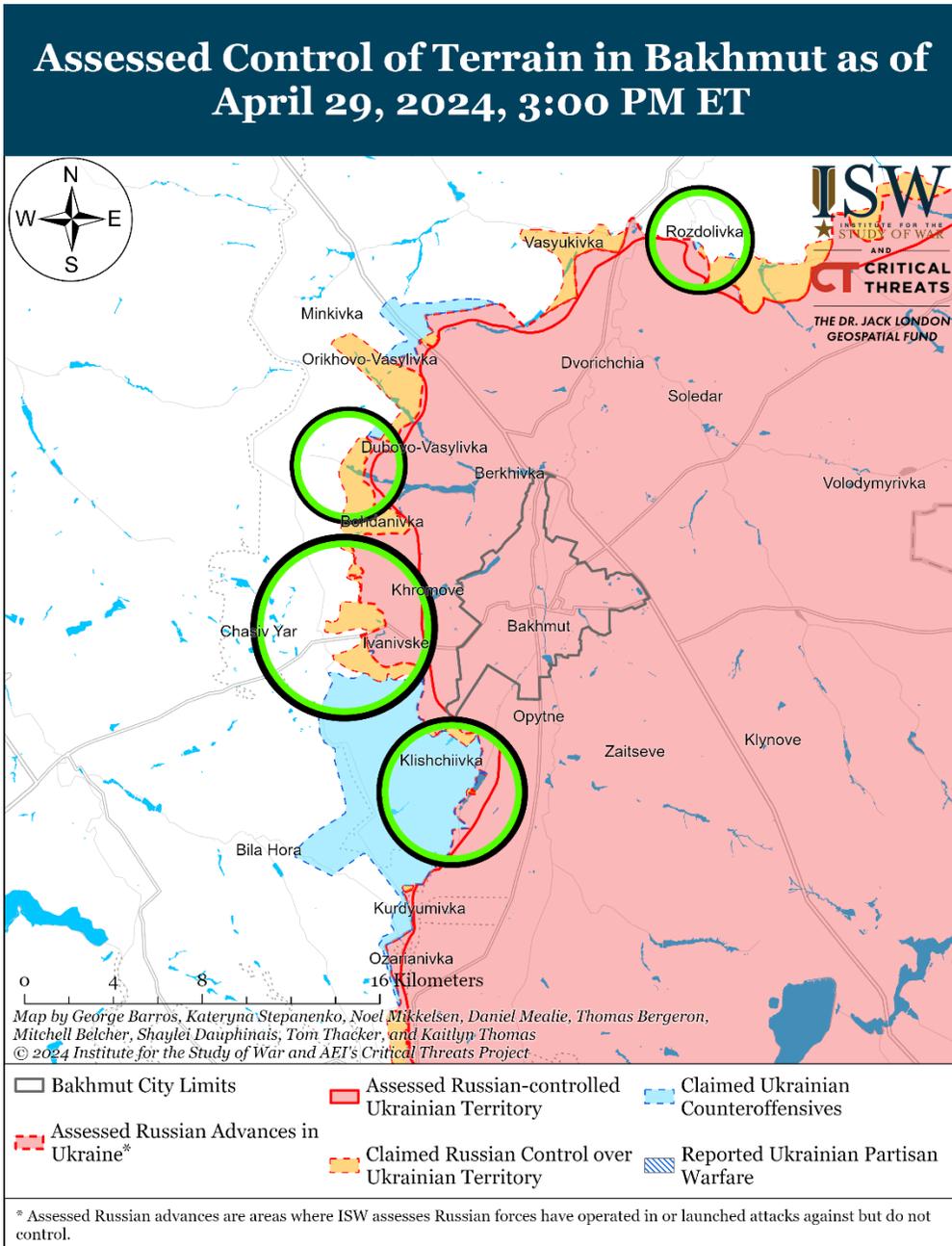
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of April 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

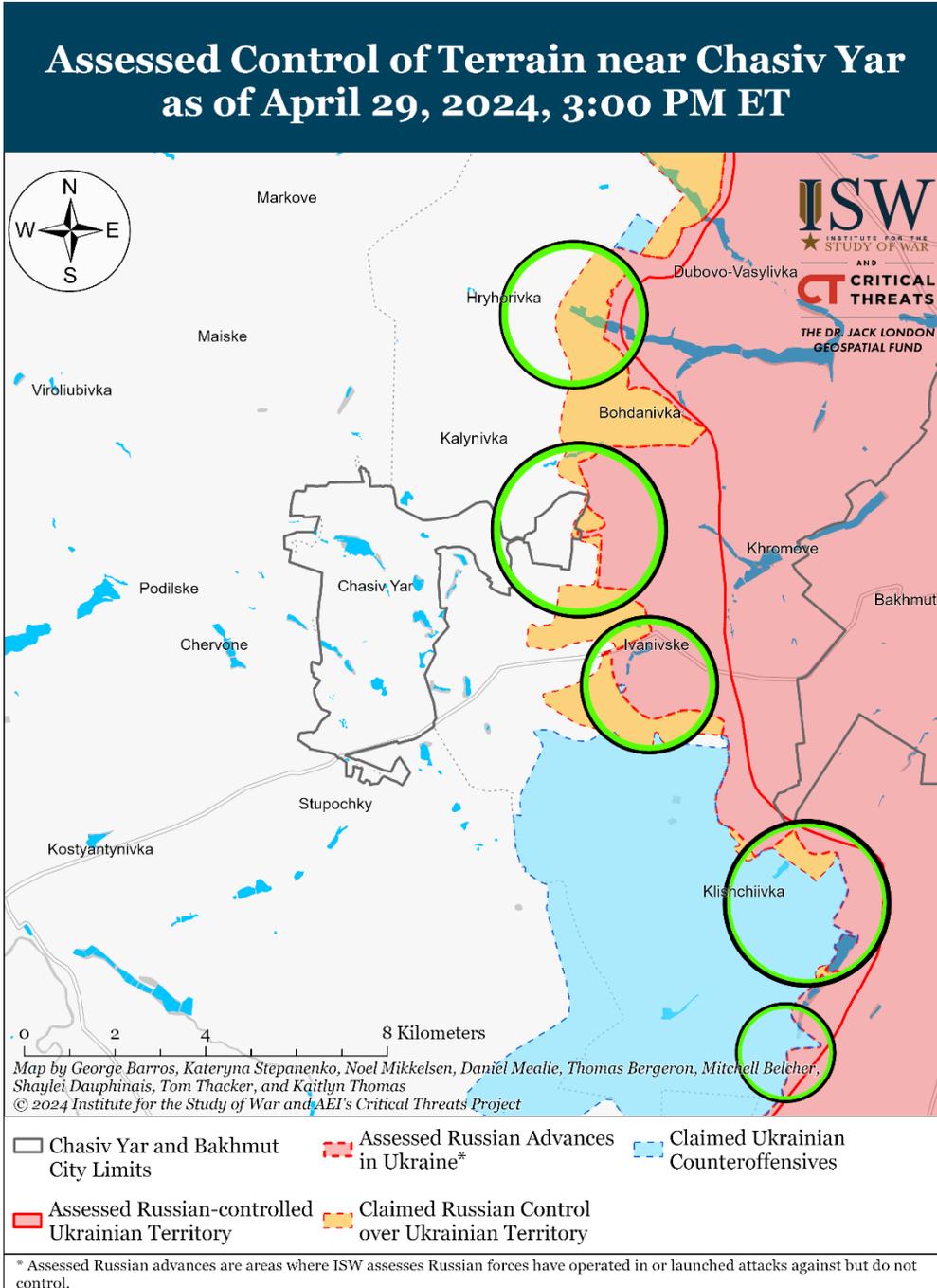
Positional engagements continued in the Siversk direction northeast of Bakhmut on April 29, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Positional engagements continued east of

Siversk near Verkhokamyanske; southeast of Siversk near Vyimka; and south of Siversk near Rozdolivka.[45] Elements of the Russian 2nd Artillery Brigade and the “GORB” detachment (both of the 2nd Luhansk People’s Republic Army Corps [LNR AC]) are reportedly operating near Spirne (southeast of Siversk).[46]



Fighting continued near Chasiv Yar on April 29, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Geolocated footage published on April 28 shows that Ukrainian forces recently repelled a roughly reinforced platoon-sized Russian mechanized assault north of Klishchiivka (southeast of Chasiv Yar).[47] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are using “turtle” armored vehicles – armored vehicles with metal sheets welded on their sides to protect against drone strikes – in combat operations near Chasiv Yar after having recently used similar vehicle protection systems fitted on tanks west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka.[48] Fighting continued north of Chasiv Yar near Hryhorivka;

near the Novyi Microraion (eastern Chasiv Yar); east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske; southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka and Andriivka; and south of Chasiv Yar near Pivdenne and Niu York.[49] The deputy commander of a Ukrainian unit operating near Chasiv Yar stated that Ukrainian and Russian forces each control about 50 percent of Ivanivske and that Ukrainian and Russian forces are conducting attacks in the settlement in alternating waves.[50] The deputy commander stated that Russian forces are interested in taking Ivanivske, which is located in a geographical lowland, to advance to Chasiv Yar.

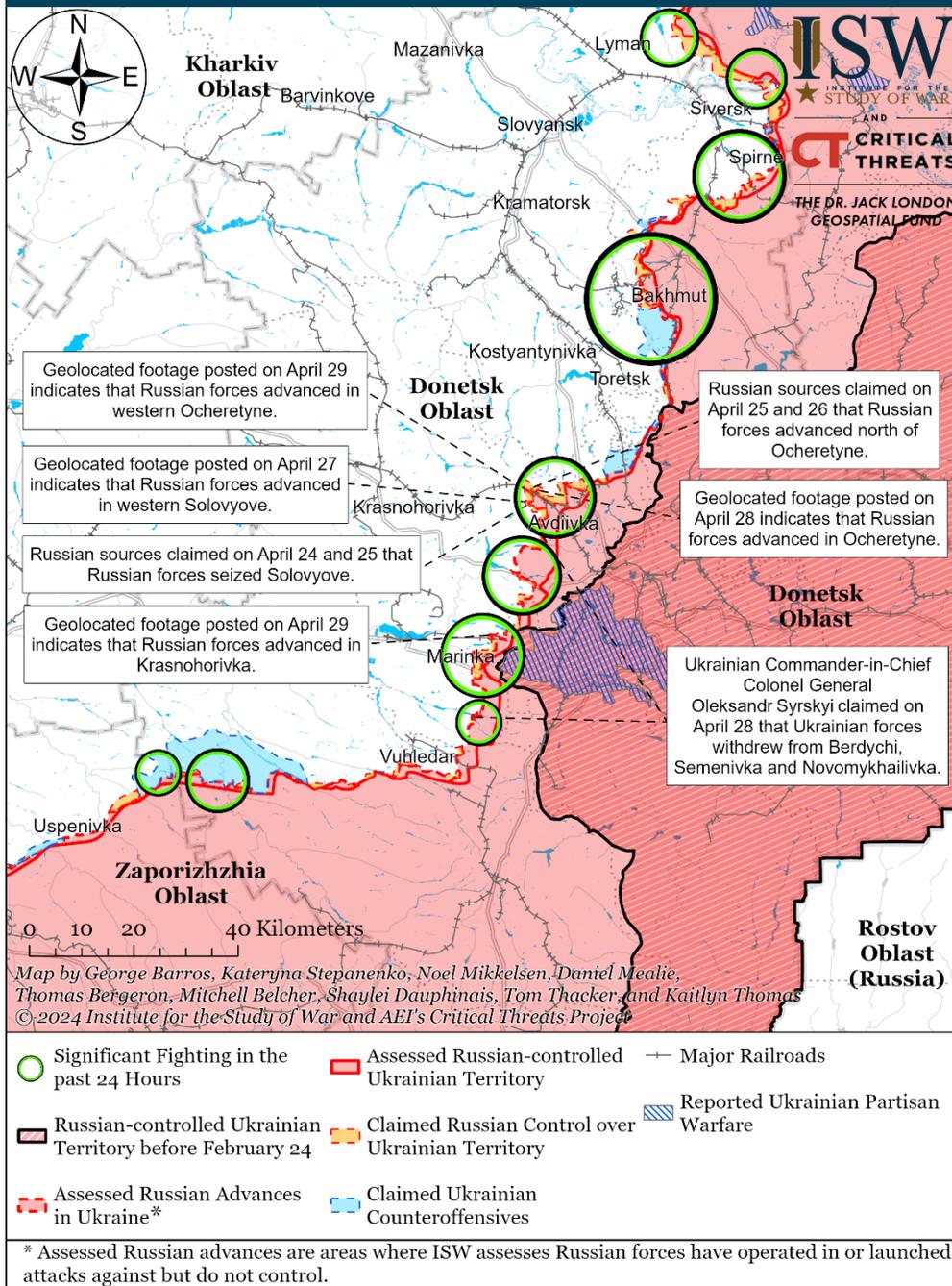


See topline text for updates on the situation in the Avdiivka direction.

Russian forces recently made confirmed advances west of Donetsk City amid continued fighting west

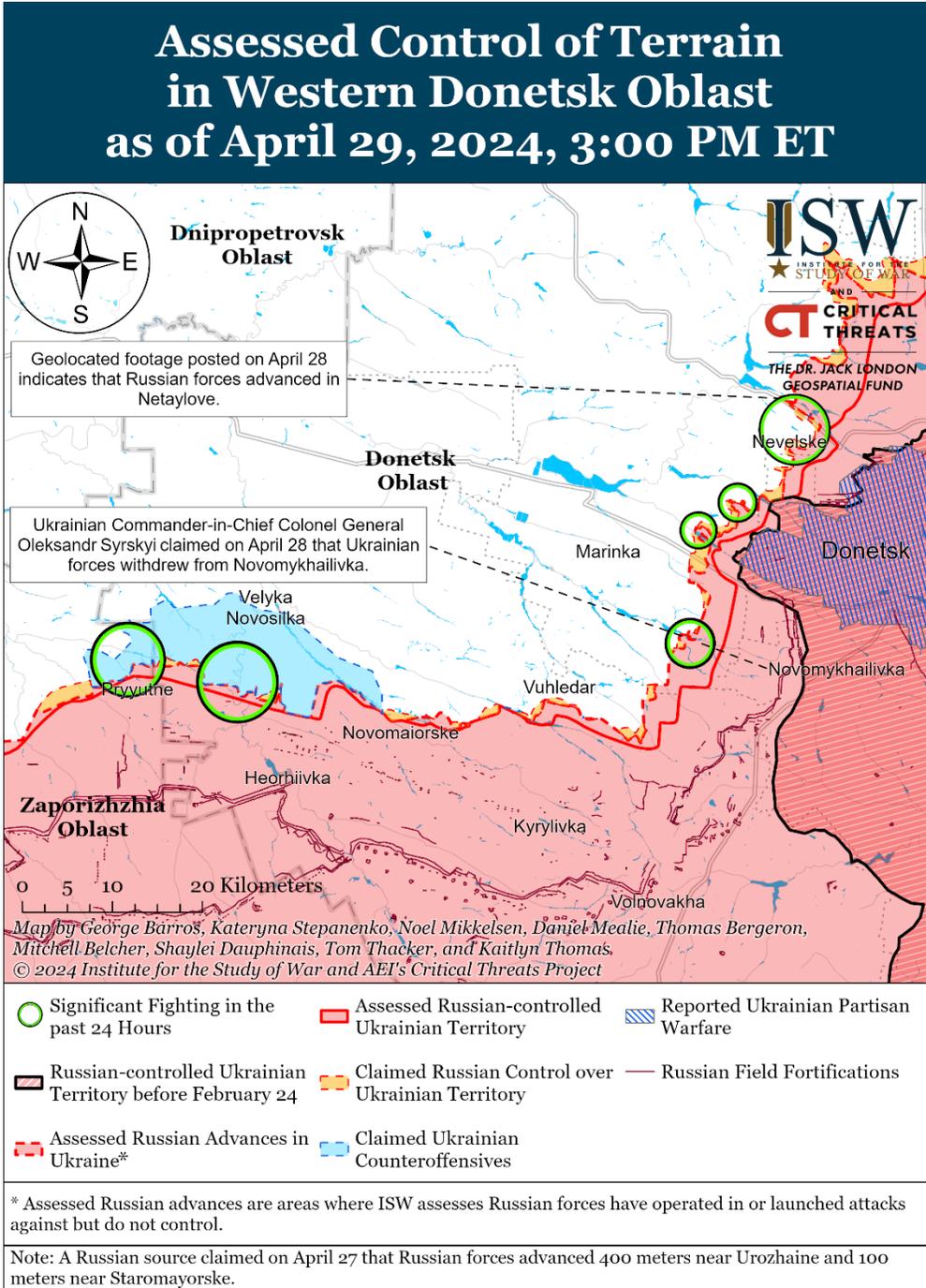
and southwest of Donetsk City on April 29. Geolocated footage published on April 29 indicates that Russian forces advanced east of Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City).[51] Additional geolocated footage published on April 29 of a roughly reinforced platoon-sized Russian mechanized assault indicates that Russian forces advanced within Krasnohorivka, and Russian milbloggers claimed that protective metal sheets on the Russian “turtle” tanks in the assault successfully protected against Ukrainian drone strikes.[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also advanced near Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk City), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[53] Fighting continued west of Donetsk City near Heorhiivka and Krasnohorivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Novomykhailivka.[54]

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



Positional engagements continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on April 29, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Positional engagements continued northeast of Vuhledar near Vodyane; southeast of Velyka Novosilka near Novodarivka; and south of Velyka Novosilka near Urozhaine and Staromayorske.[55] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Mykilske (southeast of Vuhledar), up to 200 meters near Urozhaine, and up to 700 meters near Staromayorske, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims. Elements of

the Russian 36th Motorized Rifle Brigade (29th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) and the 14th Spetsnaz Brigade (subordinate to the Russian General Staff's Main Intelligence Directorate) are reportedly operating near Vuhledar.[56] Elements of the Russian 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, EMD) are reportedly operating near Shevchenko (southeast of Velyka Novosilka), and elements of the 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces and EMD) are reportedly operating near Urozhaine.[57]

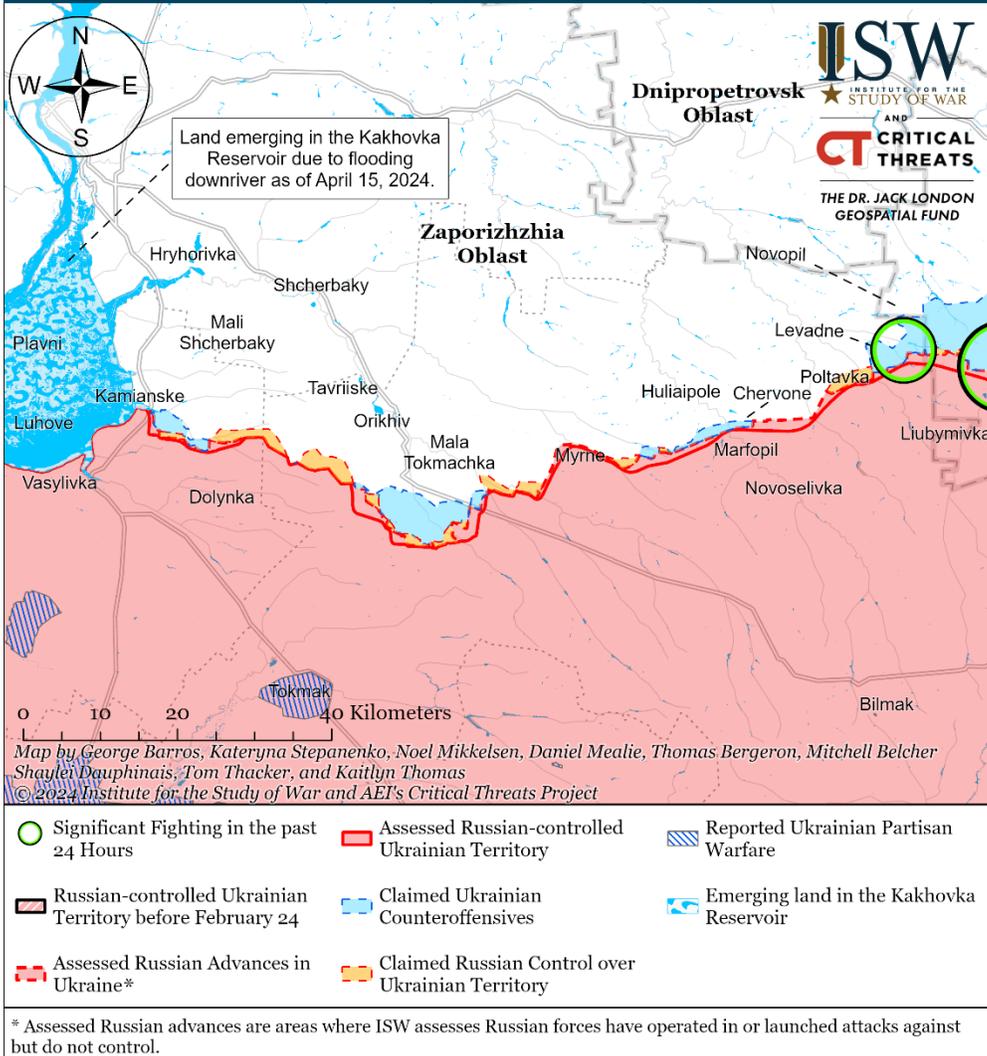


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Positional fighting continued in western Zaporizhia Oblast near Robotyne and Verbove (east of Robotyne) on April 29, but there were no changes to the frontline.[58] Elements of the Russian 108th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division), 291st Guards Artillery Brigade (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]), and 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th CAA) are reportedly operating near Robotyne. [59]

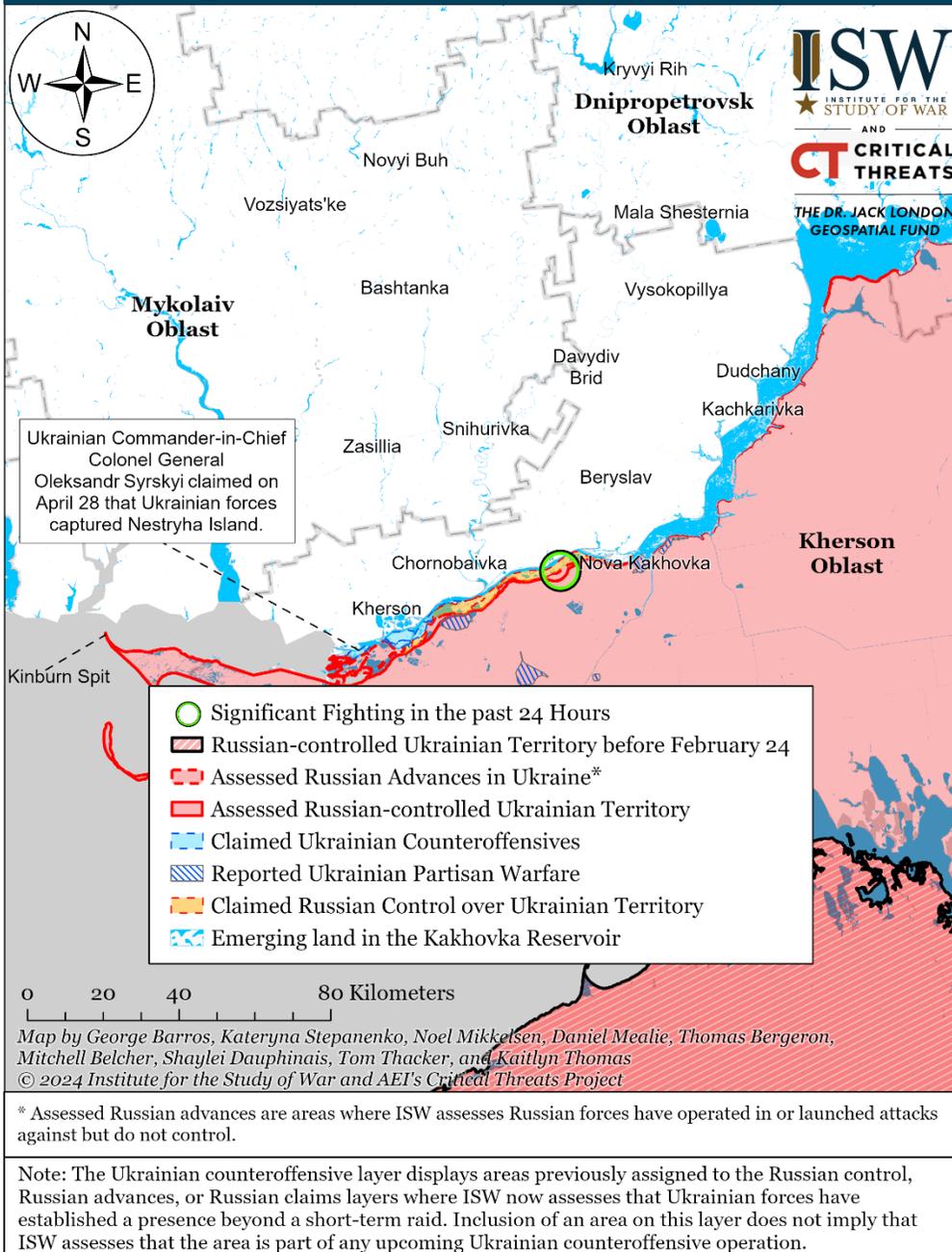


Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of April 29, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional fighting continued in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast near Krynyky on April 29, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline.^[60] Elements of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet [BSF]) are reportedly fighting in Krynyky.^[61]

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



Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk stated on April 29 that Russian authorities have stopped transporting fuel across the Kerch Strait railway bridge for the past month due to the threat of a Ukrainian strike igniting the fuel as it crossed the bridge, possibly destroying the bridge.[62] Pletenchuk emphasized that the Kerch Strait Bridge - likely referring to both the road and railway bridges - do not provide essential Russian military logistics. Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) Head Vasyl Malyuk stated in March 2024 that Russian forces have stopped using the Kerch Strait railway bridge for military and logistics transport.[63]

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

Russian forces conducted limited missile and guided glide bomb strikes against Kharkiv City and areas of southern Ukraine on April 29. Ukrainian outlet *Suspilne* reported that there were two explosions in Kharkiv City following Russian guided glide bomb and anti-aircraft missile strikes on the Kyivskiy raion in northern Kharkiv City.[64] Russian forces also launched unspecified missiles at Zaporizhzhia City and Odesa City, damaging civilian and residential infrastructure in Odesa City.[65]

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

Ukrainian officials continue to report that Russian authorities are coercing Ukrainians in occupied Ukraine to join the Russian military. The Office of the Ukrainian Presidential Representation in Crimea reported that authorities have recorded the burial of at least 784 Russian soldiers likely within the past week presumably in occupied Crimea and stated that at least 593 of these soldiers were Ukrainian citizens.[66] The Office of the Ukrainian Presidential Representation in Crimea also reported that Ukrainian forces have recently taken 42 Russian servicemen as prisoners-of-war (POWs) who are from Crimea, most of whom are likely Ukrainian citizens.[67] The representative's office reported that Russian authorities are also attempting to recruit doctors and other medical staff in civilian hospitals to sign contracts with the Russian military.[68] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian occupation authorities in southern Ukraine are forming conscription commissions to increase recruitment rates in occupied Ukraine for Russia's spring conscription cycle in April-July 2024.[69] Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko posted images on April 29 of the Russian military conducting a recruitment drive in Freedom Square in occupied Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast.[70]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) continues to award Russian military units for their service in Ukraine. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu awarded the Russian 11th Engineering Brigade (Southern Military District [SMD]) for building fortifications in the Lysychansk, Soledar-Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Zaporizhzhia and Kakhovka directions; the 50th Railway Brigade (5th Territorial Command, Russian Railway Forces) for strengthening Russian border defenses in Bryansk Oblast and operating the Baikal-Amur Railway; the 90th Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army [CAA], SMD) for operating in southern Ukraine; and the 56th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) for operations near Robotyne.[71] Such state awards are likely meant in part to incentivize military recruitment by advertising benefits accrued to awarded servicemembers.

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

Nothing significant to report.

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

Ukraine continues efforts to expand its domestic defense industry and increase joint production with its Western allies to support the war effort. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on April 25 that Ukrainian defense industrial companies are producing unspecified weapons and equipment at a higher rate than the Ukrainian government can fund and that Ukrainian officials are working to encourage foreign investment to fund additional projects.[72] Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov announced on April 23 that Ukraine issued domestically produced armored vehicles to a Ukrainian unit.[73] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Yuriy Dzhygyr stated that roughly half of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense's (MoD) contracts for weapons and military equipment are with Ukrainian manufacturers.[74] Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated on April 26 that Ukraine and Latvia have agreed to increase joint drone production.[75]

Ukraine's Western allies continue to promise and provide additional military assistance to Ukraine. Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal met with Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Richard Marles on April 27 and announced that Australia will transfer 50 million AUD (\$32.8 million) in ground-to-air MANPADS munitions, over 30 million AUD (\$19.69 million) to Ukraine's drone coalition, and roughly 20 million AUD (\$13.1 million) for other military needs.[76] Australia will also transfer an unspecified number of air-to-ground munitions to Ukraine. Canadian Defense Minister William Blair announced on April 26 that Canada will provide three million CAD (roughly \$2.2 million) for domestic drone production in Ukraine, an additional 13 million CAD (\$9.5 million) to the Czech ammunition initiative for Ukraine, and an additional 100 Skyranger drones to Ukraine.[77] The Spanish MoD stated that it will deliver an unspecified number of 155mm and 120mm artillery shells and air defense missiles to Ukraine in the coming months and will also deliver small arms, logistics vehicles, armored infantry fighting vehicles, anti-tank weapons, and artillery systems in the next two months.[78] The Danish MoD announced on April 25 that the Danish parliament and Cabinet of Ministers agreed to increase Denmark's military assistance to Ukraine by 4.4 billion Danish kroner (\$632.27 million) in 2024.[79] The Lithuanian MoD reported on April 23 that Lithuania recently provided an unspecified number of M577 armored personnel carriers to Ukraine.[80] Lithuanian Defense Minister Laurynas Kasčiūnas stated that Lithuania is also considering providing Ukraine with unspecified radar systems in the near future.[81] European Union (EU) High Commissioner Josep Borrell announced that the Czech ammunition initiative should begin deliveries of artillery shells to Ukraine at the end of May or beginning of June.[82]

Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, Defense Minister Ludivine Dedonder, and the Belgian Council of Ministers stated on April 26 that Belgium will send the first F-16 aircraft to Ukraine sometime in 2024 and will do everything possible to deliver them before the end of the year.[83] Belgian officials added that Belgium will also allocate an additional 200 million euros (\$214.3 million) to the German-led defense aid coalition and will provide additional air defense missiles to Ukraine.[84]

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 Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine today.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Nazer Voloshyn stated on April 29 that the Kremlin is conducting an information operation aimed at creating panic and fear among Ukrainians about the possibility of a future Russian offensive operation against Sumy Oblast.[85] Voloshyn stated that Ukrainian forces are monitoring the Russian force grouping across the Russian-Ukrainian border near Sumy Oblast and that the current Russian grouping in the area poses no threat to Ukraine. Sumy Oblast Military Administration Head Volodymyr Artyuk warned on March 12 about the same Russian information operation and reported that Ukrainian forces have not observed any Russian strike groups forming along the Russian-Ukrainian border.[86]

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 signed Belarus' annual decree on the conscription of reserve officers into the Belarusian armed forces and border service on April 29.[87] The decree provides for the planned annual conscription of male citizens of Belarus under the age of 27 who have completed reserve officer training and are enrolled in the Belarusian reserves.[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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