

**Nicole Wolkov, Christina Harward, Grace Mappes, Olivia Gibson, and George Barros**

**January 6, 2025, 7pm ET**

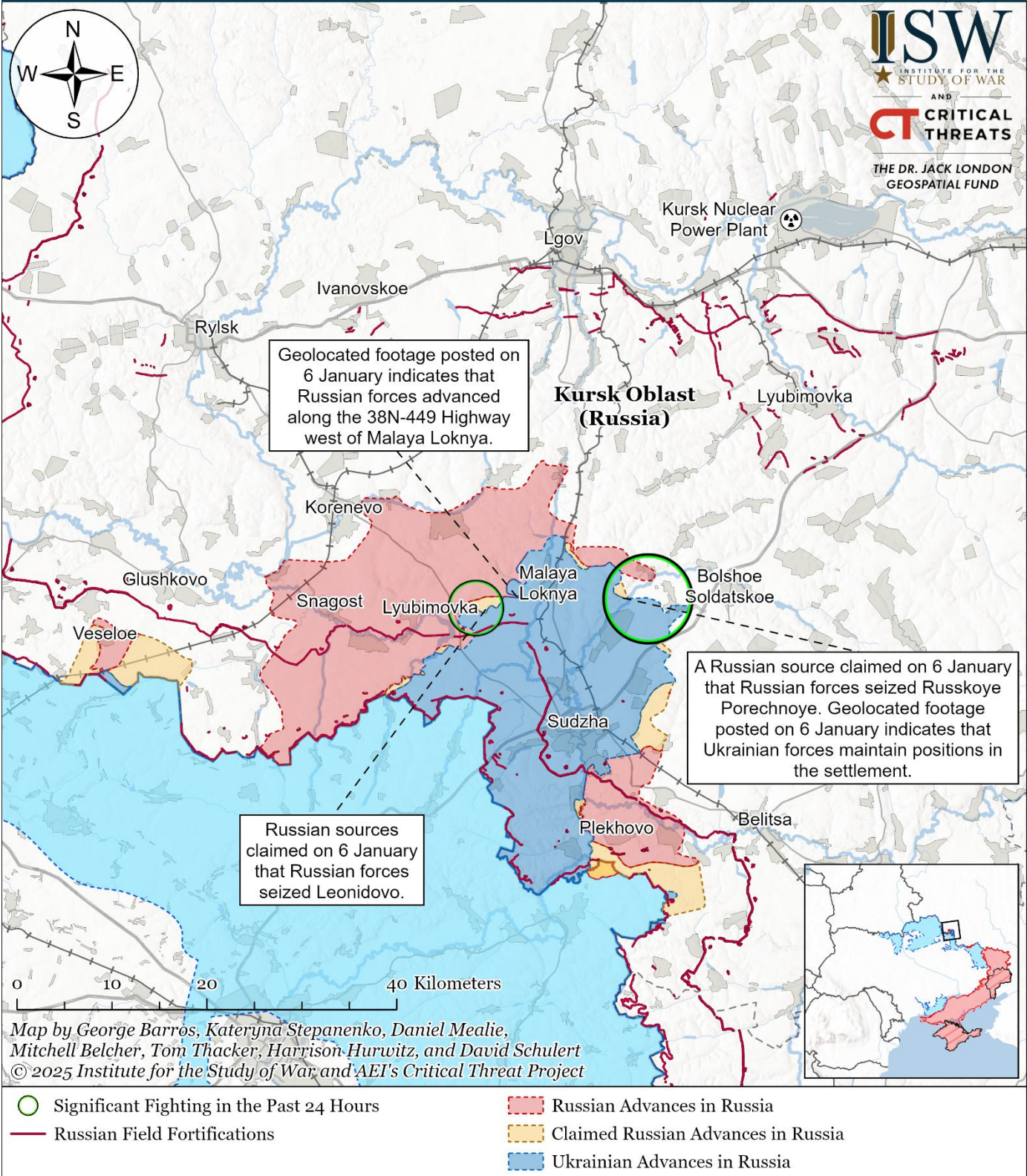
**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1pm ET on January 6. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the January 6 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Ukrainian forces recently made tactical advances amid continued intensified offensive operations in the Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast on January 6.** Geolocated footage published on January 5 and 6 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced in southern Berdin, central Russkoye Porechnoye, and central Novosotnitsky (all northeast of Sudzha).[1] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Russian milbloggers claimed on January 6 that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian roughly reduced platoon-sized mechanized assault near Berdin and that Russian forces, including elements of Rosgvardia's "Talib" Group, repelled Ukrainian attacks near Novosotnitsky.[2] Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 30th Motorized Rifle Regiment (72nd Motorized Rifle Division, 44th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]), 2nd Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]), 11th Airborne (VDV) Brigade, and Akhmat Spetsnaz units cleared areas near Berdin and Novosotnitsky.[3] One Russian milblogger characterized recent Ukrainian attacks in Kursk Oblast as enhanced reconnaissance in force operations that could be a diversionary effort for unspecified future operations.[4] Increased Ukrainian offensive operations in Kursk Oblast may be the beginning stages of a concerted Ukrainian operation in Kursk Oblast or elsewhere in the theater, though ISW is unprepared to offer any specific forecast.

**Russian forces attempted to leverage Ukrainian attacks northeast of Sudzha to attack elsewhere in the Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast on January 6.** Geolocated footage published on January 5 indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Malaya Loknya (northwest of Sudzha).[5] Russian milbloggers claimed on January 6 that Russian forces, including elements of the 56th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division), seized Leonidovo (northwest of Sudzha) and that Russian forces advanced in northeastern Russkoye Porechnoye (northeast of Sudzha).[6] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also advanced near Makhnovka and Dmitryukov (both southeast of Sudzha).[7] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces, including elements of the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, Eastern Military District [EMD]), attacked toward Malaya Loknya and near Novoivanovka, Viktorovka, and Nikolskiy (all northwest of Sudzha).[8] The Russian MoD claimed that "Caspian naval infantry" drone units, likely referring to drone units of the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla), are operating in Kursk Oblast, indicating that the Russian military command likely redeployed elements of the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment from western Zaporizhia Oblast to Kursk Oblast.[9]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction

## 6 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



**Ukrainian forces may be continuing to conduct long-range strikes against Russian rear areas in Kursk Oblast as part of efforts to use integrated strike capabilities to support ground operations.** Geolocated footage published on January 5 indicates that there were audible explosions near the Russian 3754th Central Aviation Technical Base (military unit 13830) in Kursk City.[10] ISW cannot independently confirm if Ukrainian forces successfully struck the base. A Russian milblogger claimed on January 6 that Ukrainian forces targeted Russian forward and rear positions in Kursk Oblast with missiles several times.[11] The Russian Kursk Oblast Operational Headquarters claimed on January 6 that Russian forces destroyed two Ukrainian missiles over Kursk Oblast.[12] ISW previously assessed that Ukrainian forces may be attempting to integrate longer-range precision strike capabilities and electronic warfare (EW) systems activity to support ground operations.[13]

**Russian forces reportedly executed more Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) on January 3.** A geolocated image published on January 6 shows the aftermath of a reported Russian execution of three bound Ukrainian POWs near Neskuchne (southwest of Velyka Novosilka) on January 3, and Ukrainian officials announced an investigation into the reported executions.[14] Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) published a purported audio interception on January 6 reportedly of a unit commander of the Russian 60th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) issuing an order to execute a Ukrainian POW.[15] ISW continues to assess that Russian commanders are either complacent or enabling their subordinates to execute POWs in clear violation of international law.[16]

**Ukrainian Human Rights Commissioner Dmytro Lyubinets announced that Ukraine and Russia have reached a preliminary agreement to conduct regular POW exchanges in 2025.** Lyubinets indicated on January 6 that the exchanges will include both military POWs and civilian prisoners and stated that Ukraine will prioritize returning prisoners who are seriously ill or wounded.[17] Lyubinets did not provide further details about the preliminary agreement but noted that it remains to be seen "whether the Russian side will keep its word." Ukraine and Russia conducted one of the largest POW exchanges in 2024 on December 30. Russia had consistently demonstrated an unwillingness to engage in POW exchanges before the start of Ukraine's incursion into Kursk Oblast in August 2024, during which Ukrainian forces took many Russians prisoners.[18]

**The leaders of the Chechen "Akhmat" Spetsnaz forces and the far-right paramilitary unit "Rusich" Russian Sabotage Assault Reconnaissance Group met on January 6 and promoted a message about Russia's ethnic diversity and harmony.** Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz commander Apty Alaudinov published a video of his meeting with Rusich Group deputy commander (call sign "Medved") and the self-declared Nazi and the leader of the Rusich Group Alexei Milchakov on January 6.[19] Alaudinov stated that he has no issue with Russian nationalists who love their "nation" (*natsiya*) and want it to be better, as long as they do not claim that their "nation" is superior to all others. Alaudinov stated that he realized that Milchakov loves his country and that there is a lot of work ahead to make Russia "great, powerful, and united." Alaudinov stated that he and Milchakov agreed that they have a "common enemy" and "common goals" and that they need to prevent anyone from "stirring up interethnic and interfaith" tensions, presumably among Russian citizens. Milchakov stated that the meeting was "friendly" and that they discussed possible "interaction" in the war in Ukraine and the development of their "personal relationships." [20] The administration of the Rusich Telegram channel responded to criticisms of the meeting, claiming that Alaudinov invited

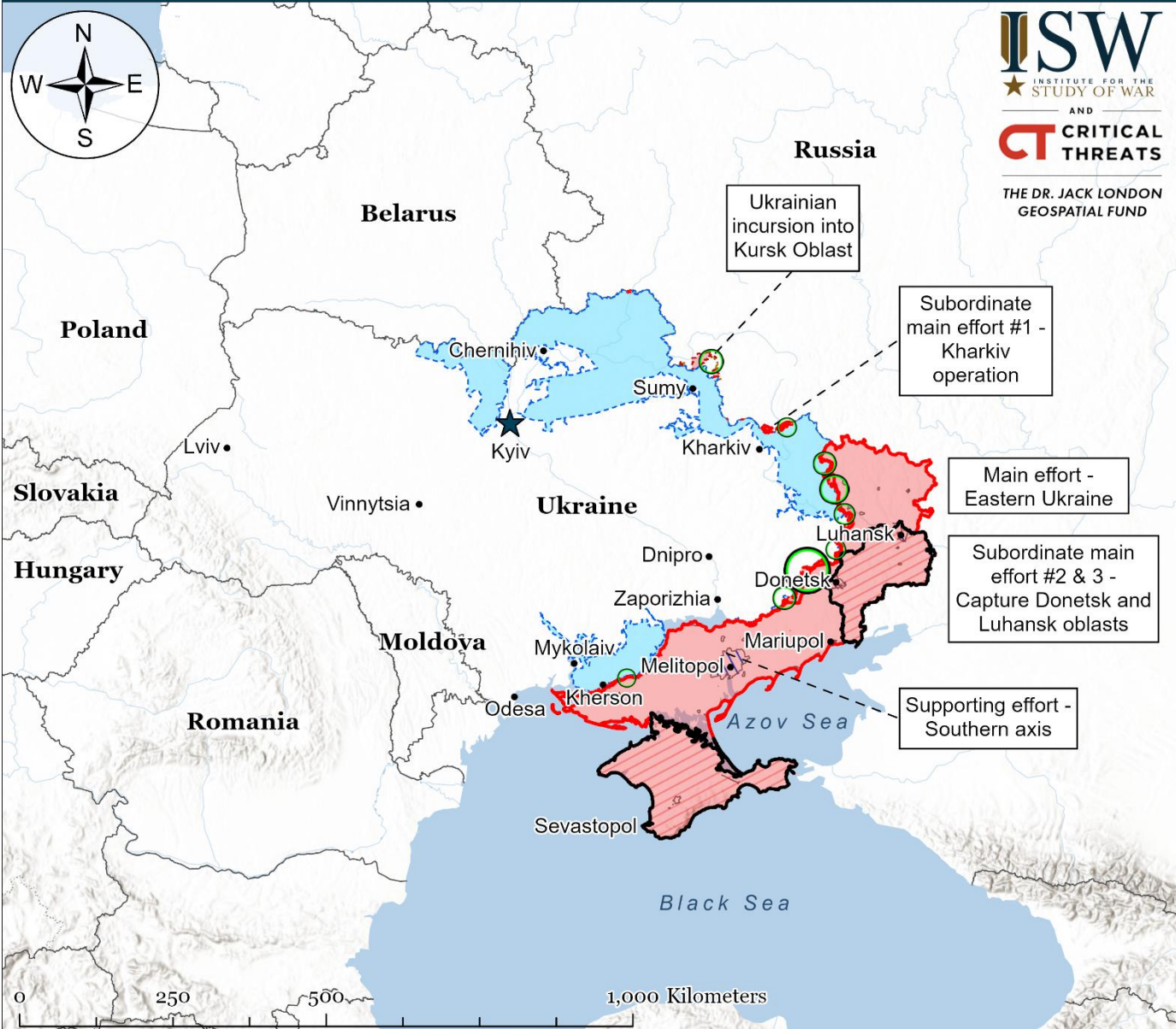
Milchakov to the meeting, has "never fought against Russia and the Russians," and never spoke against Milchakov's views.[21] The Rusich Sabotage Assault Reconnaissance Group previously criticized Wagner Group commander Alexander Kuznetsov (call sign "Ratibor") for joining the Akhmat Spetsnaz in April 2024, and Russian milbloggers, including those in Russia's ultranationalist community, have previously criticized Chechen "Akhmat" forces for not contributing to Russian military operations.[22] Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly attempted to portray Russia as an ethnically and religiously harmonious and inclusive society as he balances against xenophobic demands from Russia's pro-war ultranationalist community.[23]

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Ukrainian forces recently made tactical advances amid continued intensified offensive operations in the Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast on January 6.**
- **Russian forces attempted to leverage Ukrainian attacks northeast of Sudzha to attack elsewhere in the Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast on January 6.**
- **Ukrainian forces may be continuing to conduct long-range strikes against Russian rear areas in Kursk Oblast as part of efforts to use integrated strike capabilities to support ground operations.**
- **Russian forces reportedly executed more Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) on January 3.**
- **Ukrainian Human Rights Commissioner Dmytro Lyubynets announced that Ukraine and Russia have reached a preliminary agreement to conduct regular POW exchanges in 2025.**
- **The leaders of the Chechen "Akhmat" Spetsnaz forces and the far-right paramilitary unit "Rusich" Russian Sabotage Assault Reconnaissance Group met on January 6 and promoted a message about Russia's ethnic diversity and harmony.**
- **Russian forces advanced in the Lyman, Toretsk, and Pokrovsk directions, and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces seized Kurakhove.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated in an interview published on January 5 that 3,800 North Korean personnel have been killed and wounded in Kursk Oblast.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

## 6 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



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

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

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

### **Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation**

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

Ukrainian outlet *Suspilne* reported on January 6 that sources in Ukraine's Special Services (SBU) confirmed that Ukrainian drones struck and damaged a gas terminal at the Ust-Luga port in Leningrad Oblast on the night of January 3 to 4.[24] The SBU sources stated that the drone strikes severely damaged one gas container and shattered three others.

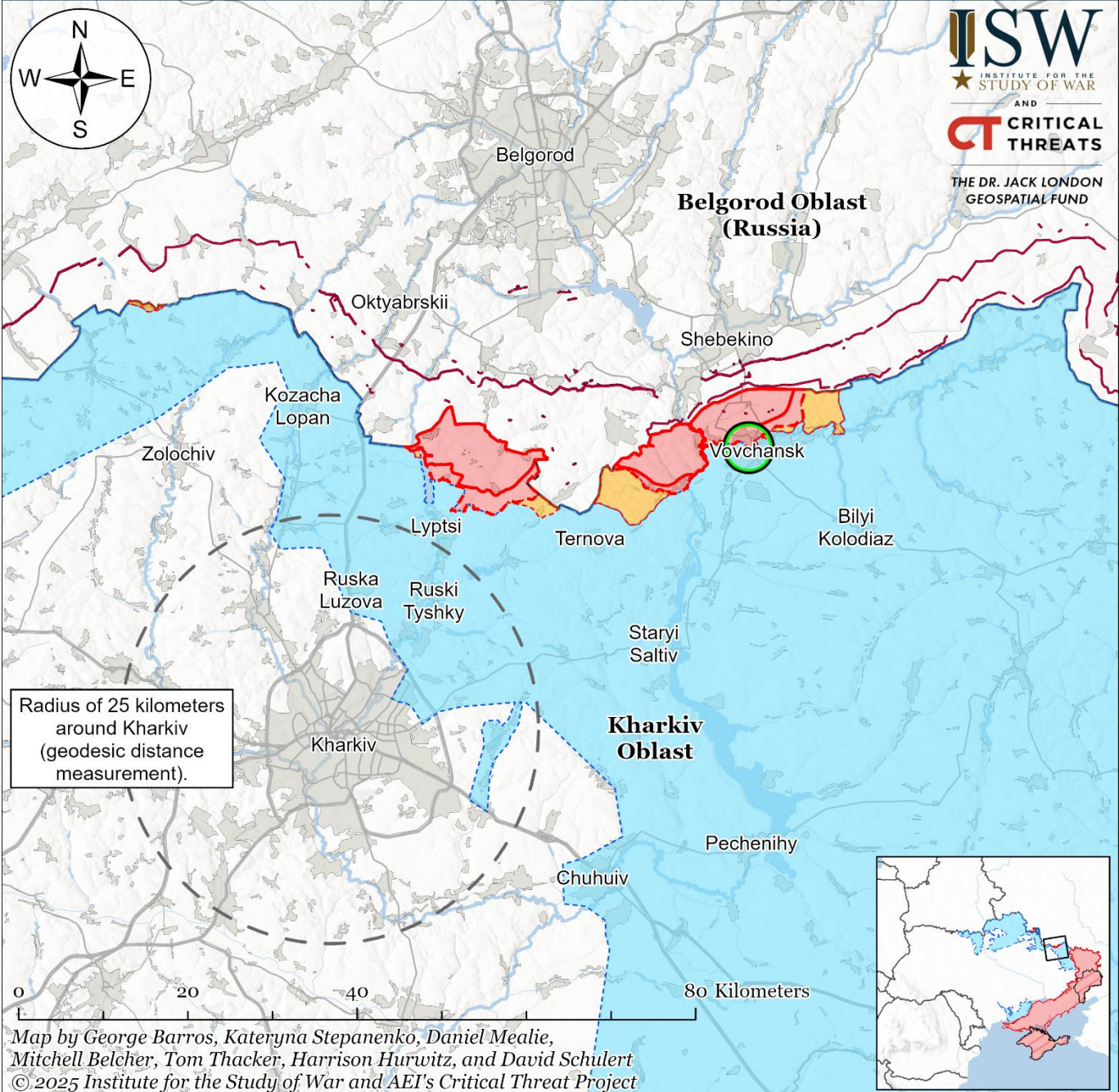
### **Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

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

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on January 5 and 6 but did not make any confirmed advances.[25] Kharkiv Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Synhubov stated on January 6 that Ukraine's renewed offensive operations in Kursk Oblast have already reduced the number of Russian ground attacks in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[26]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kharkiv Direction

## 6 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



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

**Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

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

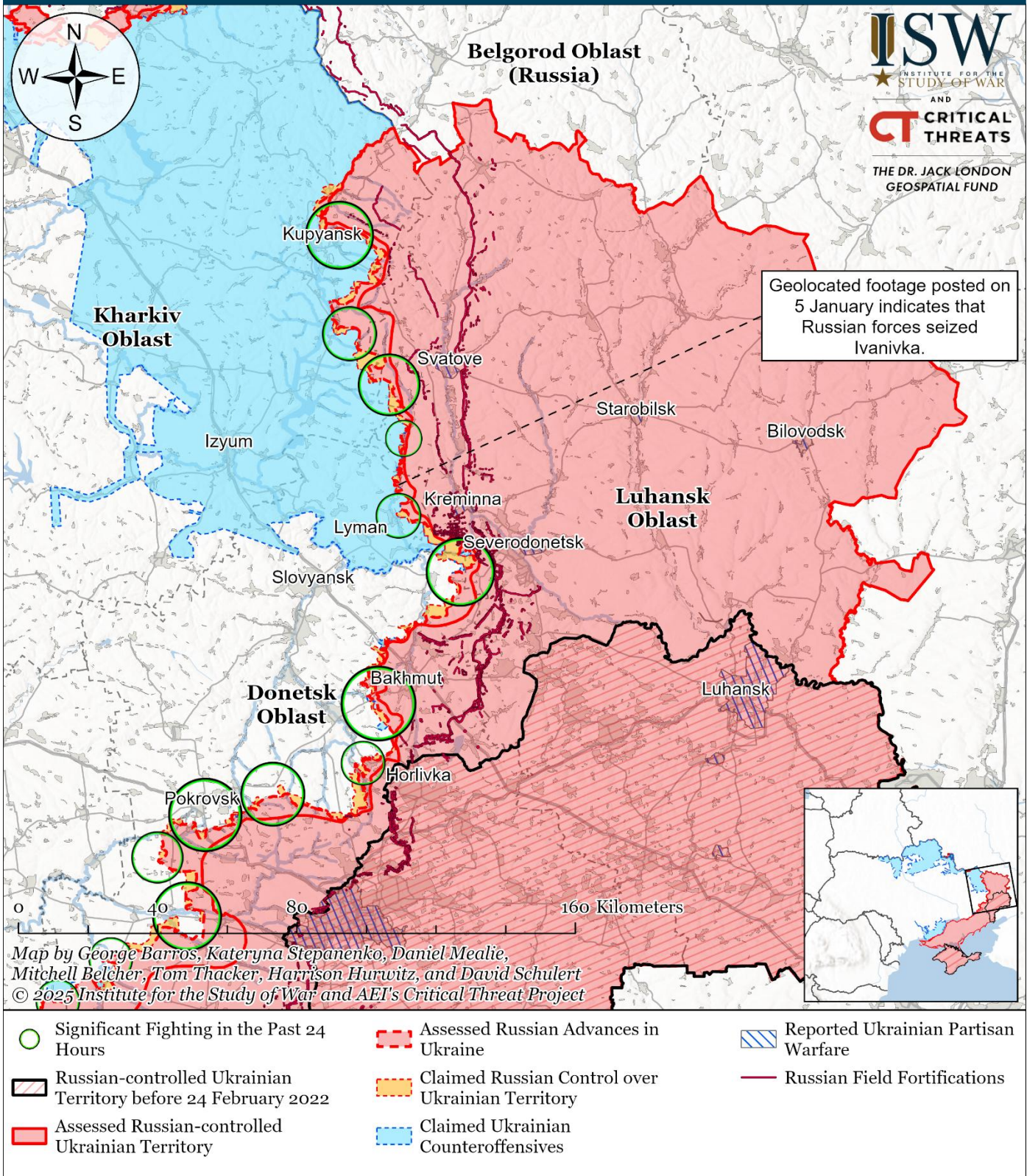
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on January 6 but did not advance. Russian forces attacked northeast of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka and Synkivka on January 5 and 6.[27] The commander of a Ukrainian drone battalion operating in the Kupyansk direction stated on January 5 that Russian forces are using armored vehicle columns to transport infantry to the frontline, with mine-clearing vehicles, followed by tanks leading the column to provide fire support, and with infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) carrying five to seven personnel each in the rear.[28] The drone battalion commander reported that Russian forces use more infantry in assaults when they are unable to use armored vehicles and that dismounted infantry sometimes have to walk up to 10 kilometers on foot to reach the frontline. The spokesperson and unit commander of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kupyansk direction noted that poor weather sometimes prevents Russian forces from fielding armored vehicles, aircraft, or drones and that Russian forces will send infantry to conduct assaults without reconnaissance support in these conditions.[29] Kharkiv Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Synhubov reported on January 6 that Russian forces conducted strikes targeting crossings over the Oskil River in the Kupyansk direction on the night of January 5 to 6.[30]

Russia forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on January 6 but did not advance. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced in the fields east of Zahryzove and west of Lozova (both northeast of Borova) on January 5.[31] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Geolocated footage published on January 5 shows that Russian forces conducted a roughly platoon-sized mechanized assault east of Kruhlyakivka (northeast of Borova) but did not make any confirmed advances.[32] Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Nova Kruhlyakivka and Zahryzove; east of Borova near Nadiya and Pershotravneve; and southeast of Borova near Novoserhiivka, Tverdokhlibove, and Makiivka on January 5 and 6.[33]

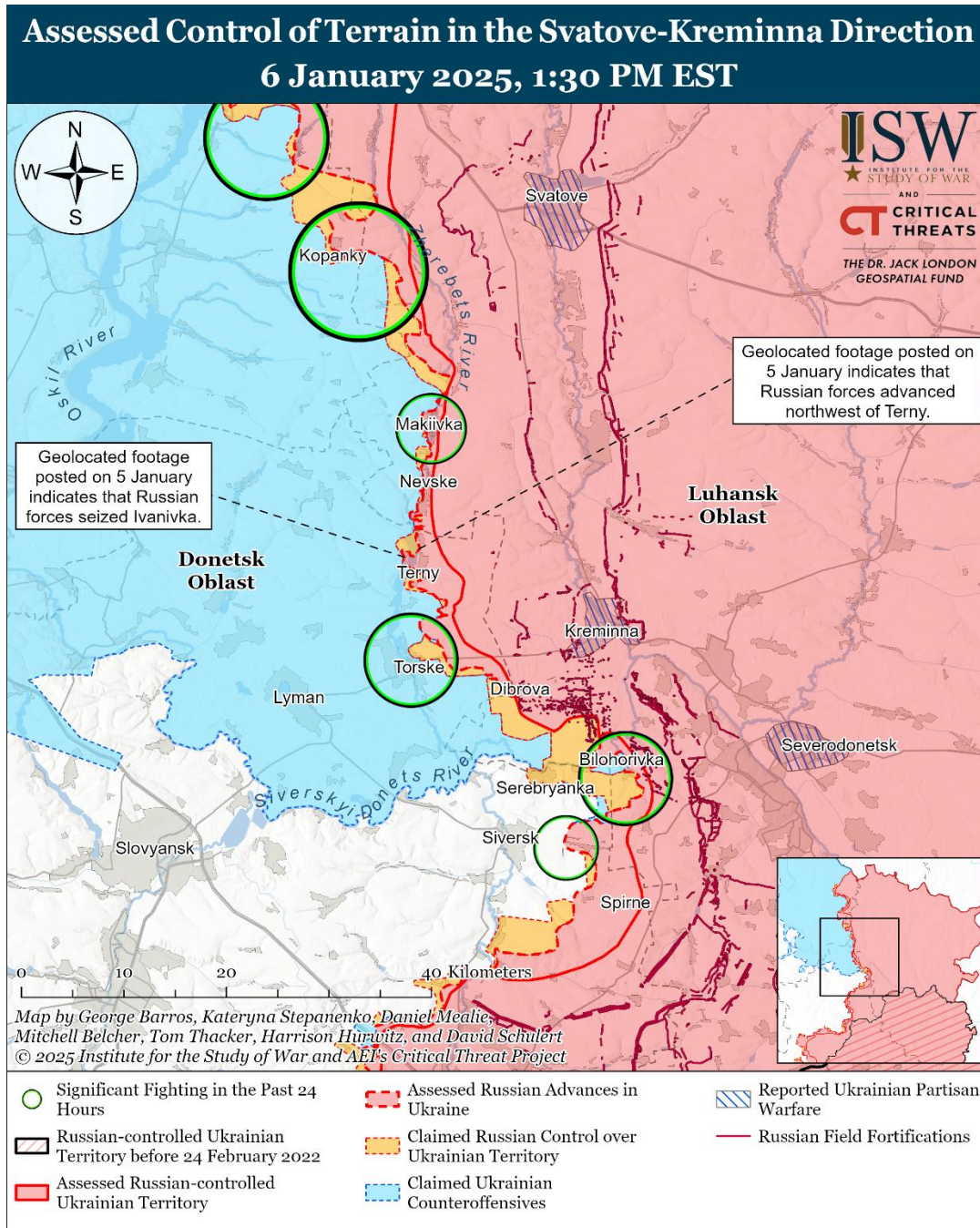


# Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast

## 6 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



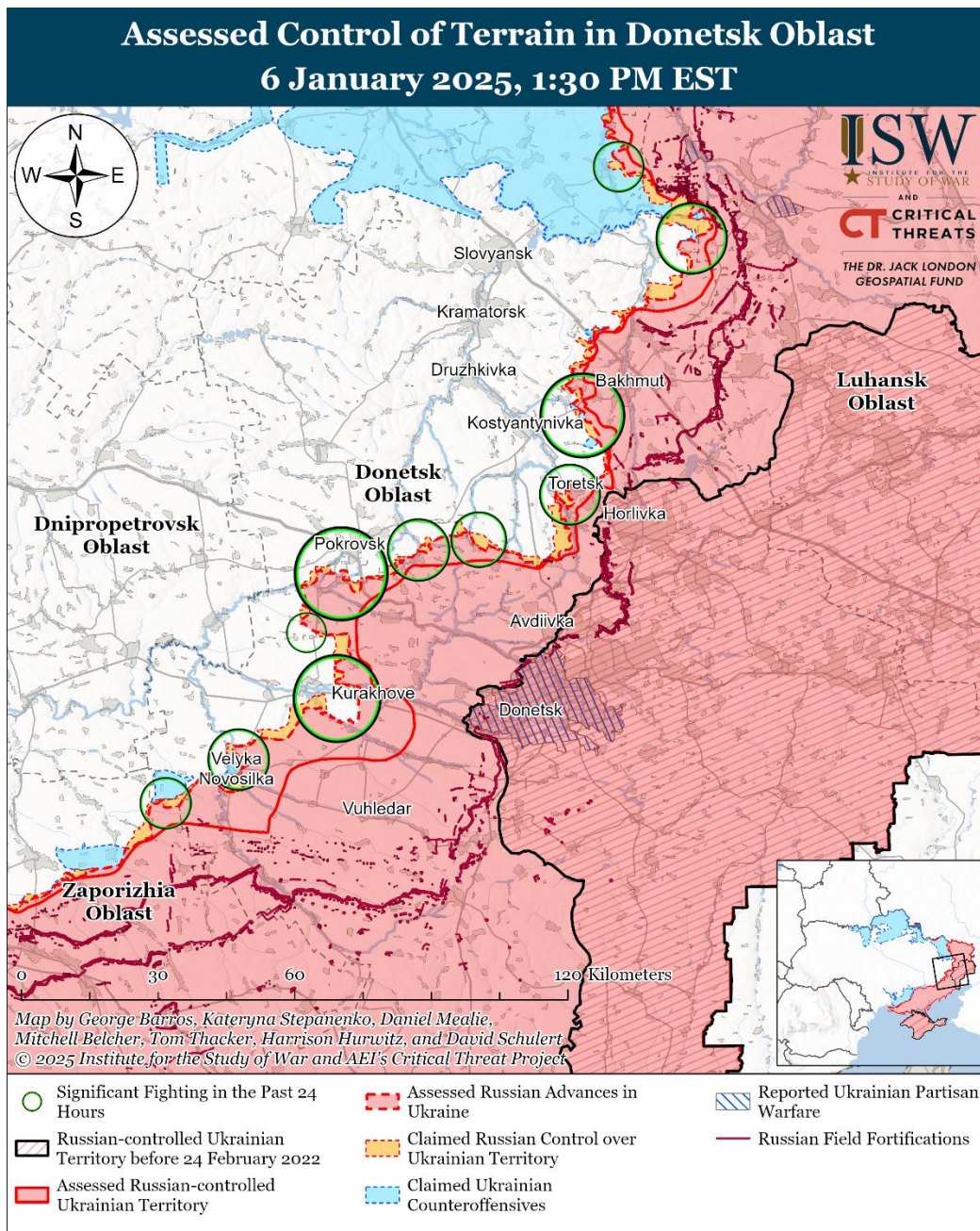
Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Kreminna amid continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on January 6. Geolocated footage published on January 5 and 6 indicates that Russian forces, reportedly elements of the Russian 144th Motorized Rifle Division (20th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Moscow Military District [MMD]), likely seized Ivanivka and advanced southwest of the settlement as well as in fields northwest of Terny (both northwest of Kreminna).[34] A Russian milblogger claimed on January 6 that Russian forces advanced further in fields southwest of Ivanivka, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation that Russian forces advanced to the extent of the milblogger's claim.[35] Russian forces also continued ground attacks northwest of Kreminna near Terny and west of Kreminna near Zarichne on January 5 and 6.[36]



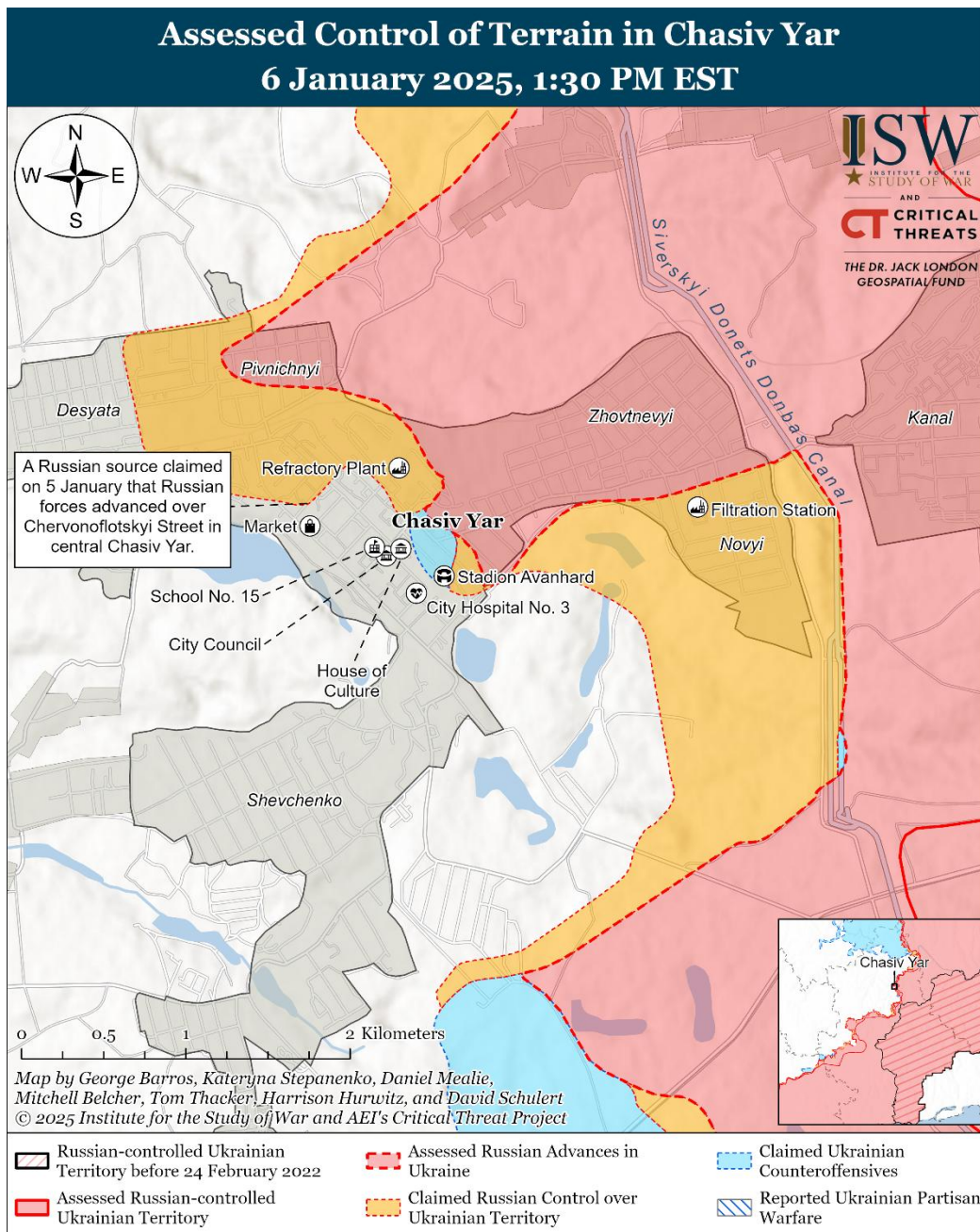
**Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Bilohorivka (northeast of Siversk) on January 5 and 6 but did not make any confirmed advances.[37] Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Military Administration Head Artem Lysohor published footage on January 6 showing Russian forces unsuccessfully attacking in the Siversk direction with fireteams consisting of two-to-four personnel.[38]



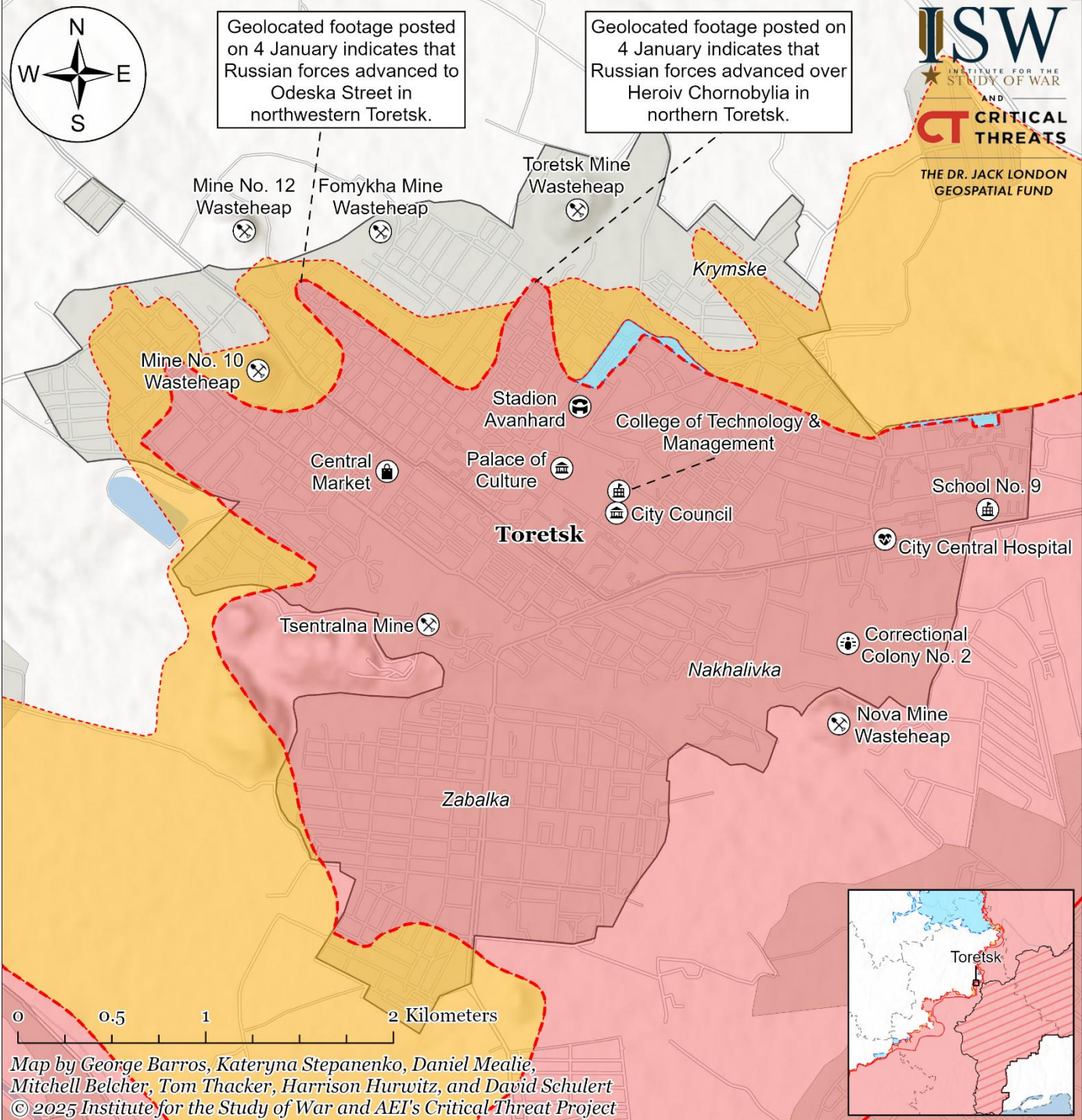
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on January 6 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced along Chervonoflotskyi Street in central Chasiv Yar, but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[39] Russian forces conducted offensive operations near and within Chasiv Yar itself and south of Chasiv Yar near Bila Hora, Stupochky, and Predtechyne on January 5 and 6.[40] A spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Chasiv Yar direction stated that Russian forces have increasingly been using armored vehicles in the past few weeks, particularly during bad weather, but that Russian forces have not significantly changed their tactics of assaulting in small infantry groups.[41] Elements of the Russian 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.[42]



Russian forces recently advanced in Toretsk amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on January 6. Geolocated footage published on January 4 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced along Heroiv Chornobylia and Darhomyzhskoho streets in northwestern Toretsk.[43] Additional geolocated footage published on January 6 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced along 3 Hirskyi and 4 Hirskyi streets in northern Toretsk.[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces made additional gains in northern, northeastern, and southwestern Toretsk and west of Krymske (northeast of Toretsk), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[45] Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces reported on January 6 that Russian forces conducted an assault with an unspecified number of armored vehicles toward Shcherbynivka (southwest of Toretsk).[46] A Russian milblogger claimed on January 6 that Russian forces occupy 85 percent of Toretsk, although ISW assesses that Russian forces have occupied 69.4 percent of the settlement as of January 6.[47] Russian forces continued attacking within and near Toretsk itself; northeast of Toretsk near Krymske; and southwest of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka on January 5 and 6.[48]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Toretsk

## 6 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



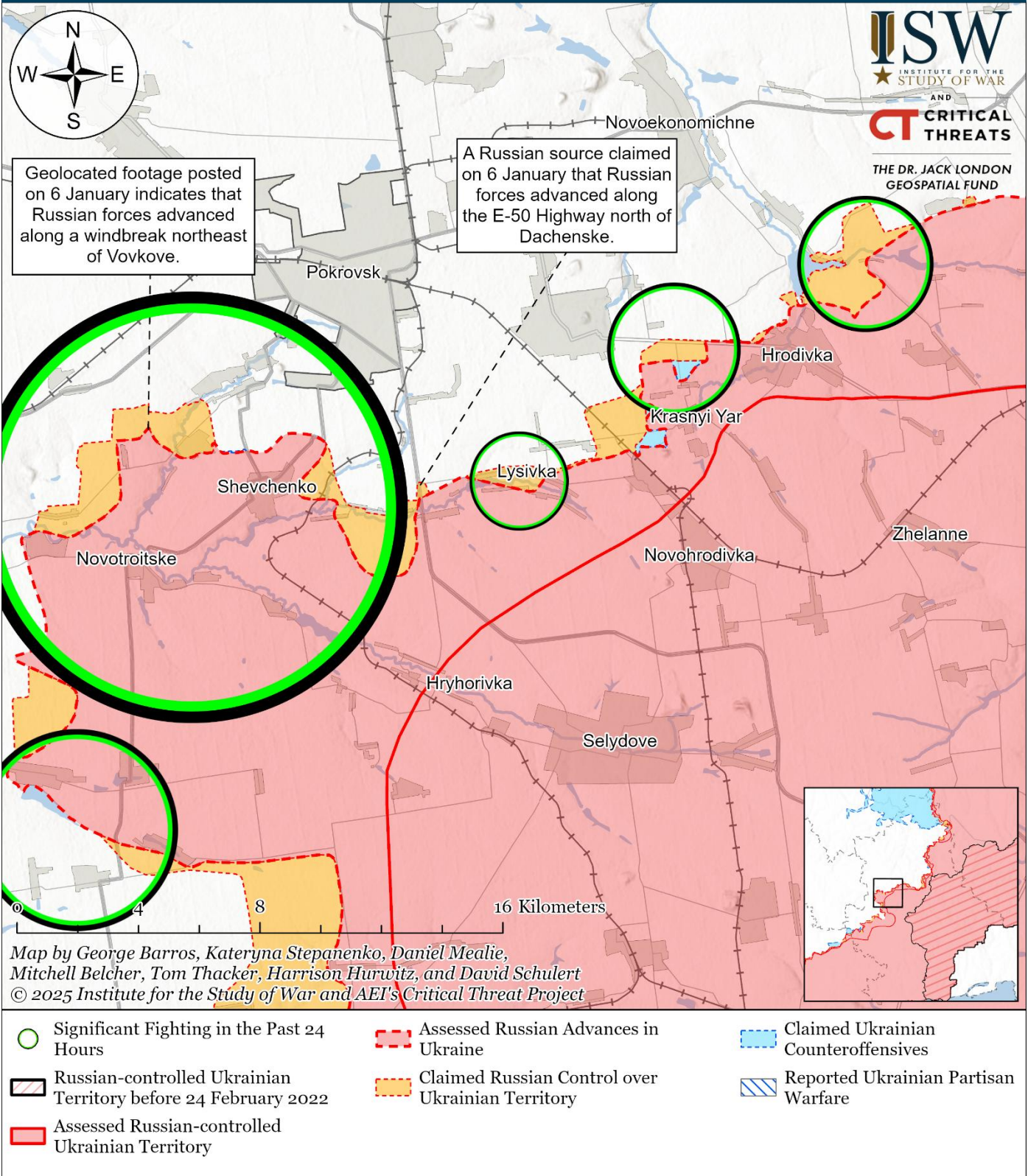
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, and David Schulert  
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- |  |  |                                     |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian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

Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on January 6. Geolocated footage published on January 6 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced on the northwestern outskirts of Vozdvyzhenka (east of Pokrovsk).[49] Additional geolocated footage published on January 6 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced northeast of Vovkove (southwest of Pokrovsk).[50] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on January 6 that Russian forces seized Dachenske (south of Pokrovsk), which ISW assesses Russian forces seized as of December 22.[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced east of Vozdvyzhenka, into Baranivka (just northeast of Vozdvyzhenka), near Yelyzavetivka (west of Vozdvyzhenka), into eastern Zelene (south of Pokrovsk), south of Zvirove (southwest of Pokrovsk), and north of Vovkove, but ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[52] Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Pokrovsk itself; east of Pokrovsk near Tarasivka, Yelyzavetivka, Vozdvyzhenka, Myrolyubivka, and Pomin; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Zelene and Novyi Trud; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Pishchane, Solone, Novovasylivka, Novoyelizavetivka, and Yasenove on January 5 and 6.[53] Elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st Combined Arms Army [CAA], formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] AC) reportedly continue operating near Vozdvyzhenka, and elements of the "Maxim Krivonos" volunteer detachment, allegedly formed by former members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces who defected to fight for Russia, are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[54]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction

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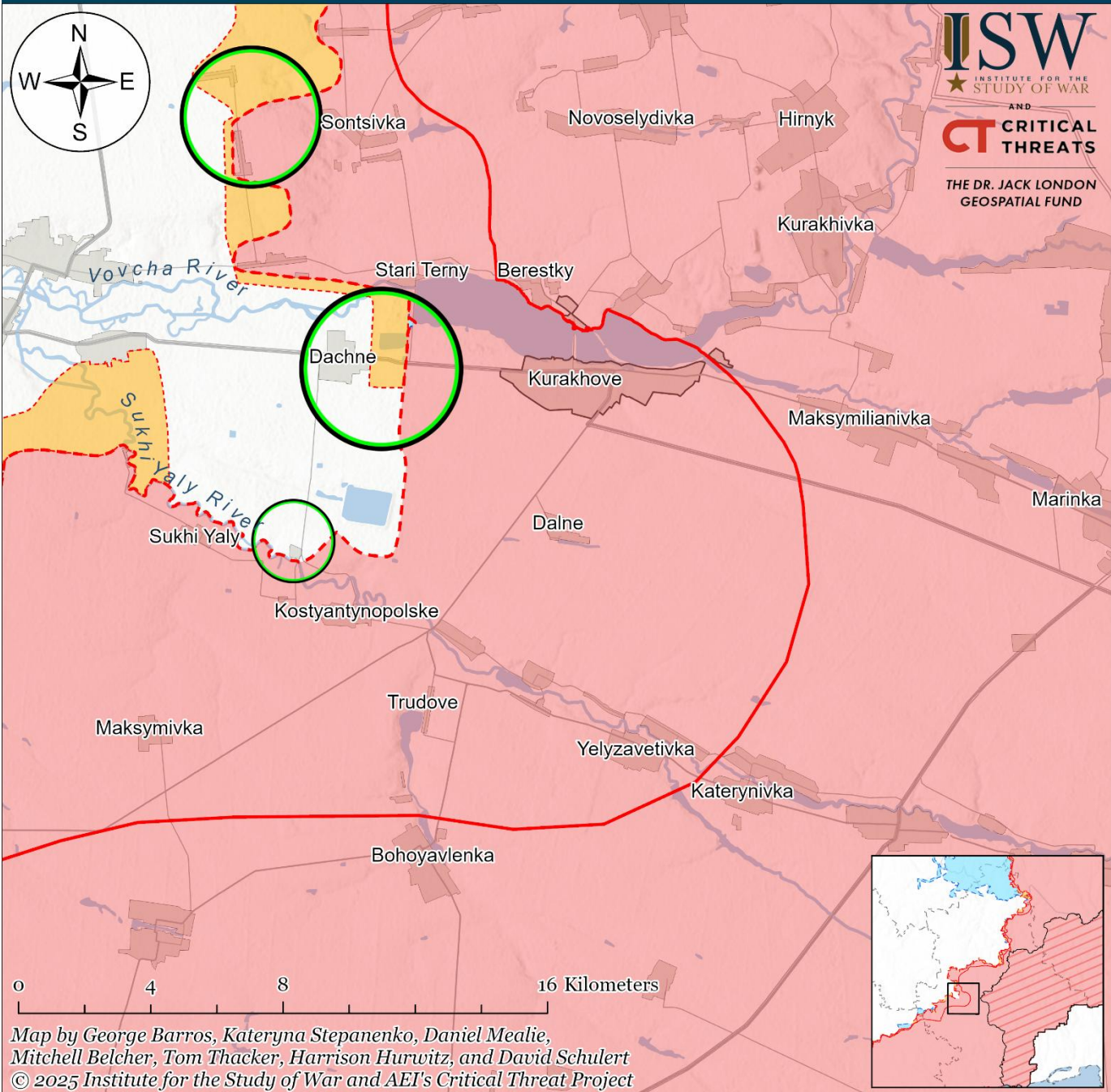




The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces seized all of Kurakhove amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on January 6. The Russian MoD claimed on January 6 that elements of the Russian 5th and 110th motorized rifle brigade (51st CAA) seized all of Kurakhove.[55] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated that there was ongoing fighting within Kurakhove as of the morning of January 6.[56] Kremlin newswire *TASS* reported on January 6 that sources within unspecified Russian security agencies stated that Russian forces have pushed Ukrainian forces out of part of the Kurakhivske Thermal Power Plant (TPP) west of Kurakhove and that fighting is ongoing for the administrative buildings at the TPP.[57] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced south of Shevchenko (northwest of Kurakhove), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[58] Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kurakhove itself; northwest of Kurakhove near Petropavlivka and Slovyanka; west of Kurakhove near Dachne and Kostyantynopil; southwest of Kurakhove near Zelenivka on January 5 and 6.[59] Elements of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) are reportedly operating near Petropavlivka and Shevchenko (northwest of Kurakhove), and elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Kurakhove.[60]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kurakhove Direction

## 6 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



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- |  |  |                                     |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Significant Fighting in the Past 24 Hours                      | Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine             | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before 24 February 2022 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare |
| Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory                |  |                                     |

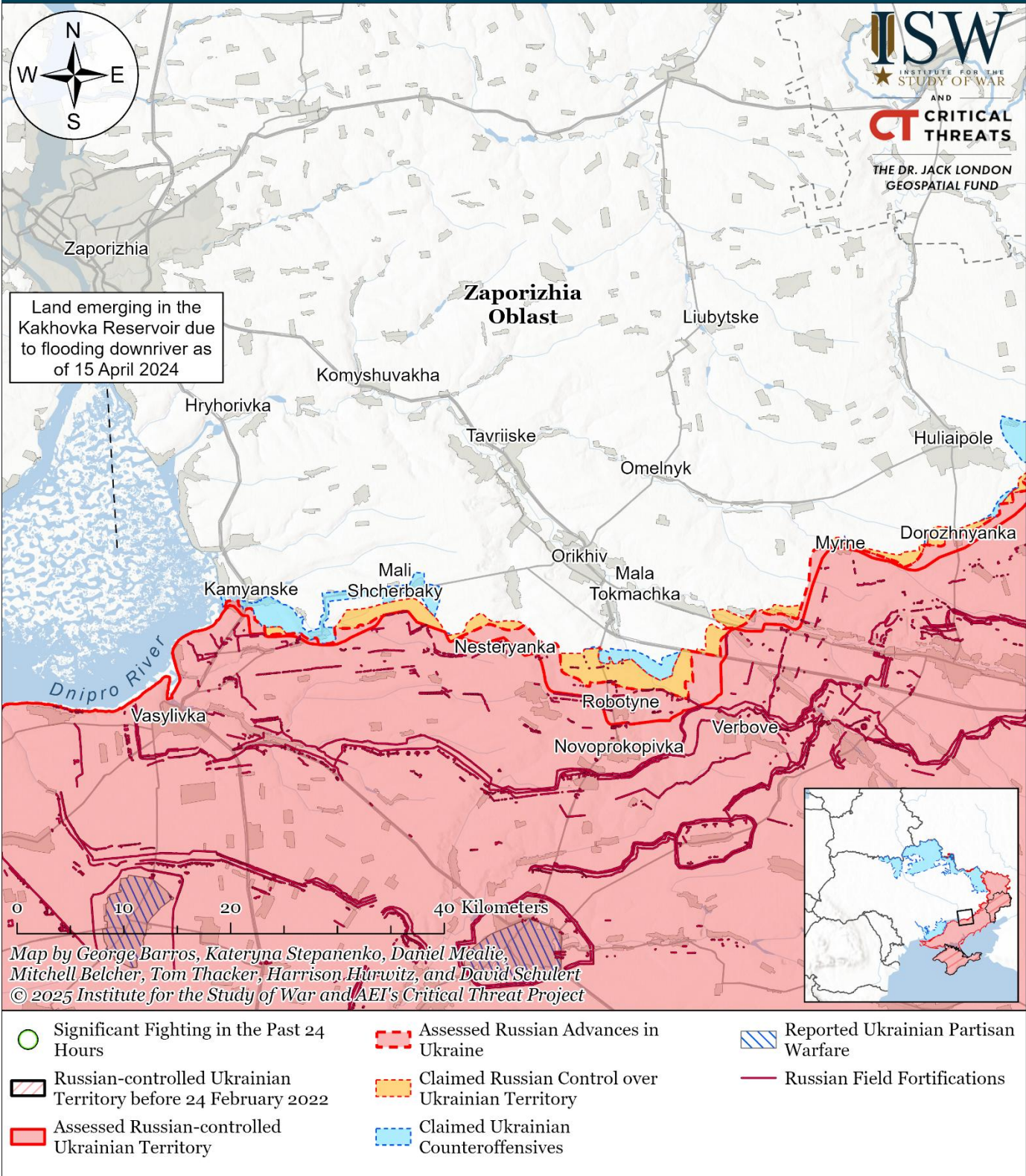
Russian forces continued offensive operations near Velyka Novosilka on January 6 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian forces conducted offensive operations north of Velyka Novosilka near Novyi Komar on January 6.[61] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 5th CAA (EMD) are attempting to encircle Ukrainian forces in Neskuchne (southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[62] Trehubov stated that Russian forces are more frequently using armored vehicles in the Vremivka direction since there are fewer buildings in the area.[63] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces should prioritize the seizure of Velyka Novosilka after having seized Kurakhove in order to free up Russian forces for redeployment to other sectors of the frontline, including to the Pokrovsk or Zaporizhia direction.[64]

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

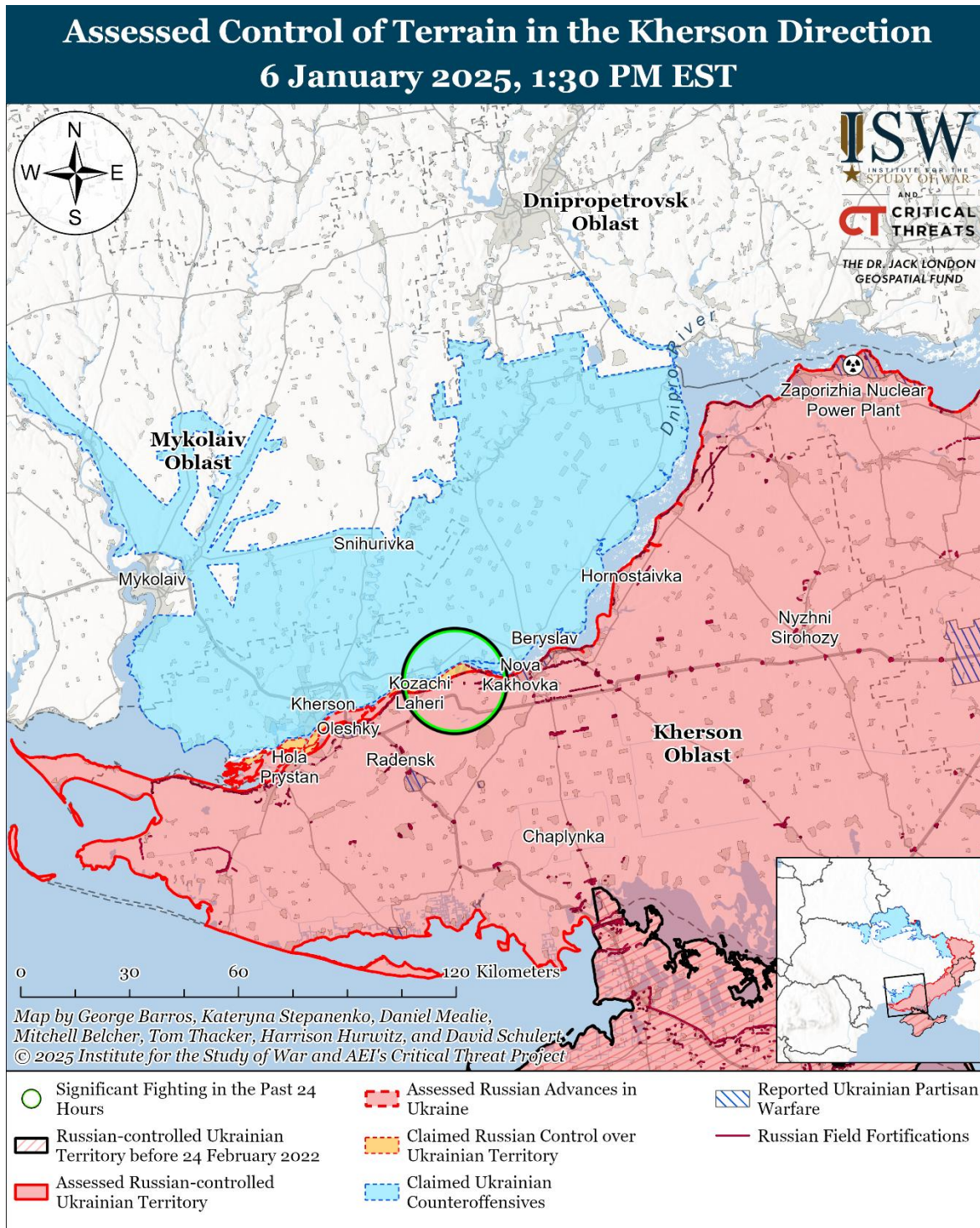
Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast near Novodanylivka (north of Robotyne) on January 6 but did not make any confirmed advances.[65] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled two Ukrainian counterattacks in the Zaporizhia direction on January 5.[66]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction

## 6 January 2025, 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Dnipro direction on January 5 and 6 but did not make any confirmed advances.[67] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported on January 6 that Russian forces are attempting to seize a bridgehead in the island zone in the Dnipro River Delta.[68] Elements of the Russian 80th Arctic Motorized Brigade (14th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) reportedly continue to operate in the Kherson direction.[69]



Ukrainian forces continue to conduct strikes against Russian air defense systems in southern Ukraine and reportedly destroyed five air defense systems in a single day. The Ukrainian Navy published footage on January 6 showing Ukrainian forces conducting a drone strike that destroyed two Russian Pantsir-S1 air defense systems and stated that Ukrainian forces also destroyed or damaged an Osa air defense system in occupied Kherson Oblast.[70] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported on January 6 that Ukrainian forces destroyed two Russian S-300 air defense systems in the past day.[71] A Russian milblogger claimed on January 6 that Ukrainian forces destroyed one of the Pantsir systems by launching a first-person view (FPV) aerial drone from a sea-launched drone carrier.[72] The milblogger complained that Russian forces are not developing protections against Ukrainian drone innovations.

Ukrainian drone strikes continue to affect Russian operations in the Black Sea. Ukrainian Navy Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk reported on January 6 that Russian forces have saturated the Kerch Strait Bridge with echeloned air defenses and increased the number of fuel tanker trucks crossing the bridge, indicating that Russian forces are using the bridge for fuel supply after Ukrainian strikes damaged Russian ferries.[73] Pletenchuk reported on January 5 that Russian forces have only deployed one submarine in the Black Sea to guard a Russian base (likely the Russian naval base in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea) and that Russian forces have been using aviation to protect the Black Sea area due to the threat of Ukrainian naval and aerial drone strikes against Russian ships.[74] Pletenchuk stated that Ukrainian drone strikes against ships docked for repairs have forced Russian forces to stop trying to repair vessels in occupied Crimea.[75] Pletenchuk stated that the Russian base in Russian-occupied Ochamchire, Abkhazia lacks a harbor that would allow Russian forces to dock ships safely or expand their naval capabilities.[76] ISW previously reported that the existing port in Ochamchire is unsuitable to become a primary base for the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) as the sandy beaches and surrounding terrain is largely inconducive for the construction of deepwater naval infrastructure.[77]

### **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 Ukraine overnight on January 5 to 6. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched two Kh-59/69 cruise missiles from the south and 128 Shahed and other drones from Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and Oryol and Kursk oblasts.[78] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed both Kh-59 missiles and 79 drones over Mykolaiv, Poltava, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr, Kirovohrad and Vinnytsia oblasts and that 49 drones became "lost." [79] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that the drones and missiles did not hit any targets but that falling debris damaged enterprises, institutions, and residential areas in Chernihiv, Sumy, Cherkasy, Poltava, and Kyiv oblasts. Ukrainian train operator Ukrzaliznytsia reported that the strikes damaged the railway network and temporarily stopped operations in Kyiv Oblast on January 6, but that Ukrzaliznytsia has since restored operations.[80]

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

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated in an interview published on January 5 that 3,800 North Korean personnel have been killed and wounded in Kursk Oblast.[81] Zelensky warned that North Korea could deploy additional military personnel to support Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Russian machine guns and small arms manufacturer Degtyaryev Plant recently filed its second multimillion-ruble lawsuit against the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD). Russian state news outlet TASS reviewed case materials showing that the Degtyaryev Plant filed a lawsuit against the Russian MoD for over 100 million rubles (about \$930,000) for an unspecified reason.[82] TASS noted that the Degtyaryev Plant won a case against the Russian MoD for about 100.5 million rubles (about \$934,000) in December 2024 in its first lawsuit but that the details are unknown.[83] Russian authorities have arrested multiple high-ranking Russian MoD officials, including those responsible for defense procurement and logistics, on charges of bribery and embezzlement in recent months.[84]

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

Nothing significant to report.

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

*ISW is not reporting on activities in Russian-occupied areas today.*

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

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated in an interview published on January 5 that Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko apologized a few days after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine that Russian forces had launched the invasion from Belarus.[85] Zelensky stated that Lukashenko claimed that Russian President Vladimir Putin launched missiles from Belarusian territory without Lukashenko's permission. Lukashenko's Press Secretary Natalia Eismont claimed on January 6 that Lukashenko did not apologize to Zelensky because Belarus "has nothing to apologize for" and that the phone call occurred due to Lukashenko's son Nikolai Lukashenko's "emotional reaction," presumably to Russia's full-scale invasion.[86]

**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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