



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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Note: The data cut-off for this product was 11:45 am ET on May 22. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 23 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is fostering the formation of an informal state ideology based on Russian nationalism that positions Russia in opposition to the West as part of ongoing efforts to militarize and unify Russian society. Putin stated on May 22 at a likely highly scripted award ceremony that "strong family foundations" and "traditional values" support Russia's "1,000-year-old statehood."^[1] Putin emphasized that Russia's "most important" task is to preserve its people, culture, and spirituality. A Russian Orthodox priest who received an award during the ceremony thanked Putin for protecting Russian traditional culture, spirituality, and language. The priest noted that Russia's celebrations of its contributions to victory in the Second World War teach Russian youth and those in the "Russkiy Mir" ("Russian World") to defend Russia and love Russia's culture and spiritual foundations. (The "Russian World" is a Kremlin-promoted geopolitical concept with amorphous parameters that broadly encompass those who live outside of Russia's borders but relate in some vague way to Russian language, culture, Orthodoxy, and media). Russian State Historical Museum General Director and awardee Alexei Levikin claimed that many countries hostile to Russia are basing their policies and ideologies on the falsification of historical events and facts. A martial arts school director who received an award claimed that Russia always proves that its fighters are the best on the battlefields and in sports arenas.

Putin notably promoted Russian nationalism by emphasizing Russia's spirituality and thousand-year history and by giving only a Russian Orthodox priest — but no representatives of other faiths — an award, despite the fact that the Russian state formally regards Russian Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism as Russia's "traditional" religions.^[2] Putin has previously highlighted ethnic and religious minorities' contributions to Russia at high profile events and has often promoted a civic Russian identity and nationalism.^[3] Putin's departure from this rhetoric at the highly staged event on May 22 may be an attempt to appease the increasingly pro-war Russian ultranationalist community. Putin is also attempting to use the awardees' statements to reinforce the creation of an informal state ideology predicated on perpetuating the belief that the West is determined to defeat Russia, thereby justifying a future military conflict against the West to the Russian public.^[4] Putin declared 2025 the "Year of the Defender of the Fatherland," and the development of an informal Russian nationalist ideology provides an ideological foundation for the ongoing Kremlin effort to develop a new cadre of loyal elites that includes selected veterans of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.^[5] Putin will likely expand efforts to unify Russian society against the perceived threat of the West and to develop an elite class of militarized nationalists in order to ensure that any successor will embody similarly aggressive and dangerous ideals that perpetuate eternal conflict with the West and NATO.

Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin — one of the most outspoken Russian ultranationalists in Putin's inner circle — expressed support for the inclusion of an informal state ideology based on Russian nationalism in the Russian Constitution. Russian State Duma Deputy Speaker Pyotr Tolstoy

stated on May 19 at the St. Petersburg International Legal Forum that Russia may change its constitution in the future.[6] Duma Committee on State Building and Legislation Head Pavel Krasheninnikov later stated at the forum that the Russian Constitution "meets current realities" and does not need amending, however.[7] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated on May 19, in response to Tolstoy, that changing the constitution is "not on the [Kremlin's] agenda." [8] Bastrykin claimed in an interview with Kremlin newswire TASS published on May 22 that Russia is built on traditional values, such as patriotism, citizenship, service to the Fatherland, and a strong family, and that these traditional values should underpin Russia's "national idea." [9] Bastrykin further claimed that Russia should enshrine this "national idea" in its constitution. Bastrykin emphasized Russia's need to protect and preserve its "historical heritage" through legal frameworks. Bastrykin routinely publicly expresses interest in an informal Russian state ideology predicated on Russian ethno-religious nationalism and opposition to the West, in contrast to other senior Russian officials. [10] The Russian Constitution notably forbids the adoption of a formal state ideology. [11] Peskov stated on May 22 that it is difficult to comment on proposals to amend the Russian Constitution because the Kremlin does not have the specifics of such proposals — a departure from his May 19 statement apparently dismissing changes to the constitution. [12] Kremlin officials most recently leveraged Victory Day, Russia's largest holiday that commemorates the Soviet Union's contributions to the Second World War, to promote a new informal state ideology based on Russian unity in the face of opposition from the West. [13] The Kremlin is likely accelerating its promotion of this ideology to prepare the domestic population for a future military conflict against the West. Bastrykin is likely spearheading efforts to formally enshrine Russian nationalist ideology in the constitution as one of the most powerful and influential ultranationalists within the Kremlin elite.

Russian authorities are renewing their years-long narrative rejecting the legality of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, possibly to deny Ukrainian and Belarusian sovereignty and independence in the future. Russian State Duma Committee on the Protection of the Family, Fatherhood, Motherhood, and Childhood Head and member of the Communist Party Central Committee Nina Ostanina stated on May 22 that Duma deputies are ready to raise the issue of the alleged illegality of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. [14] Ostanina agreed with Russian Presidential Advisor Anton Kobayakov's May 21 claim that the Soviet Union's founding body was not involved in the dissolution of the Soviet Union and that, therefore, the Soviet Union still legally exists. [15] Ostanina further claimed that the dissolution of the Soviet Union was illegal because "no one gave authority" to then Belarusian Parliament Chairperson Stanislav Shushkevich, then Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic President Boris Yeltsin, and then Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk to sign the December 1991 Belovezha Accords, the internationally recognized document in which the Soviet republics of Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus agreed to dissolve the Soviet Union. [16] Russian authorities have intermittently revived false narratives about the illegality of the Soviet Union's dissolution and calls to reestablish the Soviet Union since at least 2014, and promoted this informational effort in 2021 and 2023. [17] The Kremlin has been pursuing its strategic effort to de facto annex Belarus through the framework of the Union State of Russia and Belarus and consistently denies Ukrainian sovereignty. [18] Russian officials, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin, have frequently invoked the "trinity doctrine" — the ideological concept suggesting that Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians are a "triune" and forcibly separated people. [19] The Kremlin may be instructing lower-level officials to reinject the narrative about the allegedly illegal dissolution of the Soviet Union into the Russian information space in order to set conditions for the Kremlin to withdraw its recognition of Ukraine and Belarus as independent states in the future and call for a united Russian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian state. Russian officials have notably not acted upon past calls for the reestablishment of the Soviet Union, and the most recent iteration of this information campaign is similarly unlikely to have any near-term effects.

Russian authorities and state media continue to publicly question the legitimacy of the Ukrainian negotiating team and the Ukrainian government, likely to further efforts to reject and delay negotiations and to set conditions to renege on any future peace agreement with Ukraine. Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Legal Department Director Maksim Musikhin claimed to Kremlin newswire TASS on May 21 that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has "long" lost his "internal" and "external" legitimacy so there "may be problems" with any agreements Zelensky may sign in the future.^[20] Musikhin claimed that a person "who has the [Ukrainian] people's mandate" should sign any future agreements and that the Ukrainian people must choose a new leader. Musikhin claimed that the Ukrainian Constitution may grant the head of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada the power to sign agreements. TASS also amplified a source allegedly "close to the negotiations" in Istanbul claiming that Ukraine will have to change the members of its negotiating group in order to work on a memorandum for a future peace treaty because the Ukrainian delegation at the recent Istanbul talks had a "shortage of politicians."^[21] The source further questioned the legitimacy of any future Ukrainian negotiating group by claiming that the group may include "spies" working for European states or the United States. Musikhin is reiterating the longstanding false Kremlin claim that Zelensky is not the legitimate leader of Ukraine and therefore cannot sign any agreements with Russia.^[22] Musikhin is also repeating Russian President Vladimir Putin's false claim that the Verkhovna Rada is the only legitimate power in Ukraine.^[23] Kremlin officials have repeatedly claimed that Ukraine must hold elections for its government to be legitimate even though Ukraine's constitution and law explicitly prohibits elections during periods of martial law and prohibits the Ukrainian government from lifting martial law during invasion by a hostile country.^[24] Musikhin's statements and these Russian state media reports are part of the Kremlin's ongoing efforts to set conditions for Russia to justify its withdrawal from any future peace agreements with Ukraine at a time of Russia's choosing and to support Russia's repeated demand that Ukraine acquiesce to regime change and the installation of a pro-Russian government.^[25]

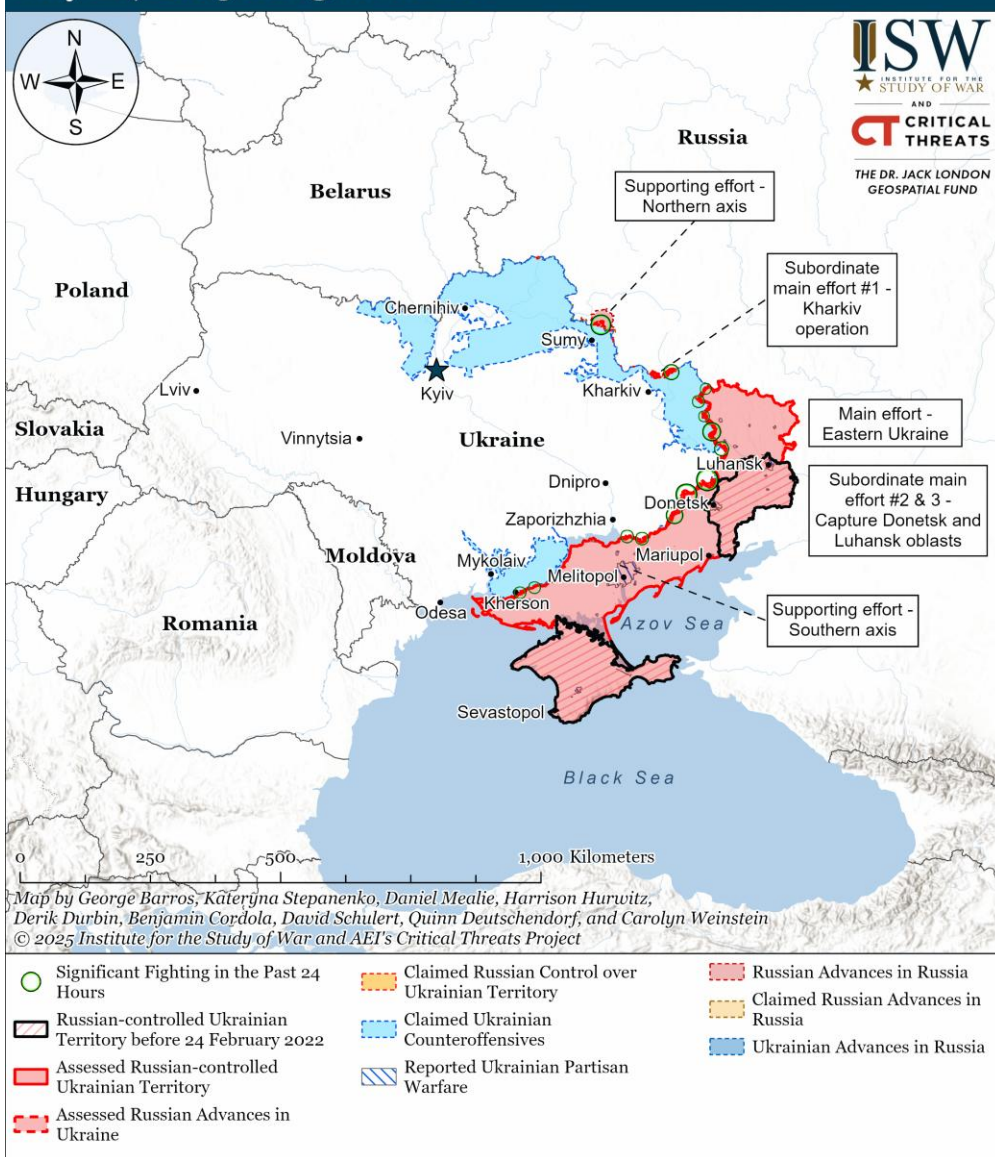
Recent Western reporting provided additional details in a case in which Russian forces executed Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in November 2024, supporting ISW's assessment that high-level Russian military commanders are likely involved in these executions. CNN reported on May 21 that a Ukrainian intelligence official provided drone footage and intercepted audio in which a Russian commander ordered the execution of Ukrainian POWs and that the footage and audio correspond to a credible report of a Russian execution in western Zaporizhia Oblast in November 2024.^[26] CNN reported that it could not independently verify the radio intercept or its link to the execution but noted that a forensic expert and an unnamed Western intelligence official found the audio to be authentic and "consistent with previously documented brutal executions." Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) told CNN that elements of a "Storm" unit of the Russian 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) were responsible for the November 2024 executions and at least one other suspected execution. ISW observed additional reporting and footage that indicated that Russian forces captured and disarmed six Ukrainian POWs and executed five at close range near Novodarivka (eastern Zaporizhia Oblast) on November 23, 2024, in violation of international law.^[27] UN Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial summary or arbitrary executions Morris Tidball-Binz told CNN that Russian executions of Ukrainian POWs cannot occur at such high numbers or frequency without the orders or consent of the highest Russian military commanders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin. There has been a sharp increase in credible reports and footage of Russian forces executing Ukrainian POWs throughout 2024 and 2025, and ISW continues to assess that Russian military commanders are either complicit in or directly enabling their subordinates to conduct systemic executions in direct violation of international law.^[28]

Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov confirmed on May 22 Colonel General Andrei Mordvichev's appointment as Russian Ground Forces Commander.^[29] ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin likely appointed Mordvichev to proliferate positional warfare tactics and operational concepts for grinding marginal advances — the main tactics Russian forces used in the Avdiivka-Pokrovsk direction — across Russia's Ground Forces.^[30]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin is fostering the formation of an informal state ideology based on Russian nationalism that positions Russia in opposition to the West as part of ongoing efforts to militarize and unify Russian society.**
- **Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin — one of the most outspoken Russian ultranationalists in Putin's inner circle — expressed support for the inclusion of an informal state ideology based on Russian nationalism in the Russian Constitution.**
- **Russian authorities are renewing their years-long narrative rejecting the legality of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, possibly to deny Ukrainian and Belarusian sovereignty and independence in the future.**
- **Russian authorities and state media continue to publicly question the legitimacy of the Ukrainian negotiating team and the Ukrainian government, likely to further efforts to reject and delay negotiations and to set conditions to renege on any future peace agreement with Ukraine.**
- **Recent Western reporting provided additional details in a case in which Russian forces executed Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in November 2024, supporting ISW's assessment that high-level Russian military commanders are likely involved in these executions.**
- **Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov confirmed on May 22 Colonel General Andrei Mordvichev's appointment as Russian Ground Forces Commander.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Toretsk, and Russian forces recently advanced near Vovchansk, Toretsk, and Velyka Novosilka.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War May 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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.

- Alleged Ceasefire Violation
- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- Russian Supporting Effort – Northern Axis
- 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, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas, and possibly advance into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Significant Activity in Belarus

Alleged Ceasefire Violations

There are no active ceasefires in Ukraine.

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

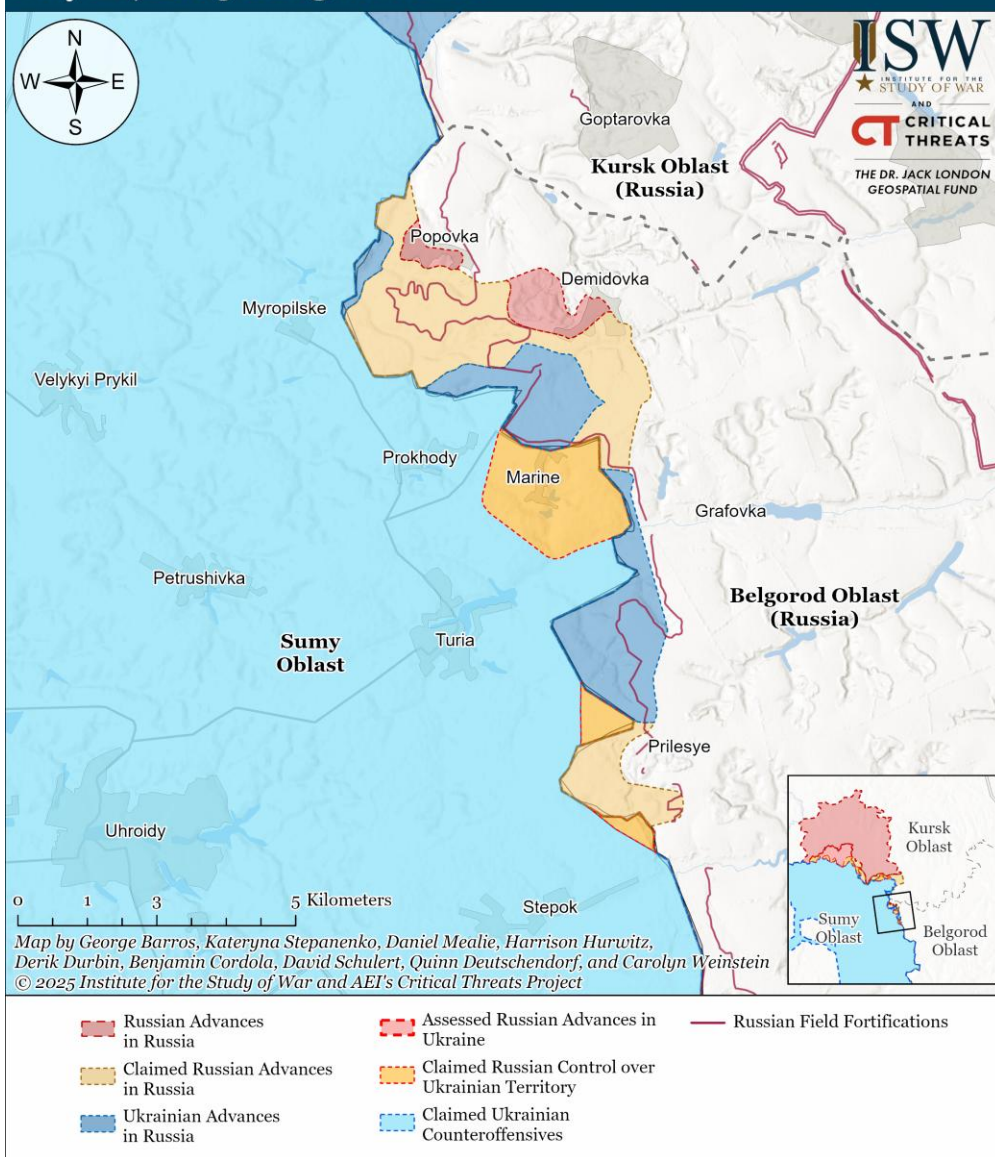
Limited fighting continued in Kursk Oblast on May 22.

A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack toward Novyi Put (southeast of Tetkino), and another milblogger claimed that a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group attempted to enter an unspecified area of Glushkovsky Raion (south of Rylsk along the international border).[31]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet [BSF]) reportedly continue operating in the Kursk Oblast border area.[32]

Neither Russian nor Ukrainian forces reported ground activity in northwesternmost Belgorod Oblast on May 22.

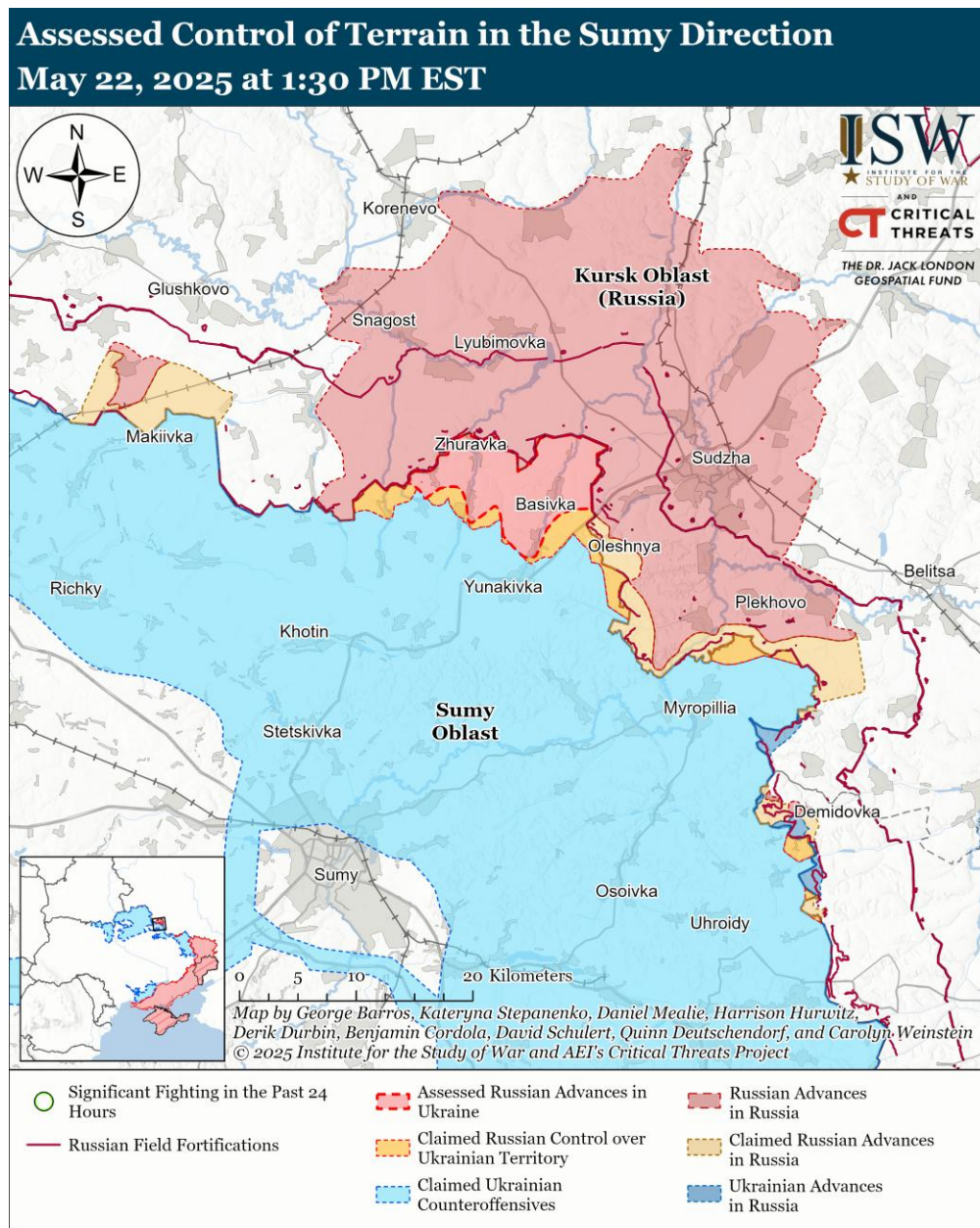
Assessed Control of Terrain in the Belgorod Direction May 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian forces reportedly struck a munitions plant in Tula Oblast overnight on April 21 to 22. Russian opposition outlet *Astra* reported on May 22 that Ukrainian forces conducted a drone strike against Russian state defense corporation Rostec's NPO Splav munitions plant in Tula City.[33] The NPO Splav plant is a leading Russian manufacturer of ammunition for multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), air-launched missiles, and thermobaric artillery systems.[34] Tula Oblast Governor Dmitry Milyaev claimed that Ukrainian drones struck residential areas and infrastructure.[35] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces downed 10 drones over Tula Oblast overnight.[36]

Russian Supporting Effort – Northern Axis (Russian objective: Create defensible buffer zones in northern Ukraine along the international border and approach to within tube artillery range of Sumy City)

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in northern Sumy Oblast on May 22 but did not advance.



Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Sumy City near Loknya (northeast of Sumy City) on May 22.^[37]

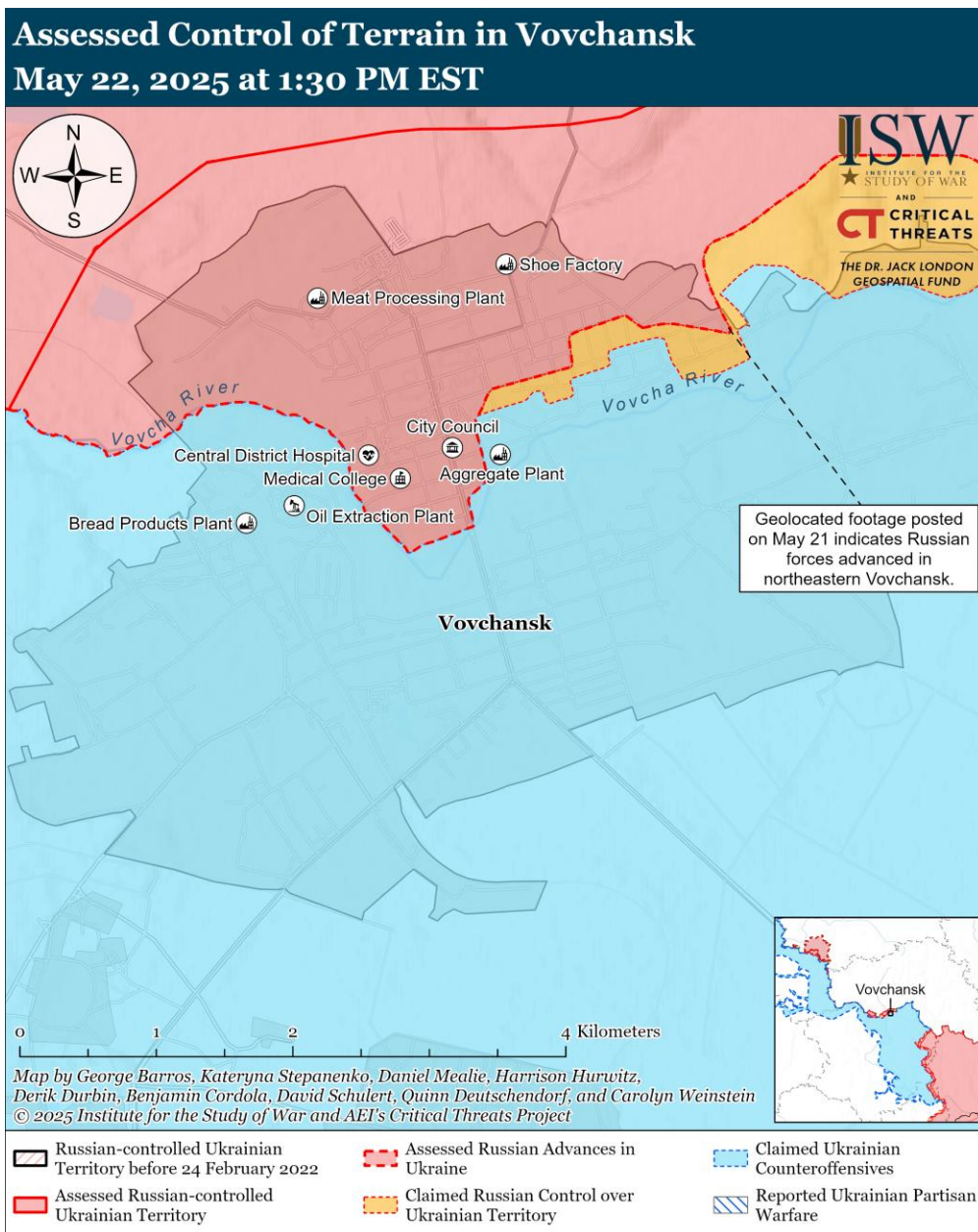
Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 106th Airborne (VDV) Division and "Rubikon" Center for Advanced Unmanned Technologies reportedly continue operating in the Sumy Oblast border area.[38]

<u>Russian</u>	<u>Main</u>	<u>Effort</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Ukraine</u>
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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 recently advanced northeast of Kharkiv City.

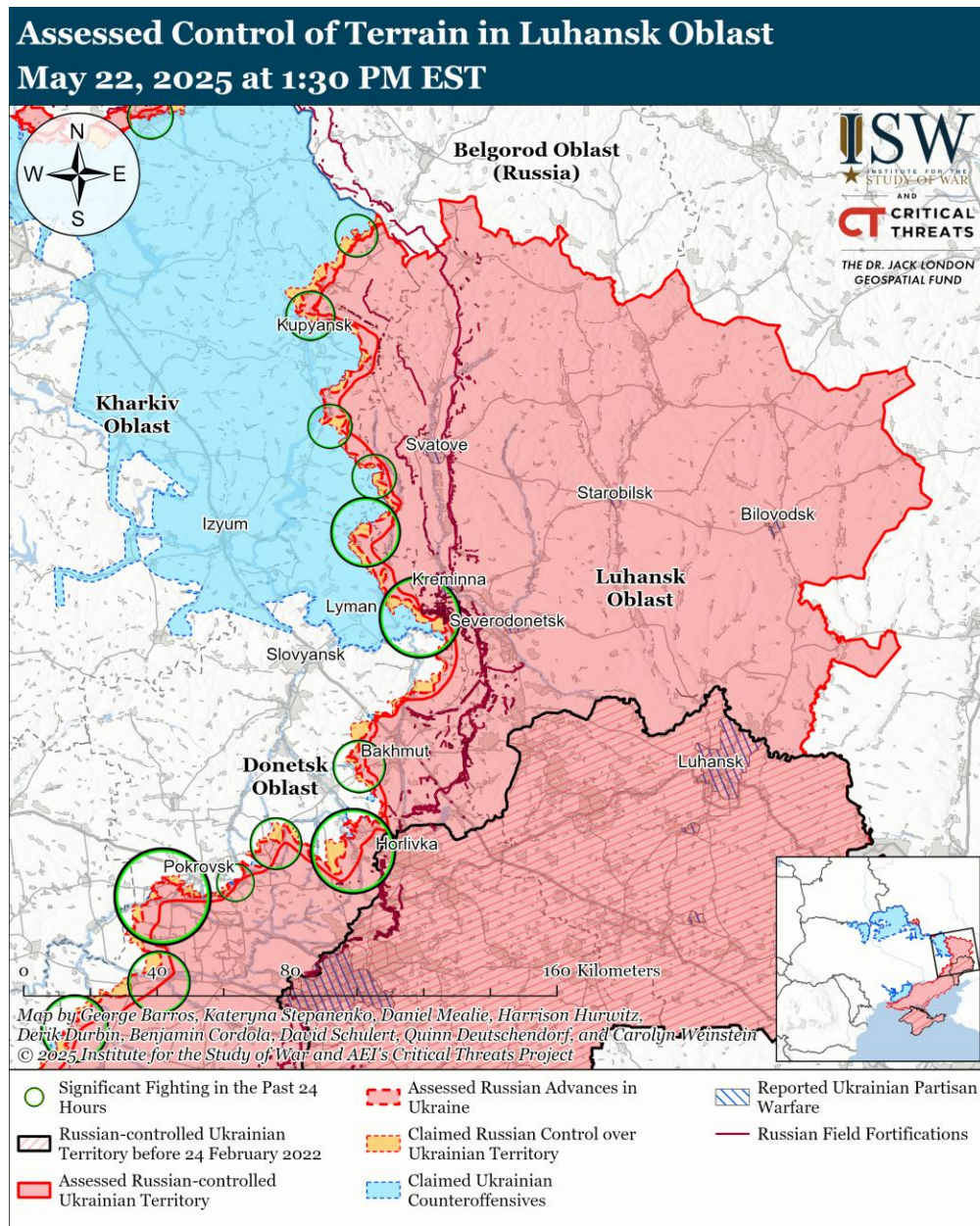
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 21 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in northeastern Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City).[39]



Russian forces continued ground attacks northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk, Vovchanski Khutory, and Tykhe on May 21 and 22.^[40]

Geolocated footage published on May 22 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently struck a Russian TOS-1A thermobaric artillery system with a first-person view (FPV) drone southeast of Shebekino, Belgorod Oblast (southeast of Belgorod City and north of Vovchansk).^[41]

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 May 22 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kupyansk near the international border near Kamyanka, north of Kupyansk near Kindrashivka and toward Mala Shapivka, and east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka on May 21 and 22.[42] Ukraine's Khortytzia Group of Forces reported on May 22 that Russian forces attacked on eight motorcycles near Mala Shapivka, that Ukrainian forces destroyed five motorcycles, and that the remaining three motorcycles unsuccessfully attacked toward Kindrashivka.[43]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on May 22 but did not advance.

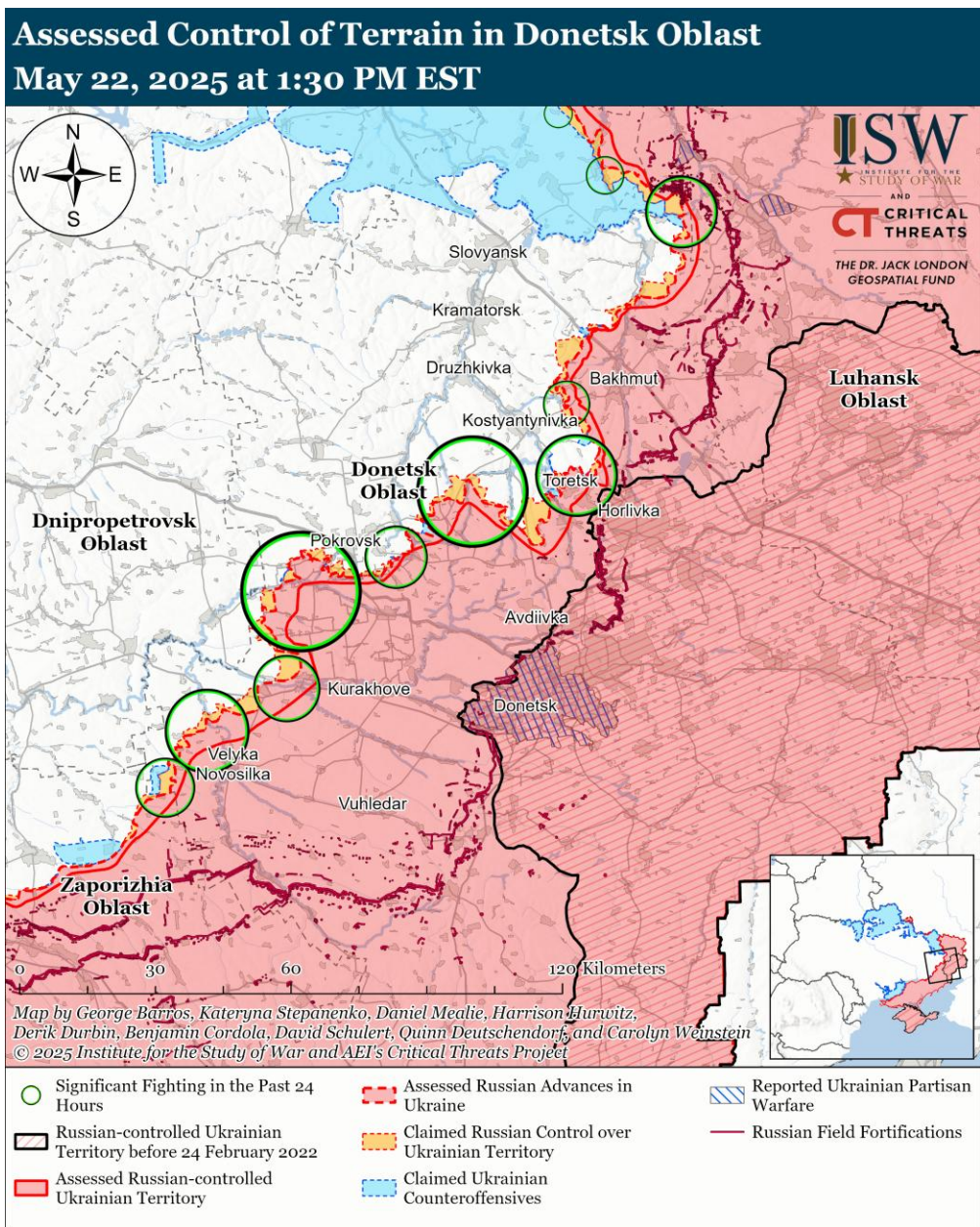
Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Nova Krukhlyakivka and Zahryzove and southeast of Borova near Hrekivka and toward Novoserhiivka and Olhivka on May 21 and 22.^[44] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Zahryzove.^[45]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on May 22 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked north of Lyman near Ridkodub, Novyi Mir, and Zelena Dolyna; northwest of Lyman toward Karpivka; east of Lyman near Torske; and southeast of Lyman in the Serebryanske forest area on May 21 and 22.^[46]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian "Rubikon" Center for Advanced Unmanned Technologies are reportedly striking targets near Rubtsi (northwest of Lyman).^[47]

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas, and possibly advance into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast)



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on May 22 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka and Hryhorivka and east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske on May 21 and 22.[48]

Order of Battle: Artillery elements of the Russian 2nd Artillery Brigade (3rd Combined Arms Army [CAA], formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps [LNR AC], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Serebryanka (north of Siversk).[49]

Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Chasiv Yar direction.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 16 shows artillery elements of the Russian 7th Military Base (49th CAA, SMD) striking Ukrainian positions in southeastern Bila Hora (south of Chasiv Yar), indicating that Ukrainian forces advanced in the area.^[50] ISW assesses that this Ukrainian advance did not occur recently.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed on May 22 that Russian forces advanced north and northwest of Chasiv Yar.^[51]

Russian forces attacked near Chasiv Yar itself and south of Chasiv Yar near Predtechyne and Bila Hora on May 21 and 22.^[52]

The commander of a Ukrainian company operating in the Kramatorsk direction reported on May 21 that Russian forces are using different assaults tactics, including using heavy tracked vehicles, automobiles, and motorcycles.^[53]

Order of Battle: Artillery elements of the Russian 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th AC, Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Virolyubivka (northwest of Chasiv Yar), and elements of the 215th Reconnaissance Battalion (98th Airborne [VDV] Division) are reportedly operating in the Chasiv Yar direction.^[54]

Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Toretsk direction.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 21 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced northwest of Druzhba (east of Toretsk).^[55]

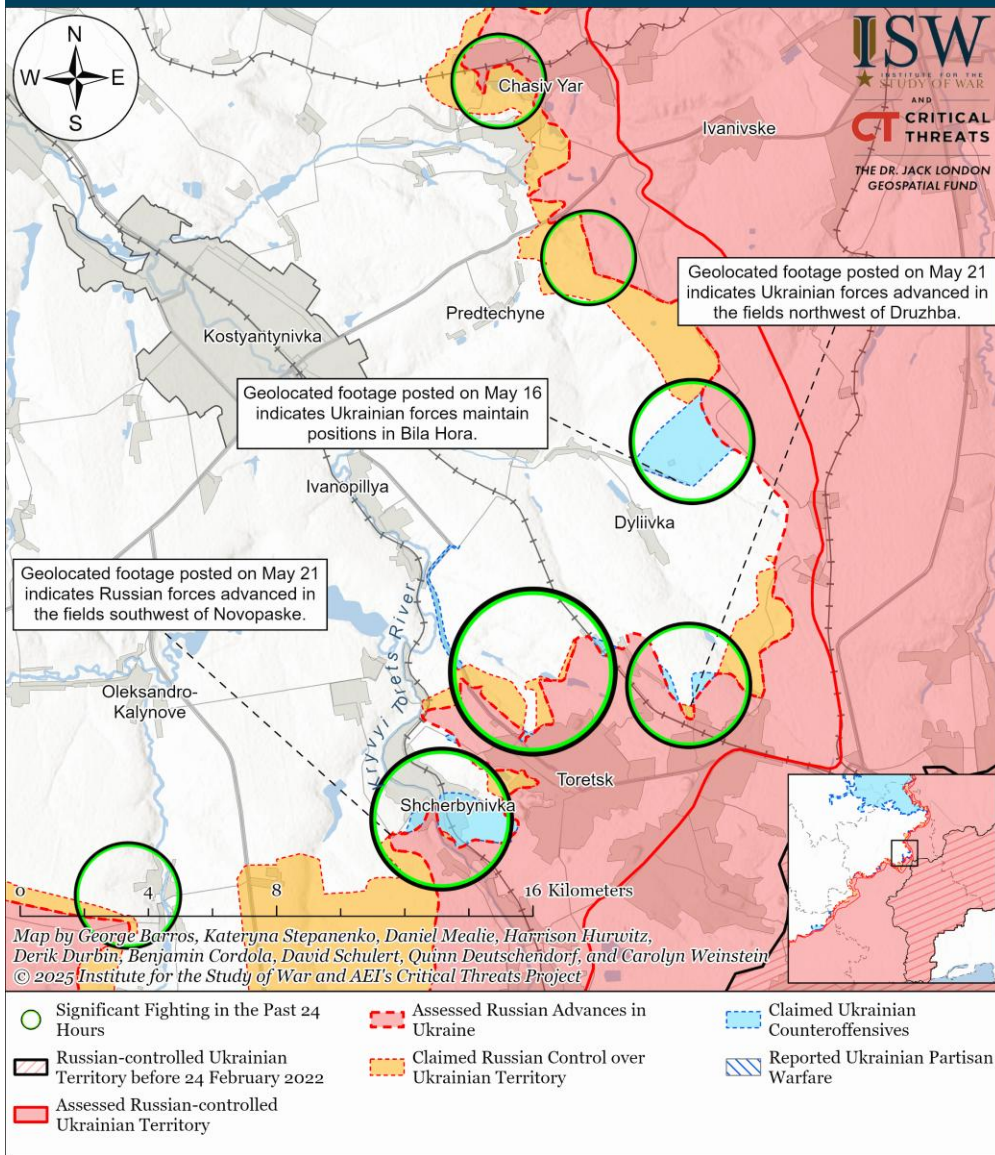
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 21 and 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced west of Dylivka (north of Toretsk) and southwest of Novopaske (west of Toretsk).^[56]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced north and northwest of Nova Poltavka (southwest of Toretzk).[57]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Toretzk itself; east of Toretzk near Druzhba; north of Toretzk near Dyliivka; northwest of Toretzk toward Yablunivka and Popiv Yar; west of Toretzk near Romanivka and Shcherbynivka; and southwest of Toretzk near Nova Poltavka and toward Zorya on May 21 and 22.[58] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Dyliivka.[59]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on May 22 that Russian forces seized Nova Poltavka, but ISW assessed that Russian forces seized the settlement as of May 17.[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are dropping at least 10 guided glide bombs on Kostyantynivka (northwest of Toretzk) every day and that Russian first-person view (FPV) drones have fire control over all the roads into the town.[61] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Toretzk's northern outskirts near the No. 12 mine are contested "gray zones." [62]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kostyantynivka Direction May 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

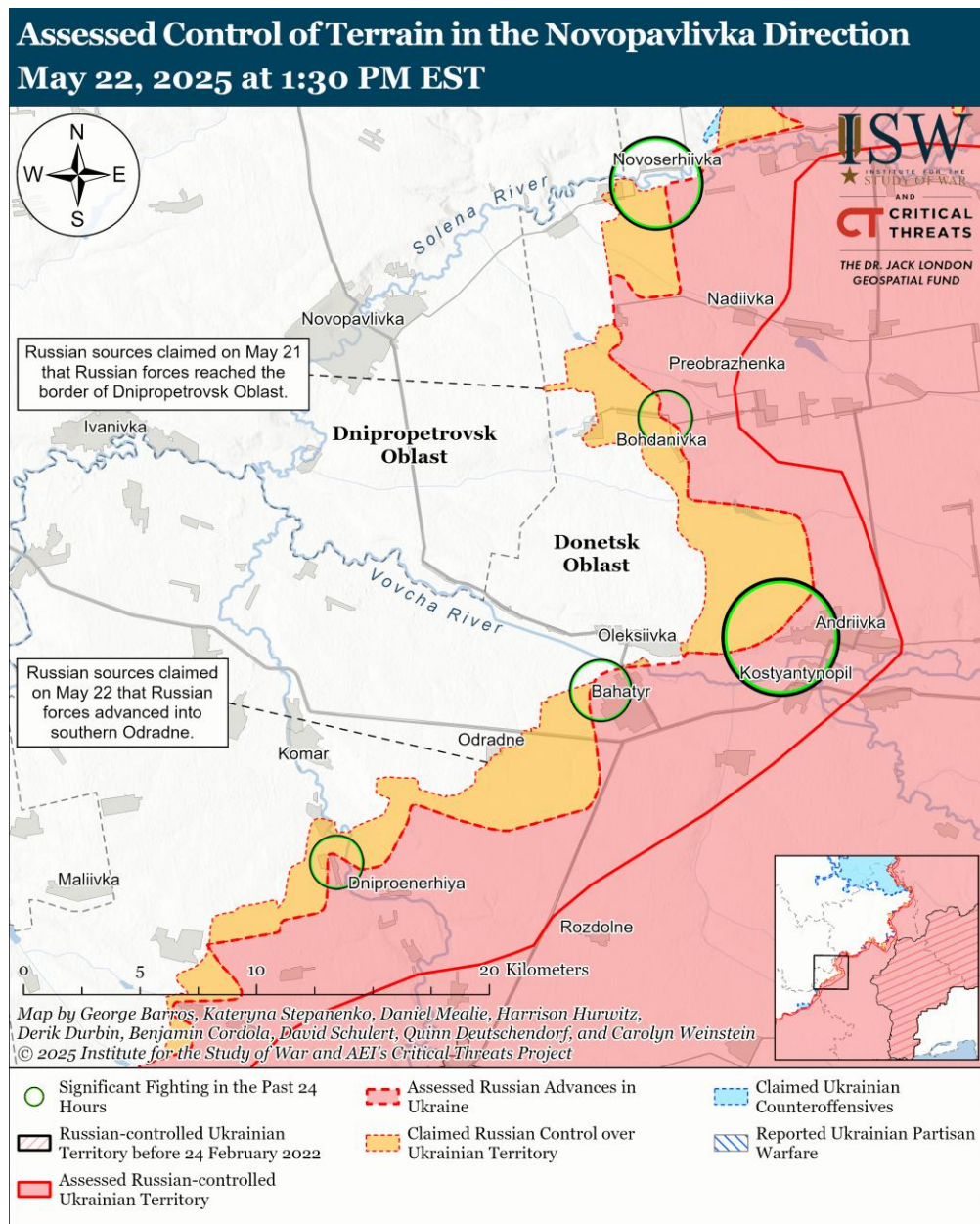


Order of Battle: A Russian milblogger credited elements of the Russian "Dostovalov" Battalion (a volunteer battalion formed in Republic of Bashkortostan in 2022) with seizing Nova Poltavka.[63] Elements of the Russian 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Kostyantynivka (Toretsk) direction.[64] Elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA) are reportedly operating near Dylivka, and elements of the 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd CAA, formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps [LNR AC], SMD) are reportedly operating near Druzhba.[65]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Pokrovsk direction on May 22 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Pokrovsk toward Shevchenko Pershe; east of Pokrovsk near Yelyzavetivka, Pomin, and Myrolyubivka; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Dachenske; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Kotlyne and Udachne on May 21 and 22.[66] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Novoukrainka (south of Pokrovsk).[67]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Novopavlivka direction on May 22 but did not make any confirmed advances.



Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced in northeastern Novomykolaivka (northeast of Novopavlivka).[68] Russian milbloggers continued to claim on May 21 and 22 that Russian forces, reportedly from the 90th Tank Division (41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]), reached the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast administrative border north of Horikhove (southeast of Novopavlivka).[69] One Russian milblogger claimed on May 21 that Ukrainian forces destroyed the Russian forces that reached the border, however, and ISW continues to assess that Russian forces very likely have not established enduring positions at the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast border.[70] Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation Head Lieutenant Andriy Kovalenko reported on May 21 that Russian forces have not advanced to the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast administrative border.[71]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Novopavlivka near Novoserhiivka and Novomykolaivka and southeast of Novopavlivka near Troitske and Horikhove on May 21 and 22.[72]

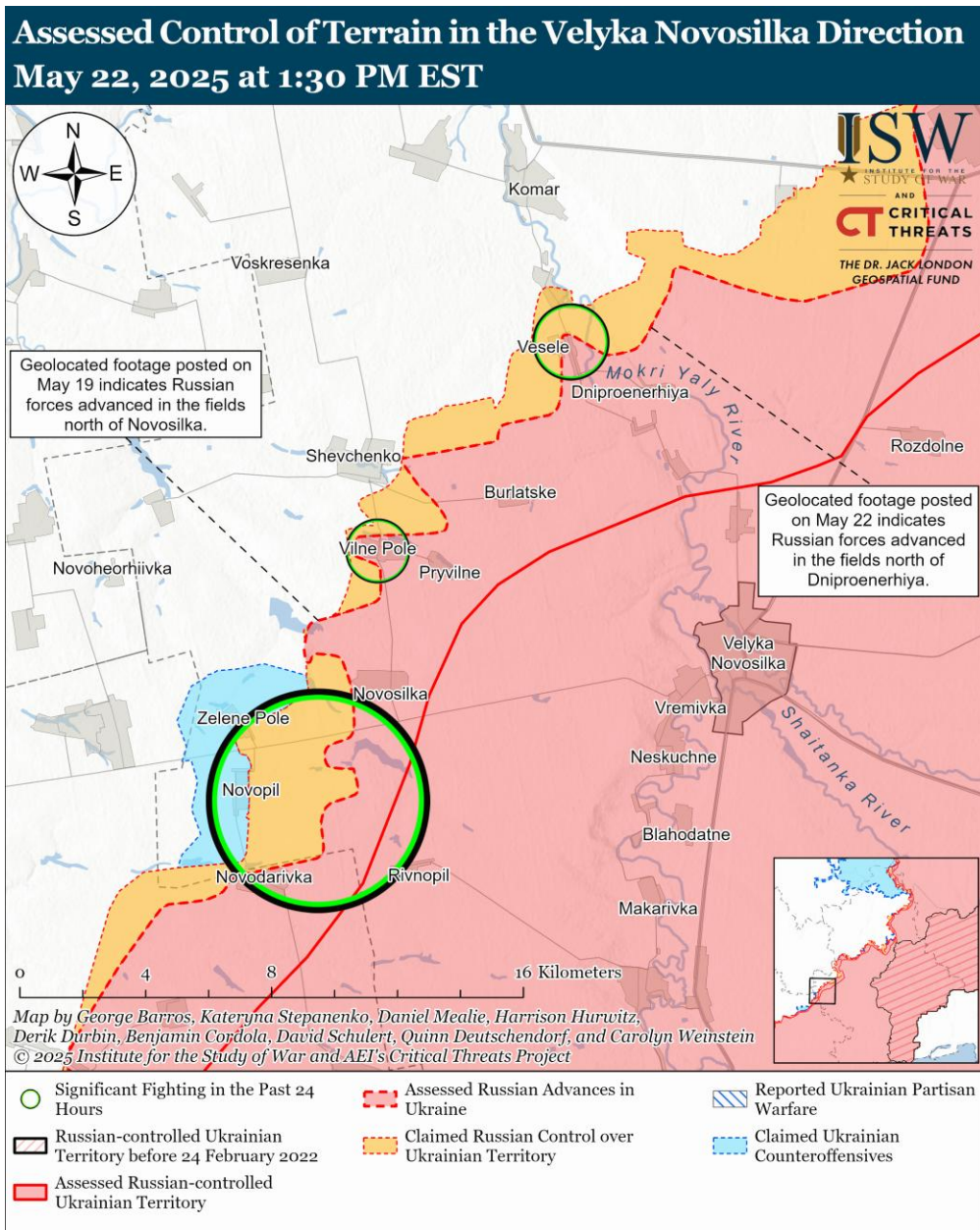
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on May 22 but did not make any confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced east, south, and southwest of Odradne (southwest of Kurakhove) and that Russian forces occupy roughly two-thirds of the settlement.[73]

Russian forces attacked west of Kurakhove near Andriivka, Bahatyr, and Kostyantynopil and southwest of Kurakhove near Odradne on May 21 and 22.[74] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Bahatyr and Odradne.[75]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 430th Motorized Rifle Regiment (29th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) and drone operators of the 30th Artillery Brigade (36th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating in Odradne.[76] Drone operators of the Russian 14th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Novoukrainka (west of Kurakhove).[77]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Velyka Novosilka direction.



Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced north of Dniproenerhiya (northwest of Velyka Novosilka) and northwest of Novosilka (west of Velyka Novosilka).[78]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced east of Fedorivka (northwest of Velyka Novosilka), northwest of Vilne Pole (west of Velyka Novosilka), and near the Zelene Pole-Novopil line (southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[79]

Russian forces attacked northwest of Velyka Novosilka near Dniproenerhiya and toward Komar; west of Velyka Novosilka near Shevchenko and Vilne Pole; and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Rivnopil, Zelene Pole, and Novopil on May 21 and 22.[80] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Burlatske (northwest of Velyka Novosilka), Zelene Pole, and Novopil.[81]

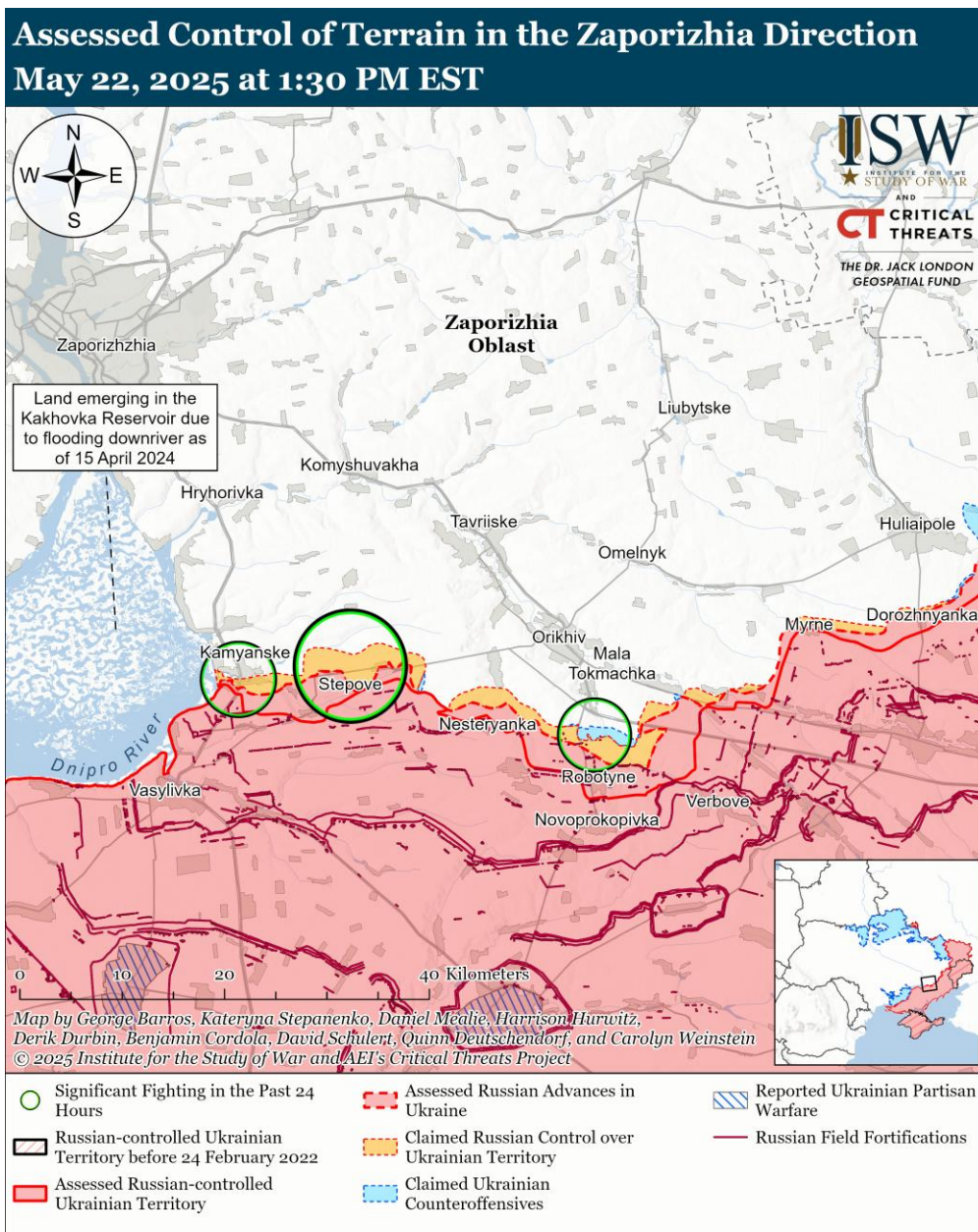
Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 5th Tank Brigade (36th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating in the Komar direction.[82] Elements of the Russian 60th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating near Vilne Pole.[83]

Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions, secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes, and advance within tube artillery range of Zaporizhzhia City)

Russian forces continued offensive operations east of Hulyaipole near Vysoke (formerly Chervone) on May 21 and 22 but did not advance.[84]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating in the Polohy direction.[85]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Zaporizhia direction on May 22 but did not advance.

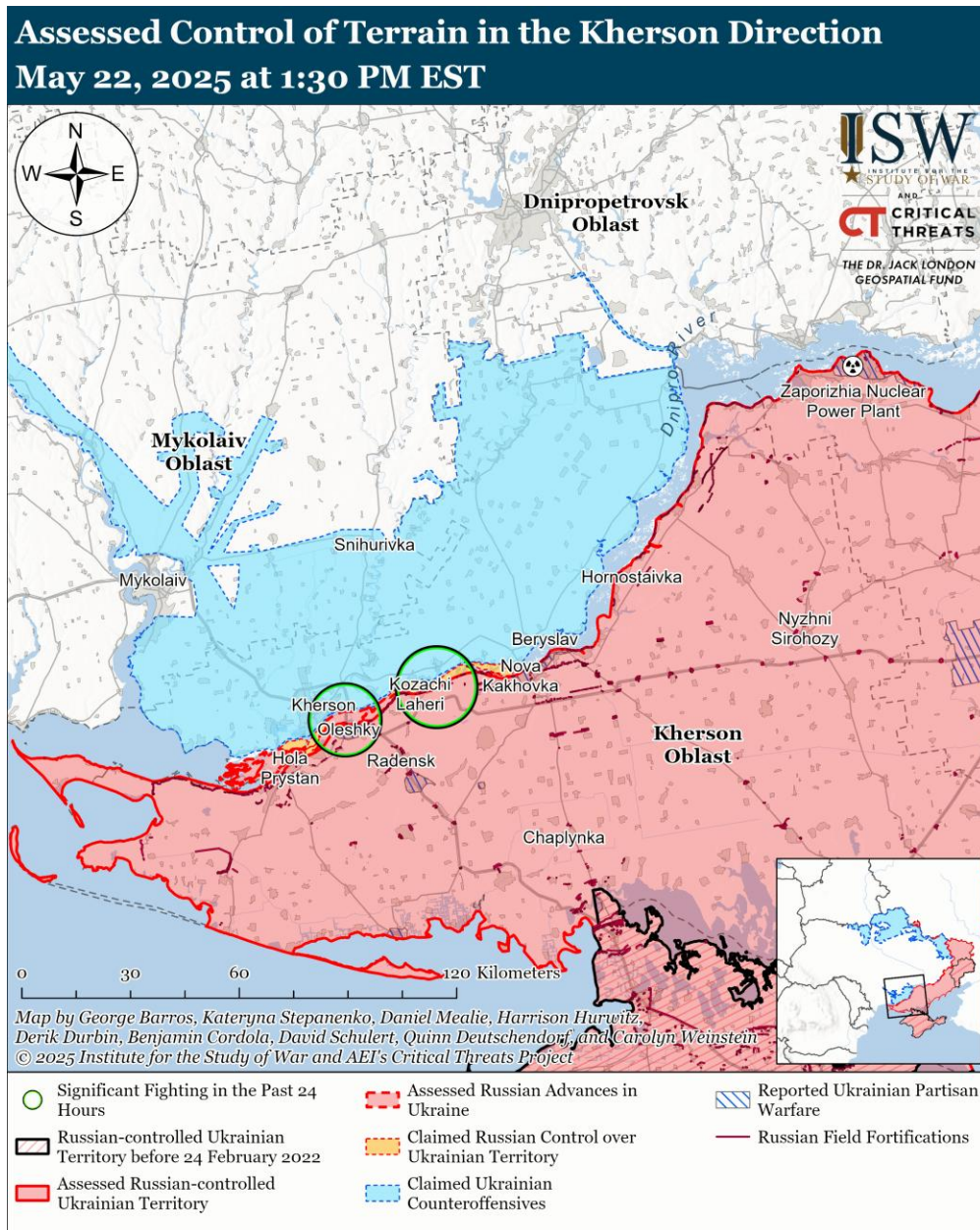


Russian forces attacked southeast of Orikhiv near Mala Tokmachka; south of Orikhiv near Novodanylivka; southwest of Orikhiv near Shcherbaky, Stepove, and Kamyanske; and northwest of Orikhiv towards Pavlivka on May 21 and 22.^[86]

The spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Zaporizhia direction reported on May 22 that Russian forces conduct assault during both the day and night but that the intensity of Russian attacks fluctuates.^[87]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division reportedly continue operating in the Zaporizhia direction.^[88]

Russian forces conducted limited offensive operations in the Kherson direction on May 21 and 22 but did not advance.



Russian forces attacked east of Kherson City near the Antonivka road and rail bridges on May 22.[89]

Order of Battle: Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on May 22 that Ukrainian forces destroyed a vehicle and killed four officers from an unspecified Chechen "Akhmat" unit between occupied Skadovsk and Antonivka (in the Russian rear along the Black Sea coast).[90]

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 May 21 to 22. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched an Iskander-M ballistic missile from near Taganrog, Rostov Oblast and 128 Shahed and decoy drones from the directions of Kursk City; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea.[91] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces shot down 112 drones over eastern, northern, southern, and central Ukraine and that 38 drones were "lost" or suppressed by Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) systems. Ukrainian officials stated that the Russian strikes affected Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Mykolaiv oblasts.[92]

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

Belarus continues to increase its ties with Russian defense industrial enterprises. Belarusian State Military Industrial Committee Chairperson Dmitry Pantus met with the Russian United Aircraft Corporation Deputy General Director Alexander Bobryshev on May 21 at the MILEX-2025 international exhibition of arms and military equipment forum in Minsk, Belarus to discuss joint Belarusian and Russian efforts to expand industrial cooperation in the production of aircraft and aircraft equipment.[93] Pantus and Bobryshev also met with the Russian tank manufacturer Uralvagonzavod Director General Alexander Potapov to discuss cooperation between Belarusian defense enterprises and Uralvagonzavod, including to fulfill Belarusian and Russian defense orders. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced that the Belarusian military signed a contract for small arms ammunition supplies with the Russian Imperial Tula Armament at the MILEX-2025 forum.[94]

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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