

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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March 1, 2024, 6:15pm 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 12:30pm ET on March 1. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the March 2 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Reported details of Russian-Ukrainian peace negotiations that occurred in Istanbul in April 2022 indicate that Russia has consistently envisioned a settlement for its illegal invasion of Ukraine wherein Ukraine would be unable to defend itself from a future Russian attack – an objective Russia continues to pursue under calls for Ukraine’s “demilitarization.” The *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* reported on March 1 that documents it obtained of the draft treaty from the 2022 Ukrainian-Russian peace negotiations indicate that both sides initially agreed that Ukraine would be a “permanently neutral state that doesn't participate in military blocs.”[1] The draft treaty also reportedly banned Ukraine from receiving any foreign weapons or hosting any foreign military personnel. The *WSJ* reported that Russia pushed for the Ukrainian military to be limited to 85,000 soldiers, 342 tanks, and 519 artillery systems, whereas Ukraine wanted the caps to be 250,000 soldiers, 800 tanks, and 1,900 artillery systems. Russia also reportedly demanded that Ukrainian missiles be limited to a range of 40 kilometers, a range that would allow Russian forces to deploy critical systems and materiel close to Ukraine without fear of strikes. The Kremlin has repeatedly called for the “demilitarization” of Ukraine since its full-scale invasion but has not previously provided details on what that would specifically entail.[2] The Ukrainian military in 2014 – before Russia’s first invasion – consisted of about 130,000 personnel, and the documents from 2022 indicate that Russia intended to drastically reduce Ukraine’s military to such a level that Ukraine could no longer defend itself.[3] Russian President Vladimir Putin has most recently emphasized the idea of a “demilitarized” or “sanitary” zone in Ukraine that would place Russian territory – including occupied Ukraine – out of range of both Ukrainian frontline artillery systems and Western-provided long-range systems.[4] Putin likely aims for the “demilitarization” of Ukraine to allow him to enforce his will upon Ukraine without any substantial resistance.

Reported details of the draft treaty suggest that Russia intended to use the treaty to set conditions for future attacks against Ukraine while also prompting the West to make concessions on Ukraine’s sovereignty. The *WSJ* reported that the United States, United Kingdom, China, France, and Russia were to be guarantors of the treaty.[5] Russia also reportedly

wanted to include Belarus as a guarantor. The guarantor states were supposed to “terminate international treaties and agreements incompatible with the permanent neutrality of Ukraine,” including military aid agreements. The *WSJ* did not specify if other non-guarantor states would have to terminate their agreements with Ukraine as well, although this is likely considering that the treaty would ban Ukraine from having foreign-supplied weapons. It is unclear what Russia considers to be “incompatible” with a permanently “neutral” Ukraine, although the Kremlin most certainly would have broadly interpreted this as forbidding Ukraine from joining NATO, which is stipulated by Ukraine’s constitution, thereby likely demanding that Ukraine amend its constitution.[6] Russia reportedly wanted all guarantors to agree on a response should Ukraine be subject to any attacks, but the *WSJ* stated that the guarantor states were unlikely to agree on a response should Russia attack Ukraine again – likely due to the guarantor states’ diverging interests. This stipulation likely intended to allow Russia to influence, predict, and prepare for the international response to any possible future Russian attacks on Ukraine. ISW continues to assess that any ceasefire would benefit Russia, giving it time to reconstitute and regroup for future offensive operations.[7]

Russia’s territorial objectives beyond the areas it occupied in 2022 likely prevented Russia and Ukraine from agreeing on the status of Russian-occupied areas in Ukraine in April 2022. The *WSJ* reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky were to hold “face-to-face talks” to discuss areas of eastern Ukraine that Russian forces have occupied since 2014, but that this meeting never took place.[8] The need for Putin and Zelensky to discuss the matter independently and separately suggests that the Russian and Ukrainian negotiating delegations were unable to reach an agreement on the status of the Russian-occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, likely due to Russia’s wider expansionist territorial desires, as Kremlin officials have repeatedly indicated.[9] The *WSJ* did not report on any clauses in the treaty concerning Russian-occupied territory outside of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Russian authorities suggested that the Kremlin has likely adopted a more extensive set of goals regarding Ukraine over the course of Russia's war against Ukraine. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitri Peskov responded to the leaked April 2022 draft agreement between Russia and Ukraine, claiming that the draft agreement is “no longer relevant” and that “conditions have changed.”[10] Peskov's statements are likely part of a current trend of increased Russian confidence in the Russian military’s capabilities and the attainability of Putin’s maximalist war objectives following the recent seizure of Avdiivka and prolonged US debates about military aid to Ukraine.[11] ISW continues to assess that Russian President Vladimir Putin maintains his maximalist objectives in Ukraine, which are tantamount to complete Ukrainian and Western capitulation, and that Russia has no interest in good-faith negotiations with Ukraine.[12]

Russian President Vladimir Putin appeared to disparage Russian elites in his February 29 Federal Assembly speech, more closely aligning himself with the veteran and military community and drawing praise from ultranationalist milbloggers. Putin attempted to distance himself from the Russian elite by claiming that the individuals who “lined their pockets due to economic processes in the 1990s” are not the elite, but that the “real elite” are workers and military servicemen who proved their loyalty to Russia.[13] Putin used this subverted definition of elites to praise the Russian military and align himself more strongly with the veteran and military community, stating that military veterans should hold leading positions in Russian society, business, and government and “should be entrusted with Russia’s future” and implying that veterans should take on roles traditionally occupied by Russian elites. Several Russian milbloggers supported Putin’s claim that

Russian military veterans should hold prominent and influential roles in Russian society and framed Putin's statements as the start of a campaign to change the "elites" of Russia.[14] Putin also proposed expanding and creating multiple economic support measures including "more fairly distributing the tax burden toward those with higher personal and corporate incomes." [15] One Russian milblogger explicitly expressed support for economic reforms that would replace "oligarch capitalism" with "equal opportunities and minimal stratification in living standards." [16] Putin's criticism of Russian elites and economic proposals that would, in theory, reduce their influence may intensify an existing rhetorical line among pro-war milbloggers criticizing Russian elites. [17]

Kremlin officials met with leaders of the pro-Russian Moldovan autonomous region Gagauzia and emphasized Russia's support for Gagauzia against perceived Moldovan "oppression" on March 1. Russian Federation Council Chairperson Valentina Matviyenko met with Gagauzian Governor Yevgenia Gutsul and People's Assembly Chairperson Dmitry Konstantinov in Moscow and criticized Moldovan authorities for "Russophobic" policies that are supposedly antithetical to Moldova's national interests. [18] Matviyenko added that the Russian Federation Council is prepared to provide "all possible assistance" in expanding Russian-Gagauzian relations. [19] The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) announced that 10 Russian federal subjects signed a range of bilateral agreements emphasizing economic and humanitarian ties with Gagauzia. [20] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger who has previously focused on discontent in Gagauzia and pro-Russian Moldovan breakaway region Transnistria stated that Gutsul and Konstantinov are "following the example of Transnistria" by asking for Russia's support in the face of Moldovan "oppression." [21] The Transnistrian Congress of Deputies recently met and adopted a series of decisions that likely aim to provide the Kremlin with justifications for a wide range of possible escalatory actions against Moldova that the Kremlin can either pursue immediately or over the long term. [22] ISW has observed indications that the Kremlin hopes to use pro-Russian actors in Gagauzia as another basis to justify future intervention and hybrid operations aimed at destabilizing and polarizing Moldova to prevent or slow Moldova's integration in the European Union (EU). [23]

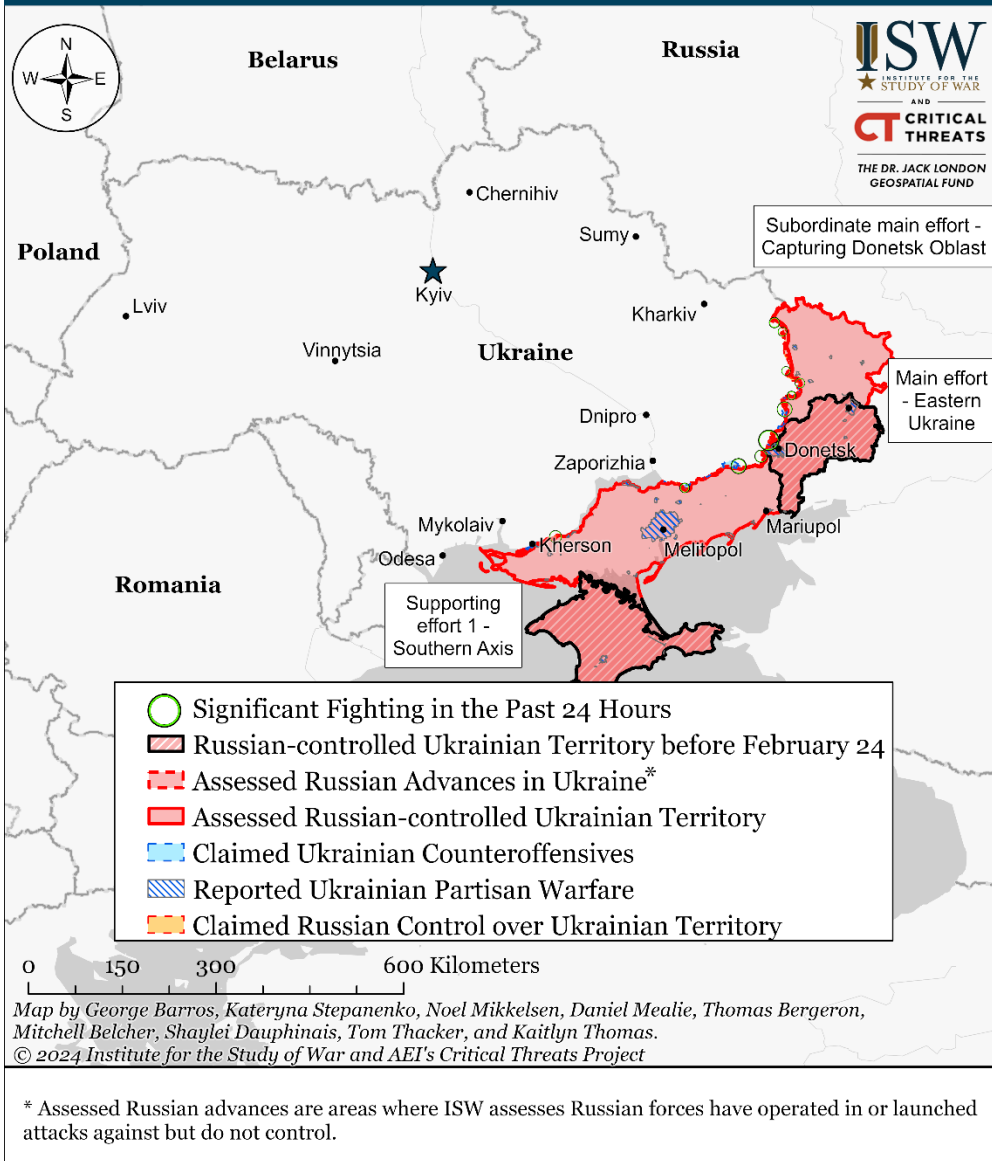
Ukraine and the Netherlands signed a 10-year bilateral security agreement on March 1. [24] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that the Netherlands announced that it would provide 2 billion euros (about \$2.17 billion) in military aid to Ukraine in 2024 and additional security assistance over the next 10 years. [25] Zelensky stated that the bilateral security agreement prioritizes assistance in air defense and artillery systems and naval and long-range weapons. [26] The Dutch Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced that it will provide Ukraine with 14 rigid-hull inflatable boats, eight paramilitary river patrol boats, and CB90-class fast assault craft. [27] The Dutch MoD also announced that it is increasing its contribution to the Czech initiative to provide artillery shells to Ukraine from 100 million euros (about \$108 million) to 250 million euros (about \$271 million). [28]

Key Takeaways:

- **Reported details of Russian-Ukrainian peace negotiations that occurred in Istanbul in April 2022 indicate that Russia has consistently envisioned a settlement for its illegal invasion of Ukraine wherein Ukraine would be unable to defend itself from a future Russian attack – an objective Russia continues to pursue under calls for Ukraine's "demilitarization."**
- **Reported details of the draft treaty suggest that Russia intended to use the treaty to set conditions for future attacks against Ukraine while also prompting the West to make concessions on Ukraine's sovereignty.**

- **Russian authorities suggested that the Kremlin has likely adopted a more extensive set of goals regarding Ukraine over the course of Russia's war against Ukraine.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin appeared to disparage Russian elites in his February 29 Federal Assembly speech, more closely aligning himself with the veteran and military community and drawing praise from ultranationalist milbloggers.**
- **Kremlin officials met with leaders of the pro-Russian Moldovan autonomous region Gagauzia and emphasized Russia's support for Gagauzia against perceived Moldovan "oppression" on March 1.**
- **Ukraine and the Netherlands signed a 10-year bilateral security agreement on March 1.**
- **Russian forces made confirmed advances near Avdiivka and Donetsk City on March 1.**
- **Russian authorities will likely use annual combat training for Russian reservists to support crypto-mobilization efforts.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of March 1, 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.

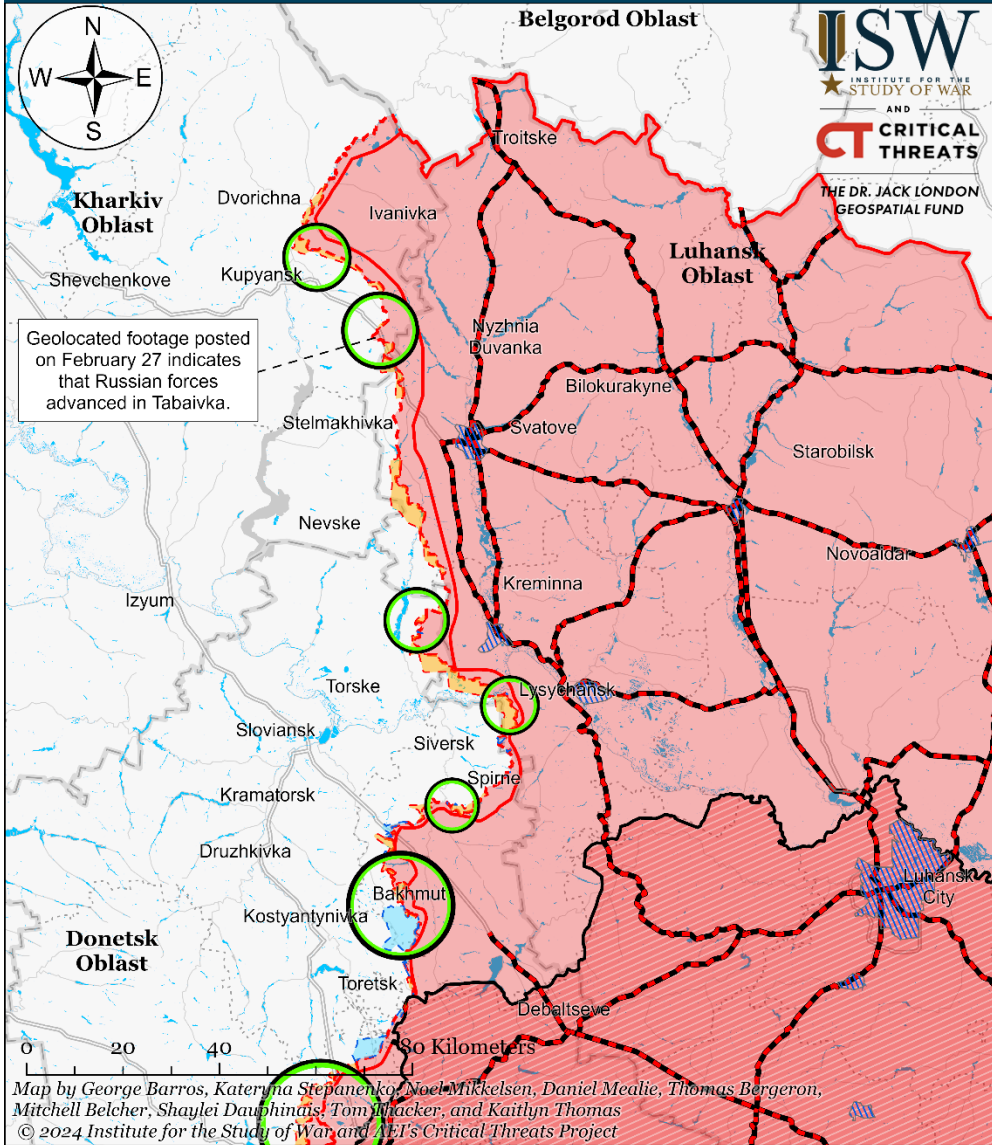
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- 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 engagements continued along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on March 1. Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional engagements continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka and Petropavlivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Tabaivka; west of Kreminna near Terny and Yampolivka; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[29] Russian milbloggers published footage purportedly showing Russian forces striking a Ukrainian pontoon bridge across the Oskil River near Kupyansk-Vuzlovy (immediately southeast of Kupyansk) with a glide bomb and claimed that Russian forces have destroyed all the stationary bridges across the Oskil River.[30] Russian forces likely damaged stationary bridges across the Oskil River during a coordinated strike campaign in September and October 2023, although this effort did not succeed in isolating the Ukrainian defense northeast of Kupyansk at the time, and Ukrainian forces do not yet appear to be facing serious difficulties in supplying positions on the east bank of the Oskil River.[31] An increase in Russian strikes on Ukrainian crossings along the Oskil River would be an indicator that Russian forces may intend to intensify the ongoing Russian offensive operation along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line.[32] Elements of the Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz "Aida" group and the Russian "GORB" detachment are reportedly operating near Bilohorivka.[33]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of March 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Shaylei Daughinais, Tom Macker, and Kaitlyn Thomas
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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.

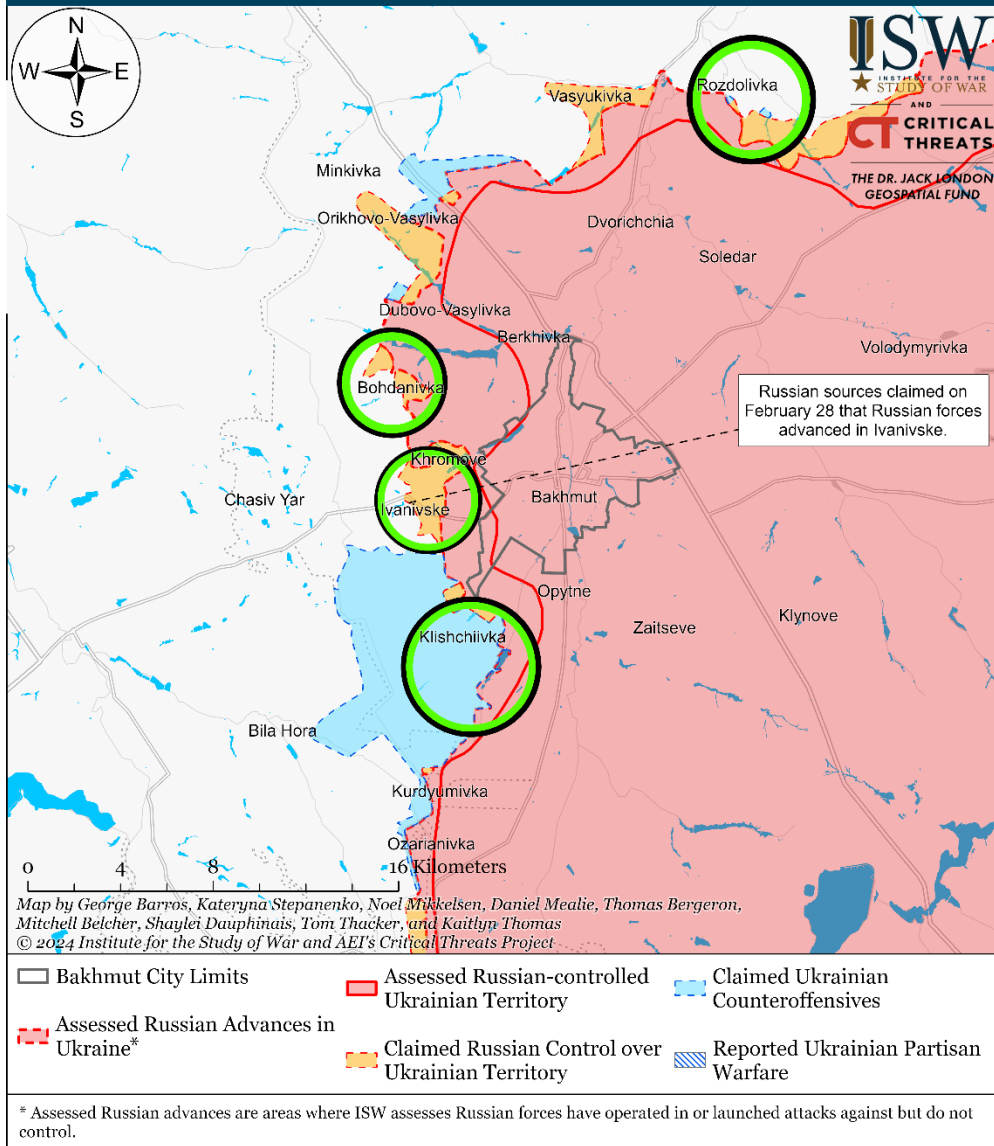
Note: A Russian source claimed on February 27 that Russian forces advanced 300 meters along the Terny-Torske line.

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

Note: ISW is restructuring its coverage of the Donetsk Oblast axis to include activity in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area. During the 2023 Ukrainian counteroffensive, ISW assessed that Ukrainian activity in the border area was a supporting and related effort to Ukrainian activity in the south. As Russian forces have seized the battlefield initiative following the end of the counteroffensive, Russian troops appear to be trying to drive southwest of Donetsk City while simultaneously driving northeast from the Velyka Novosilka area on the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border. This Russian effort appears to include settlements along the O0532 Marinka-Pobieda-Vuhledar route. ISW will further restructure the Donetsk Oblast axis if Russian operational objectives in this area appear to change in the future.

Positional fighting continued near Bakhmut on March 1. Select Russian milbloggers refuted previous Russian claims that Russian forces captured Ivanivske (west of Bakhmut) and claimed that Russian forces continued to advance near and within the settlement.[34] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of recent notable tactical Russian gains within Ivanivske. Positional fighting continued northeast of Bakhmut near Berestove and Rozdolivka; northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka; southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka, Andriivka, and Kurdyumivka; and south of Bakhmut near Pivdenne and Niu York.[35] Elements of the 98th Airborne (VDV) Division and the 11th VDV Brigade reportedly continue to operate in the Bakhmut direction.[36]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of March 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

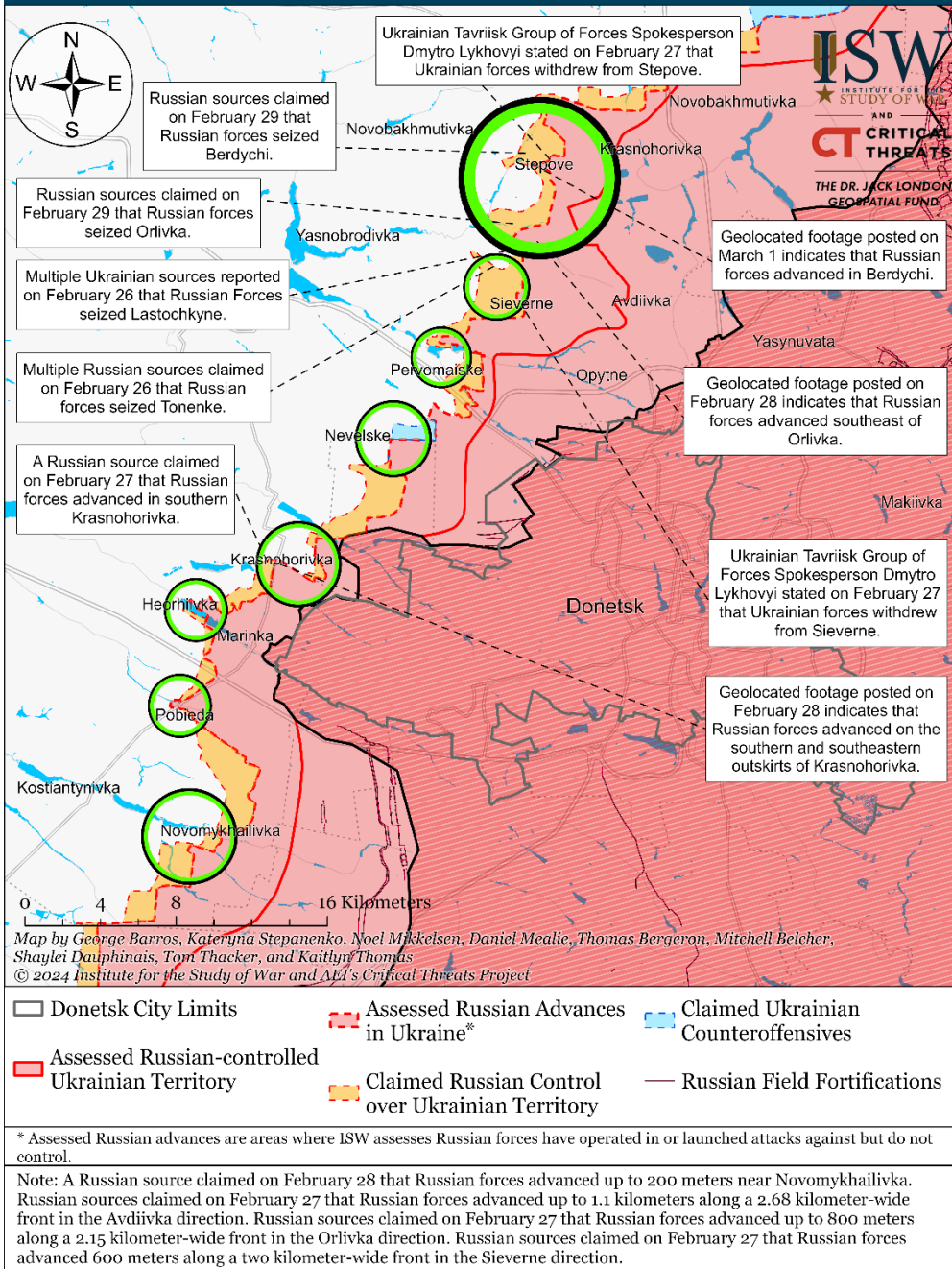


Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash indicated on March 1 that Ukrainian forces have established significant defensive positions near Chasiv Yar (west of Bakhmut). Yevlash stated that Ukrainian forces began to prepare Chasiv Yar for defense immediately following the Russian seizure of Bakhmut in May 2023 and that there are several Ukrainian defensive “rings” around the settlement.[37] Yevlash stated that Ukrainian forces have established dozens of squad-sized defensive positions and dozens of platoon-sized defensive positions near Chasiv Yar as well as fortifications and firing points within Chasiv Yar itself.[38] Yevlash also stated that Ukrainian forces have created minefields and other defensive obstacles in the Chasiv Yar area.[39] Available imagery, which ISW will not present or describe in greater detail at this time to preserve Ukrainian operational security, shows that Ukrainian forces have established significant fortifications in a ring shape in the

Chasiv Yar area. Yevlash stated that the potential Russian seizure of Chasiv Yar would offer Russian forces routes of advance towards Kostyantynivka (southwest of Chasiv Yar) and that Russian forces' main operational objective in Donetsk Oblast remains the Kramatorsk-Sloviansk agglomeration (about 35km northwest of Bakhmut).[40]

Russian forces recently advanced west of Avdiivka amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on March 1. Geolocated footage published on February 29 indicates that elements of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Army Corps [AC]) recently advanced to the southeastern outskirts of Orlivka (west of Avdiivka).[41] Additional geolocated footage published on March 1 indicates that elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) recently advanced into eastern Berdychi (northwest of Avdiivka).[42] A Russian milblogger reiterated existing Russian claims that Ukrainian forces have withdrawn from Tonenke (west of Avdiivka) and that Russian forces have completely seized Orlivka.[43] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of Russian forces operating in Tonenke or Orlivka. Positional fighting continued northwest of Avdiivka near Novobakhmutivka and Semenivka and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske and Pervomaiske.[44] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy stated that Russian forces are intensifying indirect fires and increasing the size of their assault groups up to the size of a "battalion tactical group" in the Avdiivka direction.[45] Tarnavskiy stated that Russian forces are committing reinforcements to offensive operations in the Avdiivka area and acknowledged that Russian forces have recently achieved unspecified localized successes.[46]

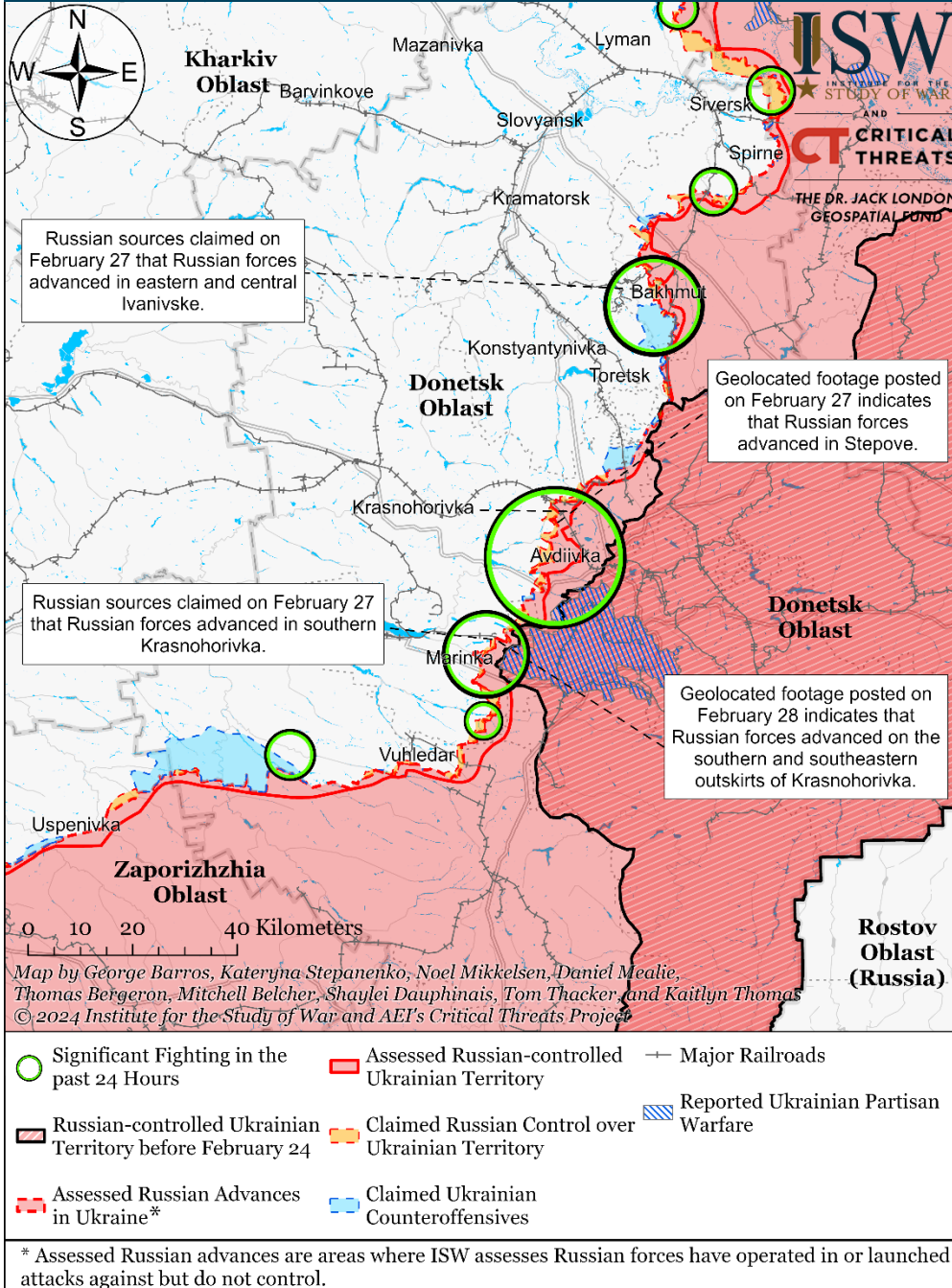
Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of March 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced southwest of Donetsk City amid continued positional fighting west and southwest of Donetsk City on March 1. Geolocated footage published on March 1 indicates that elements of the Russian 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, Eastern Military District [EMD]) recently made a marginal advance in southern Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk City).[47] Additional geolocated footage published on March 1 indicates that Russian forces recently

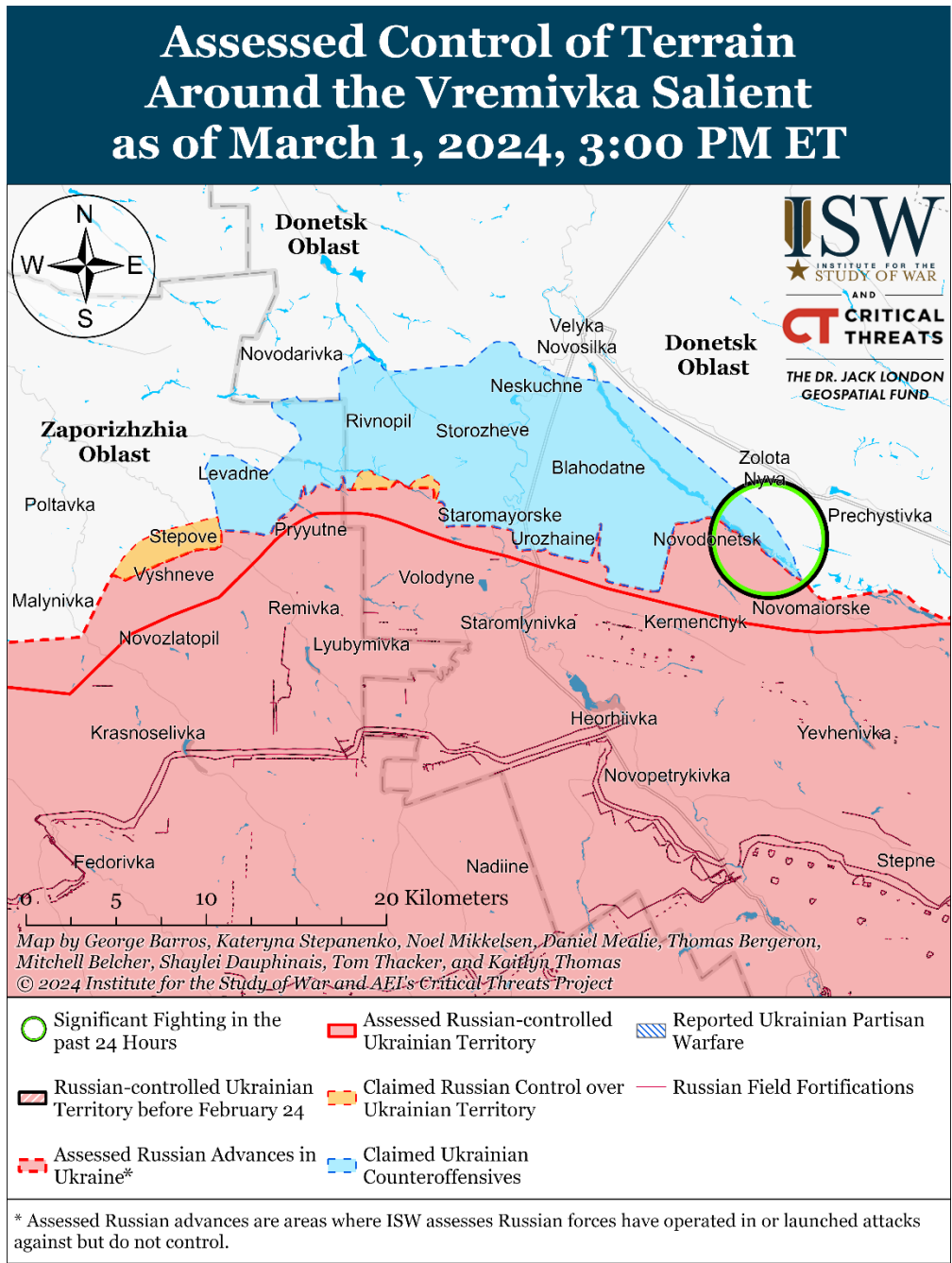
advanced east of Pobieda (southwest of Donetsk City).[48] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continued to operate on the southern outskirts of Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City), although Ukrainian military officials stated that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces out of Krasnohorivka on February 27.[49] Positional fighting continued west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Pobieda and Novomykhailivka.[50] Elements of the Russian 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) are reportedly operating near Novomykhailivka, and elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Krasnohorivka.[51]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of March 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional fighting continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on March 1. Positional fighting occurred southeast of Velyka Novosilka near Novodonetske and Zolota Nyva; south of Velyka Novosilka near Urozhaine; and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Marfopil, Shevchenko, and

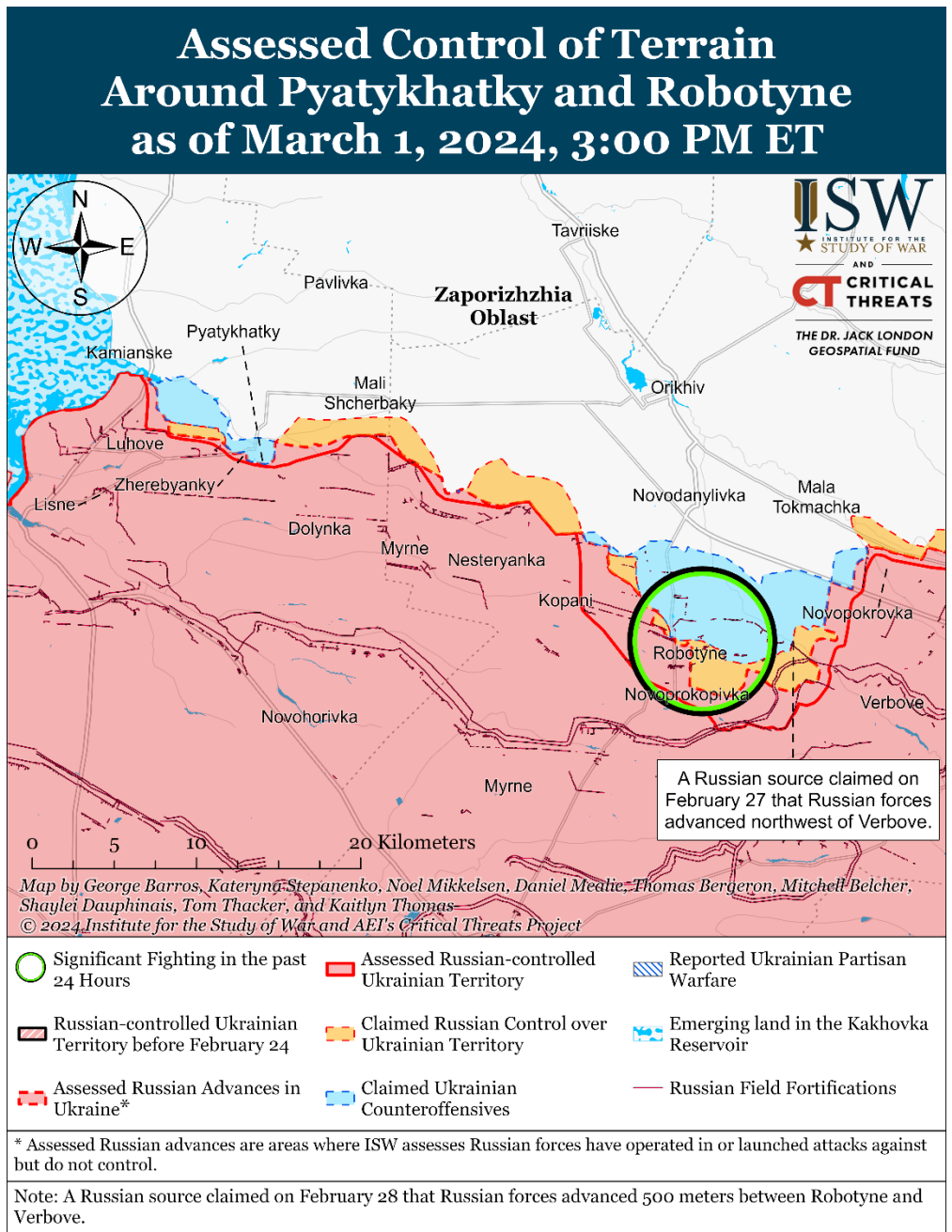
Malynivka.[52] Elements of the 11th Air and Air Defense Forces Army (Russian Aerospace Forces [VKS] and EMD) are reportedly operating near Malynivka.[53]



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

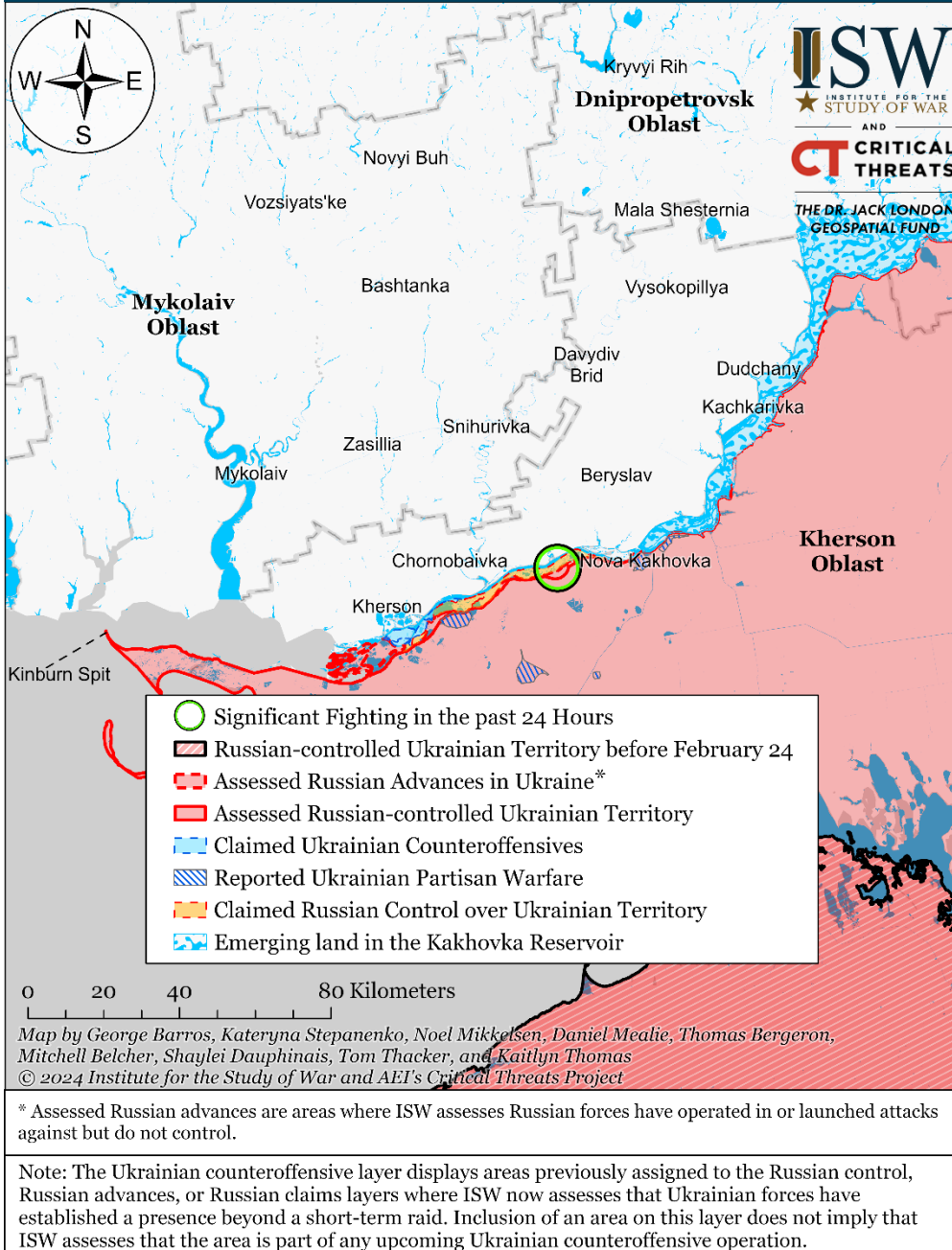
Positional engagements continued in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on March 1, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued near Robotyne.[54] A Russian milblogger claimed that destruction within Robotyne is making it difficult for Russian forces to establish a foothold and that Russian forces have to routinely

maneuver within a contested "gray zone" in the settlement.[55] Elements of the Russian 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Robotyne.[56]



Positional engagements continued in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast near Krynky on March 1.[57] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are trying to clear the area near Krynky.[58]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of March 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a series of strikes against Russian targets near Sevastopol, Yevpatoria, Saky, and Simferopol in occupied Crimea.[59] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces shot down up to ten unspecified air targets.[60]

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 March 1 that Russian forces launched five S-300 missiles from Belgorod Oblast and occupied Donetsk Oblast and four Shahed-136/131 drones from Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai at Ukraine on the night of February 29 to March 1.[61] The Ukrainian Air Force stated that Ukrainian forces destroyed all four Shaheds over Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts. Kostyantynivka City Military Administration Head Serhii Horbunov stated that Russian forces struck administrative and infrastructure facilities in Kostyantynivka, Donetsk Oblast with four S-300 missiles.[62]

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

Russian authorities will likely use annual combat training for Russian reservists to support crypto-mobilization efforts. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the annual decree on conscripting Russian reservists for military training in 2024.[63] Russian reservists in the Russian armed forces, Rosgvardia, Ministry of Emergency Situations, Federal Security Service (FSB), and other state security agencies will undergo combat training.[64] Russian citizens who have previously been conscripted into the Russian military are considered reservists. Russian authorities will likely use this mandatory combat training to try to recruit Russian reservists through ongoing crypto-mobilization efforts that offer incentives for signing military contracts.

The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that the Russian defense industrial base (DIB) significantly increased artillery ammunition production in 2023 and will likely continue to increase in 2024.[65] The UK MoD stated that Russian munitions production will likely peak in “the next 12 months due to capacity restraints.” The UK MoD stated that the increased Russian DIB output is due to Russian efforts to refurbish and modernize existing materiel rather than produce new materiel and noted that the “vast majority” of Russian tanks “produced” in 2023 were refurbished. The UK MoD assessed that the Russian DIB is unable to meet the demands of the Russian military but is “certainly capable” of maintaining a material advantage over Ukraine in 2024.

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

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on March 1 that Russian forces conducted a successful combat training launch of the RS-24 Yars intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) equipped with a multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV).[66] Putin emphasized during his address to the Federal Assembly on February 29 that Russia possesses weapons that can strike Western countries.[67] ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin frequently uses nuclear saber-rattling to instill fear in Western audiences and weaken Western support for Ukraine and that Russian nuclear use in Ukraine and beyond is highly unlikely.[68]

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

Note: ISW will be publishing its coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts on a weekly basis in the Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment. ISW will continue to track developments in Ukrainian defense industrial efforts daily and will refer to these efforts in assessments within the daily Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment and other ISW products when necessary.

ISW is not publishing coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts today.

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)

Note: ISW will be publishing coverage of activities in Russian-occupied areas twice a week in the Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment. ISW will continue to track activities in Russian-occupied areas daily and will refer to these activities in assessments within the daily Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment and other ISW products when necessary.

ISW is not publishing coverage of activities in Russian-occupied areas today.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Spokesperson Andriy Yusov stated that Russian First Deputy Presidential Chief of Staff Sergei Kiriyenko and former assistant to Russian President Vladimir Putin Vladislav Surkov are involved in an ongoing Russian information campaign aimed at demoralizing Ukrainian society called “Maidan-3.”[69] Yusov stated on February 29 that Russia is purchasing Telegram channels and other social network pages and attempting to attract unspecified influential individuals to spread disinformation that delegitimizes Ukrainian government decisions.[70]

Kremlin officials continue attempts to deter Western states from sending military aid to Ukraine. Kremlin officials seized on an audio recording allegedly of a conversation between German military personnel to accuse Germany of planning a strike on the Kerch Strait Bridge.[71] Kremlin newswire *TASS* and veteran Russian propagandist and *RT* editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan posted a transcript of the alleged German audio, wherein the alleged German military personnel discuss how much training and preparation the German military would need to provide should Germany decide to supply Ukraine with Taurus missiles, and should Ukraine decide to conduct a complicated long-range precision strike on Russian targets like the Kerch Strait Bridge.[72] ISW cannot independently verify the authenticity of the audio recording or transcript. Russian officials routinely intensify their attempts to portray the Western provision of certain systems to Ukraine as significant escalations when those systems are subjects of debate in the West. [73]

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)

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.

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[1] <https://www.wsj.com/world/russia-ukraine-peace-deal-2022-document-6e12e093>

[2] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar020824> ; <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/67843> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121423>

[3] <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/09/ukraine-military-2014-russia-us-training/> ; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/03/03/ukraines-military-is-far-smaller-than-russias-but-theres-3-reasons-it-might-not-be-so-easy-to-crush/>

[4] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar013124>

[5] <https://www.wsj.com/world/russia-ukraine-peace-deal-2022-document-6e12e093>

[6] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121423>

[7] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar112723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar122722> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar12232022> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-22-2023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar110423> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-26-2024>

[8] <https://www.wsj.com/world/russia-ukraine-peace-deal-2022-document-6e12e093>

[9] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar022224> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar122823> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-14-2023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121523> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121323>

[10] https://t.me/tass_agency/234304

[11] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar022924> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-20->

2024 ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar021424> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar020224> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar012624>

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