

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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February 2, 2024, 7:50pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

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

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

**Note:** The data cut-off for this product was 1:45pm ET on February 2. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the February 3 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian President Vladimir Putin evoked a wide Russian social and economic mobilization reminiscent of the Soviet Union's total mobilization during the Second World War during a February 2 speech despite the fact that Russia is undertaking a far more gradual but nonetheless effective mobilization of its defense industrial base (DIB). Putin attended the "Everything for Victory" event at the Tulatochmash plant in Tula Oblast on February 2 and promoted Russian efforts to expand its DIB to an audience of 600 representatives of various professions from across Russia.[1] "Everything for Victory" is a Soviet-era slogan that Soviet authorities first used during the Russian Civil War and then extensively during the Second World War to promote the widespread mobilization of Soviet industry and society.[2] Putin stated that defense industrial workers in Tula Oblast are currently working under this slogan just as their grandfathers and great-grandfathers did.[3] Putin asserted that modern Russian defense industrial workers have proven themselves worthy of these "ancestors," who won the industrial battle against Nazi Germany and Europe's defense industry to create the Soviet victory of 1945.[4] Putin followed his Soviet predecessors in ignoring the critical role the US defense industry played in facilitating the Soviet victory through the Lend-Lease program. The Kremlin has previously appealed to the mythos of the Great Patriotic War (Second World War) to reassure the Russian public that the Russian war effort will bring to bear overwhelming manpower and materiel for victory in Ukraine as the Soviet Union did for the Red Army against Nazi Germany.[5] Putin's allusion to the Soviet Union's total mobilization during the Second World War does not necessarily indicate that he intends to bring Russia to such a wartime footing, although he may be engaging in such rhetorical overtures to gauge domestic reactions and prepare the Russian public for a wider economic or military mobilization.

Putin claimed that Russia's DIB is significantly expanding and sufficiently supporting the war effort in Ukraine. Putin claimed that 6,000 Russian enterprises and 3.5 million workers are part of Russia's DIB and that 10,000 more enterprises are connected to the DIB in auxiliary or supporting roles.[6] Putin

stated that in the previous 16 months, Russia's DIB has created 520,000 new jobs; has increased the production of armored protection for personnel by a factor of 2.5; and has increased the production of armored vehicles and other equipment for combined arms warfare by an unspecified percentage.[7] Putin claimed that Russian enterprises are fulfilling the entirety of the state defense order and that the Kremlin significantly increased and fully funded the 2024 state defense order.[8] Putin also repeatedly stressed that Russia is expanding its DIB with technological innovation and adaptation as a priority, alleging that all of Russia's latest weapons are superior to weapons produced by NATO countries.[9] Putin added that whoever is quicker to find new ways to suppress their enemy's means of destruction, reconnaissance, and suppression will win, echoing sentiments that Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi expressed in his February 1 essay detailing a strategy to seek advantage over the Russian military through technological innovation and adaptation.[10]

Russia has been gradually mobilizing its DIB in an effort to fulfill operational requirements in Ukraine without causing widespread disruptions to Russia's already beleaguered economy.[11] This effort, while well below total mobilization, has addressed many Russian requirements for sustaining Russian operations in Ukraine.[12] The Russian effort has achieved this effect in part through Russia's ability to procure equipment from its partners and retool Russia's economy for military production purposes.[13] Russia has yet to expand its DIB to the point where it will be able to stop relying on partner countries to source critical materiel, however. It remains unclear how much further Russia can mobilize its DIB without taking significant and possibly unpopular actions given Russia's persistent economic and human capital constraints. The longer Russia maintains the battlefield initiative in Ukraine, however, the more the Russian military will have the option to tailor operations to optimize Russia's production and consumption of certain materiel in a sustainable and scalable way. Retaining the battlefield initiative may also allow the Kremlin to choose to expand Russia's DIB over conducting a large-scale offensive effort that would require substantial materiel.

**Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stated on February 2 that Russian forces retain the "strategic initiative" along the entire frontline in Ukraine, a notable departure from Shoigu's previous characterization of Russian operations as "active defense."**[14] Shoigu claimed during a conference call with the Russian military leadership that Russian forces are advancing and improving their positions along the frontline.[15] Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed on January 16 that Russian forces "completely" have the initiative in Ukraine following a failed Ukrainian counteroffensive.[16] Shoigu and Putin consistently downplayed localized Russian offensive operations in October and December 2023, characterizing Russian operations in Ukraine as "active defense." [17] ISW assessed at that time that Russian authorities may have been attempting to temper expectations about the Russian military's ability to make operationally significant advances, particularly around Avdiivka where Russian forces launched a localized offensive in October 2023.[18] Putin's and Shoigu's rhetorical shift suggests that Russian authorities may be gaining confidence in the Russian military's ability to achieve operationally significant advances. Russian authorities could also be rhetorically posturing ahead of the March 2024 Russian presidential elections. ISW continues to assess that Russian forces have regained the initiative throughout most of the Ukrainian theater but have not seized the battlefield initiative in Kherson Oblast.[19]

**Open-source investigations indicate that Russian forces are benefitting from Ukraine's ammunition shortage and inability to conduct sufficient counterbattery warfare.** Ukraine-based open-source organization Frontelligence Insight stated on February 1 that

Russian forces previously established stationary artillery firing positions for long periods of time from late 2022 to early 2023 when ammunition shortages limited Ukrainian counterbattery warfare capabilities.[20] Frontelligence stated that Russian forces began to concentrate their artillery in a similar way in January 2024, suggesting that Ukrainian forces are again running low on artillery ammunition. Frontelligence stated that Ukrainian forces can sometimes strike Russian artillery but overall lack adequate ammunition for effective counterbattery fire. Frontelligence stated that the lack of Ukrainian counterbattery fire allows Russian artillery to largely destroy settlements, making it nearly impossible for Ukrainian forces to defend the settlements. Frontelligence stated that many of Ukraine's FPV drones lack the range to strike the numerous Russian artillery pieces deployed 15 to 24 kilometers from the frontline. Western and Ukrainian officials have recently highlighted Ukraine's need for artillery ammunition.[21] ISW continues to assess that artillery shortages and delays in Western security assistance will create uncertainty in Ukrainian operational plans and likely prompt Ukrainian forces to husband materiel, which may force Ukrainian forces to make tough decisions about prioritizing certain sectors of the front over sectors where limited territorial setbacks are least damaging.[22]

**US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller reiterated on February 1 that Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly indicated that he has not changed his aims to capture and subjugate Ukraine.** Miller dismissed Russian President Vladimir Putin's January 31 suggestion of creating a "demilitarized zone" in Ukraine as disingenuous during a press conference on February 1.[23] Miller stated that it would be "kind of tough" to have a demilitarized zone in Ukraine when Russian forces continue to operate in Ukraine and that Putin has made it clear over and over again that he has not abandoned his maximalist objects in Ukraine, which ISW assesses are tantamount to complete Ukrainian and Western capitulation. Miller stated that if Russia "really wanted to show interest" in a demilitarized zone in Ukraine, it should begin by demilitarizing the areas of occupied Ukraine where there are currently Russian forces.[24] Putin emphasized the idea of a "demilitarized" or "buffer zone" during a meeting on January 31 and stated that Russian forces' most important goal across the theater is pushing the frontline deeper into Ukraine to place Russian territory – including occupied Ukraine – out of the range of Ukrainian frontline artillery systems and Western-provided long-range systems.[25]

**Russian milbloggers and ultranationalist figures continue to present themselves as impartial and constructive critics of the Russian military in juxtaposition to official Kremlin sources in the Russian information space.** A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on February 2 that Russian authorities should amend the Russian Criminal Code to punish Russian citizens and military personnel who "misinform [Russian] authorities and military command." Former Roscosmos (Russian space agency) head and Zaporizhia Oblast occupation senator Dmitry Rogozin announced in response that he will prepare a bill to amend the Russian Criminal Code.[26] Russian milbloggers have frequently criticized Russian battlefield commanders for lying to the Russian military command, including by submitting inaccurately positive reports to their superiors, resulting in the Russian military command flaunting false or premature claims of success while routinely committing Russian forces to costly assaults.[27] Kremlin propagandist Vladimir Solovyov accused Russian milbloggers on February 2 of highlighting Russian battlefield losses and shortcomings by amplifying footage published on January 30 showing Ukrainian forces destroying a company-sized column of advancing Russian vehicles and tanks near Novomykhailivka, Donetsk Oblast.[28] Several Russian milbloggers criticized Solovyov in response, advocating for milbloggers to be allowed to share constructive criticism of Russian operations in Ukraine in order to prevent unnecessary

deaths.[29] The Kremlin has actively censored some Russian milbloggers in recent months for criticizing Russian operations in Ukraine, likely to encourage and enforce self-censorship among Russian sources.[30]

**Kremlin affiliates reportedly launched an information campaign wherein prominent social media influencers promote the Russian Orthodox Church.** A Russian insider source claimed on February 1 that a recent uptick of young and rich Russian social media influencers promoting the Russian Orthodox Church, its head Patriarch Kirill, and related symbols is part of a dedicated campaign by Igor Sechin, head of the Russian state oil company Rosneft, and former Rosneft Head Eduard Khudainatov, both of whom are affiliated with Russian President Vladimir Putin.[31] Sechin is reportedly Putin's "de facto deputy" and reportedly leads a Kremlin faction that clashes with a faction led by Russian Security Council Secretary Dmitry Patrushev.[32] A dedicated social media campaign by a Kremlin faction member, if reports are true, aimed at promoting conservative ideals through the Russian Orthodox Church may be an attempt to forward Putin's "Year of the Family" ideology and curry favor with Putin. The Kremlin may also seek to promote the Russian Orthodox Church to Russian youth and young adults to increase its broader control over Russian society. The Kremlin has been using the Russian Orthodox Church to consolidate control over occupied Ukraine and eliminate Ukrainian culture and identity in occupied areas.[33]

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin evoked a wide Russian social and economic mobilization reminiscent of the Soviet Union's total mobilization during the Second World War during a February 2 speech despite the fact that Russia is undertaking a far more gradual but nonetheless effective mobilization of its defense industrial base (DIB).**
- **Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stated on February 2 that Russian forces retain the "strategic initiative" along the entire frontline in Ukraine, a notable departure from Shoigu's previous characterization of Russian operations as "active defense."**
- **Open-source investigations indicate that Russian forces are benefitting from Ukraine's ammunition shortage and inability to conduct sufficient counterbattery warfare.**
- **US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller reiterated on February 1 that Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly indicated that he has not changed his aims to capture and subjugate Ukraine.**
- **Russian milbloggers and ultranationalist figures continue to present themselves as impartial and constructive critics of the Russian military in juxtaposition to official Kremlin sources in the Russian information space.**
- **Kremlin affiliates reportedly launched an information campaign wherein prominent social media influencers promote the Russian Orthodox Church.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Avdiivka and in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area amid continued positional engagements along the entire line of contact on February 2.**
- **Russian outlet *Izvestiya* stated on February 2, citing sources within the Russian military, that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is forming air defense units as part of assault units to defend Russian infantry against Ukrainian drones, frontline air strikes, and shelling.**

- **Ukrainian and Canadian officials announced a new coalition to return Ukrainian children from Russia to Ukraine.**

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of February 2, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



***We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and***

***specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.***

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- Activities in Russian-Occupied Areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives
- Significant Activity in Belarus

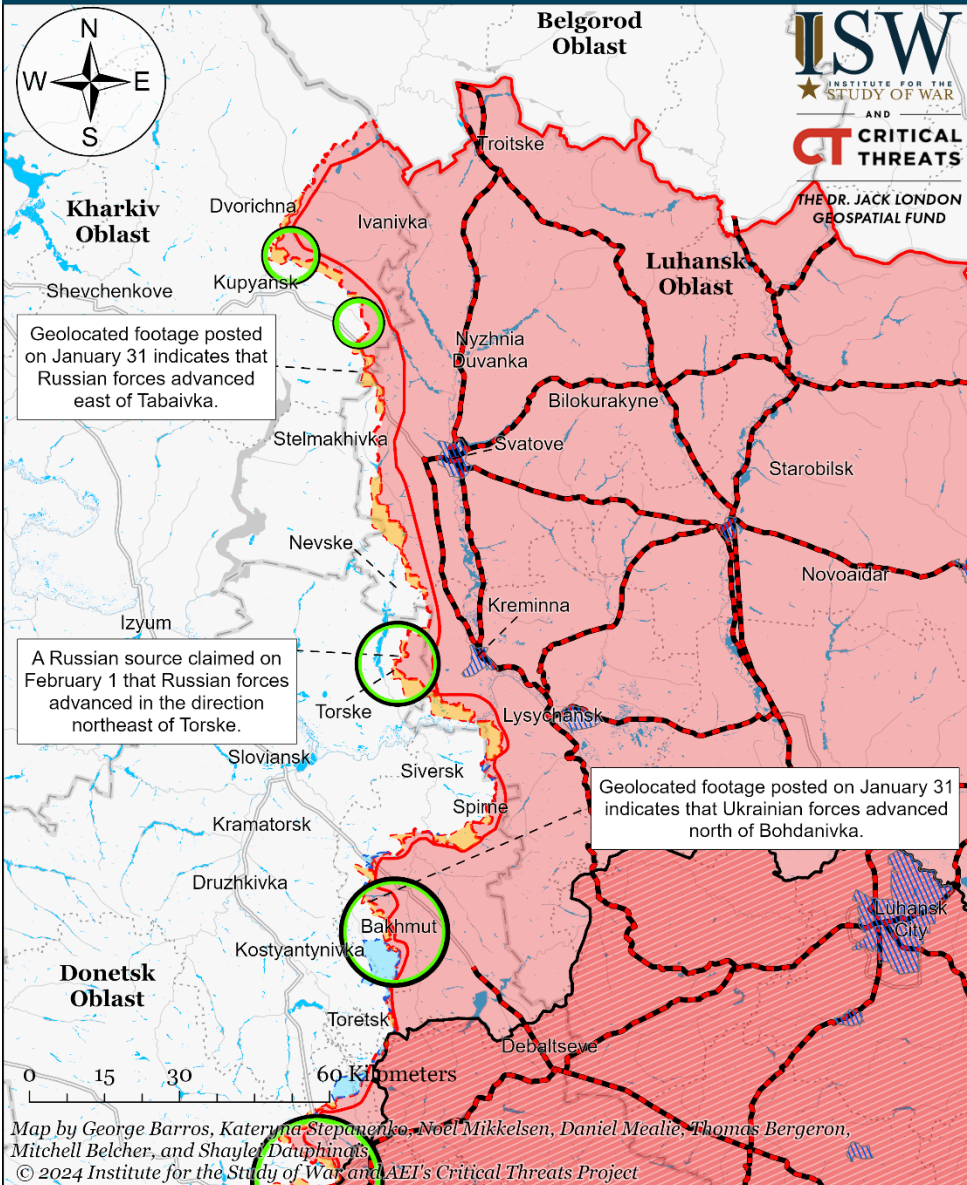
### **Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

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

Positional fighting continued in the Kupyansk direction on February 2, but there were no confirmed changes to the front line in the area. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that positional fighting continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka and southeast of Kupyansk near Ivanivka, Tabaiivka, Krokmalne, and Berestove.[34] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Russian forces have concentrated 40,000 personnel, 500 tanks, 650 infantry fighting vehicles, 430 artillery systems, and over 150 MLRS systems in the Kupyansk direction, and that there is a total of 57,000 Russian personnel in both the Kupyansk and Lyman directions.[35] Ukrainian officials and sources reported that Russian forces had concentrated roughly 100,000 personnel in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions as of October 2023. Yevlash may have been referring to a geographically smaller sector of the frontline area than the other Ukrainian sources. Russian forces continued intensified localized offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line.

Russian forces reportedly advanced west of Kreminna amid continued positional fighting in the area on February 2. Russian milbloggers claimed on February 1 and 2 that Russian forces advanced roughly 2-2.5 kilometers towards Terny and Yampolivka (both west of Kreminna) in recent days, and one milblogger claimed that Russian forces are two kilometers away from Terny.[36] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims, however. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that positional fighting continued west of Kreminna.[37]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of February 2, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, and Shayle Dauphinais.  
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- - - Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- - - Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- - - Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

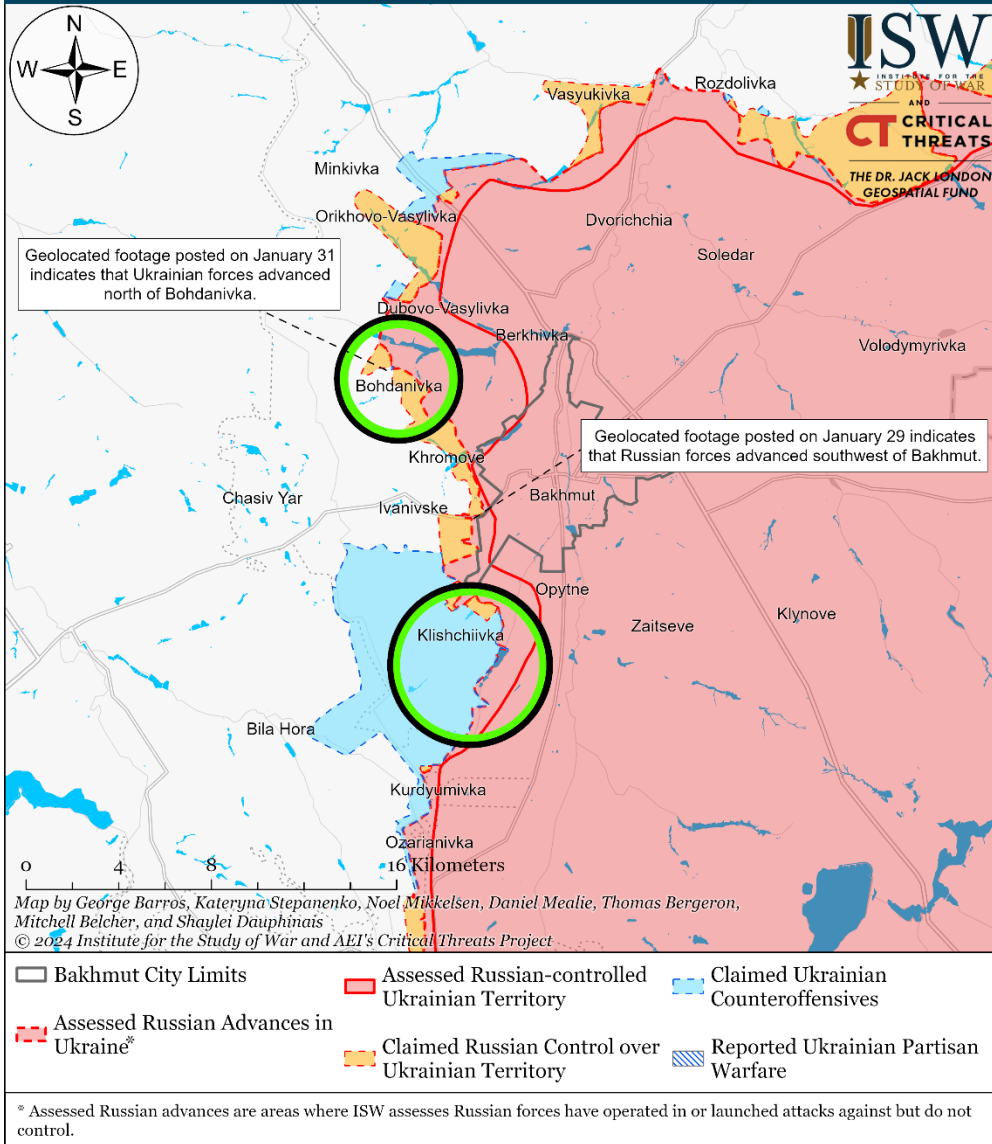
Note: Russian sources claimed on February 2 that Russian forces advanced two kilometers toward Terny. Ukrainian and Russian sources claimed on February 1 that Russian forces advanced along a 3.45 kilometer wide and 2.15 kilometer deep frontline near Yampolivka. A Russian source claimed on January 29 that Russian forces advanced along a front one and a half kilometers wide and 750 meters deep near Synkivka.

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

Positional engagements continued near Bakhmut on February 2, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional fighting occurred northeast of Bakhmut near Bilohorivka (21km northeast of Bakhmut), northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka, west of Bakhmut near Ivanivske, and southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka.[38] Elements of the Russian 137th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (106th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Rozdolivka and Vasyukivka (north of Bakhmut), elements of the 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Northern Fleet) are reportedly operating near Bohdanivka, and elements of the 68th Tank Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Ivanivske.[39]

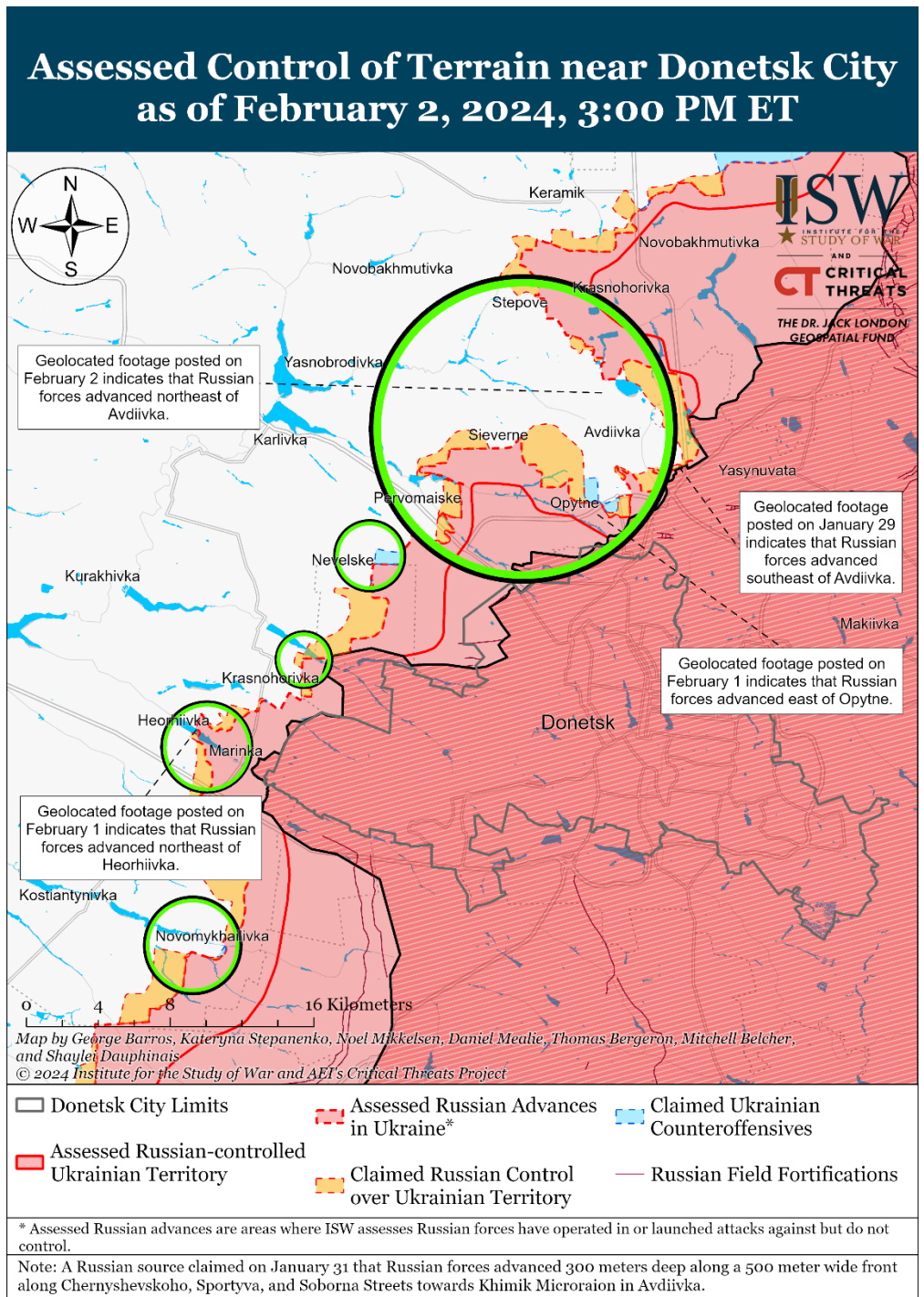


# Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of February 2, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced northeast and south of Avdiivka amid continued positional fighting in the area on February 2. Geolocated footage published on February 2 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in dacha areas immediately northeast of Avdiivka.[40] Additional geolocated footage published on February 1 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced east of Opytne (south of Avdiivka).[41] Russian milbloggers claimed on February 1 and 2 that Russian forces advanced in the southernmost residential area in Avdiivka and advanced up to 1.25 kilometers near the Avdiivka quarry.[42] Russian and Ukrainian sources reported positional fighting northwest of Avdiivka near Stepove, near the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northwestern Avdiivka, in southernmost Avdiivka, on Avdiivka's southern outskirts, and southwest of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske and Nevelske.[43] Elements of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic

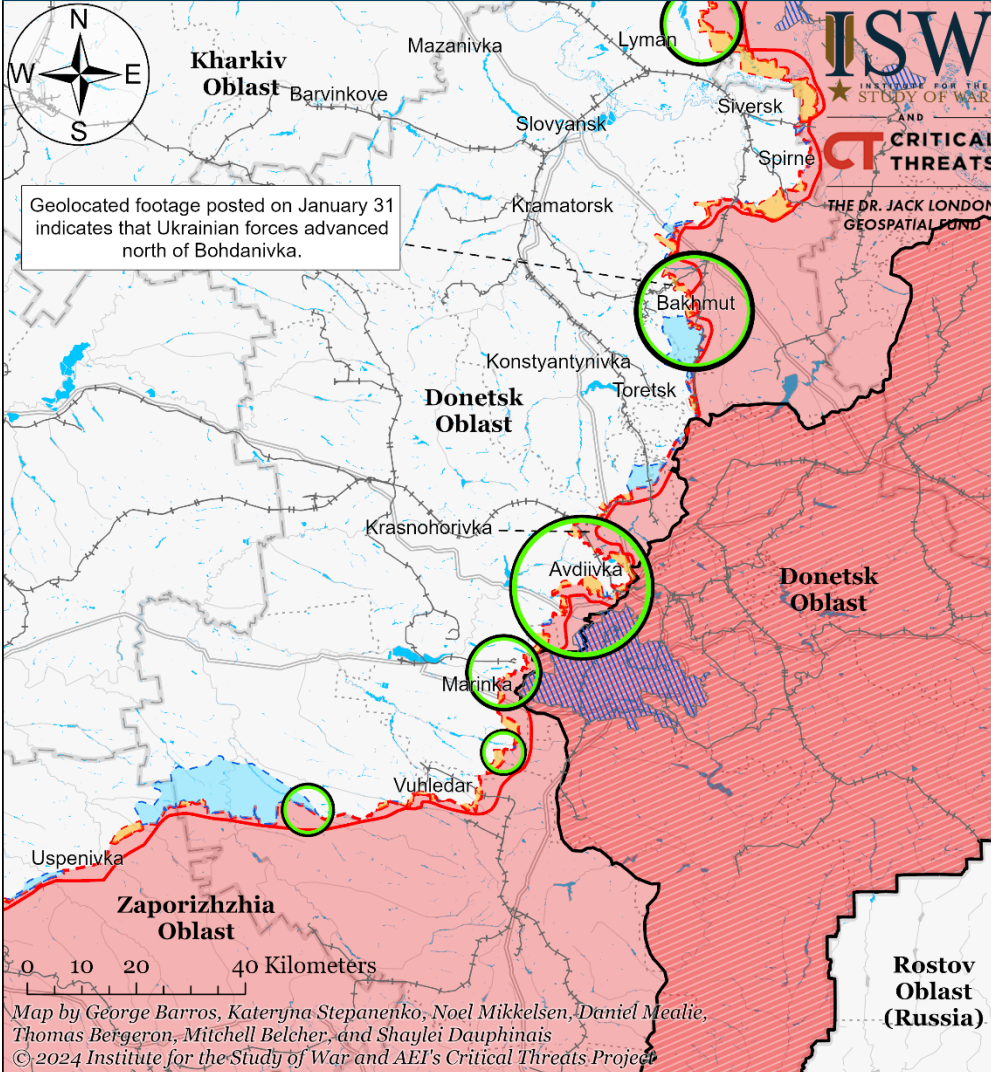
[DNR] Army Corps [AC]) are reportedly operating near the Avdiivka quarry and elements of the "Veterany" Reconnaissance and Assault Brigade (Volunteer Assault Corps) are reportedly operating near Avdiivka.[44]



Positional fighting continued west and southwest of Donetsk City on February 2, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced up to one kilometer in the direction of Kurakhove (west of Donetsk City), although ISW has not observed any

confirmation of this claim.[45] Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional engagements occurred west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Novomykhailivka.[46] Elements of the Russian 150th Motorized Rifle Division (8th CAA, SMD) and the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR AC) are reportedly operating along the Marinka-Heorhiivka and Marinka-Krasnohorivka lines; elements of the 255th Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating along the Marinka-Pobieda (southwest of Donetsk City) line; and elements of the 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD), the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet), and the 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, EMD) are reportedly operating near Novomykhailivka.[47]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of February 2, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



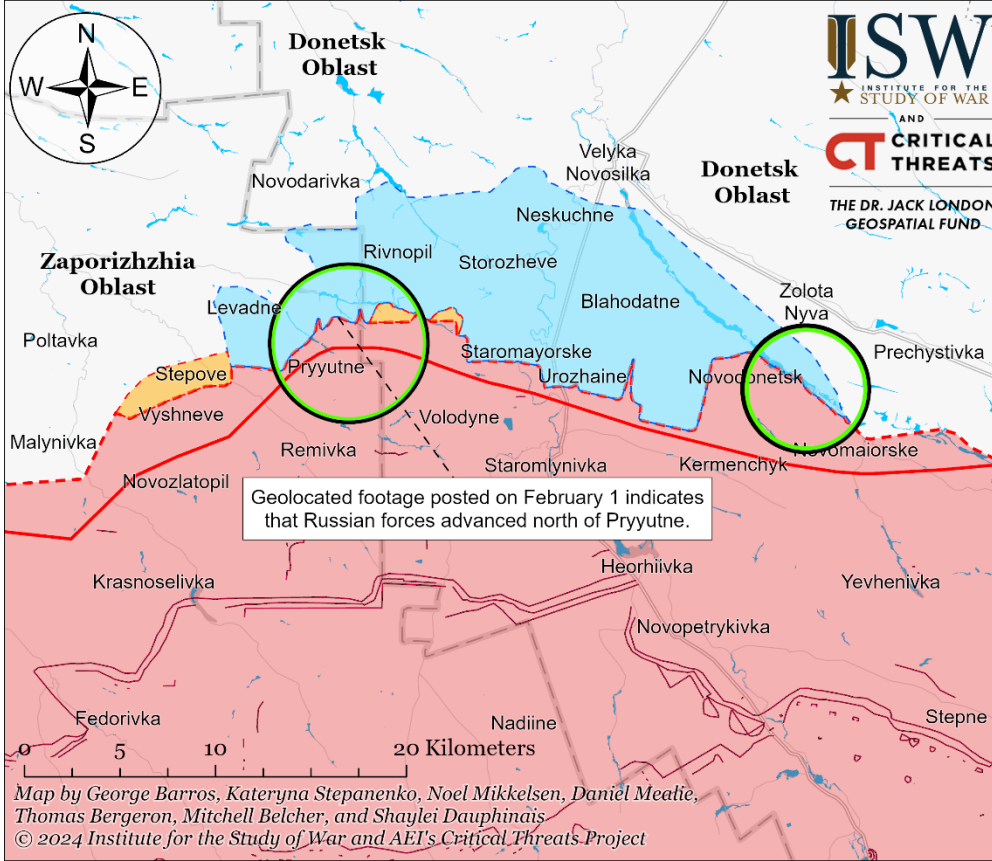
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- ▨ Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- +— Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- +— Major Railroads

\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Russian forces recently made a confirmed advance in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area. Geolocated footage published on January 30 indicates that Russian forces advanced north of Pryyutne (southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[48] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced up to two kilometers north of Pryyutne, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these Russian maximalist gains.[49] Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued south of Velyka Novosilka near Staromayorske and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Zolota Nyva.[50] Elements of the Russian 5th Combined Arms Army (Eastern Military District) are reportedly operating near Staromayorske.[51]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of February 2, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives

\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on January 31 that Russian forces advanced up to 500 meters deep along a 2.1 kilometer front north of Pryutne.

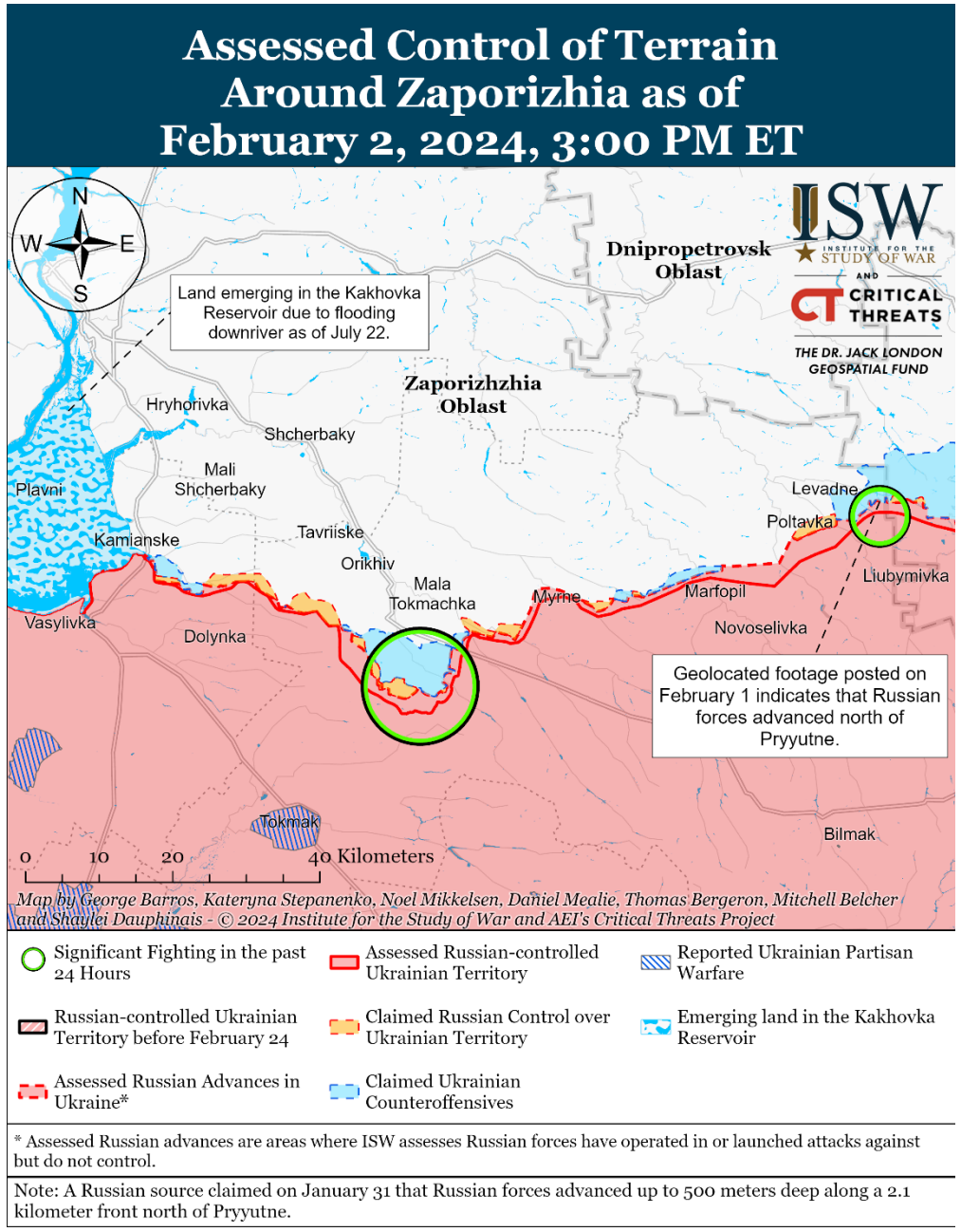
Positional engagements continued in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on February 2, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in the area. Russian sources stated that Russian forces advanced west of Verbove and that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced northwest of Verbove (east of Robotyne), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these Russian claims.[52] Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued near Robotyne, Verbove, and Novofedorivka (northeast of Robotyne).[53] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian drones near Robotyne are causing “problems” for Russian forces in the area.[54] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces are suffering from a shortage of electronic warfare (EW) systems near

Robotyne.[55] Elements of the Russian 108th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Robotyne.[56]



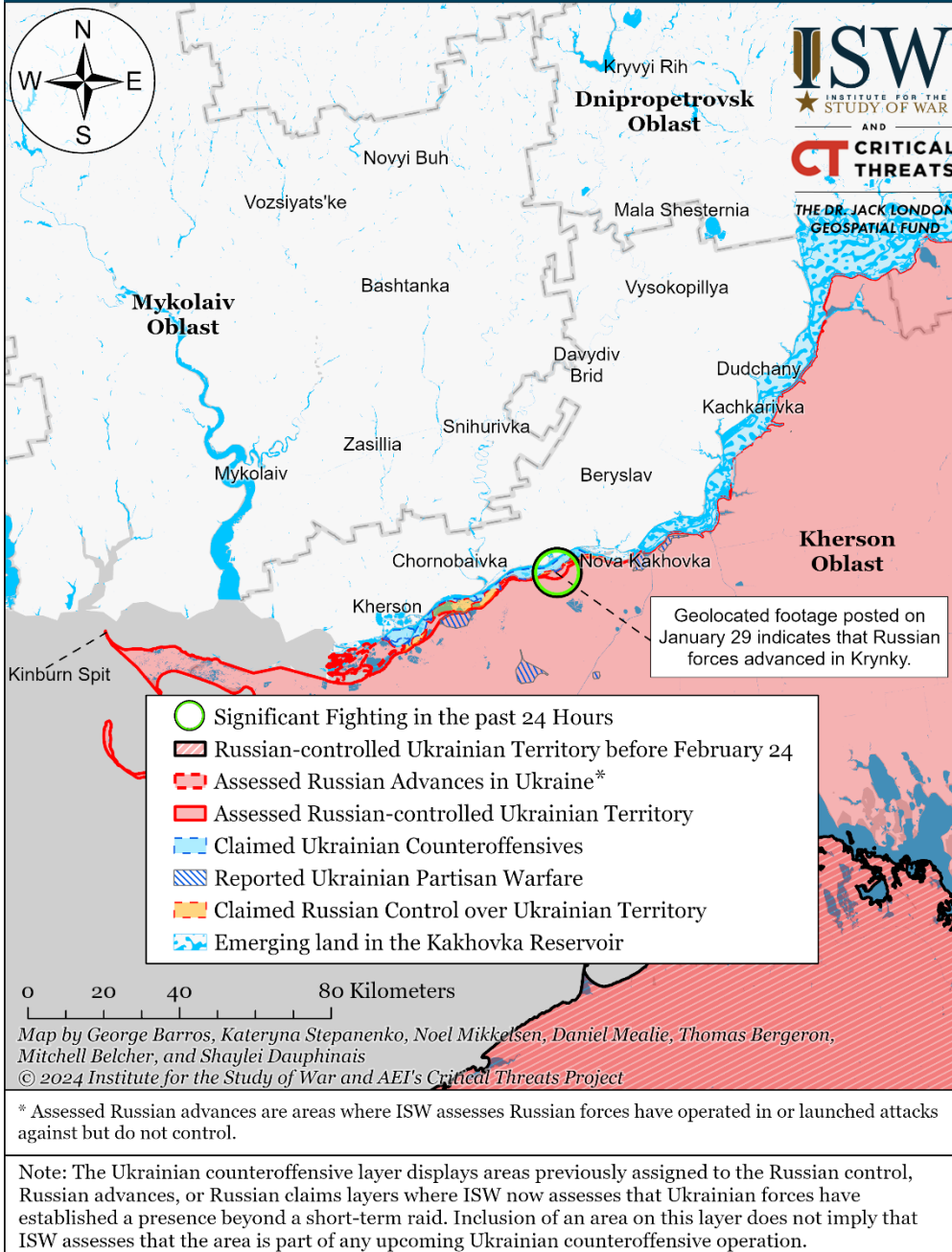
The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast.[57] Elements of the Russian 104th VDV Division reportedly continue to operate near Krynyk.[58] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Colonel Nataliya Humenyuk stated that there are more than 70,000 Russian personnel and hundreds of pieces of weapons and equipment on the east bank of the Dnipro River in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts.[59] Humenyuk noted that not all of these Russian troops are concentrated along the frontline, but many are also located deeper in the rear. Humenyuk stated that Russian forces are losing up to 70 percent of the personnel in each assault group on the east bank of the Dnipro River but that Russian forces are able to readily replenish units by transferring personnel from the rear to the front. ISW continues to assess that the

tempo of Russian offensive operations in Ukraine and Russia’s ongoing crypto-mobilization campaign is enabling Russian forces to recover from losses and conduct regular operational-level rotations.[60]





# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of February 2, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on February 2 that publicly available satellite imagery confirms that the January 31 Ukrainian strike on Belbek Air Base in occupied Sevastopol damaged at least three planes.[61] Humenyuk stated on February 2 that the Ukrainian strike on the Russian *Ivanovets* Tarantul-class corvette near Lake Donuzlav on the night of January 31 to

February 1 could have killed its entire crew of 40 Russian personnel, but that the exact number of deaths is still unknown.[62]

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

The Ukrainian Air Force reported on February 2 that Russian forces launched 24 Shahed-136/131 drones from Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai, and Cape Chauda, occupied Crimea, and that Ukrainian forces shot down 11 of the drones in Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, Kirovohrad, and Kharkiv oblasts.[63] The Ukrainian Air Force stated that at least seven additional drones did not reach their targets. The Ukrainian Air Force stated that Russian forces particularly targeted infrastructure facilities in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, and Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Head Serhiy Lysak stated that the Russian drone strike disrupted electricity in the area.[64] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces struck an infrastructure facility in Kirovohrad Oblast.[65]

Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on February 2 that Russian forces are increasingly using ballistic missiles in their strike packages because Ukraine has limited means to intercept ballistic missiles. Ihnat stated that many of the Russian ballistic missiles do not reach their targets due to the declining quality of Russian missiles. Ihnat previously stated that Ukraine needs additional assets to protect against these missiles.[66] ISW continues to assess that Russia may be intensifying efforts to source ballistic missiles from abroad because ballistic missiles may be more successful in striking targets in Ukraine in some circumstances.[67]

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

Russian outlet *Izvestiya* stated on February 2, citing sources within the Russian military, that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is forming air defense units as organic parts of assault units to defend Russian infantry against Ukrainian drones, frontline air strikes, and shelling.[68] *Izvestiya* stated that the MoD will provide the air defense units with Tor-M2 and Gibka short-range anti-aircraft systems and suggested that the innovation should make Russian assault operations in Ukraine more effective.[69] Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu announced in March 2023 that the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) intended to form and staff additional air defense units in 2023.[70]

Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec stated on February 2 that it is improving the protection and technical components of the "Drok" self-propelled mortar system to improve ease of operation and the system's security.[71]

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

Director of the Kyiv Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Expertise (KNDISE) Alexander Ruvin reported on January 29 that Russian forces are placing trackers with a secondary power source in Orlan-10 reconnaissance drones, allowing Russian forces to track the drones after Ukrainian forces shoot them down, recover the drones, and transport them elsewhere.[72] KNDISE observed the trackers in all of the drones they have recently received from the Ukrainian military for research. Ruvin

reported that the trackers' components, chips, and microcircuits were not produced in Russia and that Ukrainian authorities are investigating the components' origins.

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

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on February 2 that Ukraine is working to increase the number of domestic drone production contracts and the pace of domestic drone production in 2024.[73] Zelensky stated that Ukraine's 2024 goal is to have more than 90 percent of Ukrainian drones on the front be domestically produced.[74]

The Lithuanian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported on February 2 that it delivered another round of military aid to Ukraine that includes thousands of rounds of "Carl Gustaf" anti-tank grenade launcher ammunition and an unspecified number of RISE-1 remote detonation systems.[75]

### **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)**

Ukrainian and Canadian officials announced a new coalition to return Ukrainian children from Russia to Ukraine. Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joy announced that Canada and Ukraine are launching this new coalition and that Canada will work with states that maintain direct relations with Russia, including Brazil, Mexico, Qatar, and South Africa.[76] Director of the Ukrainian "Save Ukraine" organization Mykola Kuleba stated that the organization returned four children to Ukraine from occupied Zaporizhia and Kherson oblasts on February 2 and that Ukraine has returned 235 children total from occupied Ukraine, presumably since February 2022.[77]

Russia continues efforts to integrate occupied Ukraine into the Russian economic and legal spheres. The Russian Federal Tax Service reported on February 2 that it has integrated occupied Luhansk Oblast into the Russian Unified State Civil Registry and that it will complete integrating occupied Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts into this registry in the first half of 2024.[78] Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo stated that the Kherson Oblast occupation administration opened a representative office in Moscow that has already established business relations with the Russian State Duma and that he appointed Vladimir Bodelan to lead the office.[79] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that the Zaporizhia Oblast occupation administration plans to transfer all occupation enterprises in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast to the "Development Corporation of Zaporizhia Oblast" to resell Ukrainian goods to Russian markets below market value.[80]

### **Russian Information Operations and Narratives**

The Kremlin continues to use narratives related to Soviet-era monuments in post-Soviet states to criticize these states and set information conditions to justify potential Russian aggression in the future. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) summoned the Estonian charge d'affaires in Moscow to protest Estonia's decision to reinter the remains of 16 Soviet soldiers at the Tallinn Defense Cemetery at a different location within the cemetery in order to restore the road leading to a monument commemorating the Estonian War of Independence.[81] Russian MFA Spokesperson Maria Zakharova labeled Estonia's plans "blasphemous" and claimed that "this action will not go unanswered."[82] The

Russian Embassy in Estonia absurdly claimed that Estonia’s actions are ”aimed at revising the results of the Second World War.”[83] Head of the Russian Investigative Committee Alexander Bastrykin ordered an investigation into the “desecration” of the graves on February 1, after Bastrykin similarly ordered the Russian Investigative Committee to initiate a criminal case on January 30 against an Armenian citizen who damaged the Children of the Siege of Leningrad monument in Yerevan.[84] Russia notably launched large-scale cyberattacks against Estonia in 2007 after Estonia moved a Soviet World War II war memorial and the remains of Soviet soldiers from central Tallinn to the Tallinn Defense Cemetery.[85]

Kremlin mouthpieces continued to criticize the Armenian government amid deteriorating Armenian-Russian relations.[86]

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

Belarusian State Security Council Secretary Alexander Volfovich claimed on February 2 that the US and its allies have unleashed hybrid war against Belarus and that Belarus has border units on alert, presumably to respond to perceived Western aggression.[87]

**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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