

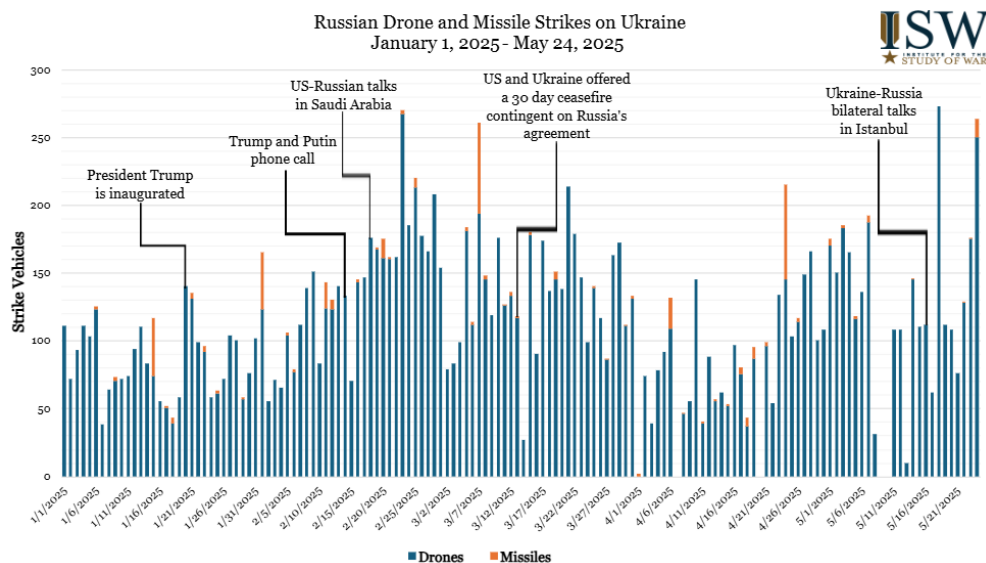
Anna Harvey, Olivia Gibson, Nate Trotter, Angelica Evans, and Frederick W. Kagan

May 25, 2025, 8:00 pm ET

**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:00 pm ET on May 25. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 26 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Russian President Vladimir Putin is leveraging long-range strikes against Ukrainian cities, aggressive rhetorical campaigns, and excessive pessimism in the West about the battlefield situation in Ukraine in a multi-pronged effort to degrade Ukrainian morale and convince the West that a Russian victory in Ukraine is inevitable and that supporting Ukraine is futile.** Russian forces have intensified long-range strikes against Ukraine over the last eight months and have conducted seven of the largest drone and missile strikes during the war to date since January 2025.[1] Russian officials are currently inundating the information space with calls for Ukraine to make concessions on its sovereignty and territorial integrity, although most of these statements are consistent with long-standing Russian war demands and in fact demonstrate that Russia's demands have not changed over the last three years of war.[2] These demands ignore the fact that the battlefield situation has shifted dramatically since early 2022, and that three years of manpower and materiel losses have significantly degraded the Russian military's ability to conquer Ukraine. Russian advances have significantly slowed as Russian forces continue to suffer personnel losses and increasingly rely on poorly trained and equipped infantry to make gains. Putin remains deeply committed to distracting from the realities of the battlefield situation, however, as bringing about the cessation of Western military assistance to Ukraine is Russia's only real hope of winning this war.

**Russian forces conducted the largest combined drone and missile strike of the war against Ukraine on the night of May 24 to 25.** The Ukrainian Air Force reported on May 25 that Russian forces launched nine Iskander-M and Kn-23 ballistic missiles from Kursk Oblast, 55 Kh-101 and Kalibr cruise missiles from Saratov Oblast and the Black Sea, one Kh-22 cruise missile from the airspace over the Black Sea, and four Kh-59/69 cruise missiles from an unspecified area of Russia and 298 Shahed and decoy drones from the direction of Bryansk, Kursk, and Oryol cities; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; and Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai.[3] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces shot down 45 cruise missiles and that two Kh-59/69 missiles were "lost in location." The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukraine shot down 139 drones and that 127 drones were "lost." Ukrainian officials reported that the Russian strike primarily targeted Kyiv and Chernihiv oblasts and also targeted Zhytomyr, Khmelnytskyi, Ternopil, Sumy, Odesa, Poltava, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Cherkasy oblasts.[4] Ukrainian officials reported that the strikes killed at least 12 people and injured up to 60 people.[5]



Graphic by Daniel Mealie, and Angelica Evans  
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Ukrainian sources noted on May 25 that Russian forces are increasingly launching missiles from occupied Crimea after using missiles less frequently over the last five months.[6] Ukrainian Main Directorate of Intelligence (GUR) Spokesperson Andriy Chernyak reported that Russian forces have launched more than 50 missiles from mobile missile systems in occupied Crimea since January 1, 2025. Chernyak stated that Ukrainian Forces struggle to strike the mobile missile launch systems since Russian forces can deploy the systems in 20 minutes and quickly break down and move the systems after a launch. Experts familiar with the topic reported that Russian forces have been launching Iskander ballistic missiles, Oniks supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles, and Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles from Crimea. ISW assessed on May 24 that Russian forces have used fewer cruise missiles in strike packages since January 2025, likely due to increased reliance on cheaper long-range drones.[7] The May 24 to 25 overnight combined strike indicates that Russia may be stockpiling cruise missiles in order to conduct large-scale combined strikes against multiple areas of Ukraine at will. Russia may also be using highly varied strike packages in order to confuse Ukrainian forces and prevent Ukrainian forces from conducting consistently effective air defense.

**Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev suggested that Russia will occupy most of Ukraine if the West continues to aid Ukraine.** Medvedev called for Russian control over a buffer zone encompassing nearly all of Ukraine, apart from a relatively small area of Volyn and Lviv oblasts along Poland's border, on his English-language social media accounts on May 25 and threatened that Russia will seize virtually all of Ukraine as a buffer zone if the West continues to supply Ukraine with military aid.[8] Medvedev and other Russian officials have repeatedly called for Russia to establish buffer zones in northern Ukraine, and Medvedev himself previously called for Russia to occupy most of Ukraine as a "buffer zone" in order to place Russian cities out of the range of Ukraine's Western-provided long-range strike systems. Russian officials routinely issue demands for Ukraine to concede significant swaths of occupied and unoccupied territory to Russia and have used Russia's illegal annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts and Crimea and the Kremlin-generated concept of "Novorossiya" — an invented region of Ukraine that Kremlin officials have claimed includes all southern and eastern Ukraine — to justify these claims.[9] Medvedev's

statements are part of a long-term Kremlin strategy to use prominent voices in the information space and weaponized versions of history to justify Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the long-term occupation of Ukrainian territory.[10]



**The Kremlin is attempting to leverage large strike packages and increasingly aggressive rhetorical efforts to distract from the Russian military's poor performance during this current stage of the war.** Putin may assess that significant strikes against Ukrainian cities and aggressive Russian rhetoric against NATO and Eastern European states will draw sufficient attention away from Russia's slow, grinding advances in eastern Ukraine. ISW has previously noted that Russia has intensified its narrative efforts against Ukraine during critical moments when the West is discussing supplying Ukraine with additional military aid, and Putin likely views the current discussion of a possible ceasefire or peace agreement to end the war as another critical moment among Ukraine's supporters.[11] Putin likely intends long-range strikes and aggressive rhetoric to generate feelings of hopelessness in Ukraine and the West and dissuade European capitals and the US from further aiding Ukraine by falsely portraying Russian victory as inevitable. Russia is also platforming its partnerships with adversarial countries such as the People's Republic of China (PRC), Iran, and North Korea to push back on the appearance of diplomatic isolation and posture itself as a country with powerful allies who are willing to stand against the West.

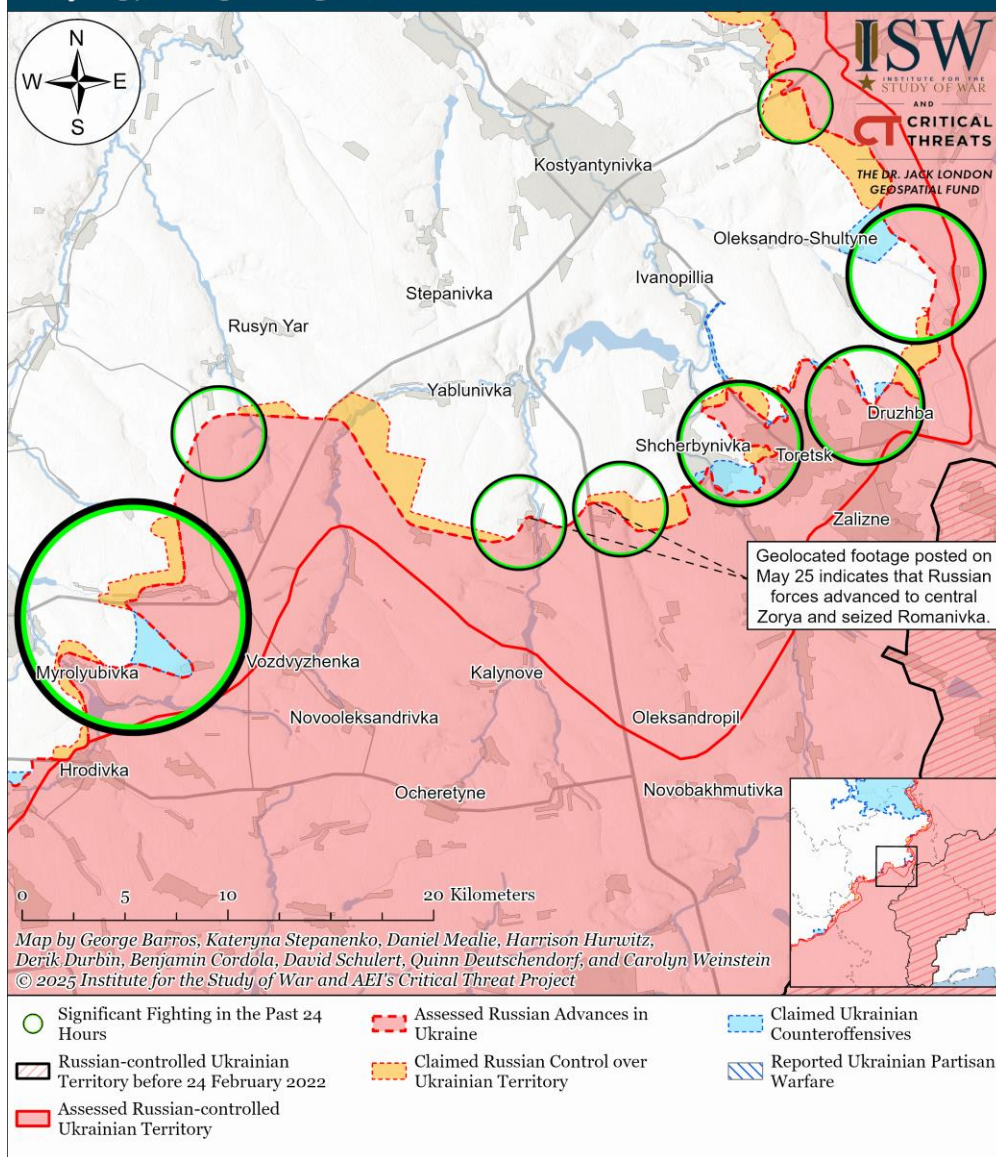
Russian officials are attempting to obfuscate the reality of Russia's compounding economic and materiel constraints, which are increasingly hindering Russia's ability to achieve significant battlefield gains. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Oleksandr Syrskyi recently reported that Russian forces have suffered 177,000 casualties in Ukraine since the start of 2025, and ISW continues to assess that Russia has prioritized rapidly deploying low quality troops with minimal training and battlefield

experience for marginal gains, which further complicates Russian forces' ability to conduct complex operations.[12] Russia's defense industrial base (DIB) cannot produce armored vehicles and artillery systems at rates that would offset Russia's current tempo of losses in the medium- to long-term.[13] Russia is also facing significant challenges in balancing resource allocation between defense industrial production and civilian sectors, and is increasingly relying on migrant workers to alleviate significant labor shortages exacerbated by the war effort.[14] The Kremlin may be reassessing its ability to sustain a long-term war effort and appears to be reprioritizing its efforts to convince the West to preemptively concede to Russian demands in light of Russia's economic and military constraints.

**Russian forces have eliminated the Ukrainian pocket southwest of Toretsk after a four-month-long offensive operation to level the frontline south and southwest of Kostyantynivka in order to set conditions to advance towards the settlement.** Geolocated footage published on May 25 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in central Zorya and northern Romanivka (west of Toretsk) and likely seized Stara Mykolaivka and Hnativka and the fields south of Romanivka.[15] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces seized Romanivka, and Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 68th Tank Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 6th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) participated in the advance north of Romanivka.[16] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked in the northern outskirts of Romanivka.[17] ISW assesses that Russian forces seized roughly 65 square kilometers of territory as part of their advance into Romanivka and Zorya, although Ukrainian forces likely previously withdrew from positions in the southern part of this pocket several days or weeks ago.



## Assessed Control of Terrain Southwest of Toretsk May 25, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces intensified assaults in this area in early February 2025 and began a concerted effort to eliminate Ukrainian positions in the pocket south of Romanivka in late April 2025.[18] The Russian military command redeployed elements of two divisions of the 8th Combined Arms Army (CAA) (Southern Military District [SMD]) from the Kurakhove direction to the Toretsk direction in mid-February and elements of the 58th CAA (SMD) and 68th Army Corps (AC) (Eastern Military District [EMD]) from the western Zaporizhia and Kurakhove directions respectively to this area in early May.[19] Russian forces have struggled to advance in this area, however, despite appearing to prioritize this sector of the frontline and reinforcing this area in early 2025.

**Russian forces would need roughly a century to seize Medvedev's proposed "buffer zone" at their current rate of advance at the cost of nearly 50 million casualties at current loss rates.** Russian forces advanced an average of roughly 14.3 square kilometers per day in Ukraine and

Russia between January 1, 2025, and May 24, 2025. At this rate of advance, it would take Russian forces approximately 3.9 years to seize the remainder of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts and approximately 91 years to seize Medvedev's proposed "buffer zone," which includes 587,459 square kilometers of Ukrainian territory. ISW assessed on February 21 that Russia would need 83 years to capture the remaining 80 percent of Ukraine at their then rate of advance, indicating that the Russian rate of advance has slowed between February and May 2025.[20] Current and former Western officials told the *Washington Post* in an article published on May 24 that Russian forces have sustained an average of 1,500 casualties per day over the last year (since mid-2024), suggesting that Russian forces could suffer nearly 50 million casualties (approximately a third of the current Russian population) were Russian forces to sustain their current casualty rate for the 91 years that it would take to create Medvedev's "buffer zone." [21]

These estimates assume that Russian forces will be able to maintain their current assessed rate of advance and do not take into account a number of geographic and defensive barriers that Russian forces would have to overcome to seize the remaining 80 percent of Ukraine. Russian forces would need to seize Ukraine's fortress belt (a group of major cities that form a significant defensive belt in Donetsk Oblast); cross the Dnipro River and retake Kherson City in Kherson Oblast; conduct a landing operation in the Black Sea to gain positions in Odesa Oblast; and retake Sumy and Kharkiv cities and seize Kyiv and other major cities in central and western Ukraine before seizing Medvedev's "buffer zone." The Dnipro River acts as a natural barrier between current Ukrainian positions and Russian positions in Kherson Oblast and has served as a natural frontline since Ukraine retook Kherson Oblast in 2022. Russian forces failed to accomplish many of these goals during the first several months of the war, and Russian forces have not seized a major urban area since they seized Bakhmut in May 2023.[22] Russian forces have not demonstrated the ability to conduct the kind of rapid, multi-directional offensive operations necessary to accomplish these goals since early 2022 and are unlikely to significantly improve their abilities in the near future given that advancing roughly 65 square kilometers constitutes a significant success in a priority frontline area at this stage of the war.

**The Kremlin is also using its bilateral engagements with Ukraine and the United States to maintain the appearance of being interested in peace and delay Western discussion of additional aid to Ukraine.** Ukraine and Russia concluded the 1,000-for-1,000 prisoner of war (POWs) exchange on May 25, each exchanging 303 servicemembers.[23] Russian Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Fomin stated that Russia expects the POW exchange to establish "a favorable atmosphere for discussing a settlement" to Russia's war in Ukraine.[24] Russian officials are framing Russia's participation in the POW exchange and bilateral negotiations with Ukraine in Istanbul as indicators that Russia is interested in peace.[25] The Kremlin is clearly attempting to portray Russia as amenable to negotiations despite Russian officials' consistent public statements about Russia's unwillingness to engage in ceasefire discussions or compromise on any agreement short of Ukraine's capitulation.

**Russia's only real hope of winning this war is to convince the West to abandon Ukraine.** Russian President Vladimir Putin remains committed to his theory of victory, which assumes that the Russian military will be able to sustain significant personnel losses in exchange for incremental gains in Ukraine indefinitely and that Russia will be able to outlast Western support for Ukraine.[26] Putin is therefore desperately seeking to prevent the future supply of Western military aid to Ukraine, as well-

resourced Ukrainian forces have consistently demonstrated their ability to inflict unsustainable losses on Russian forces and defend against significant Russian advances.[27] ISW assesses that Western aid remains vital to Ukraine's ability to defend itself against Russian aggression and is crucial for ensuring a just and enduring peace in Ukraine and long-term security in Europe.[28]

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin is leveraging long-range strikes against Ukrainian cities, aggressive rhetorical campaigns, and excessive pessimism in the West about the battlefield situation in Ukraine in a multi-pronged effort to degrade Ukrainian morale and convince the West that a Russian victory in Ukraine is inevitable and that supporting Ukraine is futile.**
- **Russian forces conducted the largest combined drone and missile strike of the war against Ukraine on the night of May 24 to 25.**
- **Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev suggested that Russia will occupy most of Ukraine if the West continues to aid Ukraine.**
- **The Kremlin is attempting to leverage large strike packages and increasingly aggressive rhetorical efforts to distract from the Russian military's poor performance during this current stage of the war.**
- **Russian forces have eliminated the Ukrainian pocket southwest of Toretsk after a four-month-long offensive operation to level the frontline south and southwest of Kostyantynivka in order to set conditions to advance towards the settlement.**
- **Russian forces would need roughly a century to seize Medvedev's proposed "buffer zone" at their current rate of advance at the cost of nearly 50 million casualties at current loss rates.**
- **The Kremlin is also using its bilateral engagements with Ukraine and the United States to maintain the appearance of being interested in peace and delay Western discussion of additional aid to Ukraine.**
- **Russia's only real hope of winning this war is to convince the West to abandon Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced in Kursk Oblast and near Kharkiv, Chasiv Yar, and Toretsk.**

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War May 25, 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.***

- 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

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

#### **Russian forces recently advanced in Kursk Oblast.**

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 25 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced in western Gornal (southwest of Sudzha).[29]

Limited fighting continued in unspecified areas of Kursk Oblast on May 24 and 25.[30]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 56th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) reportedly continue to operate near Tetkino (southwest of Glushkovo).[31]

#### **Neither Ukrainian nor Russian sources reported ground activity in northwesternmost Belgorod Oblast on May 25.**

#### **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 offensive operations in Sumy Oblast on May 25 but did not make any confirmed advances.**

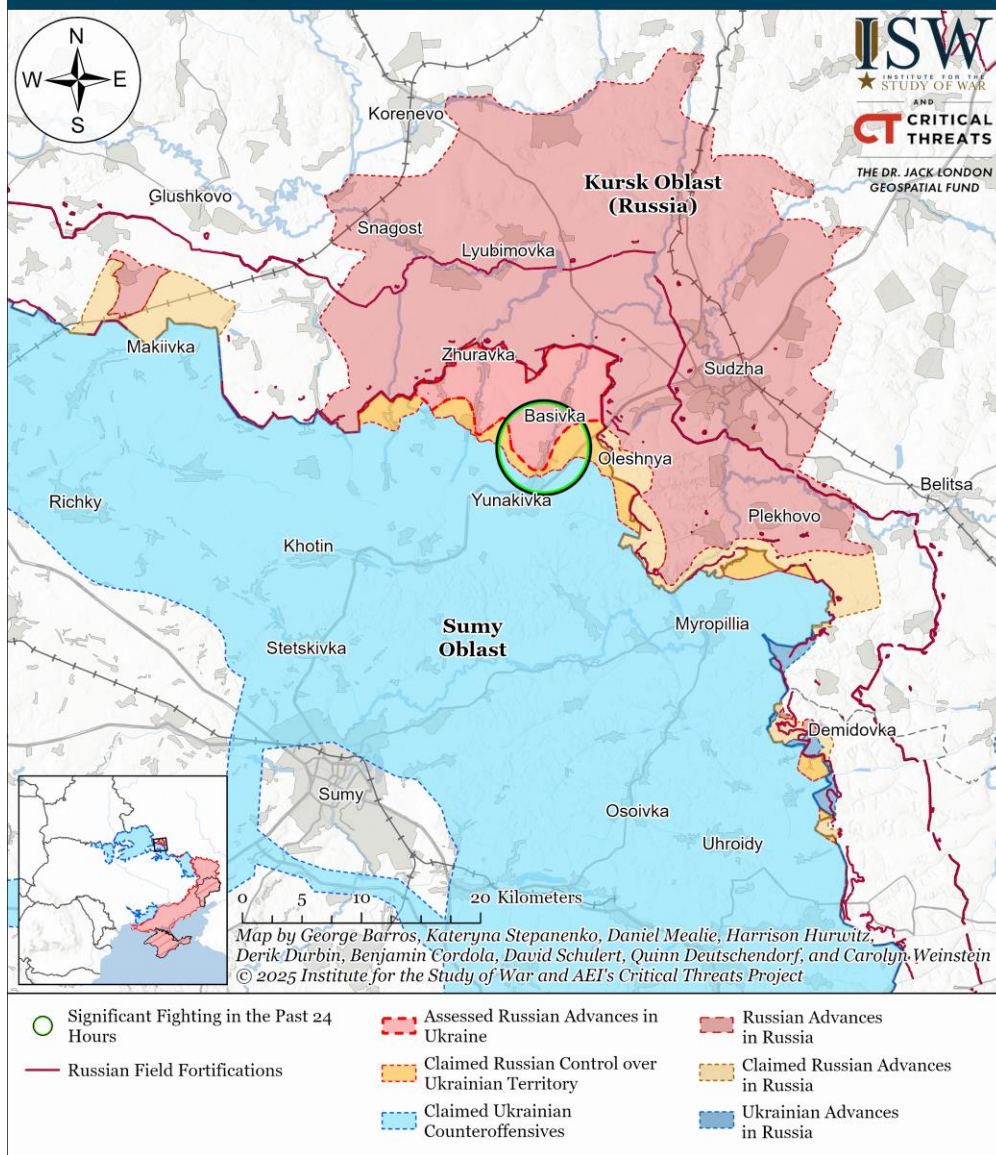
Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces seized Bilovody and advanced into Yunakivka (both northeast of Sumy City).[32]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Sumy City near Yunakivka and Bilovody on May 25.[33]

Russian Northern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Yaroslav Yakimkin claimed on May 25 that Russian forces are working to establish a "security zone" along the international border in Sumy and Kharkiv oblasts.[34]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet), 56th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division), and 137th VDV Regiment (106th VDV Division) are reportedly operating in the Sumy Oblast border area.[35] Elements of the Russian 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla) are reportedly attacking in the direction of Myropillia (northeast of Sumy City).[36]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Sumy Direction May 25, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### 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 recently advanced in the Kharkiv direction.**

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 24 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in the Vovchansk Aggregate Plant in northern Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City).[37]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk and Vovchanski Khutory on May 24 and 25.[38]

Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated on May 25 that Russia has had a large force grouping along the international border with northern Kharkiv Oblast since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, but that Russian forces are attempting to cross the border in new areas.[39] ISW previously assessed that the Russian military command may intend to use some of the Russian force grouping in Kursk Oblast to intensify offensive operations in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[40]

**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 25 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked north of Kupyansk near Kutkivka; northeast of Kupyansk near the international border near Stroivka and Krasne Pershe; and east of Kupyansk towards Petropavlivka on May 24 and 25.[41]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian “Kontora” Detachment of the 375th Separate Anti-Tank Artillery Battalion (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) are reportedly operating near Stepova Novoselivka (east of Kupyansk).[42]

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on May 25 but did not advance.**

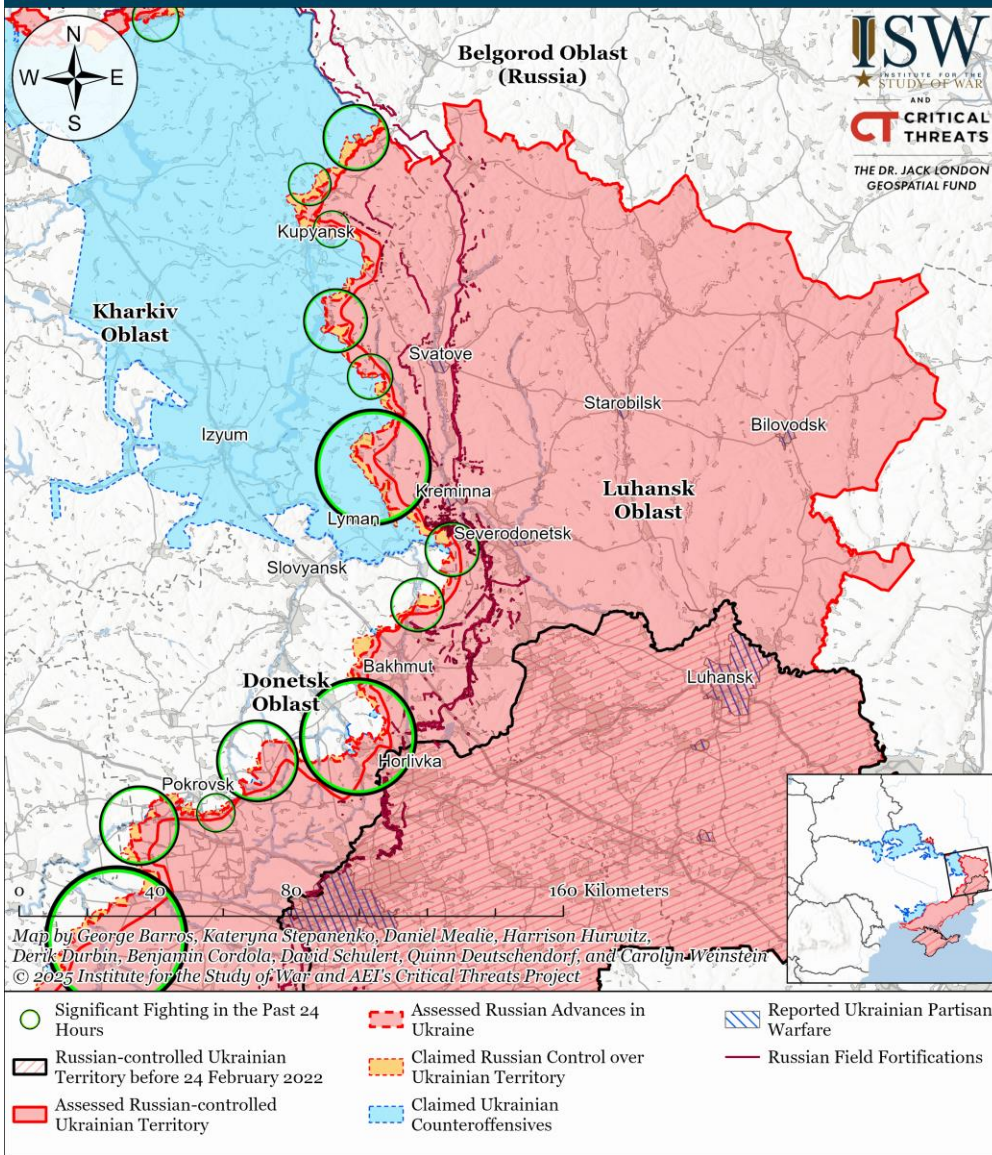
Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Kruhlyakivka, Nova Kruhlyakivka, and Zahryzove and southeast of Borova near Hrekivka and Olhivka on May 24 and 25.[43]

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on May 25 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked north of Lyman near Ridkodub, Novomykhailivka, Lypove, Zelena Dolyna, and Karpivka and towards Novyi Myr; northeast of Lyman near Kolodyazi; and east of Lyman near Torske and Kopanky on May 24 and 25.[44]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 31st Motorized Rifle Regiment (67th Motorized Rifle Division, 25th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating in Torske.[45]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast May 25, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



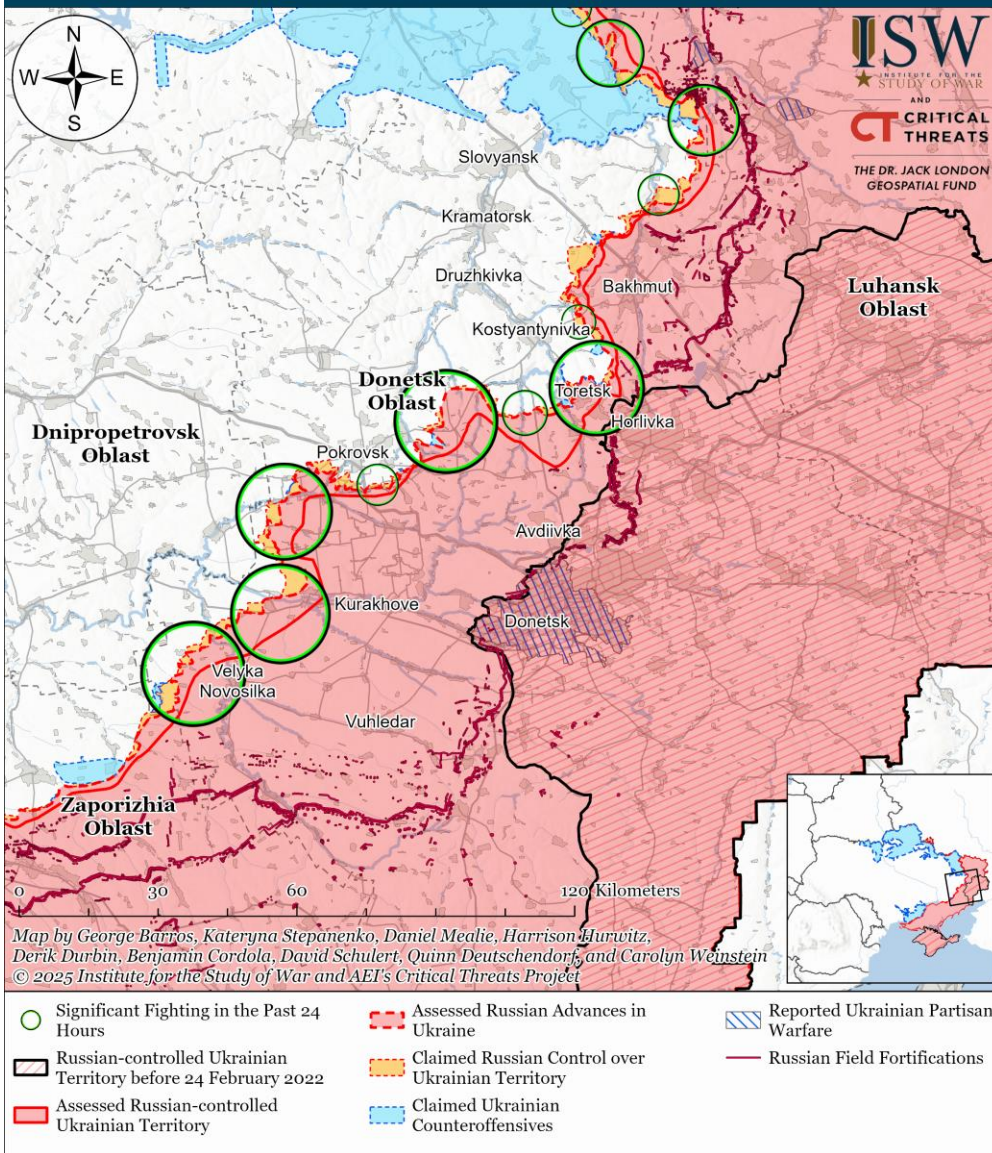
**Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast** (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas, and possibly advance into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast)

**Russian forces continued assaults in the Siversk direction on May 25 but did not advance.**

Russian forces continued assaults northeast of Siversk near Hryhorivka and Bilohorivka, southeast of Siversk near Vyimka, and south of Siversk near Pereizne on May 24 and 25.[46]



## Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast May 25, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### Russian forces recently marginally advanced in the Chasiv Yar direction.

**Assessed Russian advances:** Geolocated footage published on May 25 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced south of Chasiv Yar.[47]

**Unconfirmed claims:** A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 1442nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd Army Corps [AC]) are advancing in and north of Stupochky (south of Chasiv Yar).[48]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Chasiv Yar itself; south of Chasiv Yar near Predtechyne, Bila Hora, and Stupochky; and southeast of Chasiv Yar from Andriivka on May 24 and 25.[49]



Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian "Burevestnik" detachment (Russian Volunteer Corps) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.[50]

**Russian forces recently advanced in the Toretsk direction on May 25.**

Assessed Russian advances: *See topline text for assessed Russian advances southwest of Toretsk.*

Unconfirmed claims: *See topline text for unconfirmed claims of Russian advances southwest of Toretsk.*

Russian forces continued offensive operations in Toretsk itself; northeast of Toretsk near Dyliivka, Dachne, and Druzhba; north of Toretsk near Krymske; northwest of Toretsk in the direction of Pleshchiivka; west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka and Petrivka; and southwest of Toretsk near Zorya, Yablunivka, Popiv Yar, and Nova Poltavka on May 24 and 25.[51]

Order of Battle: Elements of the "Volka" group of the Russian 238th Artillery Brigade (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Dyliivka.[52] Elements of the 33rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA) are reportedly operating near Yablunivka.[53]

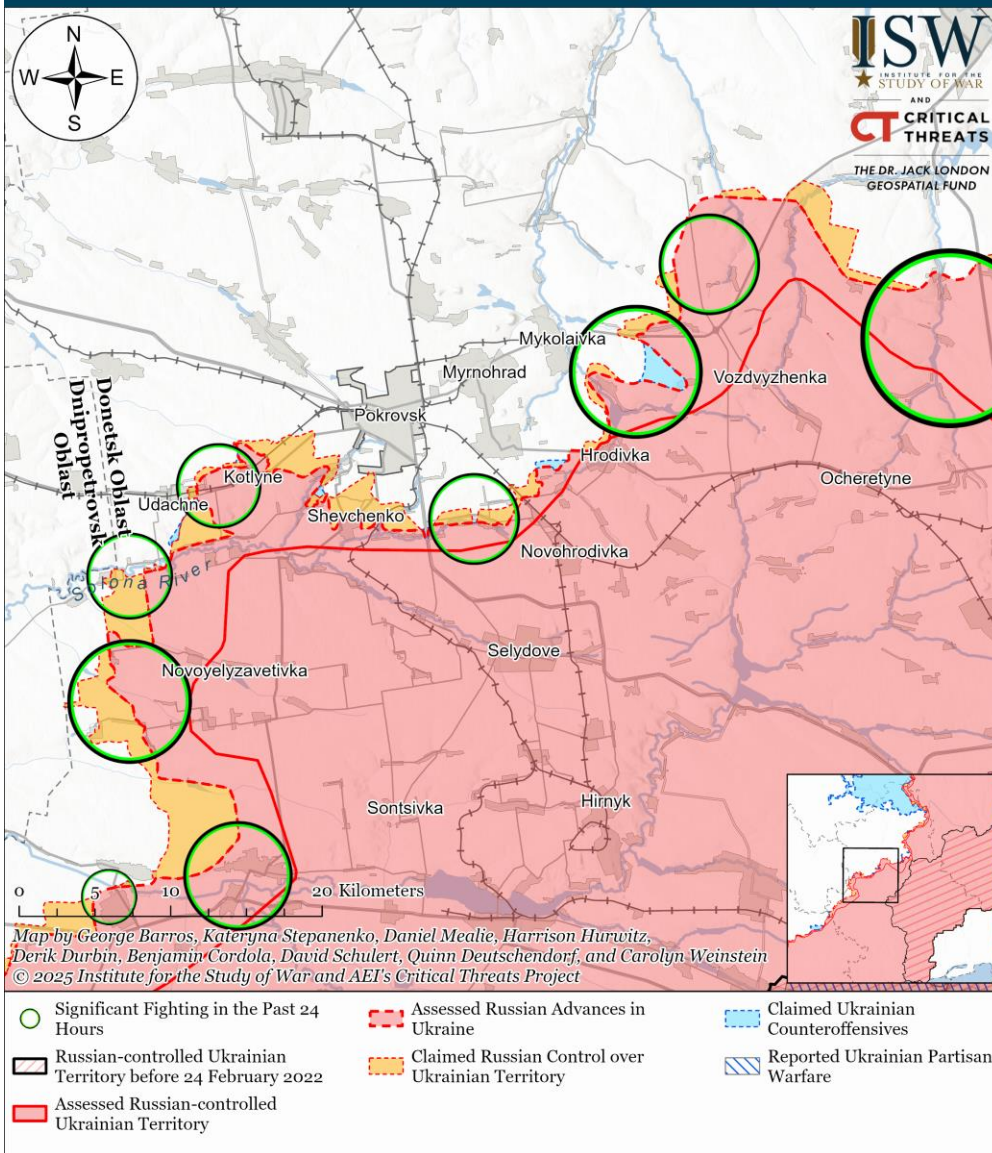
**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Pokrovsk direction on May 25 but did not make confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced into southern Leontovychi (southwest of Pokrovsk, formerly Pershe Travnya).[54]

Russian forces continued offensive operations northeast of Pokrovsk near Malynivka, Yelyzavetivka, Novotoretske, and Myrolyubivka; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka and Sukhyi Yar; south of Pokrovsk near Dachenske; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Kotlyne and Udachne on May 24 and 25.[55]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) reportedly continue to operate in the Pokrovsk direction.[56]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction May 25, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



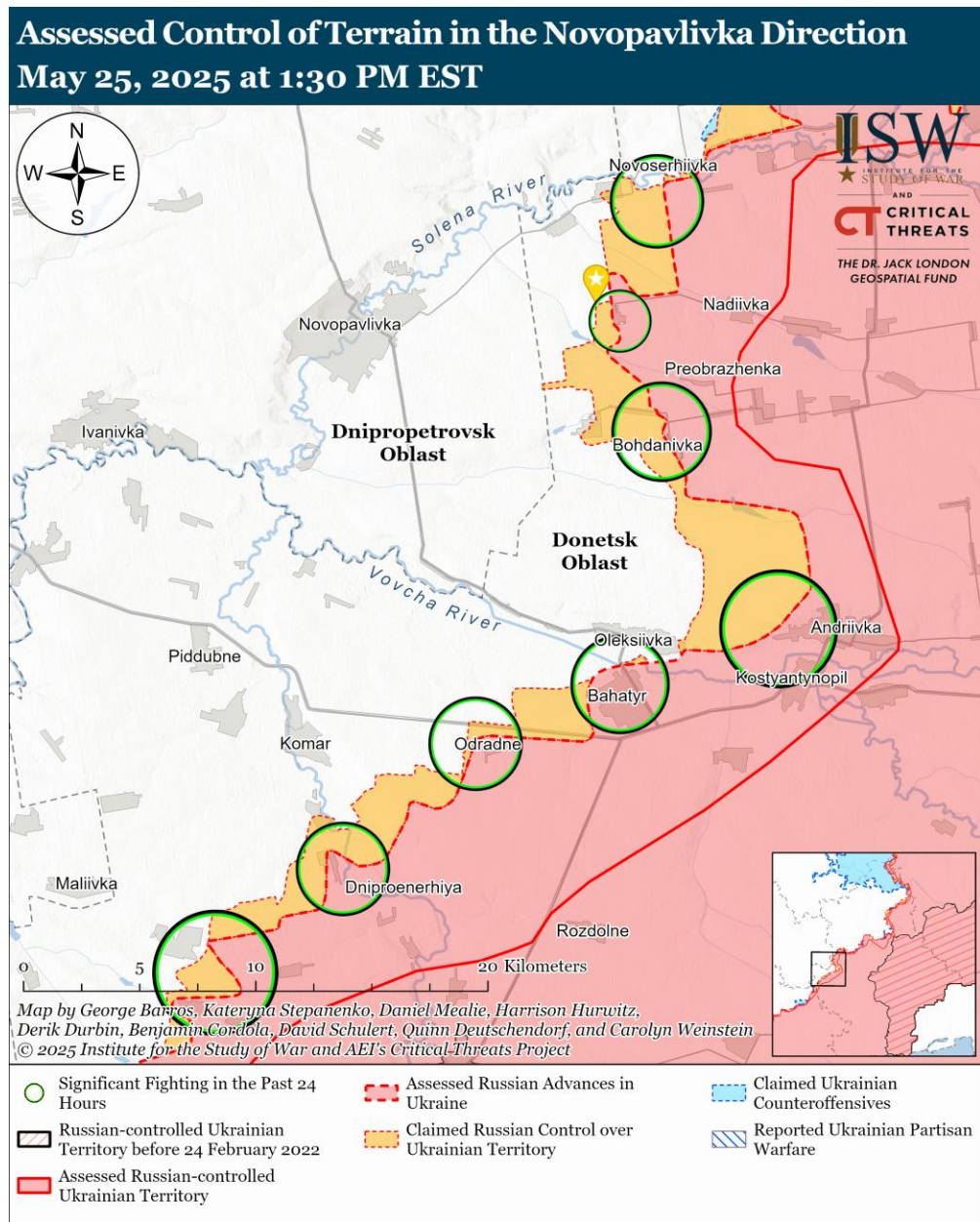
### **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Novopavlivka direction on May 25 but did not make confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers continued to make contradictory claims about Russian advances into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces temporarily advanced across the Donetsk-Dnipropetrovsk Oblast administrative border, although several other Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are still advancing toward the border near Kotlyarivka (east of Novopavlivka).<sup>[57]</sup>

Russian forces continued offensive operations northeast of Novopavlivka near Novoserhiivka and Novomykolaivka and toward Muravka; east of Novopavlivka near Troitske, Kotlyarivka, and Horikhove on May 24 and 25. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking near

Horikhove.[58] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces also counterattacked south of Novomykolaivka and seized limited positions in the nearby forest.[59]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd CAA, CMD) are reportedly operating in Novomykolaivka.[60]



**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on May 25 but did not advance.**

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on May 24 that elements of the Russian 36th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (29th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) advanced along the H-15 Kostyantynivka-Zaporizhzhia City highway northwest of Odradne (southwest of Kurakhove).[61]

Russian forces attacked west of Kurakhove near Andriivka, Oleksiivka, Kostyantynopil, and Bahatyr, and in the direction of Novoukrainka and southwest of Kurakhove near Odradne on May 24 and 25.[62] Russian milbloggers claimed on May 25 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Odradne and Dachne and in the direction of Oleksiivka (both west of Kurakhove).[63]

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velyka Novosilka direction on May 25 but did not make any confirmed advances.**

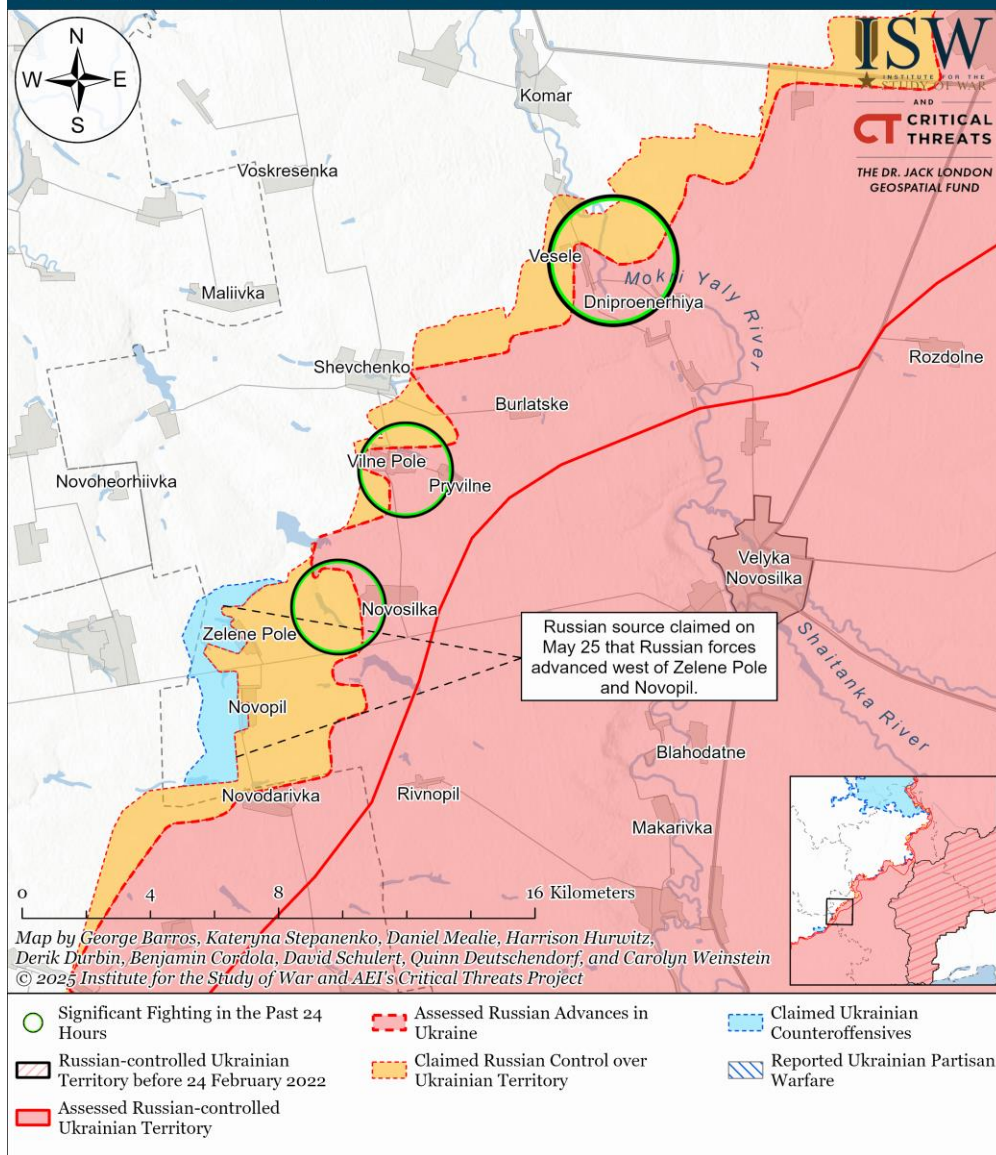
Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 127th Motorized Rifle Division's (5th CAA, EMD) 114th and 394th motorized rifle regiments advanced southwest of Novopil (southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and that additional elements of the 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment advanced northwest and southwest of Zelene Pole (southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[64]

Russian forces attacked northwest of Velyka Novosilka near Komar and Vesele; west of Velyka Novosilka near Vilne Pole and Shevchenko; and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Novosilka, Novopil, and Zelene Pole on May 24 and 25.[65] A Russian milblogger claimed on May 25 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked along the Bahatyr-Odradne-Komar line and near Zelene Pole.[66]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the 14th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly operating in the Velyka Novosilka direction.[67]



## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Velyka Novosilka Direction May 25, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



**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)**

**Neither Ukrainian nor Russian sources reported ground activity in the Hulyaipole direction on May 25.**

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) reportedly continue operating in the Polohy direction.[68]

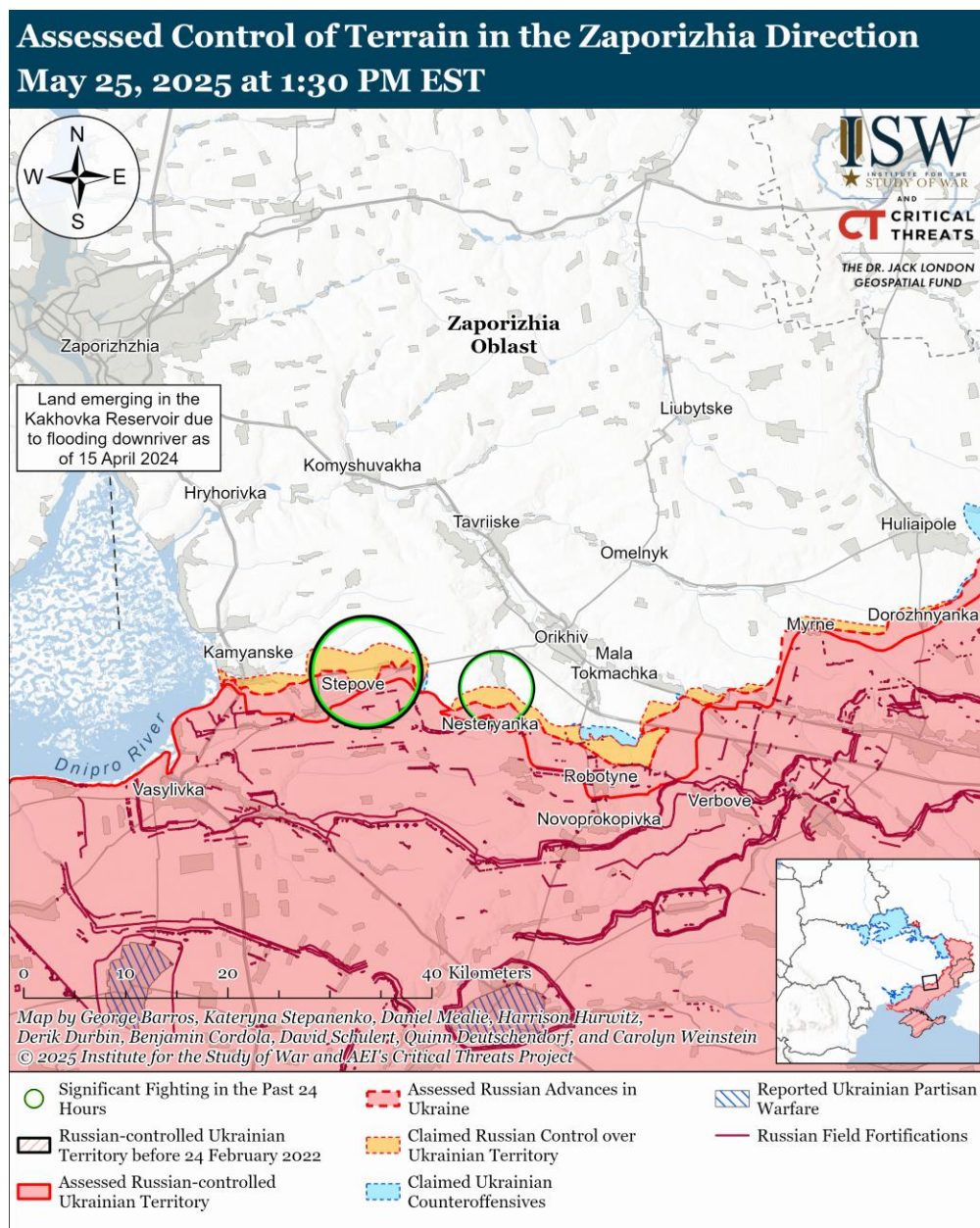
**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Zaporizhzhia direction on May 25 but did not advance.**



Russian forces attacked southwest of Orikhiv near Novoandriivka, Stepove, and Mali Shcherbaky on May 24 and 25.[69]

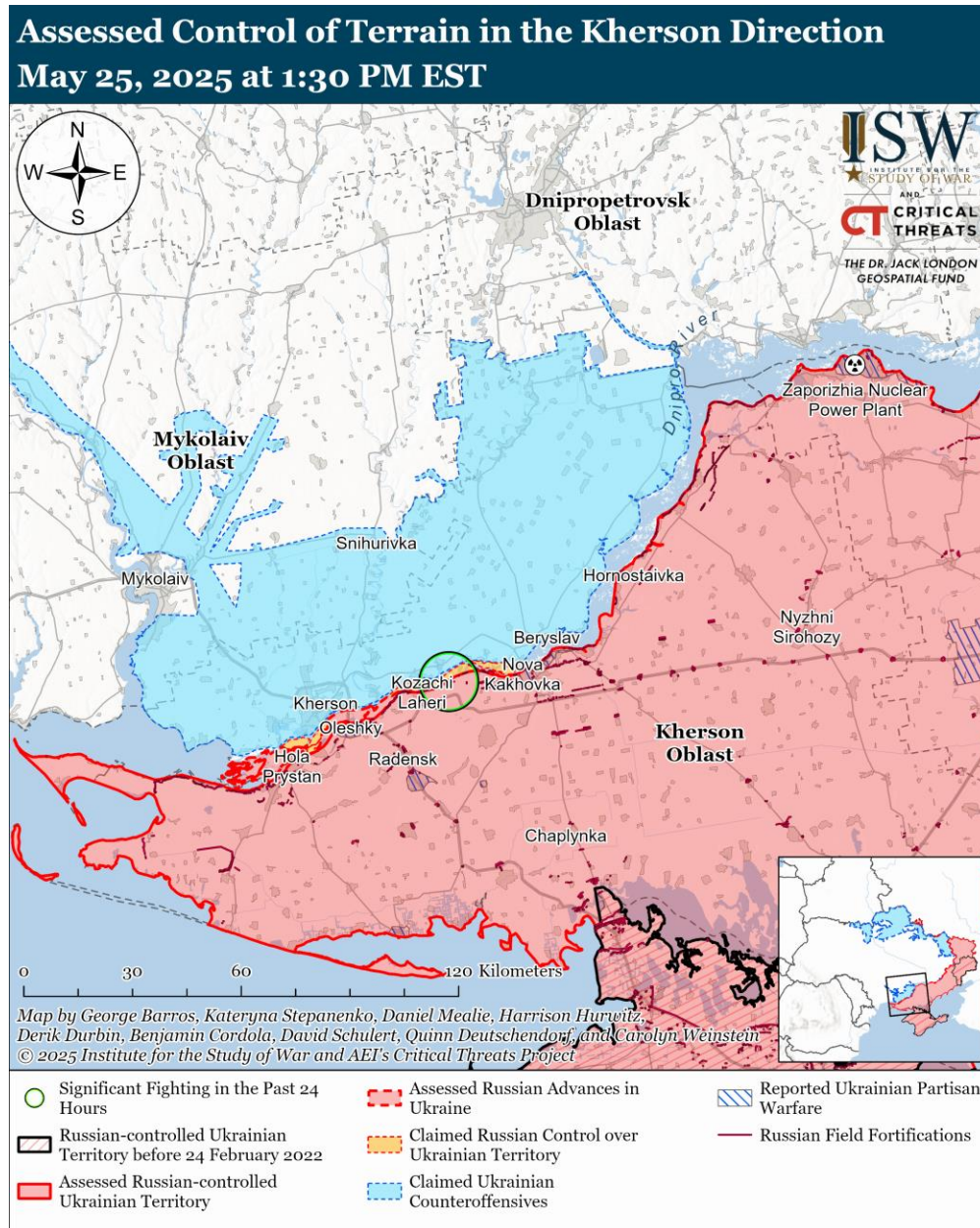
The spokesperson for the Ukrainian Volunteer Army reported on May 25 that elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division operating in the Zaporizhzhia direction are anticipating that another regiment of the 7th VDV Division will redeploy to the area from Kursk Oblast.[70]

Geolocated footage published on May 25 shows a Ukrainian drone striking a Russian fuel train near occupied Novobohdanivka, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, on May 24.[71] Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported that Ukrainian drone operators destroyed at least three fuel tanks on a Russian military supply train in Zaporizhzhia Oblast.[72]



**Russian forces continued limited attacks in the Kherson direction on May 25.[73]**

The spokesperson for the Ukrainian Volunteer Army reported on May 25 that elements of the Russian 61st Naval Infantry Brigade (Northern Fleet) operating in the Kherson direction are significantly degraded and that Russian forces are unable to resupply Russian units operating on the islands in the Dnipro River.[74]



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

*See topline text.*

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



Nothing significant to report.

**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://isw.pub/UkrWar052425> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar051825> ;  
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar042425> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar040625> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar030725>  
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