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and Frederick W. Kagan with Nate Trotter and William Runkel**

March 16, 2025, 5:45pm 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 interactive map of Ukraine's offensive in Kursk Oblast.

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 11:15 am ET on March 16. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the March 17 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz stated on March 16 that Ukraine will receive unspecified security guarantees in exchange for unspecified territorial concessions.[1] Waltz also stated that the United States is considering "the reality of the situation on the ground" in diplomatic talks when discussing an end to the war in Ukraine.[2] It is not clear exactly what Waltz meant by "the reality of the situation on the ground." Russian officials have frequently used the narrative that any negotiations must consider the "realities on the ground" to refer to the current frontline in Ukraine and their claims of the inevitability of further Russian battlefield gains.[3] Waltz's acknowledgement that Ukraine will receive unspecified security guarantees is a key aspect of achieving US President Donald Trump's stated goal of securing a lasting peace in Ukraine, but stopping hostilities on indefensible lines would limit the effectiveness of security guarantees.

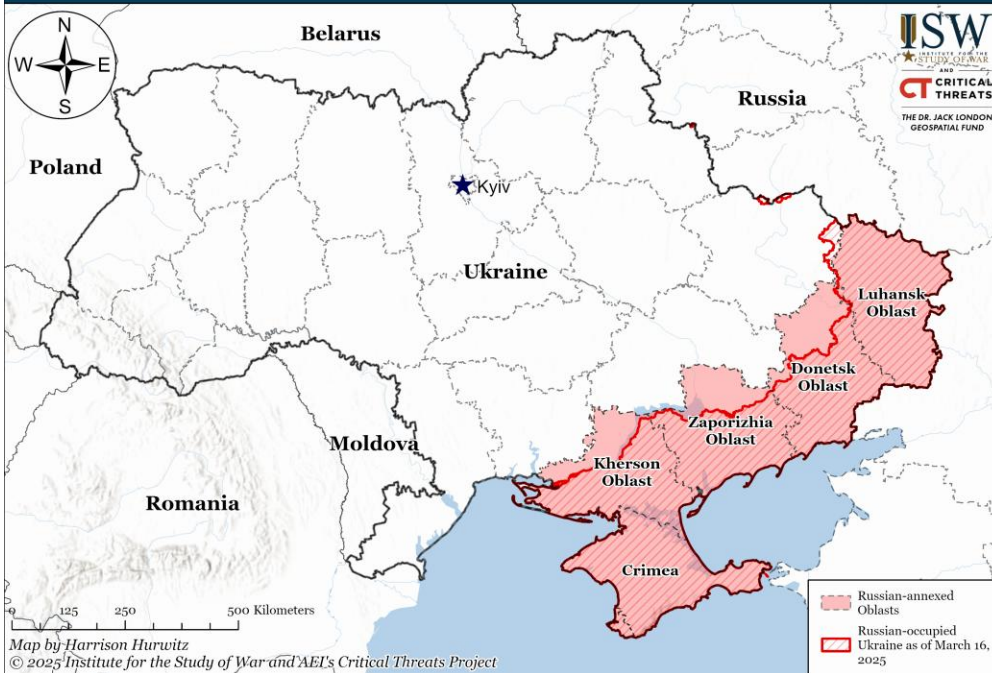
The current frontlines do not provide the strategic depth that Ukraine will need to reliably defend against renewed Russian aggression. Russian forces are just across the Dnipro River from Kherson City, roughly 25 kilometers from Zaporizhzhia City, and 30 kilometers from Kharkiv City. Russian troops on the Dnipro River could use a ceasefire to prepare for the extremely difficult task of conducting an opposed river crossing undisturbed, significantly increasing the likelihood of success in such an endeavor. Stopping a well-prepared, major mechanized offensive cold is extremely rare in war, which means that a renewed Russian assault would likely threaten both Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia cities, as well as key cities in the Donetsk "fortress belt," almost immediately.

Russia is constructing a large highway and railway aimed at connecting major cities in occupied Ukraine and Russia, which will reinforce Russia's hold on occupied Ukraine and Russia's ability to transport and supply Russian forces operating in Ukraine in the event of a future Russian offensive in southern Ukraine.[4]

The US and Europe would likely need to provide military aid to Ukraine more rapidly, in much larger volumes, and at higher cost the closer the ultimate ceasefire lines are to the current frontline. Ukraine would likely need an even larger military with greater capabilities to play its critical role in deterring and, if necessary, defeating future aggression along current frontline (both within Ukraine and along Ukraine's international border with Russia) that is over 2,100 kilometers long. Enforcing a ceasefire along the current frontline would also require the commitment of large numbers of Western forces. Helping Ukraine regain strategically critical territory, as Trump has suggested he intends to do, could significantly reduce the cost and difficulty of securing a future peace.[5] A ceasefire along more defensible positions would also place Russian forces in a more disadvantaged position for renewed offensive operations, making future Russian aggression less likely.

Russian officials maintain their maximalist territorial claims over all occupied Ukraine and significant parts of unoccupied Ukraine, however. Senior Kremlin officials, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, have consistently demanded that Ukraine surrender the entirety of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts, including areas that Russian forces do not already occupy, and have reiterated these claims in recent weeks.[6] Russian state media has also recently amplified similar sentiments from Kremlin-affiliated mouthpieces.[7] Putin recently claimed that "Novorossiia" is an integral part of Russia, and Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov defined "Novorossiia" as all of eastern and southern Ukraine including Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, and Mykolaiv oblasts.[8] Russia currently occupies a small portion of Kharkiv Oblast and the Kinburn Spit in Mykolaiv Oblast, and Russian forces are advancing towards the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast administrative border. Continued Kremlin statements demanding that Ukraine cede unoccupied Ukrainian territory indicate that the Kremlin and Putin remain committed to these territorial goals despite ongoing negotiations.

Ukrainian Oblasts that Russia Declared Annexed in September 2022



Ukrainian Oblasts that the Kremlin Defines as "Novorossiya" ("New Russia")



Russian officials have given no public indications that they are willing to make concessions on their territorial or security demands of Ukraine. Accepting Western-backed security guarantees for Ukraine would be a significant concession for Putin. Putin has repeatedly called

for Ukraine to permanently abandon its goals of joining NATO or any security bloc and to reject future offers of foreign military assistance, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov recently claimed that Russia will reject the future deployment of any European peacekeepers to Ukraine and consider any such deployment as the "direct, official, undisguised involvement of NATO countries" in the war.[9] Russian officials also appear to be generating increased support for their demands in Russian society despite the costs of Russia's protracted war effort, and Putin likely remains committed to securing a return for Russia's investment in the war he regards as sufficient.[10] Putin and Kremlin officials have been regularly broadcasting their demands for Ukrainian territorial and security concessions beyond the current frontlines to the Russian people, underscoring how unlikely Putin is to abandon his ambitions in Ukraine even after a ceasefire.

Russia continues to seize on diplomatic engagements with the United States to normalize its war demands. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke on the phone on March 15 and discussed next steps in discussions about a peace agreement in Ukraine.[11] Rubio and Lavrov agreed to continue working toward restoring dialogue between the United States and Russia. The US Department of State's and Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' readouts differ, however. Russian readouts emphasized that Rubio and Lavrov discussed implementing "mutual understandings" that were reached during the February 18 bilateral meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, but did not mention more recent US-Russian diplomatic engagements, whereas the US State Department's did not refer to "mutual understandings" reached in Riyadh.[12] This discrepancy in messaging indicates that the Kremlin is seizing specifically on the Riyadh meeting as part of ongoing narrative efforts to portray the United States and Russia as in complete agreement on how to settle the war in Ukraine and to draw attention away from Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent rejection of the US-Ukrainian ceasefire proposal.

The United Kingdom (UK) convened a virtual Coalition of the Willing summit on March 15 to reiterate support for Ukraine and discuss plans for peace. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer chaired a virtual meeting with 29 international leaders, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and officials from Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, who have agreed to continue pressuring Russia, supplying military aid to Ukraine, and tightening economic restraints on Russia "to weaken Putin's war machine and bring him to the [negotiating] table." [13] Starmer stated that the Kremlin's delay over the US ceasefire proposal contradicts Putin's stated desire for peace.[14]

An unnamed military source told *The Sunday Times* on March 16 that 35 countries within the coalition have agreed to supply weapons, logistics, and intelligence support aimed at deterring Putin from resuming offensive operations in the future.[15] *The Sunday Times* reported on March 16 that Starmer outlined plans to deploy a Western peacekeeping contingent of over 10,000 troops to Ukraine, and an unnamed senior official told the outlet that officials are working at an "unprecedented" speed to establish the contingent. Starmer stated that the coalition will reconvene on March 20 to accelerate efforts to support a potential peace deal in Ukraine.[16]

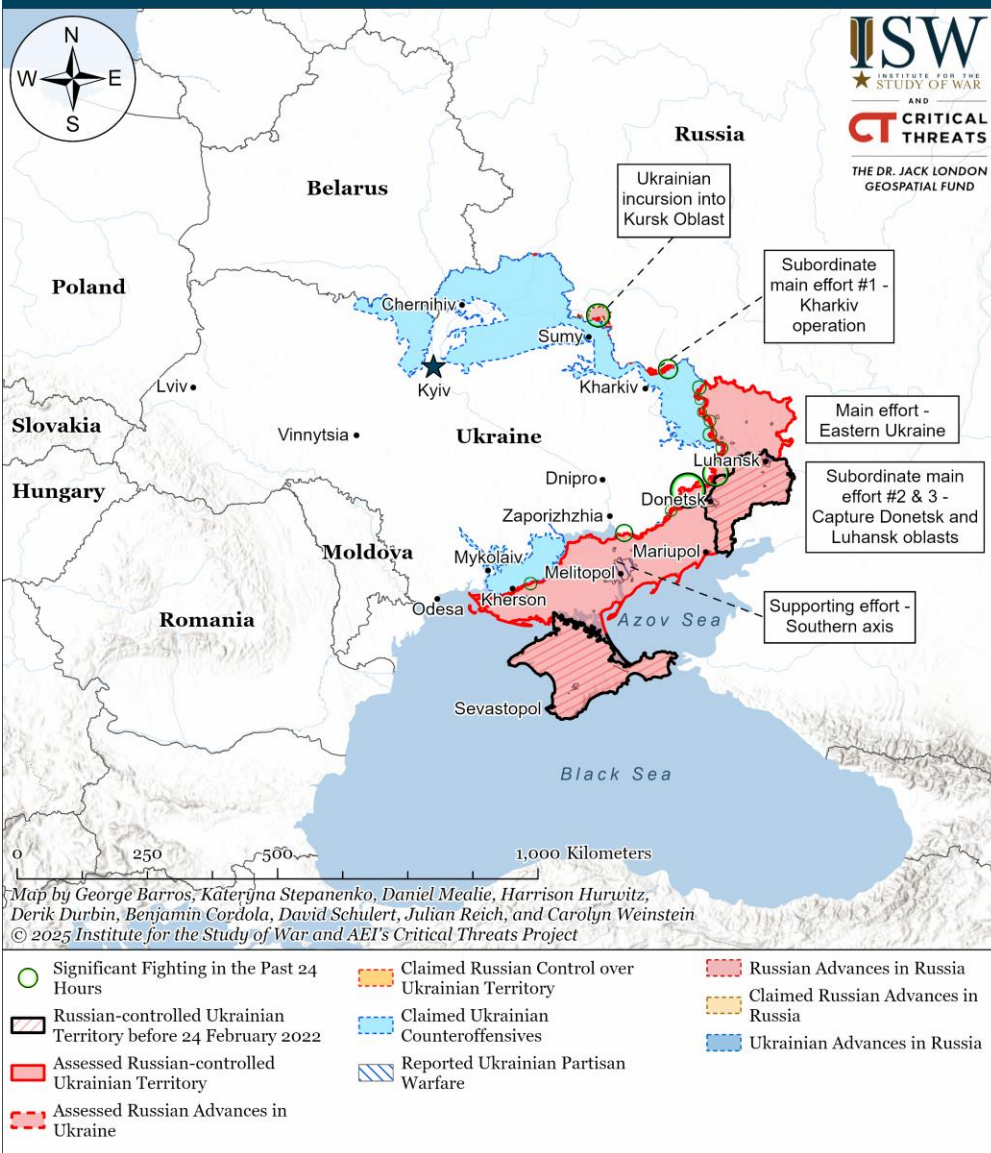
Key Takeaways:

- **US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz stated on March 16 that Ukraine will receive unspecified security guarantees in exchange for unspecified territorial concessions.**

- **The current frontlines do not provide the strategic depth that Ukraine will need to reliably defend against renewed Russian aggression.**
- **Russian officials maintain their maximalist territorial claims over all occupied Ukraine and significant parts of unoccupied Ukraine, however.**
- **Russian officials have given no public indications that they are willing to make concessions on their territorial or security demands of Ukraine.**
- **Russia continues to seize on diplomatic engagements with the United States to normalize its war demands.**
- **The United Kingdom (UK) convened a virtual Coalition of the Willing summit on March 15 to reiterate support for Ukraine and discuss plans for peace.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Borova and Russian forces advanced in Sumy Oblast and near Velyka Novosilka.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) continues efforts to posture as solving issues with the Russian military.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

March 16, 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 Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of three subordinate main efforts)

- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Significant Activity in Belarus

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Russian forces continued ground operations to push Ukrainian forces from their remaining positions in Kursk Oblast on March 16 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed Claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced to the Sudzha border checkpoint along the H-07 Yunakivka-Sudzha highway and advanced north of Gogolevka (west of Rubanshchina), west of Kurilovka (south of Sudzha), and north of Guyevo (south of Kurilovka).[17]

Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are attacking near Kurilovka and Guyevo.[18]

A Ukrainian military observer reiterated that Russian forces have not surrounded Ukrainian forces in Kursk Oblast.[19] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are surrounding an unspecified number of Ukrainian forces southwest of Sudzha, but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[20] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are defending more intensely as Russian forces continue to advance towards the international border.[21]

An assault company commander in the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) claimed on March 16 that Ukrainian drones continue to present a significant challenge for Russian forces in Kursk Oblast.[22] The Russian commander claimed that withdrawing Ukrainian forces are operating 300-400 drones in the brigade's area of responsibility (AoR) and that Russian recruits need better anti-drone training to prepare them to counter Ukrainian drones. The commander suggested that Ukrainian forces maintain "low-altitude air superiority" in Kursk Oblast despite Russian forces having established air superiority at higher altitudes using traditional systems, a phenomenon which appears to be common along a large portion of the frontline. ISW previously noted that military forces may struggle to establish and maintain low-altitude air superiority as low-altitude drone threats become increasingly prevalent in modern warfare.[23]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 56th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) are reportedly operating along the international border, and elements of the 137th VDV Regiment (106th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Sudzha.[24]

Russian forces recently advanced in northern Sumy Oblast.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 15 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced in western Basivka (northeast of Sumy City).[25]

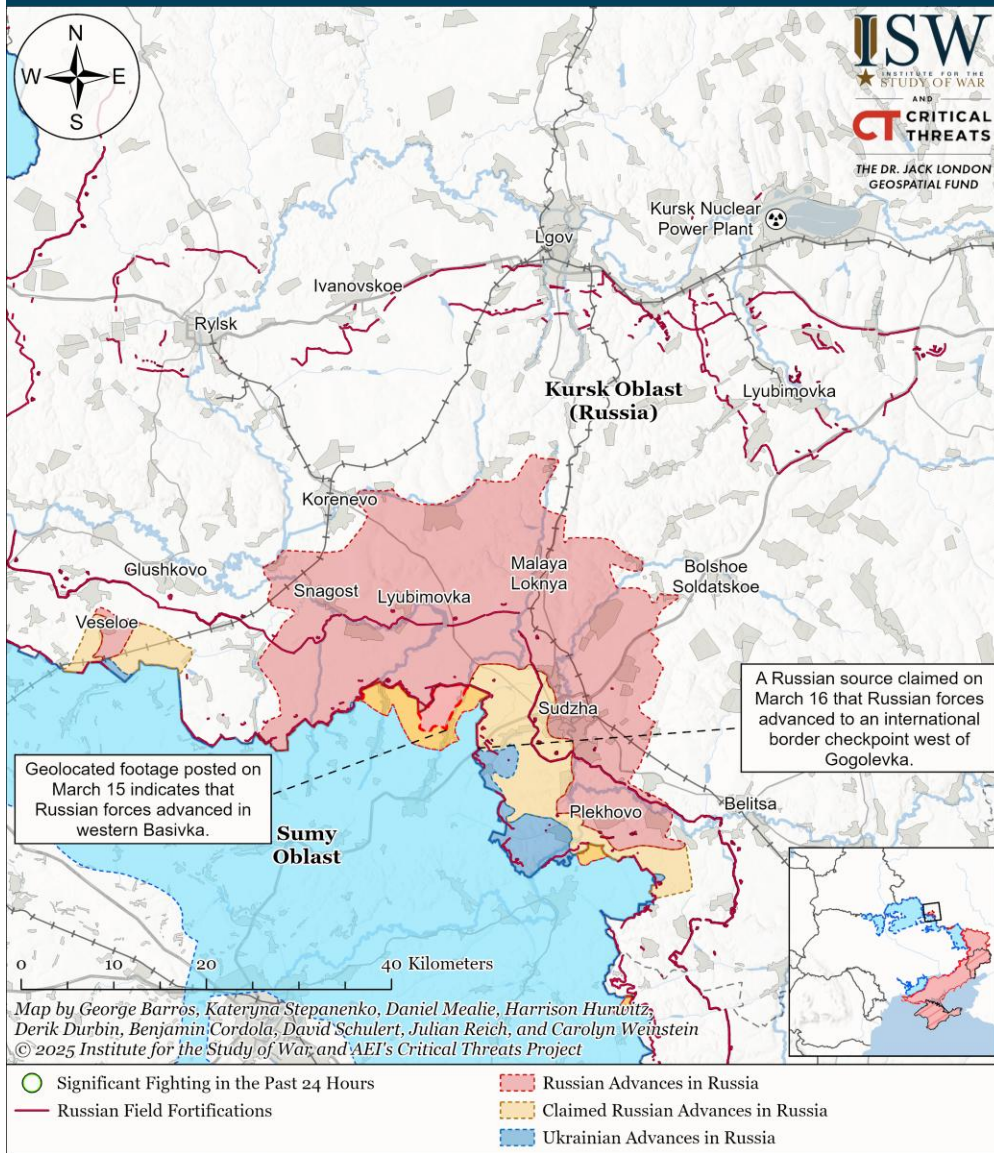
Unconfirmed claims: Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced southwest of Zhuravka (northeast of Sumy City).[26]

Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting continues near Basivka and Zhuravka.[27]

Ukrainian forces appear to be conducting a tactical strike campaign against Russian air defense systems along the frontline in Russia and occupied Ukraine. The commander of a Ukrainian drone regiment reported on March 15 that Ukrainian forces have damaged a significant number of Russian air defense systems along the frontline, forcing Russian forces to either replace or repair the frontline systems.[28] The commander stated that Russian air defense redeployments are creating "holes" in Russia's air defense umbrella that Ukraine can leverage to conduct successful strikes on Russian targets. The Ukrainian drone regiment reported on March 15 that it has destroyed four Russian Pantsir-S1 air defense systems worth an estimated \$56 million over an unspecified period.[29]

Russian sources amplified unsubstantiated claims on March 16 of systemic Ukrainian abuse and killing of civilians while retreating from Kursk Oblast.[30] ISW warned on March 15 that the Kremlin is likely preparing to intensify a narrative that accuses Ukrainian forces of war crimes in Kursk Oblast in an attempt to discredit the Ukrainian military, erode Western support for Ukraine, and spoil or delay straightforward discussions about the US-Ukrainian 30-day ceasefire proposal.[31]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction March 16, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



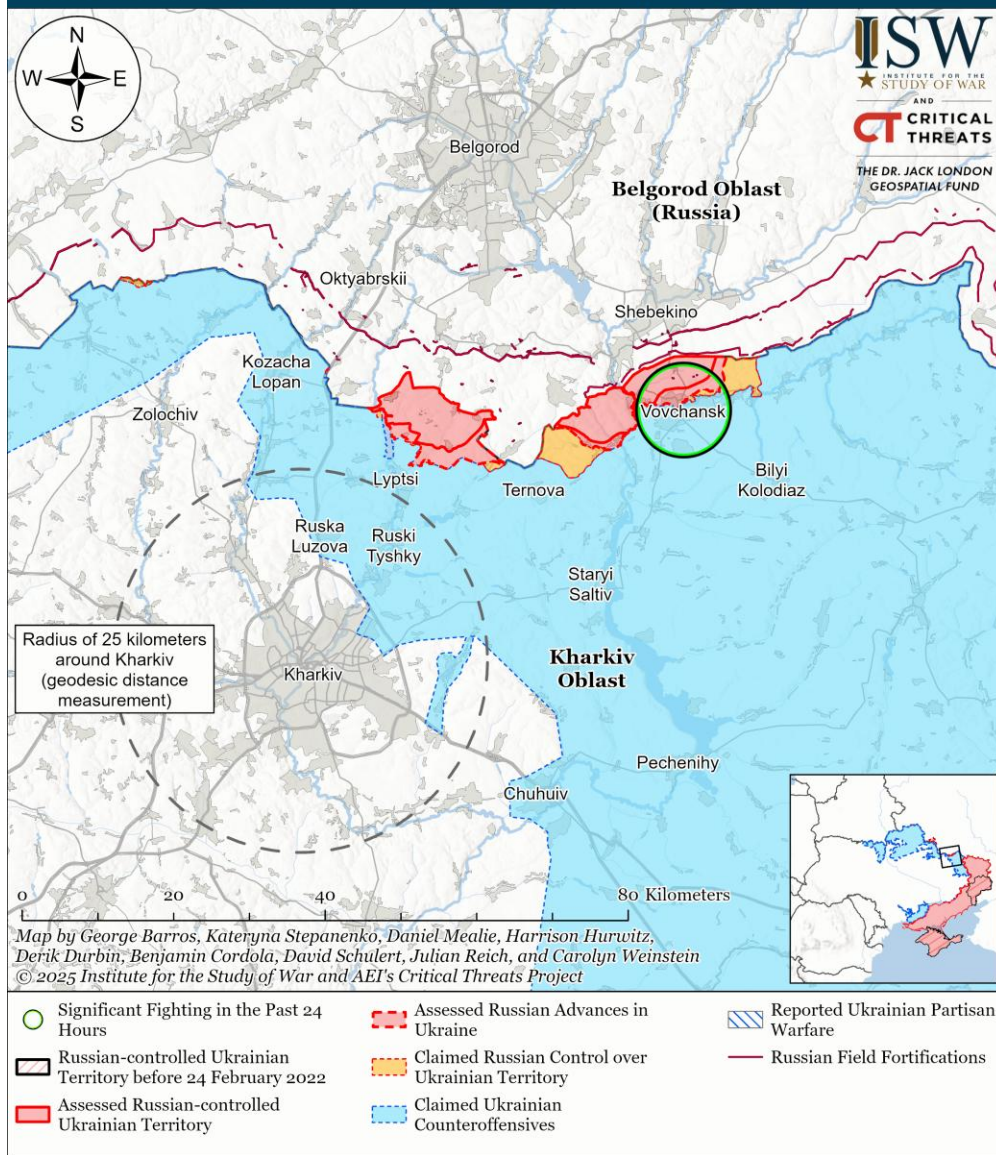
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 continued offensive operations in northern Kharkiv Oblast on March 16 but did not advance.

Russian forces continued attacking northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on March 16.[32]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kharkiv Direction March 16, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



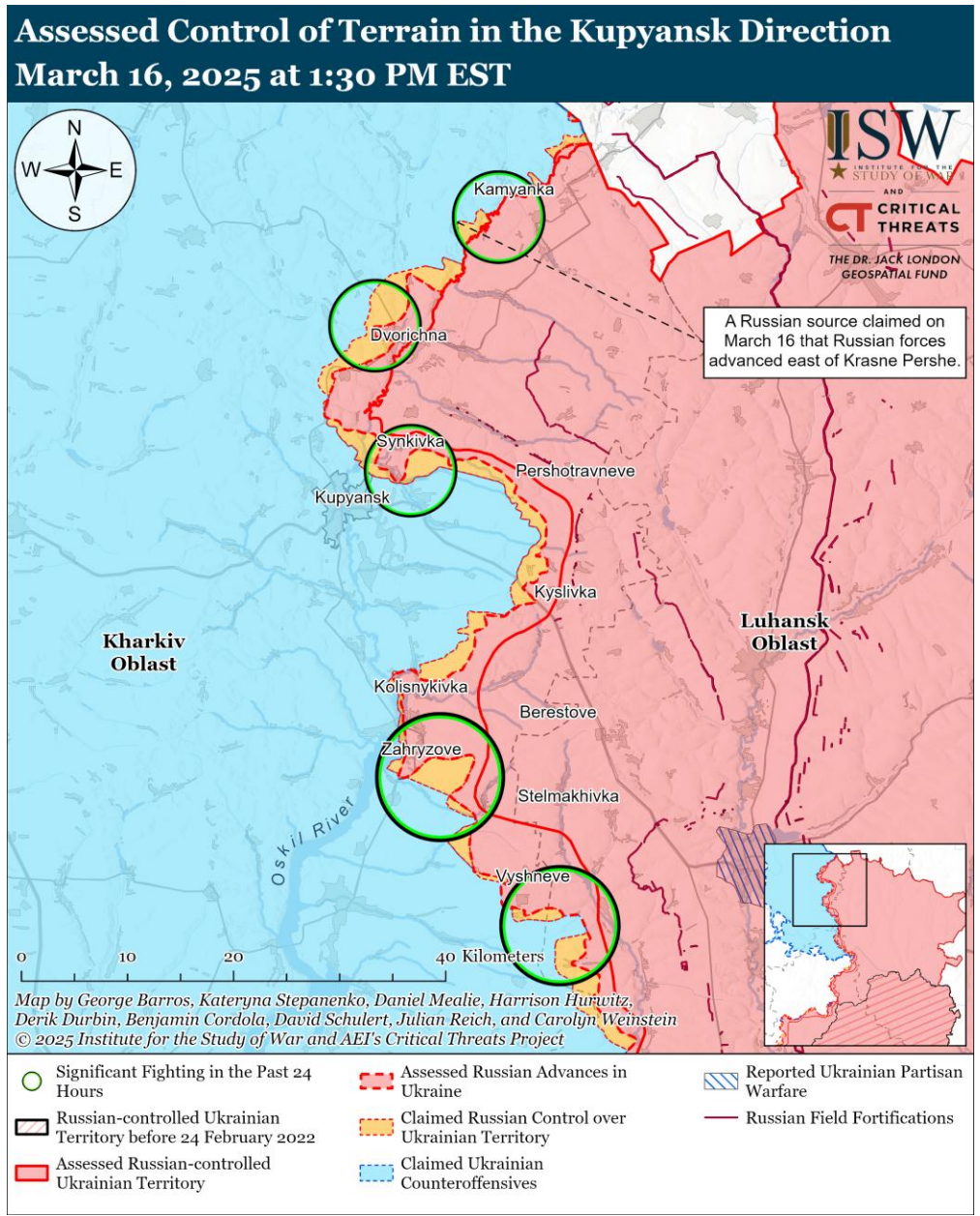
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on March 16 but did not advance.

Unconfirmed advances: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced near Fyholivka, Krasne Pershe, and Kamyanka (all northeast of Kupyansk).[33]

Russian forces attacked toward Kupyansk itself; north of Kupyansk near Kutkivka; northeast of Kupyansk near Kamyanka and Petrivka; and east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka on March 15 and 16.[34]

The commander of a Ukrainian regiment operating in the Kupyansk direction stated on March 16 that Russian forces recently crossed the Oskil River near Dvorichna (northeast of Kupyansk) and are attempting to establish pontoon crossings for artillery and armored vehicles.[35] The deputy commander of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Kupyansk direction stated on March 15 that small Russian infantry groups have become more active in the area.[36] The deputy commander stated that Russian forces attempt to remotely mine Ukrainian ground lines of communication at night.

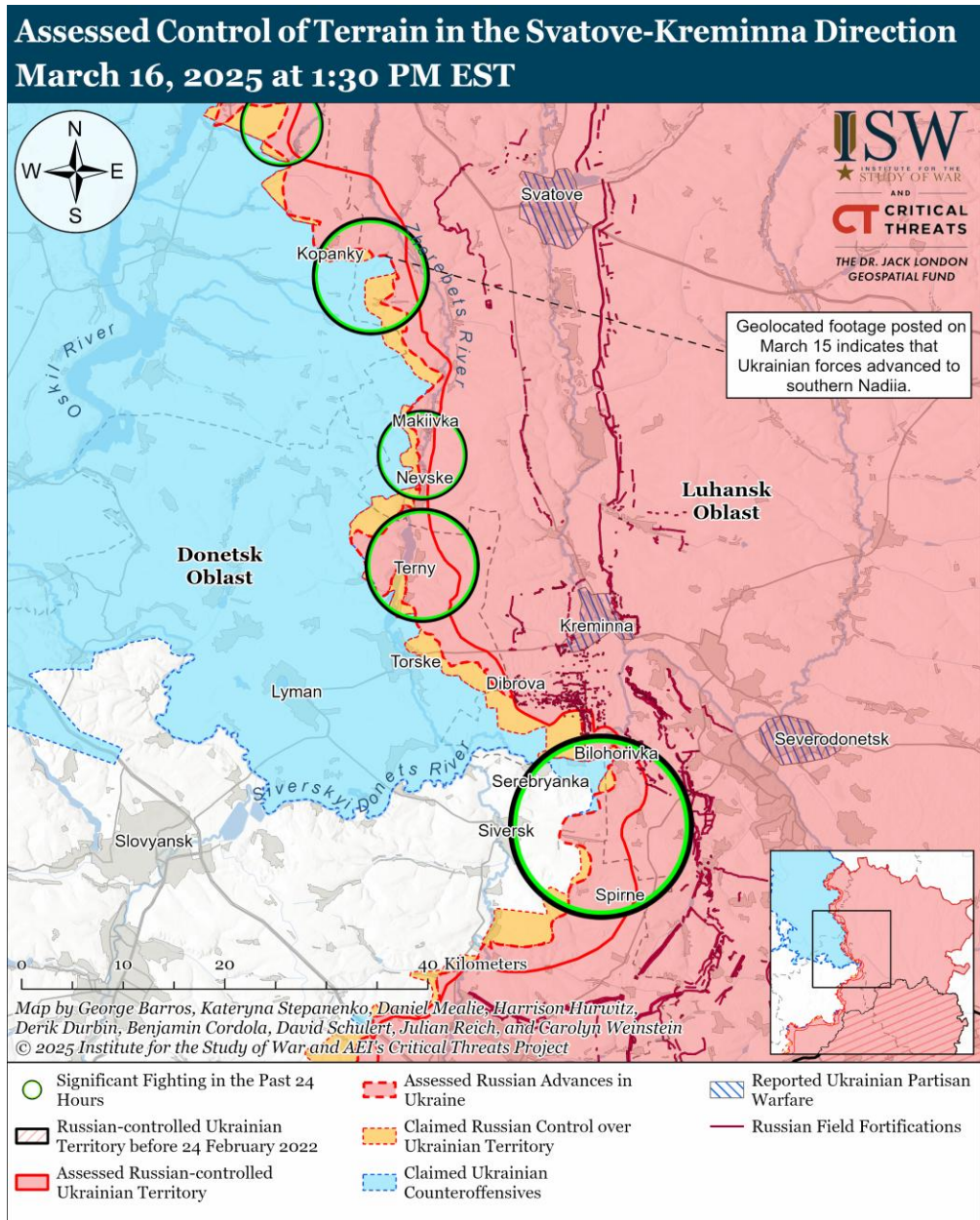


Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Borova direction.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 15 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced in southern Nadiya (east of Borova).[37]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Zahryzove, Bohuslavka, and Lozova; and west of Borova near Kopanky, Nadiya, and Novoyehorivka on March 15 and 16.[38]

A soldier in a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Borova direction reported on March 16 that Russian forces conducted fewer assaults during the week of March 10 than previous weeks.[39]

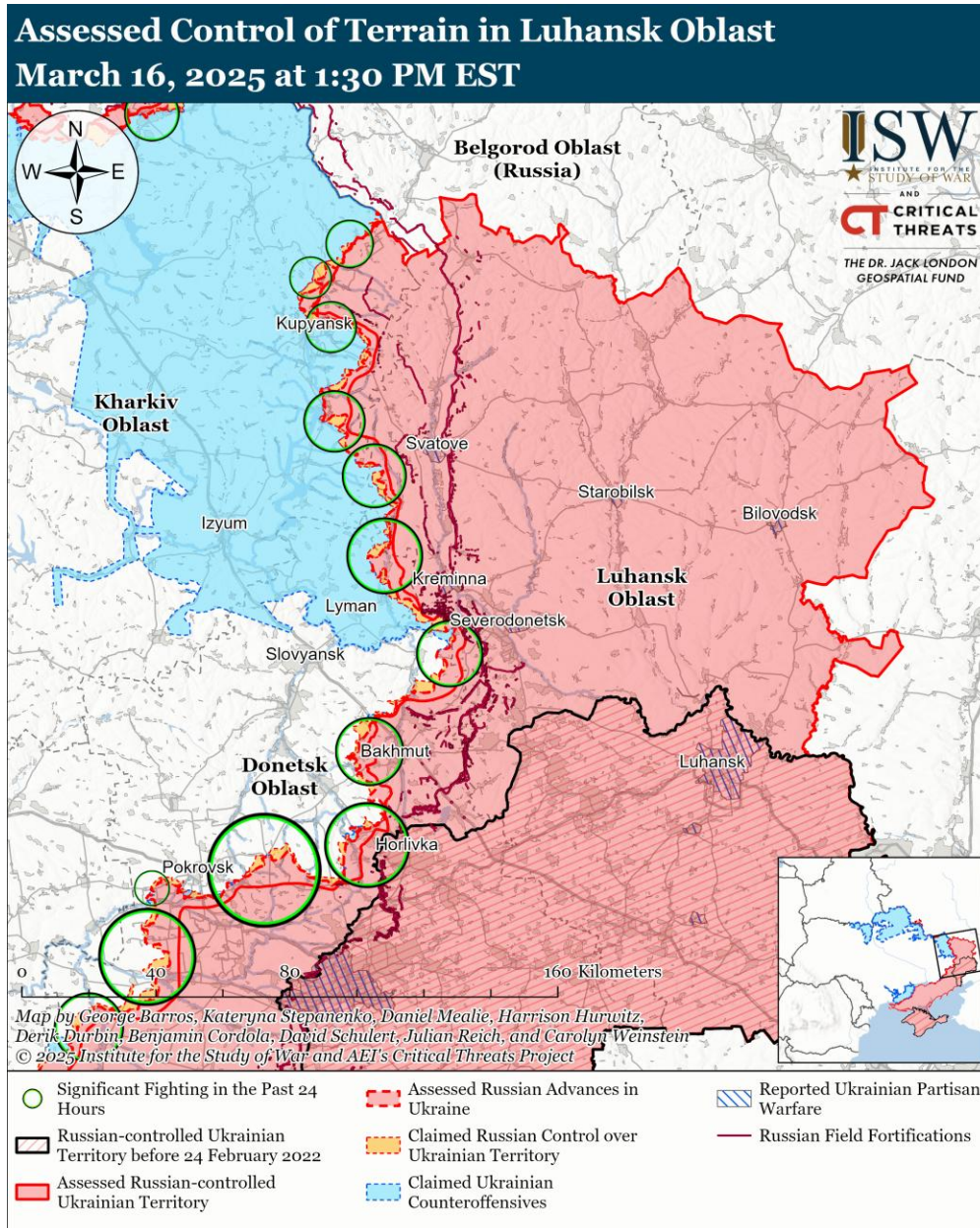


Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on March 16 but did not advance.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on March 16 that Russian forces seized Novolyubivka (northeast of Lyman), and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces seized the settlement as of February 22.[40]

Russian forces attacked north of Lyman toward Zelena Dolyna and northeast of Lyman near Balka Zhuravka (formerly Nevske), Ivanivka, Yampolivka, and Kolodyazi on March 15 and 16.[41]

The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Lyman direction stated on March 16 that Russian forces conducted many small infantry assaults in the Lyman direction on March 15. The spokesperson added that Russian forces conducted several mechanized assaults of an unspecified echelon in the Lyman direction last week (roughly March 10 to 14).[42]



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

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on March 16 but did not make any confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on March 15 that Russian forces advanced 1.2 kilometers southwest of Siversk, reached Vasyukivka, and cleared a pocket west of Sakko i Vantsetti.[43]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka and Hryhorivka, east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske, and southeast of Siversk near Ivano-Darivka on March 15 and 16.[44]

The commander of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Siversk direction reported on March 15 that Russian forces are conducting more frequent assaults in groups of three to seven soldiers in the Siversk direction and strike Ukrainian drone operators rather than infantry in preparation for these assaults.[45] The Ukrainian battalion commander stated that Russian forces also convert civilian vehicles into military vehicles to transport infantry and support assaults. The Ukrainian battalion command reported that Russian forces recently conducted a motorized assault with four or five civilian vehicles and previously conducted an unspecified attack with 15 to 20 unspecified vehicles in the area. The Ukrainian battalion commander stated that the Russian military command slightly changed tactics after recent Russian command changes in the Siversk direction. ISW previously observed reports of the dismissal of the commander of the 3rd Combined Arms Army (CAA) (formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] Army Corps [AC], Southern Military District [SMD]) and arrests and dismissals of 3rd CAA frontline brigade and frontline unit commanders operating in the Siversk direction in Winter 2024.[46]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on March 16 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked near Chasiv Yar itself and northeast of Chasiv Yar near Orikhovo-Vasylivka on March 15 and 16.[47]

A Ukrainian brigade operating in the Chasiv Yar direction published footage on March 15 of Ukrainian forces repelling a reduced battalion-sized Russian mechanized assault of over 20 armored vehicles near Chasiv Yar.[48] The brigade stated that the Ukrainian force damaged or destroyed at least 10 armored vehicles. A Russian milblogger claimed that the coming warmer weather may complicate Russian efforts to advance in western and southern Chasiv Yar, presumably due to muddy terrain.[49]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Toretsk direction on March 16 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked near Toretsk itself, northwest of Toretsk towards Kostyantynivka, northeast of Toretsk near Druzhba, and southwest of Toretsk near Sukha Balka on March 15 and 16.[50]

Ukrainian Luhansk Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Dmytro Zaporozhets stated on March 15 that Ukrainian forces recently repelled at least a reinforced platoon-sized Russian mechanized assault in the Toretsk direction and destroyed five armored vehicles, four motorcycles, and one other vehicle.[51] Zaporozhets reported that Russian forces are concentrating attacks near the Toretska Mine (northern Toretsk) and Tsentralna Mine (central Toretsk).[52] Zaporozhets noted that Russian forces typically conduct infantry attacks in groups of two to 10 personnel and that Ukrainian forces have secured fire control with drones over nearly all of Toretsk, which is particularly evident when the weather is clear.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Pokrovsk direction on March 16 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Pokrovsk near Tarasivka; east of Pokrovsk near Yelyzavetivka, Promin, Svyrydonivka, Novotoretske, and Oleksandropil; southwest of Pokrovsk near Kotlyne, Novooleksandrivka, Uspenivka, Yasenove, and Nadiivka; and west of Pokrovsk towards Serhiivka on March 15 and 16.[53]

Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated on March 16 that Ukrainian forces have stabilized the situation in the Pokrovsk direction and that Russian forces overextended their ground lines of communication (GLOC) in the area.[54]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Tarasivka, and elements of the 35th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[55]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on March 16 but did not advance.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on March 16 that Russian forces advanced in an area up to one kilometer in depth and 500 meters wide near Rozlyv (southwest of Kurakhove) and seized three windbreaks in the area.[56]

Russian forces attacked west of Kurakhove near Kostyantynopil and Andriivka and southwest of Kurakhove near Rozlyv on March 15 and 16.[57] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Kostyantynopil from Rozlyv.[58]

An officer in a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Novopavlivka direction stated on March 16 that Russian forces are conducting reconnaissance missions near Kostyantynopil to assess Ukrainian defenses and that Russian forces are using vehicles and infantry to attack Ukrainian positions in the Kurakhove direction.[59]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the 14th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly operating near Rozlyv.[60]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Velyka Novosilka direction.

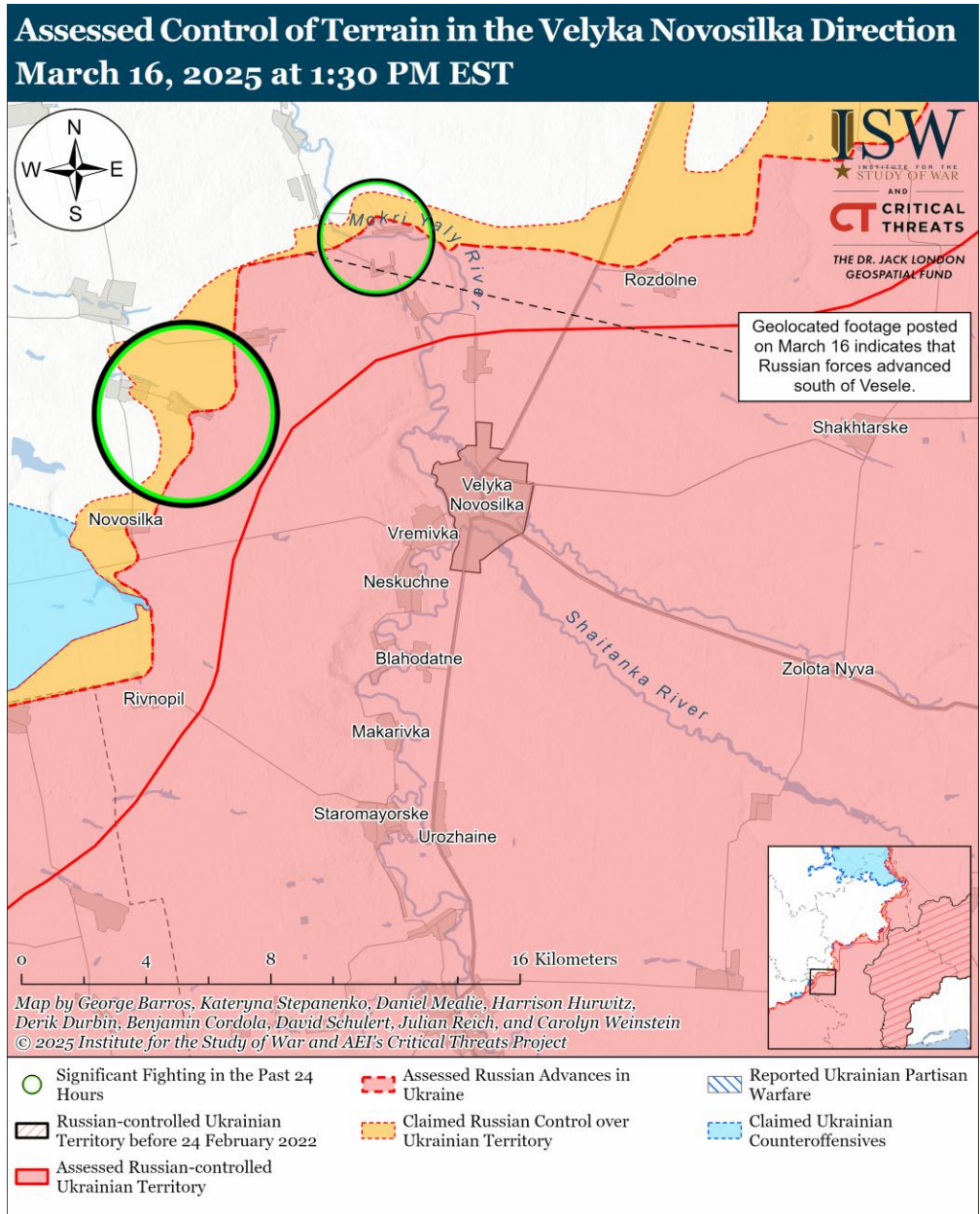
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 16 indicates that Russian forces advanced in the fields south of Vesele (north of Velyka Novosilka).[61]

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced further in the fields south of Vesele then geolocated footage indicates.[62] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced in an area up to 500 meters in depth and two kilometers wide near Shevchenko (northwest of Velyka Novosilka).[63]

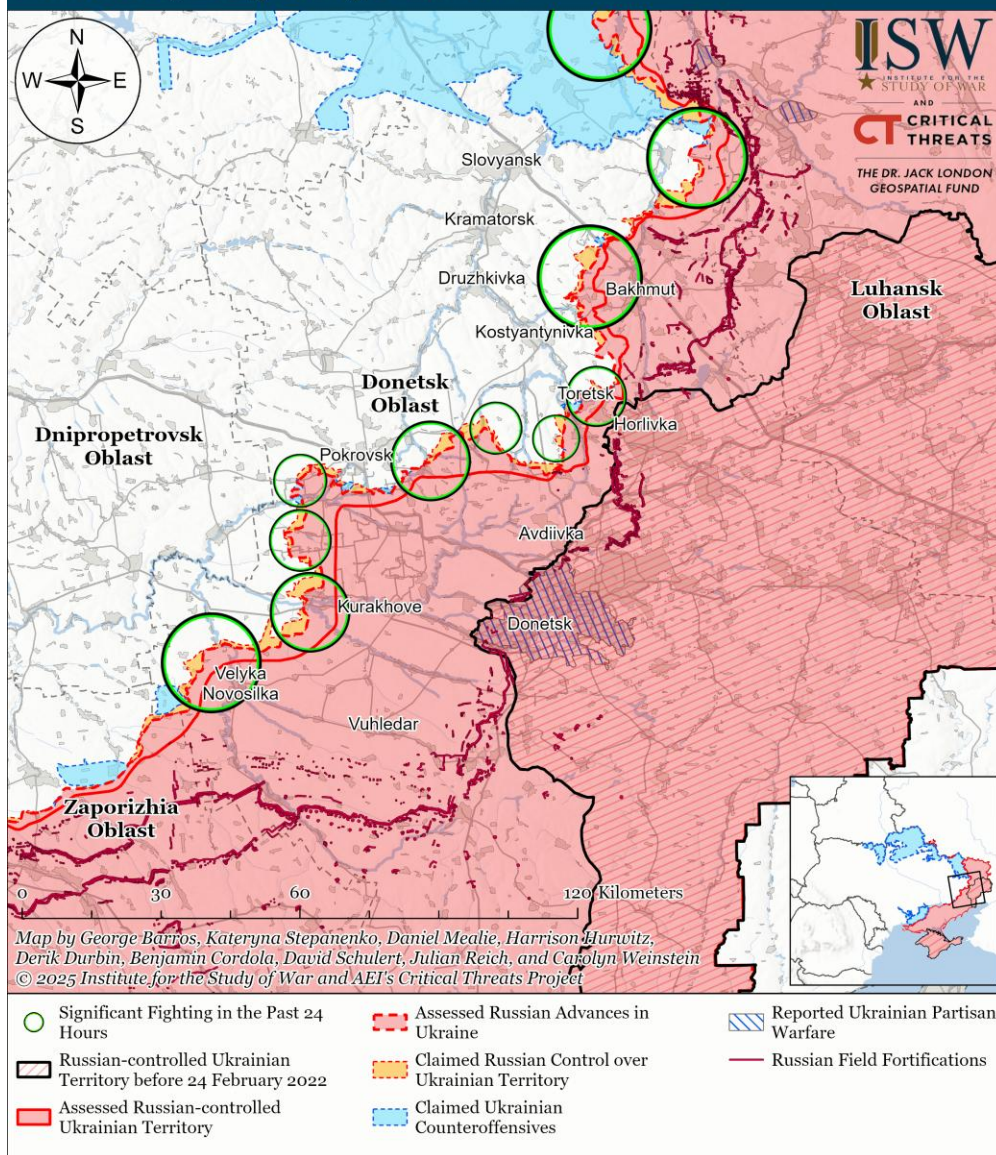
Russian forces attacked north of Velyka Novosilka near Vesele and Skudne; northwest of Velyka Novosilka near Vilne Pole and Pryvilne; and west of Velyka Novosilka near Novosilka and in the direction of Novopil on March 15 and 16.[64] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces

counterattacked near Burlatske (northwest of Velyka Novosilka), Shevchenko, and Vilne Pole.[65] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian counterattacks are slowing Russian advances in western Donetsk Oblast.[66]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 14th Spetsnaz Brigade, 43rd Spetsnaz Company (both GRU), and 36th Motorized Rifle Brigade (29th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating in the Velyka Novosilka direction.[67]



Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast March 16, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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

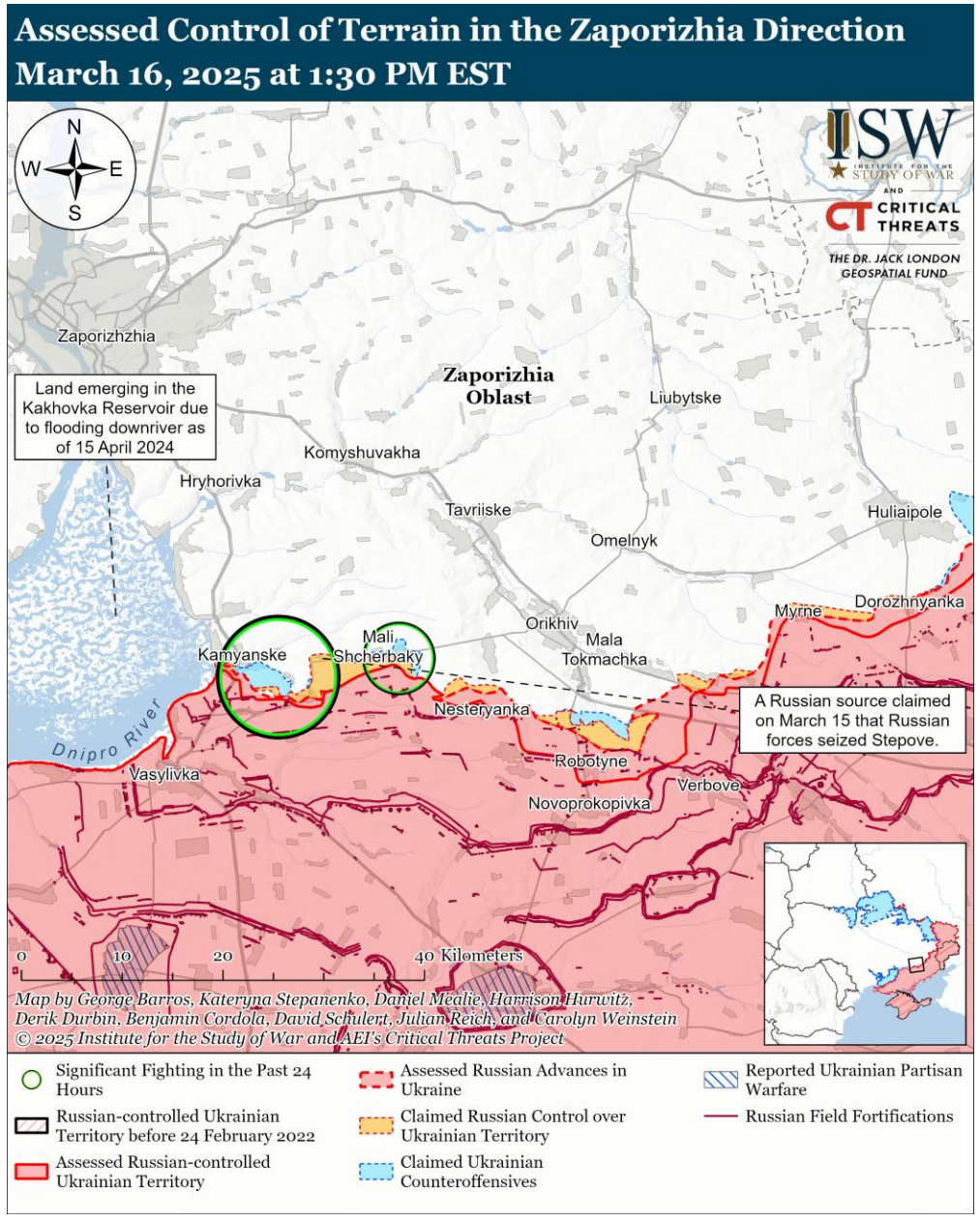
Russian forces continued ground attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on March 16 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian sources claimed that Russian forces seized Stepove and advanced near Mali Shcherbaky and Shcherbaky (all northwest of Robotyne), and one milblogger claimed that Russian forces have almost finished clearing Shcherbaky.[68]

Russian forces continued ground attacks northwest of Robotyne near Stepove, Zherybyanky, Pyatykhatky, Shcherbaky, Mali Shcherbaky, and Kamyanske on March 15 and 16.[69]

Ukrainian Southern Defense Forces Spokesperson Colonel Vladyslav Voloshyn stated that Russian forces have increased their assaults in Zaporizhia and Kherson oblasts as well as artillery and drone strikes due to improved weather conditions and Russian preparations for future offensive operations in the area.[70]

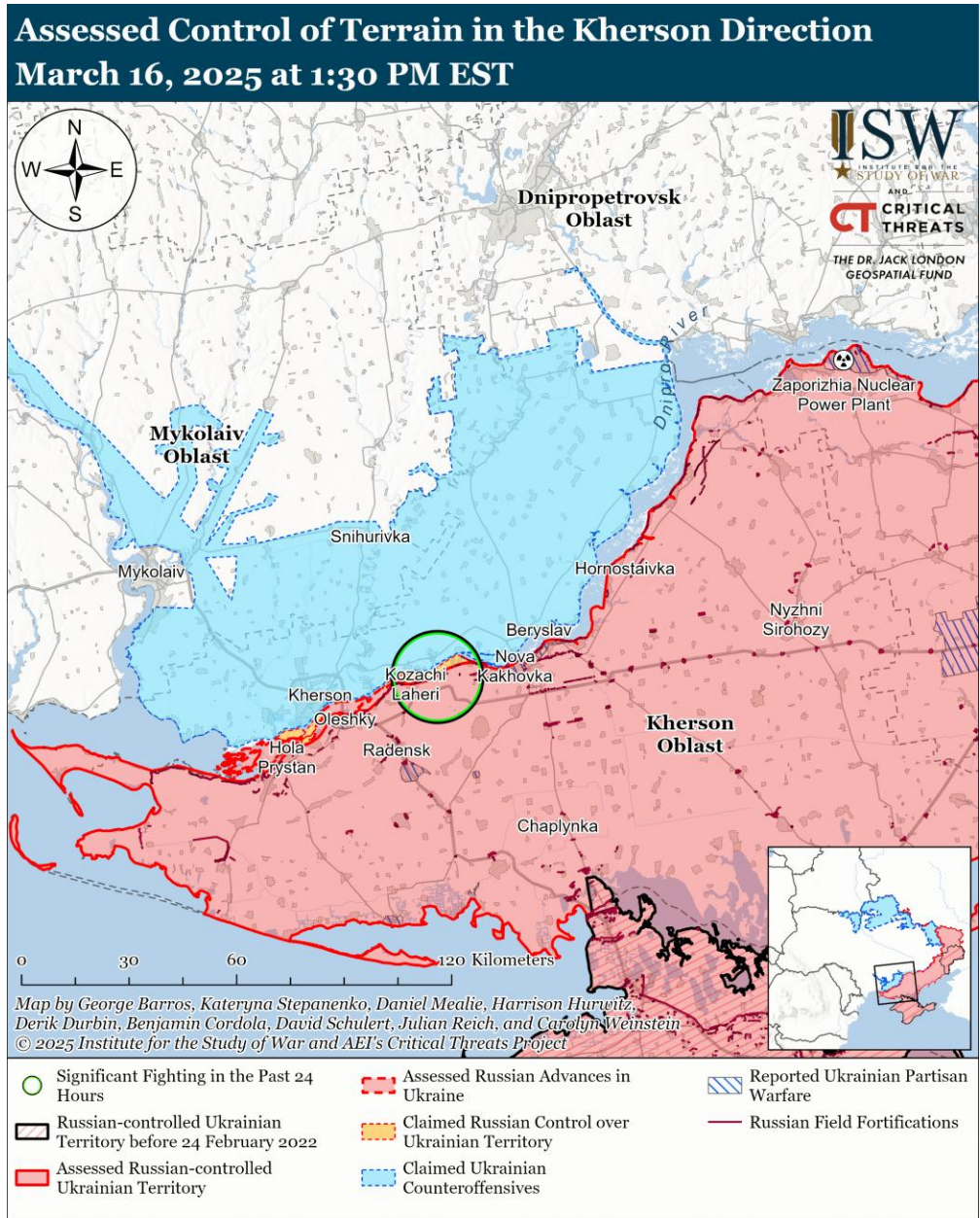
Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division are reportedly fighting near Pyatykhatky, Stepove, and Mali Shcherbaky.[71] Elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) reportedly continue operating in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[72]



Russian forces continued ground attacks in the Kherson direction on March 16 but did not make confirmed advances.[73]

Voloshyn reported that Russian forces recently intensified efforts to land troops on Velykiy and Kozatskyi islands (south and east of Kherson City, respectively) and near the Antonivsky Bridge (east of Kherson City).[74]

Geolocated footage published on March 15 shows a Ukrainian strike destroying a roadway bridge span over the Konka River north of occupied Oleshky (south of Kherson City).[75]



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

Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of March 15 to 16. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 90 Shahed and decoy drones from Bryansk City; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; Shatalovo, Smolensk Oblast; and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea.[76]

The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 47 Shahed and decoy drones over Kharkiv, Poltava, Sumy, Cherkasy, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, and Odesa oblasts and that 33 decoy drones were “lost,” likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference. Official Ukrainian sources reported that Russian drones damaged civilian infrastructure in Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Odesa oblasts.[77] Chernihiv Oblast Military Administration Head Vyazheslav Chaus reported on March 16 that a Russian ballistic missile, possibly an Iskander-M missile, struck Semenivska Hromada and disrupted power in the area.[78]

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

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) continues efforts to posture as solving issues with the Russian military. Russian Deputy Defense Minister Colonel General Andrei Bulyga held a meeting on March 16 to discuss improving the reliability of weapons, equipment, and armored vehicles supplied to Russian forces.[79] Bulyga emphasized the need to improve tank protection without reducing combat performance and ordered Russian defense manufacturers to improve the reliability of equipment. Russian forces have suffered substantial equipment losses on the frontline in Ukraine, and Russian milbloggers have recently complained about poor and unreliable equipment that Russian forces are currently fielding.[80]

The Russian military command is reportedly providing disproportionate support to elite Russian units over standard Russian units. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian Airborne (VDV) artillery units have special security and escort force protection groups that standard regular Russian artillery units do not receive.[81] The milblogger complained that the regular Russian artillery units are forced to provide cover for their firing positions.

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

Nothing significant to report.

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

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

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

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://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/video/1-1-national-security-adviser-mike-waltz-119848854>
- [2] <https://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/video/1-1-national-security-adviser-mike-waltz-119848854>
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