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March 5, 2025, 6:40 pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 11:45am ET on March 5. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the March 6 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The Trump administration suspended intelligence sharing with Ukraine, one of many demands the Kremlin has made of the US, Ukraine, and Ukraine's other supporters.

Details about the US suspension of intelligence sharing with Ukraine vary in different reports, but the Trump administration has suspended some level of intelligence sharing with Ukraine with some reporting indicating that the suspension affected all intelligence sharing.[1] Western media reported that the Trump administration specifically suspended the sharing of intelligence that Ukraine uses for early warning systems to protect against Russian long-range missile and drone strikes, for target designation for HIMARS Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (GMLRS) strikes, and for target designation for long-range strikes within Russia.[2] British outlet *Daily Mail* reported that the United States also prohibited the United Kingdom from sharing US intelligence with Ukraine.[3] The Kremlin has repeatedly insisted on an end to the provision of all foreign assistance to Ukraine as part of any peace agreement, and Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov March 4 specifically stated on March 4 that the United States provides Ukraine with intelligence data such as satellite reconnaissance data.[4]

The suspension of US intelligence sharing with Ukraine will damage Ukraine's ability to defend itself against ongoing Russian attacks against military and civilian targets.

Ukrainian forces have leveraged their ability to strike within Russia and destroy significant amounts of materiel in order to increase pressure on Russia. Ukrainian forces struck a Russian missile and ammunition storage facility near Toropets, Tver Oblast on the night of September 17 to 18, 2024, destroying two to three months of Russia's ammunition supply.[5] The Toropets facility also stored Iskander missiles, Tochka-U ballistic missiles, glide bombs, and artillery ammunition.[6] Ukrainian forces struck the Tikhoretsk Arsenal just north of Kamenny, Krasnodar Krai on the night of September 20 to 21, 2024, which at the time contained at least 2,000 tons of munitions, including munitions from North Korea.[7] Russian forces previously leveraged their quantitative artillery ammunition advantage and glide bomb strikes to facilitate battlefield gains by destroying settlements before deploying infantry to attack the area — most notably near Avdiivka in February 2024 during delays in US military aid to Ukraine.[8] Ukrainian strikes on Russian missile and ammunition storage facilities have previously relieved pressure on Ukrainian forces across the frontline by preventing Russian forces from leveraging their artillery advantage to secure gains. Ukrainian strikes against military targets in Russia also pushed Russian aviation operations further from Ukraine into Russia's rear areas, hindering Russia's ability to conduct glide bomb and missile strikes against Ukrainian frontline positions from Russian airspace.[9]

Ukraine's inability to conduct ATACMS and HIMARS strikes against Russian air defense systems within Russia and occupied Ukraine will likely impact how close to the frontline Russian pilots are willing to operate and expand Russia's ability to effectively use glide bombs against both frontline areas and near rear Ukrainian cities.^[10]

The suspension of all US intelligence sharing with Ukraine would also allow Russian forces to intensify their drone and missile strikes against the Ukrainian rear, affecting millions of Ukrainian civilians and the growth of Ukraine's defense industrial base (DIB). US intelligence has contributed to Ukraine's early warning system against Russian strikes against Ukrainian cities, allowing Ukrainian authorities and civilians to prepare once Russian forces launch missiles and drones.^[11] The suspension of US intelligence on Russian strikes against the Ukrainian rear, coupled with the US suspension of supplies of Patriot air defense missiles that Ukraine relies upon to defend against Russian ballistic missiles, would have severe impacts on the safety of Ukrainian rear areas.^[12]

Russian drone and missile strikes have heavily targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure and DIB.^[13] The likely intensification of these strikes following the US suspension of military aid and intelligence sharing to Ukraine will hinder Ukraine's ongoing progress towards expanding its DIB to be able to supply the Ukrainian military with all of its materiel needs.^[14] A self-sufficient Ukrainian DIB would allow Ukraine to defend itself over the long-term with dramatically reduced foreign military assistance, and it is in America's core national security interests that Ukraine be able to continue its efforts towards self-sufficiency.

The Trump administration has been applying considerable pressure on Ukraine, whose leaders continue to offer concessions and publicly declare their interest in achieving a lasting end to the war. These Trump administration policies are undermining the leverage that the United States needs to get Russian President Vladimir Putin to accept any peace agreement that is in the interests of the United States, Ukraine, and Europe. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on March 4 that "Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer."^[15] Zelensky also offered to exchange Ukrainian and Russian prisoners of war (POWs), to ban missile and long-range drone strikes against energy and civilian infrastructure, and to reach an immediate truce in the Black Sea.^[16] Zelensky has indicated several times — including in his February 28 Fox News interview — that he is willing to make concessions on territory, Ukraine's NATO membership, and his own tenure in office in order to secure a just and sustainable peace.^[17] **Russian President Vladimir Putin and numerous Kremlin officials have, in contrast, offered no meaningful concessions. They continuously repeat demands that amount to complete Ukrainian capitulation as well as the rolling back of NATO from Eastern Europe.**^[18]

Russia's war effort in Ukraine has brought about a series of materiel, manpower, and economic challenges for Moscow that will worsen in the coming months if Ukraine is able to sustain its defensive military operations.[19] The United States should leverage these Russian challenges in order to secure concessions necessary to achieve a just and sustainable peace. **US policies suspending military aid and intelligence sharing to Ukraine reduce the leverage US President Donald Trump's needs to achieve his stated policy objective of bringing about an end to the war in Ukraine on acceptable terms, a task that requires increasing pressure on Russia, not Ukraine.**[20]

Kremlin officials announced their intention of taking advantage of the suspension of US military aid and intelligence sharing to make additional battlefield gains. Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev stated on March 5 that US weapons supplies to Ukraine will "most likely resume" but that Russia's "main task" remains "inflicting maximum damage" on Ukraine "on the ground." [21] Medvedev's statement is consistent with ISW assessment that Russian forces will likely attempt to take advantage of the pause in US aid in order to make further gains in eastern and southern Ukraine to justify Russia's territorial claims to the entirety of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts.[22] Medvedev also indicated that Russia is aware that it may have a limited time frame in which to leverage the US suspension of aid to "inflict maximum damage" on Ukrainian forces. Russian forces exploited the previous suspension of US military aid in early 2024, including by trying to seize Kharkiv City in May 2024 before US military aid resumed flowing to Ukrainian forces on the frontline.[23]

Russian officials continue inaccurately to place the blame on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky — and not Russian President Vladimir Putin — for the lack of meaningful peace negotiations. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov responded to a question about Zelensky's willingness to negotiate, claiming that Lavrov cannot "get into [Zelensky's] head" and that Zelensky "is not human." [24] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov and Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Maria Zakharova continued to claim that Zelensky's 2022 ban on negotiating with Russia is a prominent roadblock to negotiation progress — the latest in Kremlin efforts to portray Zelensky — not Putin — as unwilling to negotiate.[25] Both Zelensky and the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) have explicitly and publicly declared Ukraine's willingness to engage in good-faith negotiations and presented substantive ceasefire proposals — in stark contrast to the Kremlin.[26]

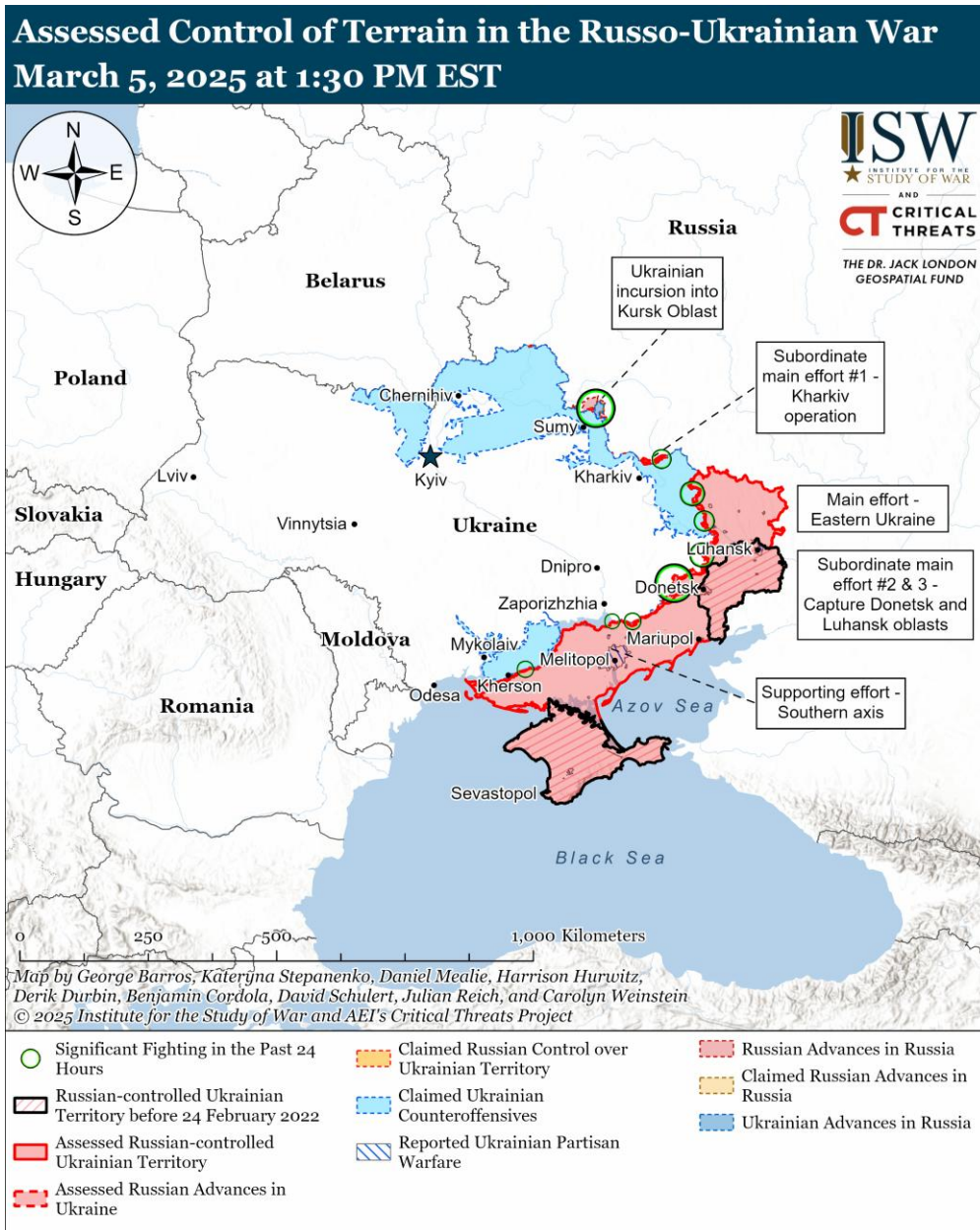
Kremlin officials continue to use business incentives to make further demands of the United States and to push the United States to de facto recognize Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territory. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov claimed on March 4 that Russia is open to working with US companies, including in areas of occupied Ukraine.[27] Peskov questioned, however, how Russia could cooperate with US companies while the US continues to sanction Russia.[28] Peskov is likely setting conditions for Russia to demand that the United States remove its

sanctions before Russia would conclude any of the economic cooperation deals that American and Russian delegations have discussed in recent meetings.[29] Peskov's inclusion of Russia's illegally annexed areas of Ukraine in potential future US-Russian economic cooperation deals is part of Russian efforts to coerce the United States into de facto recognizing these territories as Russian. Peskov's rhetoric mirrors the Kremlin's strategy of leveraging international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to legitimize Russian control over Ukrainian territories.[30] The Kremlin has used discussions with IAEA officials about the ZNPP to assert that the facility lies on Russian territory.[31]

Key Takeaways:

- **The Trump administration suspended intelligence sharing with Ukraine, one of many demands the Kremlin has made of the US, Ukraine, and Ukraine's other supporters.**
- **The suspension of US intelligence sharing with Ukraine will damage Ukraine's ability to defend itself against ongoing Russian attacks against military and civilian targets.**
- **The suspension of all US intelligence sharing with Ukraine would also allow Russian forces to intensify their drone and missile strikes against the Ukrainian rear, affecting millions of Ukrainian civilians and the growth of Ukraine's defense industrial base (DIB).**
- **The Trump administration has been applying considerable pressure on Ukraine, whose leaders continue to offer concessions and publicly declare their interest in achieving a lasting end to the war. These Trump administration policies are undermining the leverage that the United States needs to get Russian President Vladimir Putin to accept any peace agreement that is in the interests of the United States, Ukraine, and Europe.**
- **Kremlin officials announced their intention of taking advantage of the suspension of US military aid and intelligence sharing to make additional battlefield gains.**
- **Russian officials continue inaccurately to place the blame on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky – and not Russian President Vladimir Putin – for the lack of meaningful peace negotiations.**
- **Kremlin officials continue to use business incentives to make further demands of the United States and to push the United States to de facto recognize Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territory.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Toretsk and Pokrovsk.**

- Over 50,000 Russian servicemembers are reportedly listed as having abandoned their units and are absent without leave (AWOL) between February 2022 and mid-December 2024.



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

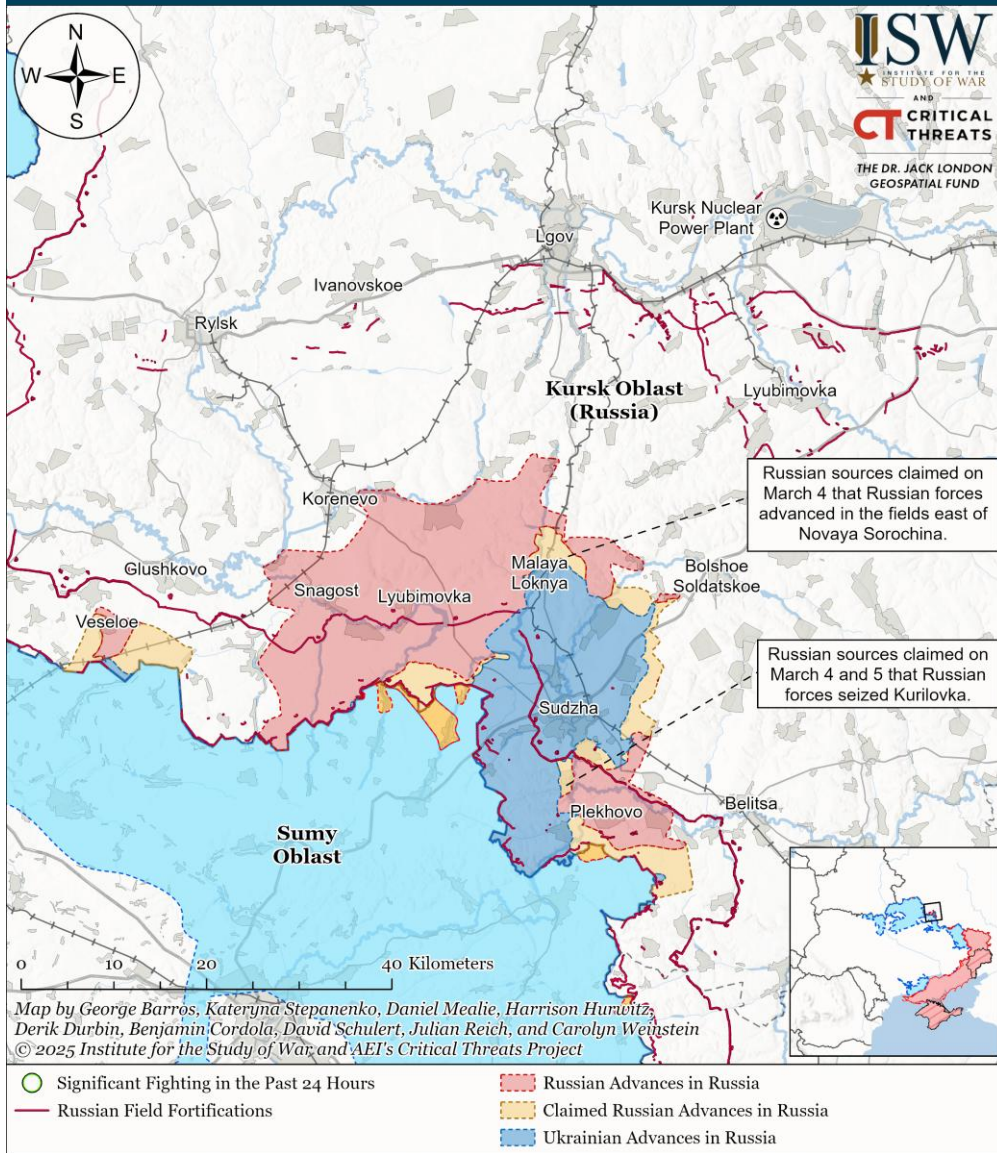
Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Russian forces continued offensive operations in Kursk Oblast on March 5 but did not make any confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces seized Kurilovka (southwest of Sudzha), Loknya, and Okhochiy (both northwest of Sudzha) and advanced east of Novaya Sorochina (northwest of Sudzha) and west of Kurilovka.[32]

A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking in southern Sudzhansky Raion.[33]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction March 5, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Order of Battle: Artillery elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Regiment (18th Motorized Rifle Division, 11th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) and elements of the Russian 83rd and 106th airborne (VDV) divisions are reportedly operating in Kursk Oblast.[34] Elements of the Russian 34th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Malaya Loknya (northwest of Sudzha).[35]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near the international border in Sumy Oblast on March 5 but did not make any confirmed advances.

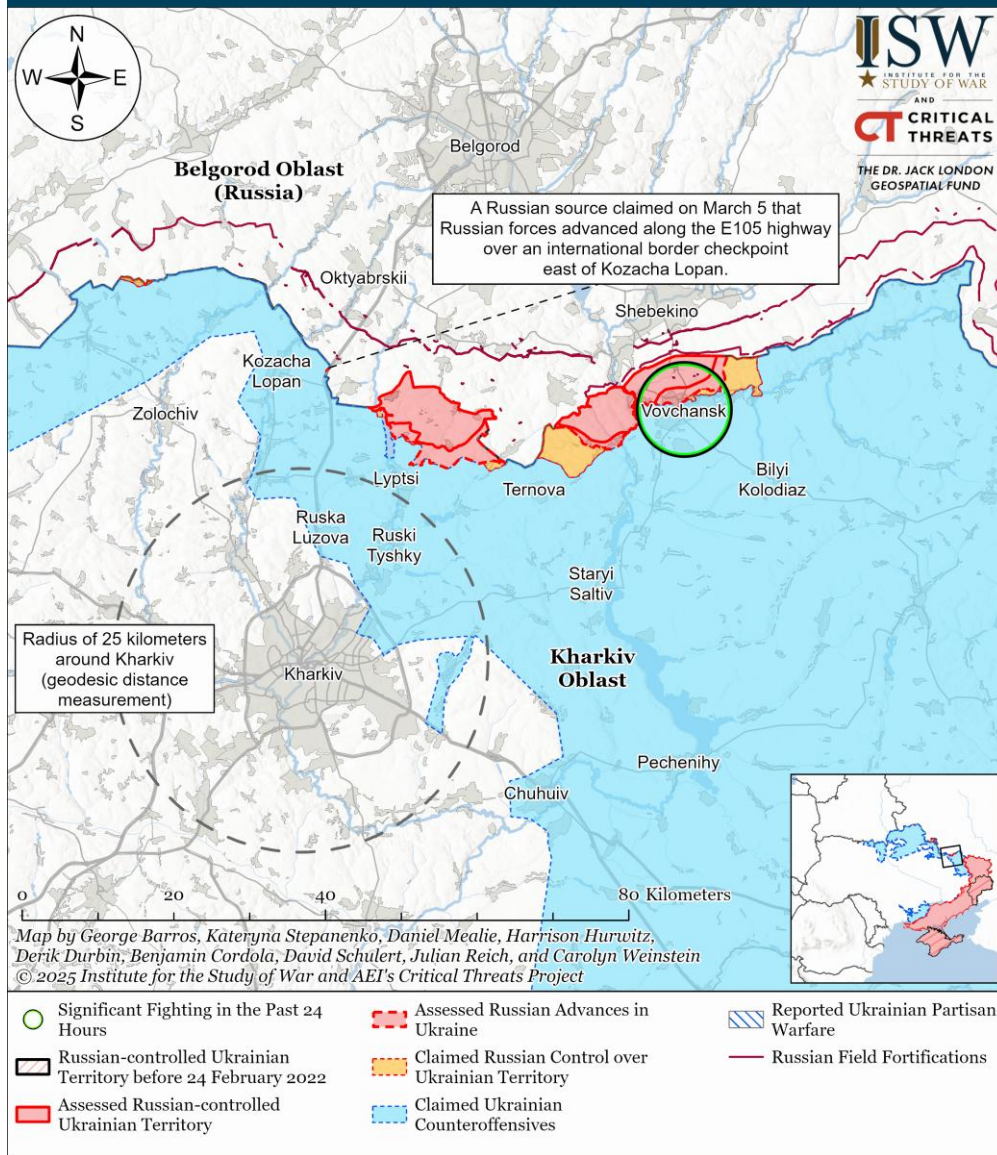
Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers continued to claim that Russian forces seized Novenke.[36]

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kharkiv direction on March 5 but did not make any confirmed advances.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kharkiv Direction March 5, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



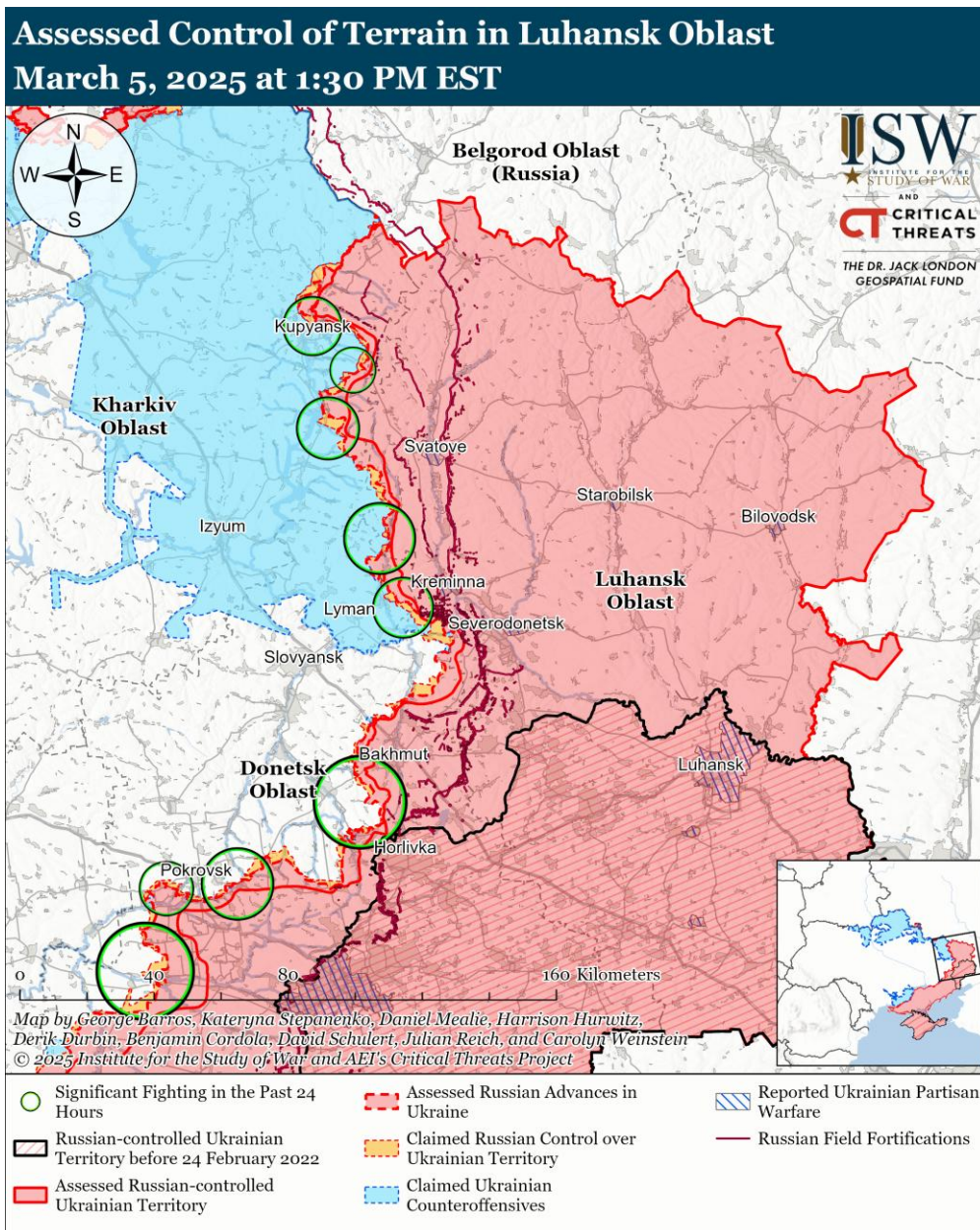
Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces seized the Nekhoteyvka international border crossing checkpoint east of Kozacha Lopan (near the international border north of Kharkiv City).^[37]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on March 4 and 5.^[38]

An officer in a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Vovchansk direction stated that Russian forces are attacking about once per week in groups of six-to-seven personnel and are "practically" not using heavy equipment.[39]

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on March 5 but did not make confirmed advances.



Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced southwest of Kalynove and toward Kindrashivka (both north of Kupyansk), to support Russian forces' ongoing effort to interdict the Ukrainian ground line of communication (GLOC) between Kupyansk and Velykyi Burluk.[40]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Kupyansk toward Krasne Pershe and Kamyanka; north of Kupyansk near Holubivka; east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; and southeast of Kupyansk near Pishchane on March 4 and 5.[41] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov reported on March 5 that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attempts in an unspecified area to cross to the west (right) bank of the Oskil River.[42]

Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces reported on March 5 that warming temperatures and the thinning of ice on the Oskil River are complicating Russian efforts to cross the river, resulting in a recent failed Russian river-crossing attempt.[43] A Russian milblogger claimed on March 4 that Russian forces are trying to connect Russia's separate bridgeheads near Topoli (northeast of Kupyansk) and Dvorichna (southwest of Topoli).[44]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on March 5 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on March 4 that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers toward Bohuslavka and Zahryzove (both northeast of Borova).[45]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Borova near Bohuslavka and Zahryzove; east of Borova near Nadiya; and southeast of Borova near Hrekivka on March 4 and 5.[46]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are introducing reserves and intensifying attacks in the Zahryzove direction in order to conduct offensive operations against the southern flank of the Ukrainian force grouping near Kupyansk.[47]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on March 5 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on March 4 that Russian forces expanded their bridgehead on the right (west) bank of the Zherebets River in Ivanivka (northeast of Lyman) and

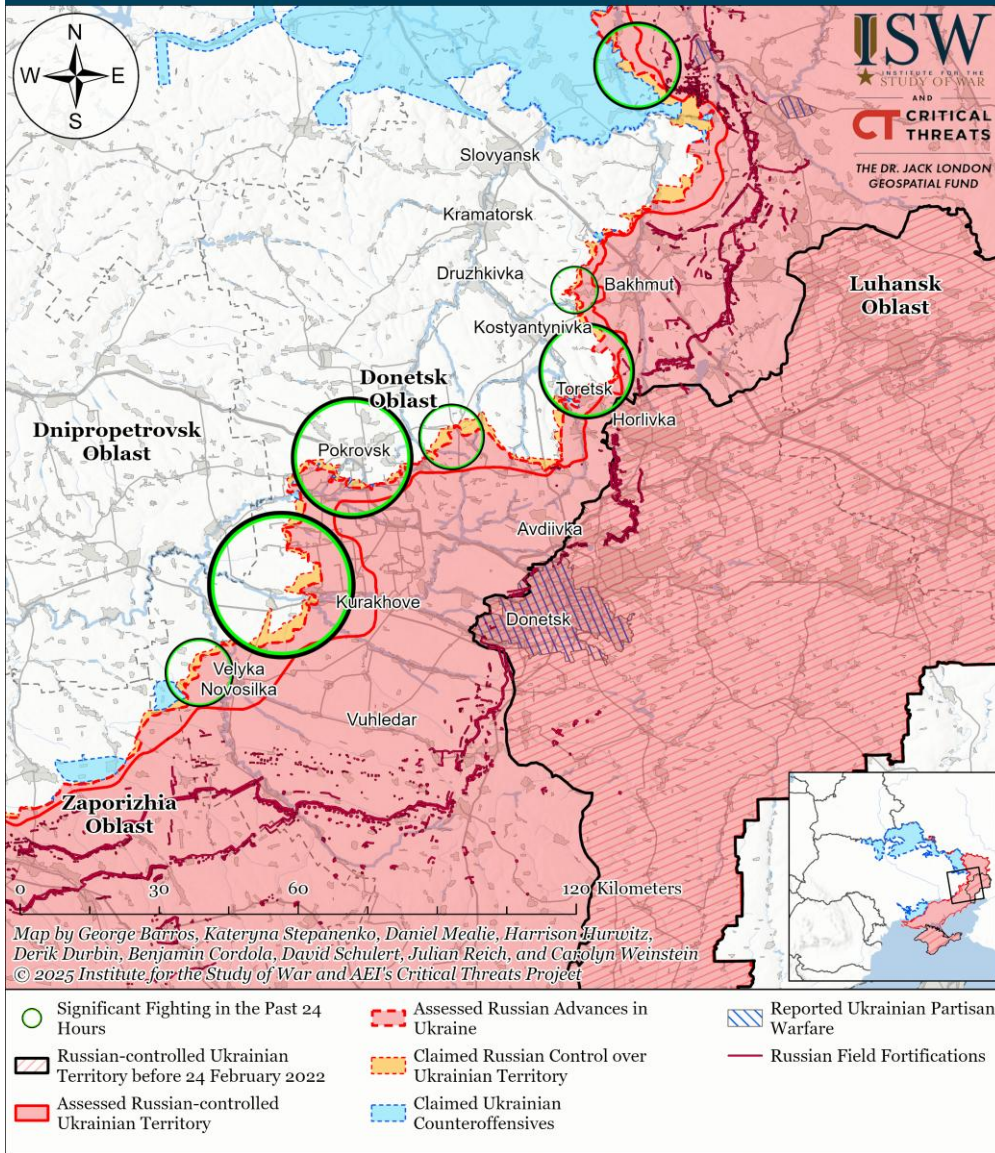
advanced north of Kolodyazi (northeast of Lyman) and roughly 1.5 kilometers to the dam northwest of Ivanivka.[48] The milblogger also claimed that Russian forces advanced in fields southeast and northeast of Torske (northeast of Lyman).

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Lyman near Kolodyazi, Novomykhailivka, Nove, Novolyubivka, Yampolivka, and Torske and east of Lyman near Dibrova and the Serebryanske forest area on March 4 and 5.[49]

The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Lyman direction reported on March 4 that Russian forces are having problems supplying forward positions with food and water.[50]

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

Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast
March 5, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on March 5 but did not advance.

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka on March 5.^[51]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on March 5 but did not advance.

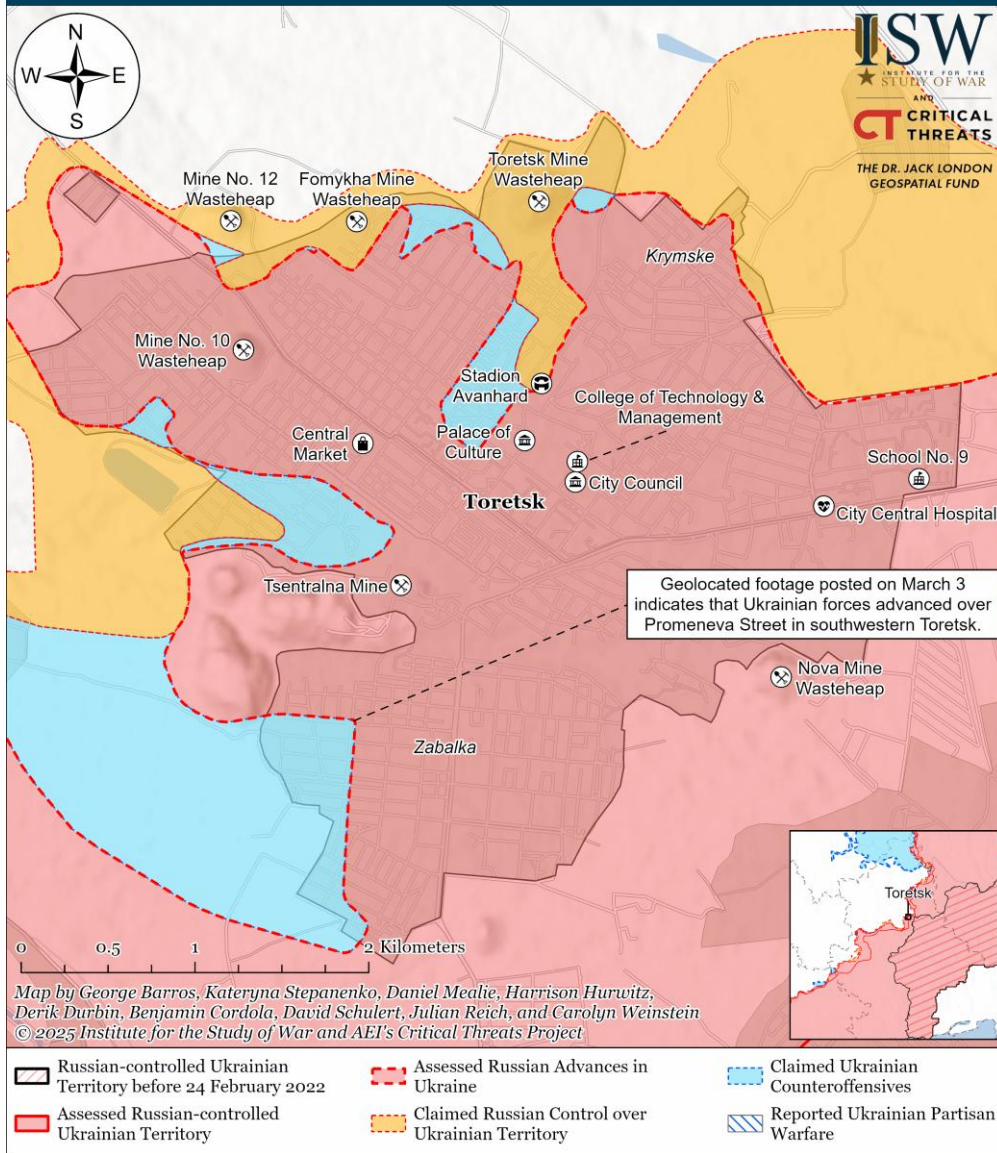
Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Chasiv Yar itself and south of Chasiv Yar near Stupochky, Predtechyne, and Oleksandro-Shulytne on March 4 and 5.^[52]

A spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Chasiv Yar direction reported that Russian forces are more active in snowy, foggy, and rainy weather conditions as such weather conditions impair Ukrainian drone operators' ability to detect Russian forces.^[53] An officer of the same Ukrainian brigade reported that Russian forces are changing their tactics from trying to attack in small infantry groups that are instead now leveraging poor weather conditions and low-visibility conditions and to accumulate equipment to attack.^[54]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 299th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (98th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.^[55] Elements of the Russian "Nevsky" Volunteer Reconnaissance-Assault Brigade (Russian Volunteer Corps) are reportedly operating near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (north of Chasiv Yar).^[56]

Ukrainian forces recently advanced in Toretsk.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Toretsk
March 5, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 3 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced along Promeneva Street in southwestern Toretsk.[57]

Russian forces attacked in Toretsk itself; north of Toretsk near Dachne and Dyliivka; and east of Toretsk near Druzhba on March 4 and 5.[58]

The commander of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Toretsk direction stated on March 5 that Russian forces conducted rotations and are attacking on motorcycles, buggies, all-terrain vehicles

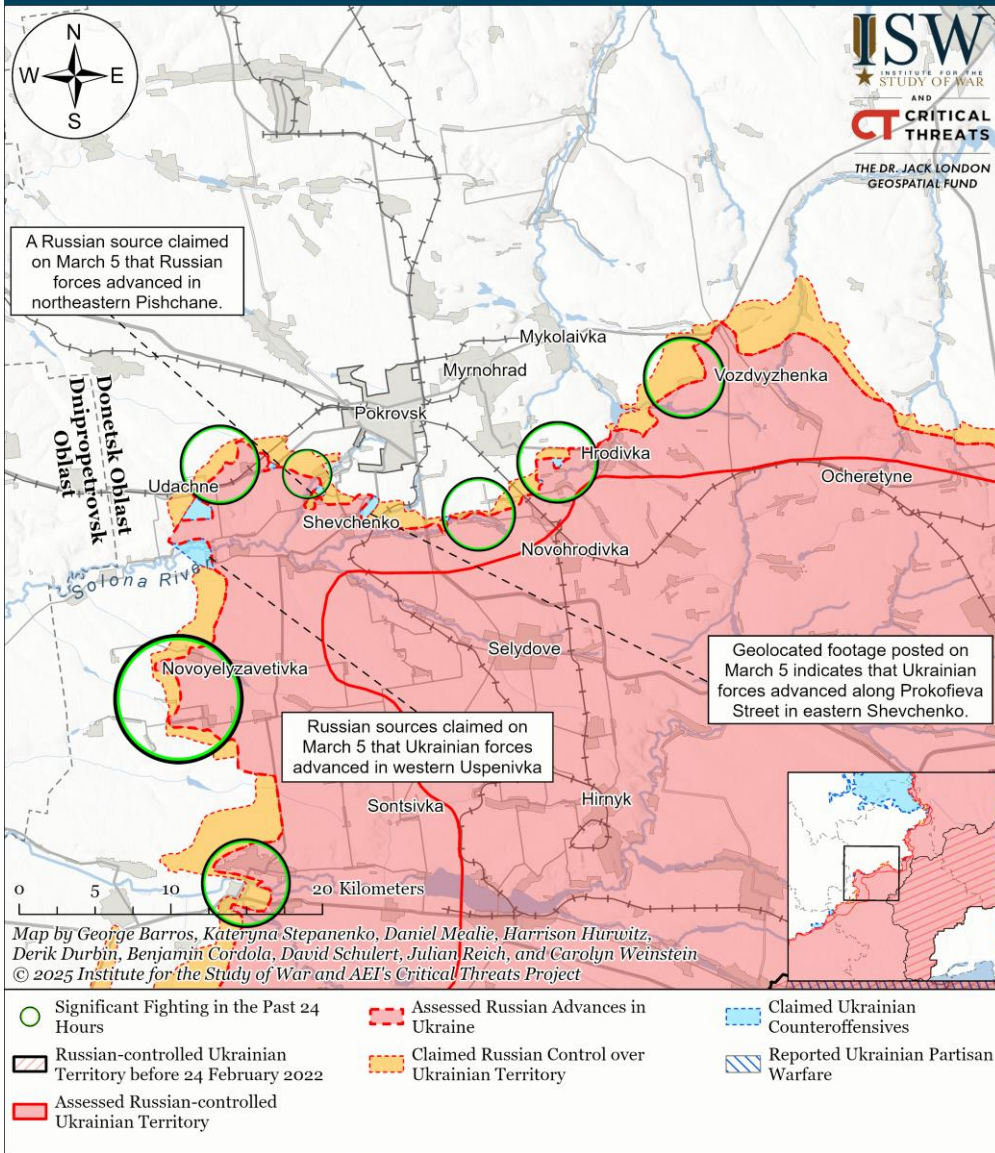
(ATVs), and civilian vehicles.[59] The commander also noted that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking in the area.

A Russian milblogger and former Storm-Z instructor claimed on March 4 that the Russian military command recently transferred several units of the 150th Motorized Rifle Division (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) to stabilize the situation in Toretsk as the combat capabilities of elements of the Russian 51st CAA's (formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC], SMD) in the area are depleted.[60] The milblogger claimed that several areas within Toretsk are contested "gray zones" and that these areas change hands frequently.

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 103rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating in the Toretsk-Shcherbynivka (just west of Toretsk) area.[61] Elements of the Russian 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA) are reportedly operating near Dachne.[62]

Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction March 5, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 5 shows Russian forces striking several Ukrainian armored vehicles in eastern Shevchenko (south of Pokrovsk), indicating that Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the area.[63] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces used up to a battalion's worth of armored vehicles in the assault against Shevchenko, but ISW cannot independently confirm this claim.[64] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced within Uspenivka (southwest of Pokrovsk) and north (right) bank of the Solona River in western Novoserhiivka (north and west of Uspenivka).[65]

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced northeast and east of Kotlyne and in northeast Pishchane (both southwest of Pokrovsk).[66]

Russian forces continued attacking northeast of Pokrovsk near Malynivka and Bohdanivka; east of Pokrovsk near Zelene Pole, Vodyane Druhe, Yelyzavetivka, and Promin; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; southwest of Pokrovsk near Pishchane, Uspenivka, Preobrazhenka, Kotlyne, and Udachne and toward Horikove; and west of Pokrovsk toward Serhiivka on March 4 and 5.[67]

The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Novopavlivka direction (southwest of Pokrovsk) stated that Russian forces operate in small groups of four to five personnel and dismount infantry four to five kilometers from the frontline in an effort to protect armored vehicles from Ukrainian drone strikes.[68]

Ukrainian military expert Petro Chernyk stated on March 5 that the tempo of Russian offensive operations near Pokrovsk has decreased.[69] Chernyk stated that Russian forces previously conducted 40 to 60 assaults per day in the Pokrovsk direction but have recently been conducting only 18 to 20 assaults per day. Chernyk stated that Russian forces were able to recruit up to 50,000 personnel per month while suffering roughly 40,000 losses per month in the last several months of 2024. Chernyk stated that Russian forces have only been able to recruit roughly 40,000 personnel per month, presumably in January and February 2025, which has slowed the tempo of Russian offensive operations in the Pokrovsk direction. Chernyk noted that Ukrainian forces currently destroy almost 85 percent of Russian targets in the Pokrovsk direction with first-person view (FPV) drones, whereas Ukrainian forces destroyed roughly 50 percent of Russian targets with FPV drones in the area in Summer 2024.

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian "Atlant" Motorized Rifle Battalion of the 35th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[70]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on March 5 but did not advance.

Russian forces continued attacking west of Kurakhove near Andriivka, Kostyantynopil, and Oleksiivka and southwest of Kurakhove near Rozdolne on March 4 and 5.[71]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velyka Novosilka direction on March 5 but did not make any confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on March 5 that Russian forces seized Pryvilne (northwest of Velyka Novosilka).[72] A Russian milblogger attributed the seizure of Pryvilne to elements of the Russian 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]).[73]

Russian forces continued ground attacks northwest of Velyka Novosilka near Burlatske, Pryvline, Skudne, and Vilne Pole on March 4 and 5.[74] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Pryvilne.[75]

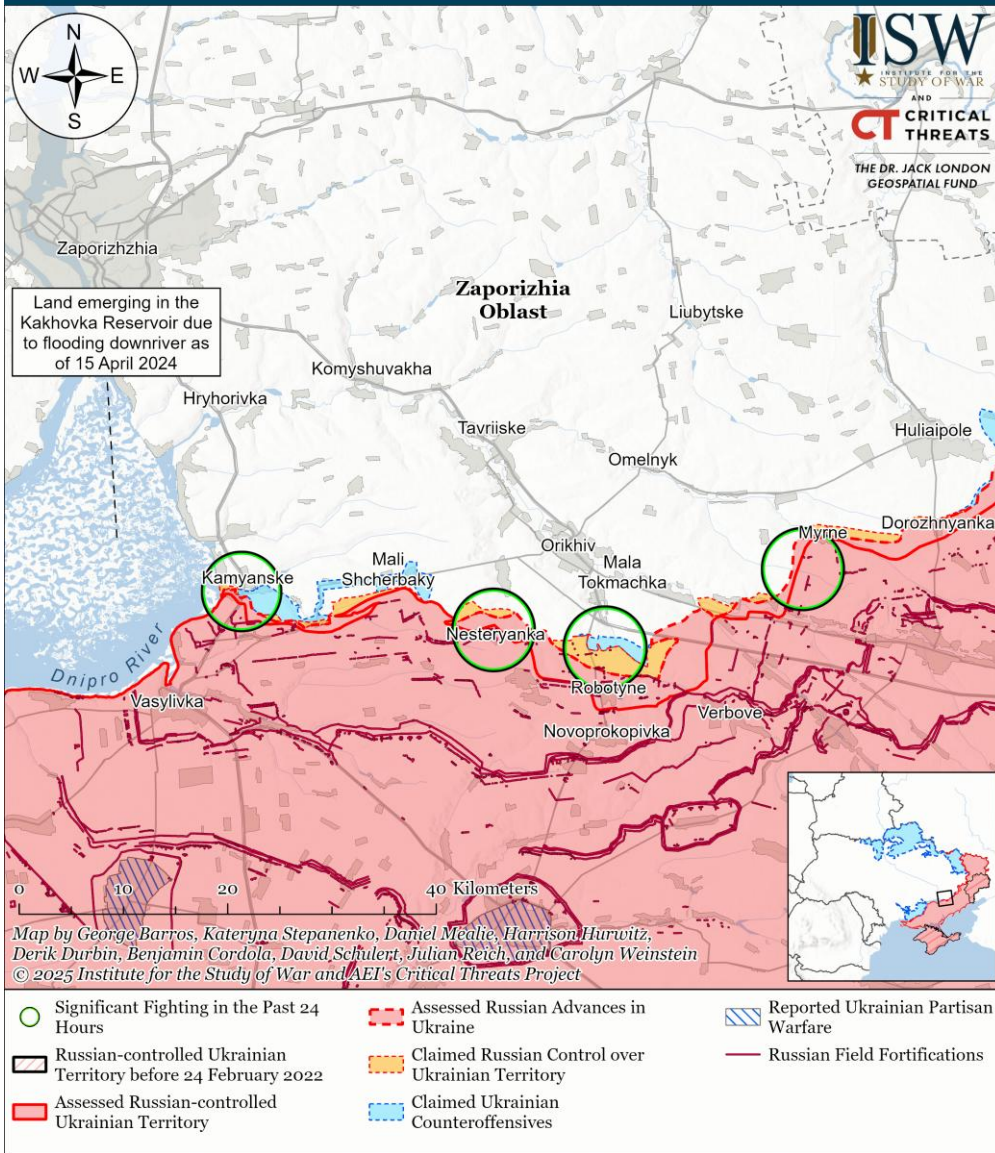
An officer in a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Velyka Novosilka direction reported on March 5 that Russian forces are concentrating their efforts toward Skudne and Burlatske and that the Russian military command redeployed elements of three brigades and one motorized rifle regiment to the area.[76] The officer noted that Russian forces have few armored vehicles in the area and conduct infantry attacks in groups of five to 10 people after which a group of 20 personnel reinforce and consolidate in areas where Russian forces attacks were successful.

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment are reportedly operating near Burlatske.[77]

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 on March 5 but did not make any confirmed advances.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction March 5, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

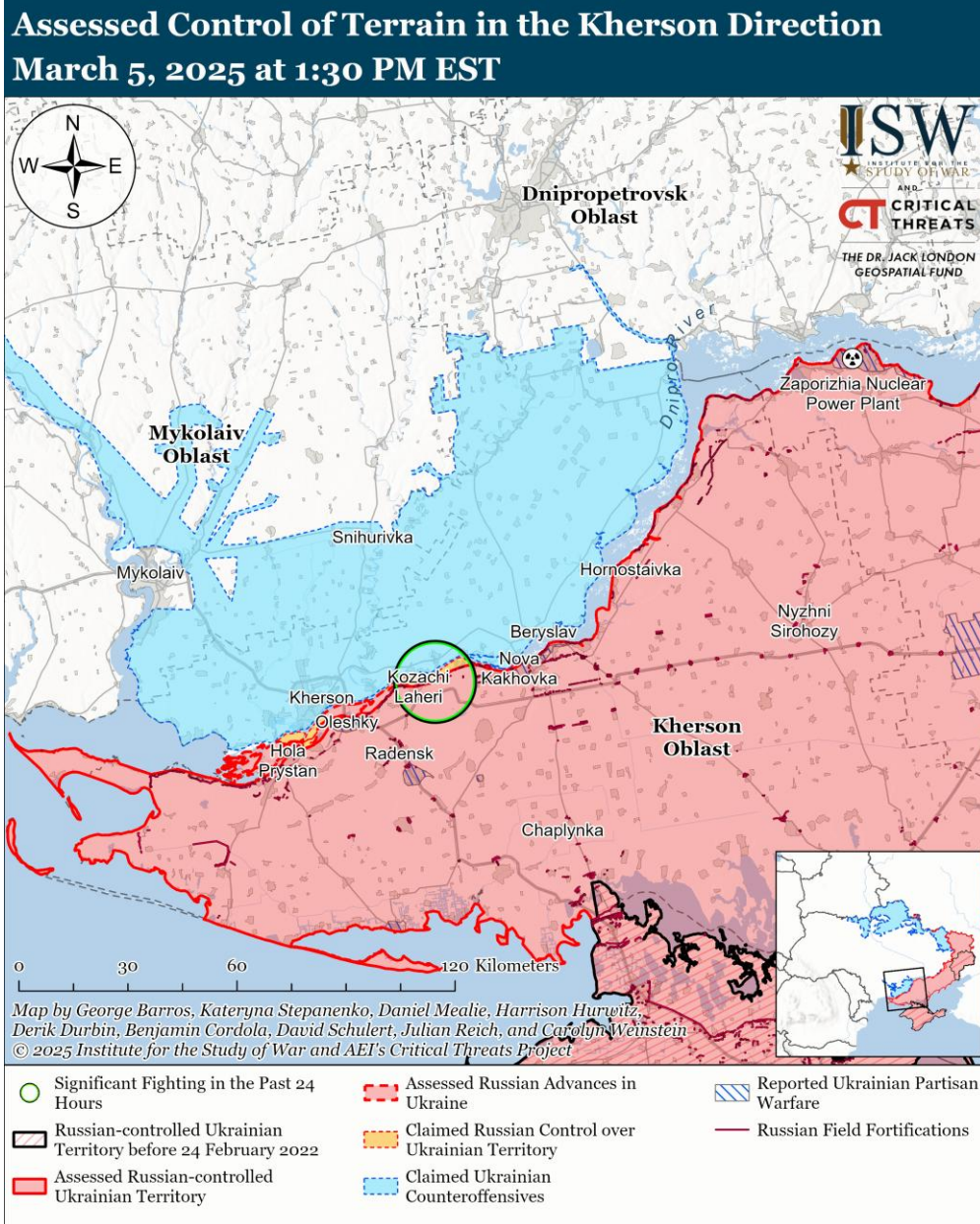


Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on March 5 that elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) advanced northeast of Robotyne.[78]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations north of Robotyne near Novodanylivka and northwest of Robotyne near Nesteryanka and Kamyanske on March 4 and 5.[79]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Dnipro direction in Kherson Oblast on March 5 but did not advance.[80]

Ukraine’s Southern Operational Command posted footage on March 5 of Ukrainian forces striking a Russian training ground in an unspecified location in Kherson Oblast.[81]



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 on the night of March 4 to 5. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched three Iskander-M/KN-23 ballistic missiles from Voronezh Oblast; one S-300 air defense missile from Kursk Oblast; and 181 Shahed and decoy drones from the directions of Oryol, Kursk, and Bryansk cities; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea.[82] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 115 drones over Kharkiv, Poltava, Sumy, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Mykolaiv, and Odesa oblasts and that 55 decoy drones were "lost," likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference. Official Ukrainian sources reported that Russian missiles damaged industrial enterprises and civilian infrastructure in Dnipropetrovsk and Odesa oblasts and that Russian drones struck critical energy infrastructure facilities and civilian infrastructure in Odesa Oblast and Kharkiv and Kyiv cities.[83]

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

Over 50,000 Russian servicemembers are reportedly listed as having abandoned their units and are absent without leave (AWOL) between February 2022 and mid-December 2024. A Ukrainian OSINT community reported that Ukrainian hackers gained access to an internal Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) presentation showing the number of criminal cases that Russian authorities had initiated against Russian servicemembers listed as AWOL as of December 15, 2024.[84] The OSINT community noted that the figures in the presentation do include instances when Russian commanders have listed servicemembers who went missing during assaults as AWOL. Ukraine-based open-source intelligence organization Frontelligence Insight used the presentation data to calculate that there were the largest number of AWOL cases - 22,577 - in the Southern Military District [SMD].[85] There were 13,769 AWOL cases in the Central Military District; 7,178 cases in the Moscow Military District; 3,052 cases in the Leningrad Military District; and 3,378 cases in the Eastern Military District – a total of 50,554 documented AWOL cases. A leaked document detailing the AWOL personnel in the SMD reportedly indicated that personnel from the 51st Combined Arms Army [CAA] (formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC]) and 3rd CAA (formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] AC) made up 58.8 percent of the SMD's AWOL cases, with most of the SMD's AWOL cases occurring between 2023 and 2024 and relatively few in 2022.

The Kremlin continues to appoint regional leaders who focus on strengthening Russia's defense industrial base (DIB). Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed Alexander Dronov as the acting governor of Novgorod Oblast on March 4.[86] Dronov emphasized his commitment to developing radio electronics and drones in the oblast and emphasized Novgorod Oblast's role in contributing to Russia's objectives in its war in Ukraine. Dronov highlighted the production of the locally developed “Prince Vandal Novogorodsky” kamikaze drone as a priority during his governorship. The “Prince Vandal Novogorodsky” kamikaze drone is controlled via a fiber-optic cable, making it resistant to electronic warfare (EW) systems.[87]

Kremlin officials continue to leverage legislative measures in an effort to legitimize Russia's illegal occupation of Ukraine and present future threats to NATO member states. First Deputy Chairperson of the Russian State Duma's Committee on Agrarian Issues, Oleg Nilov, stated on March 5 that he submitted a bill proposing that the Russian government provide veterans of the war in Ukraine and families of those killed in combat free plots of land in the Republic of Karelia, which borders NATO member Finland, as both a defensive measure and a means for social rehabilitation.[88] Putin previously issued a decree in 2022 to allocate plots of land in occupied Crimea and Sevastopol to Russian veterans who had served in the war and Russian occupation officials prepared up to 1,000 plots of land in occupied Kerch Raion, Crimea in July 2024 to distribute among volunteers who signed military contracts with the Russian Ministry of Defense.[89]

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 publishing coverage of 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)

Belarusian officials continue to highlight the deployment of Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus. Belarusian Security Council State Secretary Lieutenant General Alexander Volfovich claimed on March 5 that Russian-Belarusian military cooperation is currently at its "peak." [90] Volfovich emphasized that the recently-ratified Russian-Belarusian Union State security framework defines the deployment of Russian nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory and the use of nuclear weapons to defend the interests of Belarus and the Union State. ISW continues to assess that Russia is very unlikely to authorize the use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine or elsewhere.

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.



[1] <https://www.ft.com/content/c58fcea-00c4-4fad-bcoa-0185b7415579> ;
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