

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, July 12, 2023

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July 12, 2023, 7:15pm 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 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 cutoff for this product was 1:30pm ET on July 12. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the July 13 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The Group of Seven (G7) Coalition and NATO signed agreements to offer Ukraine long-term security commitments during the NATO Summit in Vilnius on July 12. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced that NATO has agreed on a three-part package that will give Ukraine a multi-year program of practical assistance, create a NATO-Ukrainian coordination council, and commits NATO to allow Ukraine to join the alliance without going through a Membership Action Plan (MAP).[1] G7 members Germany, Japan, France, Canada, Italy, Britain, and the United States signed a general framework document called the "Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine" aimed at offering the Ukraine military, financial, and intelligence support and stated that each member of the G7 will enter into bilateral security negotiations with Ukraine regarding the document.[2] Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida stated that other countries would have the opportunity to join the declaration at a later stage.[3] The general framework document also reportedly promises immediate steps to swiftly provide Ukraine with all necessary support in the event of a new attack but did not specify what that support would look like.[4] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that the agreements reached at the NATO summit mean that Ukraine would receive formal security guarantees, although neither the NATO nor the G7 agreements currently provide such guarantees.[5] Ukraine did secure notable agreements that will strengthen long-term Western support for Ukraine at the NATO summit, and these agreements will likely serve as the framework for potential increases in Western security assistance to Ukraine.

Ukraine secured additional bilateral security and defense agreements during the second day of the NATO summit on July 12. Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov signed agreements with Swedish Defense Minister Paul Jonsson on cooperation in the field of defense procurement and with the French Defense Ministry on increasing French military assistance to Ukraine by 170 million euros.[6] The Ukrainian Presidential Office announced that Australia will send an additional 30 Bushmaster armored vehicles to Ukraine.[7] The UK government stated that the UK will provide Ukraine with an additional 50 million pounds in security assistance, including additional ammunition for Challenger tanks.[8] Norwegian Defense Minister Bjorn Arild Gram stated that Norway will provide an additional NASAM (Norwegian Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System) support package, including two additional fire control centers, two launch units, and spare

parts.[9] Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida noted that Japan will provide Ukraine with \$30 million in non-lethal equipment including drone detection systems.[10]

The Russian information space continues to exhibit a generally muted response to the NATO summit. Many Russian sources claimed that they have long had access to planning documents for the summit and that none of the resulting agreements come as a surprise, and many milbloggers claimed that the summit has been a “failure” for Ukraine because Ukraine did not secure immediate NATO membership.[11] Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev emphasized that participants of the summit are acting in “predictable ways” and that the West will continue to provide Ukraine with military aid, and Russia will therefore continue to pursue the same goals in Ukraine.[12] Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov delivered boilerplate Kremlin rhetoric by stating that the G7’s provision of “security guarantees” to Ukraine is “potentially very dangerous” and an encroachment on Russian security interests.[13]

The muted Russian response belies the reality that the summit demonstrated the degree to which the 2022 Russian invasion has set back the goals for which the Kremlin claims it launched the war. The aim of preventing NATO expansion and, indeed, rolling back earlier rounds of NATO expansion and pushing NATO back from Russia’s borders was one of the Kremlin’s stated demands before the invasion.[14] The Kremlin has repeated this aim continually throughout the war. The lack of general outcry within the Russian information space regarding developments at the NATO summit, as well as Finland’s NATO accession and Turkey’s agreement to forward Sweden’s accession protocol, likely indicates that the Kremlin has internalized these defeats and desires to avoid dwelling on them. Many Russian sources are reporting on the NATO summit in a dispassionate and muted manner that is not commensurate with the wider defeat that the summit actually represents for Russia’s pre-war aims.

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the frontline on July 12 and reportedly made gains in some areas. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut, Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast), and Berdyansk (Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area) directions.[15] The Ukrainian General Staff also reported that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success along the Bila Hora-Andriivka and Bila Hora--Kurdyumivka lines (up to 13km southwest of Bakhmut).[16] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen stated that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success and advanced along the frontline in the Berdyansk direction.[17] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces also advanced near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut) southwest of Velyka Novosilka, Donetsk Oblast, and south of Orikhiv in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[18]

Russian forces conducted another series of Shahed drone strikes across Ukraine on July 12. Ukrainian military sources reported that Russia launched 15 Shahed drones from Kursk Oblast and that Ukrainian air defense forces shot down 11 of the launched drones.[19] Russian forces have notably not conducted missile strikes aimed at Ukrainian infrastructure over the past few days as the NATO summit is ongoing in Vilnius, behavior that diverges somewhat from previous Russian patterns of conducting missile strikes to correspond with major international political events that are relevant to the war in Ukraine.[20]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced that the Wagner Group has almost completely handed weapons and military equipment over to the MoD. Russian MoD spokesperson Igor Konashenkov announced on July 12 that the Wagner Group transferred more than 2,000 pieces of equipment and weapons to the Russian MoD.[21] Konashenkov stated that the transferred weapons include T-90, T-80, and T-72 tanks, multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), anti-aircraft missile systems, howitzers, anti-tank guns, mortar systems, armored tractors, armored personnel carriers, vehicles, and small arms.[22] Konashenkov stated that the Russian MoD transferred all the equipment and armaments to rear areas where Russian repair and recovery units will maintain and prepare the equipment for use.[23] Konashenkov also claimed that dozens of units of the transferred equipment had never been used in combat conditions.[24] A Russian milblogger challenged Konashenkov's claims about the equipment and claimed that a RU MoD employee stated that while Wagner's equipment was in good condition, it had clearly seen combat and that there was no unused equipment.[25] The Russian MoD announcement, following the Kremlin's acknowledgment of Putin's June 29 meeting with Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin, is likely part of the Kremlin's wider narrative effort to portray itself as fully in control and the Wagner rebellion as a settled affair.[26]

Former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin claimed that certain members of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inner circle may push Putin to end the war in order to depose him. Girkin claimed that Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin's rebellion succeeded, resulting in a power redistribution according to the plans of Prigozhin's patrons, whom Girkin suggested include Presidential Administration First Deputy Chief of Staff Sergey Kiriyenko, billionaire and Putin's reported personal banker Yuri Kovalchuk, and energy executives Arkady and Boris Rotenberg.[27] Girkin claimed that the power structure including Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, Moscow Oblast Governor Andrei Vorobev, and Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin has been weakened following the rebellion. Girkin claimed that members of the "Ozero Cooperative" – an association unifying the dachas of Putin and several members of his inner circle in Leningrad Oblast – want to oust Putin in favor of one of its own members, such as Prigozhin or Kiriyenko. Girkin claimed that the "Ozero Cooperative" first aims to sabotage Russian military operations, the defense industrial base (DIB), and control of rear areas to make Putin realize he must accept defeat in the war. Girkin warned that the "Ozero Cooperative" members will target the Ministry of Defense, Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), and other structures outside the control of the presidential administration.

Girkin's claims are likely part of his ongoing effort to diminish Russian political and domestic support for a potential ceasefire in the war in Ukraine, but his targeting of specific members of Putin's inner circle is notable. Girkin has repeatedly accused Prigozhin of being part of the faction arguing in favor of freezing the lines in Ukraine while Girkin has argued in favor of a grinding, protracted war effort, as ISW has previously reported.[28] Kiriyenko in particular is a prominent Kremlin mouthpiece for domestic policy and occupation matters. Kiriyenko has reportedly positioned himself to expand his political reach in recent years, including into education development, oversight of regional elections, development of the Russian internet and information bloc, and political nongovernmental organizations.[29] Russian opposition outlet *Meduza*, citing sources within the presidential administration, previously reported that Kiriyenko is attempting to position himself as a possible successor to Putin.[30] *Meduza*'s sources saw Kiriyenko's lack of connection to regional governments or businesses as undermining his prospects but noted that Kiriyenko is likely able to overcome these issues. Girkin is most likely attempting to portray Prigozhin

as a direct threat to Putin's regime in order to encourage harsher Kremlin action against Prigozhin and discourage any efforts to freeze the front in Ukraine. Girkin may be trying to discredit Kiriienko and other claimed Prigozhin patrons to undermine any support that Prigozhin may have among any possible remaining prominent patrons.[31]

Key Takeaways:

- **The Group of Seven (G7) Coalition and NATO signed agreements to offer Ukraine long-term security commitments during the NATO Summit in Vilnius on July 12.**
- **Ukraine secured additional bilateral security and defense agreements during the second day of the NATO summit on July 12.**
- **The Russian information space continues to exhibit a generally muted response to the NATO summit. The muted Russian response belies the reality that the summit demonstrated the degree to which the 2022 Russian invasion has set back the goals for which the Kremlin claims it launched the war.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the frontline on July 12 and reportedly made gains in some areas.**
- **Russian forces conducted another series of Shahed drone strikes across Ukraine on July 12.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced that the Wagner Group has almost completely handed weapons and military equipment over to the MoD.**
- **Former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin claimed that certain members of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inner circle may push Putin to end the war in order to depose him.**
- **Russian and Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted limited ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove line.**
- **Russian and Ukrainian forces continued skirmishes in the Kreminna area, where Russian forces reportedly made limited gains.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in the Bakhmut area.**
- **Russian and Ukrainian forces conducted ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line.**
- **Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations along the administrative border between Zaporizhia and Donetsk oblasts.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued limited mechanized assault operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Russian officials continue to grapple with the issue of securing Russia's international borders.**
- **Russian occupation authorities are using the promise of medical treatment to coerce residents of occupied territories to receive Russian passports and relocate to Russian territory.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of July 12, 2023, 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 these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and 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 Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas

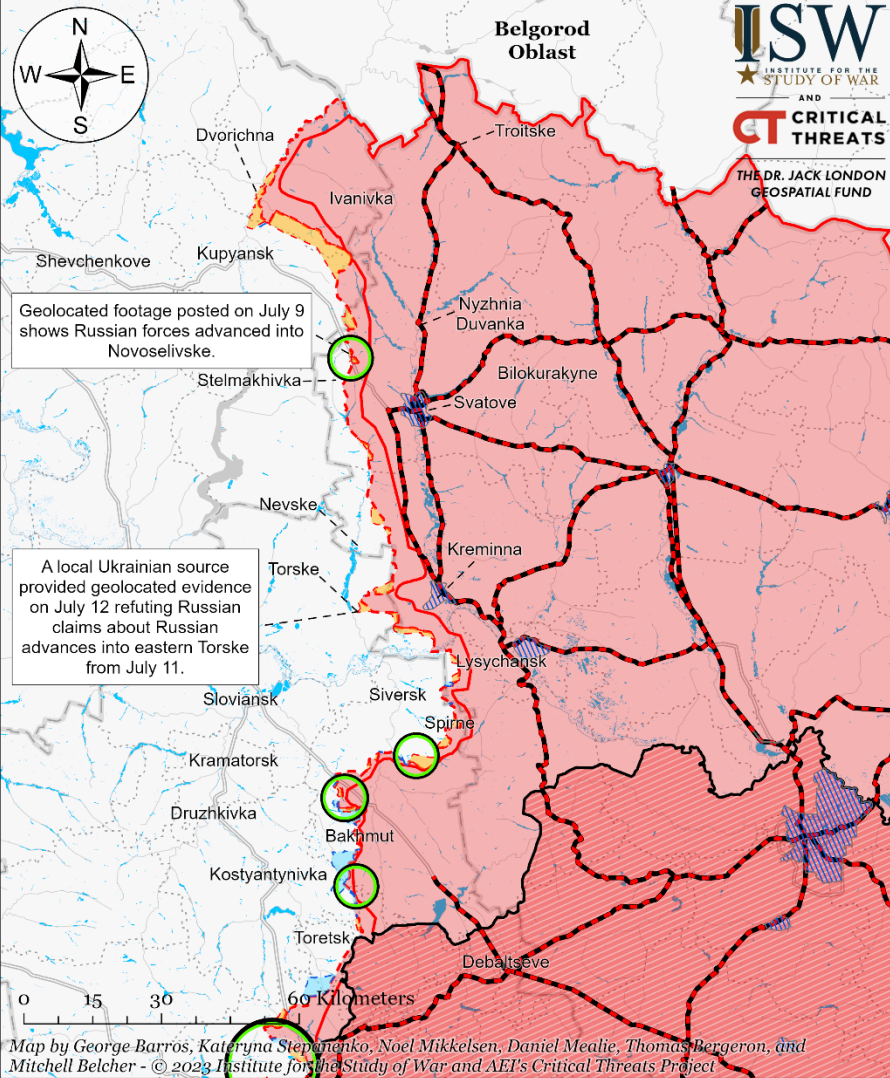
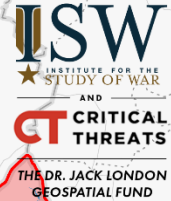
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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)

Russian and Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted limited ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove line on July 12. Geolocated footage shows that Russian forces have advanced further east of Kotlyarivka (22km southeast of Kupyansk) as of July 11.[32] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian ground attacks near Novoselivske (14km northwest of Svatove) and Karmazynivka (12km southwest of Svatove).[33] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions near Novoselivske.[34]

Russian and Ukrainian forces continued skirmishes in the Kreminna area, where Russian forces reportedly made limited gains as of July 12. Geolocated footage published on July 12 indicates that Russian forces do not hold positions in Torske (14km west of Kreminna) despite Russian milblogger claims to the contrary.[35] Russian milbloggers largely claimed that Russian forces broke through Ukrainian positions in Torske and advanced up to the eastern outskirts of the settlement.[36] Russian milbloggers also claimed that elements of the 21st Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army, Central Military District) captured a height east of Nevske (14km northwest of Kreminna) near the Zhuravka gully, and that Ukrainian forces launched counterattacks to attempt to retake the positions.[37] The Ukrainian General Staff claimed that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Vesele (31km south of Kreminna).[38] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian ground attacks near Torske, Zolotarivka (17km south of Kreminna), Verkhokamianka (20km south of Kreminna), and Spirne (25km south of Kreminna).[39]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of July 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barrós, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- - - Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- ▬ Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- ▬ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▬ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▬ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▬ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▬ Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* 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 July 11 and 12 that Russian forces launched a counterattack against Ukrainian forces at an adjacent dominant height near Klishchiivka and that Ukrainian forces broke through to the outskirts of Berkhivka. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stated on July 11 that Russian forces advanced one and a half kilometers along a two kilometer front near Lyman. A Russian source reported on July 11 that Ukrainian forces advanced one and a half kilometers into Russian defenses near Rozdolivka. A Russian source reported on July 11 that Russian forces advanced up to a depth of one kilometer, a width of eight kilometers, and occupied sections of the R-66 highway near Novoselivske. A Russian source reported on July 10 that Ukrainian forces control all dominant heights around Bakhmut. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on July 10 that Ukrainian forces advanced more than four square kilometers in the last week and have captured 24 square kilometers since the beginning of offensive operations near Bakhmut. ISW is unable to confirm the geometry of the advance at this time.

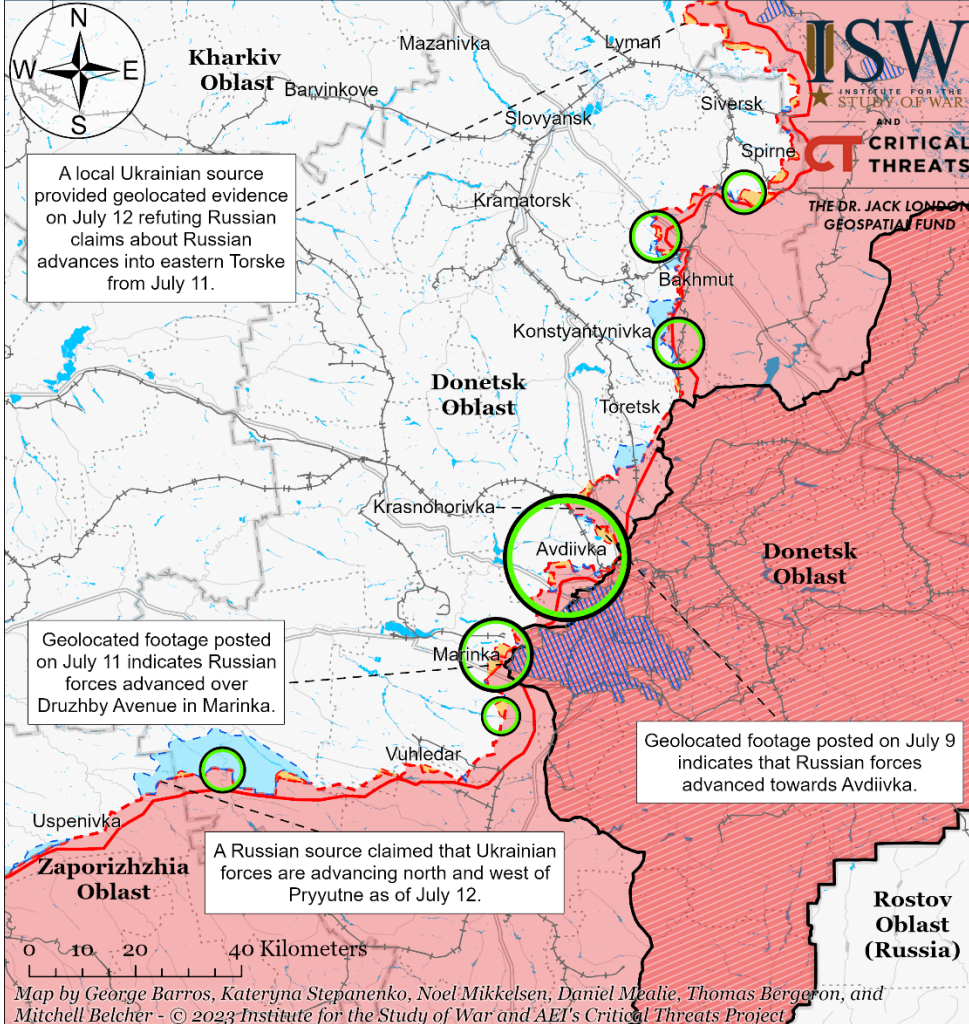
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian Objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in the Bakhmut area on July 12. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations north and south of Bakhmut.[40] Ukrainian General Staff Spokesperson Andrii Kovalev reported that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success in the Bila Hora-Andriivka (10-12km southwest of Bakhmut) and Bila Hora-Kurdyumivka directions (12-13km southwest of Bakhmut).[41] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces gained a foothold on a height east of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut) and have almost reached the E40 Bakhmut-Slovyansk highway.[42] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked the southwestern outskirts of Berkhivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).[43] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces broke through Russian defenses close to Berkhivka but that Russian artillery units forced Ukrainians to retreat.[44] The Russian MoD claimed that units of the Russian Southern Group of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Spirne (27km northeast of Bakhmut), Vesele (20km northeast of Bakhmut), Sil (14km northeast of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[45]

Russian forces counterattacked Ukrainian positions in the Bakhmut area on July 12. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Hryhorivka (8km northwest of Bakhmut) and east of Orikhovo-Vasylivka.[46] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked Ukrainian positions on the northern outskirts of Klishchiivka and pushed Ukrainian units from the outskirts of the settlement and Klishchiivka’s surrounding dominant heights.[47]

Russian and Ukrainian forces conducted ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on July 12. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued to repel Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), Nevelske (14km southwest of Avdiivka), Marinka (27km southwest of Avdiivka), Pobieda (32km southwest of Avdiivka), and Novomykhailivka (36km southwest of Avdiivka).[48] The Russian MoD claimed that units of the Russian Southern Group of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Vodyane (8km southwest of Avdiivka), Pervomaiske, and Krasnohorivka (22km southwest of Avdiivka).[49] Russian Southern Group of Forces spokesperson Vadim Astafeyev claimed that units of the Russian Southern Group of Forces destroyed Ukrainian infantry units attempting to break through Russian defenses in the direction of Vodyane.[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked towards Lastochkyne (4km northwest of Avdiivka) but have not entered the settlement.[51] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces launched unsuccessful offensive operations near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) and on the outskirts of Krasnohorivka.[52]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of July 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

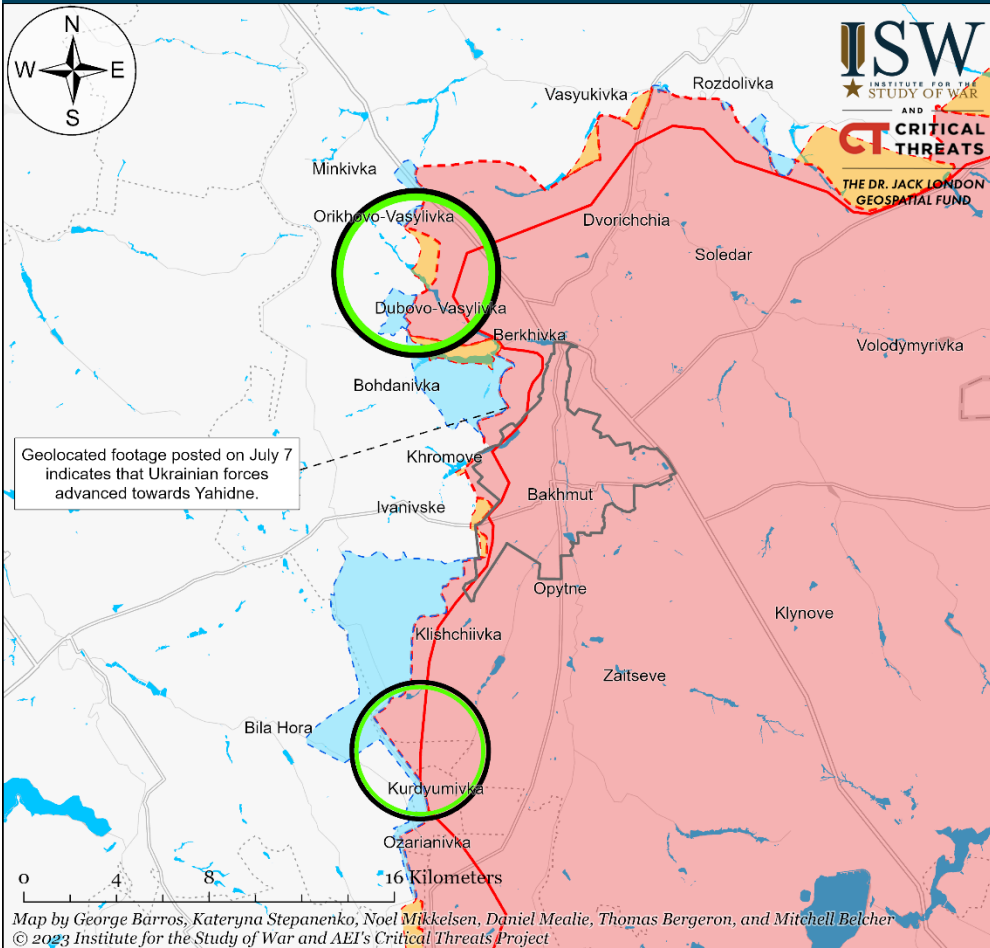


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads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

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

Note: Ukrainian Tavrisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen stated on July 12 that Ukrainian forces are advancing in the Tavriisk direction and have achieved partial success in the Berdyansk direction. Russian sources claimed on July 11 and 12 that Russian forces launched a counterattack against Ukrainian forces at an adjacent dominant height near Klishchiivka and that Ukrainian forces broke through to the outskirts of Berkhivka. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stated on July 11 that Russian forces advanced one and a half kilometers along a two kilometer front near Lyman. A Russian source reported on July 11 that Ukrainian forces advanced one and a half kilometers into Russian defenses near Rozdolivka. A Russian source reported on July 10 that Ukrainian forces control all dominant heights around Bakhmut. ISW is unable to confirm the geometry of the advance at this time.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of July 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Bakhmut City Limits	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* 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 July 11 and 12 that Russian forces launched a counterattack against Ukrainian forces at an adjacent dominant height near Klishchiivka and that Ukrainian forces broke through to the outskirts of Berkhivka. A Russian source reported on July 11 that Ukrainian forces advanced one and a half kilometers into Russian defenses near Rozdolivka. A Russian source reported on July 10 that Ukrainian forces control all dominant heights around Bakhmut. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on July 10 that Ukrainian forces advanced more than four square kilometers in the last week and have captured 24 square kilometers since the beginning of offensive operations near Bakhmut. ISW is unable to confirm the geometry of the advance at this time.

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

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast on July 12. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian assault in the direction of Petrivske (14km southwest of Vuhledar).^[53] The Russian MoD also claimed that Russian

forces stopped Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups near Solodke (17km east of Vuhledar) and Vuhledar.[54]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations along the administrative border between Zaporizhia and Donetsk oblasts on July 12 and reportedly made gains in the area. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Berdyansk direction (Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast border area), and Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen stated that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success in this direction and advanced along the frontline.[55] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian assault near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and thwarted a Ukrainian reconnaissance-in-force operation near Rivnopil (11km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[56] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are advancing north and south of Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[57] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked towards Blahodatne (5km south of Velyka Novosilka).[58]

Ukrainian forces continued limited mechanized assault operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on July 12. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol direction (western Zaporizhia Oblast).[59] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled two Ukrainian assaults near Robotyne (12km south of Orikhiv).[60] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian infantry attacked with armored vehicle support near Robotyne and in the direction of Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv) and amplified footage purporting to show Russian forces striking Ukrainian armored vehicles in the Orikhiv direction.[61] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued assaults overnight from July 11 to 12, with one milblogger claiming that Ukrainian forces stopped assaults in the area as of the morning of July 12.[62] One milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attacks on a seam of the Russian defense between positions of the 291st and 70th Motorized Rifle Regiments (both part of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District).[63] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces entered Russian trench positions in the area and advanced by up to one kilometer north of Robotyne.[64] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked northeast of Robotyne and pushed Ukrainian forces out of one of the strongholds of the 71st Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District).[65] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces also conducted several unsuccessful assaults near Zherybyanky (26km southwest of Orikhiv) and Pyatykhatky (25km southwest of Orikhiv).[66] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation head Yevgeny Balitsky described Ukrainian assaults in the area as a large-scale offensive, although Zaporizhia Oblast occupation deputy Vladimir Rogov stated a few hours earlier that reports of Ukrainian offensive in the area are false.[67]

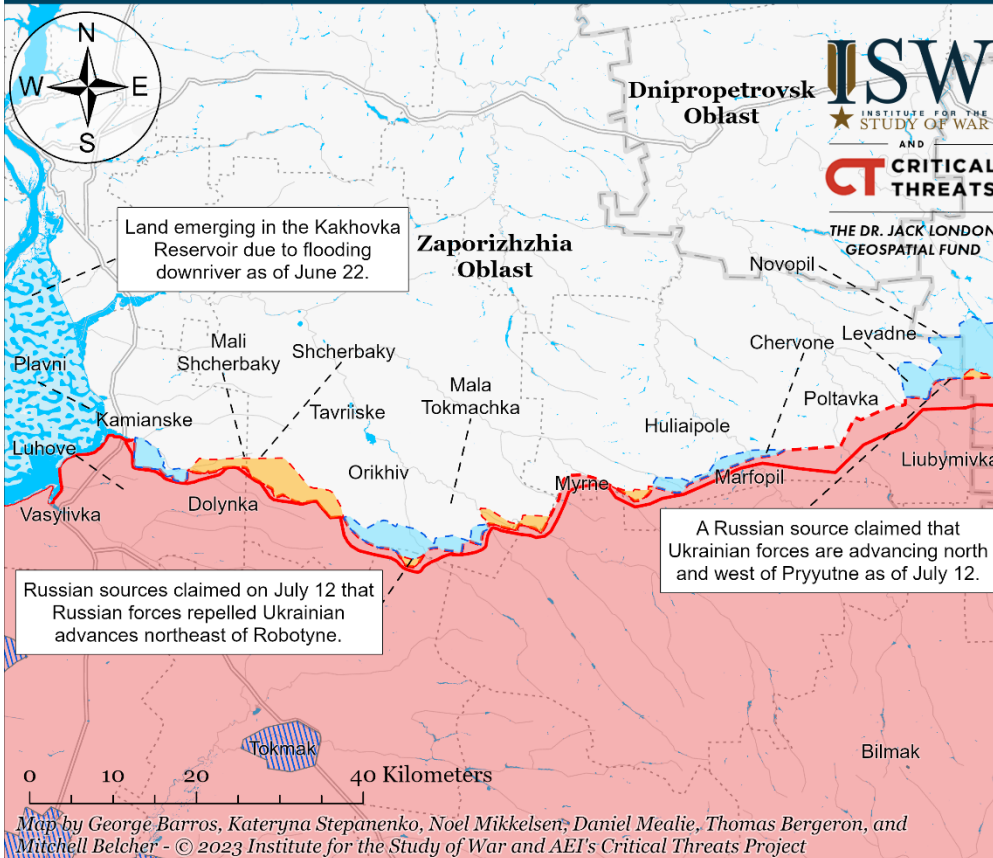
The Ukrainian General Staff confirmed that Ukrainian forces conducted a direct strike on a hotel in Berdyansk, occupied Zaporizhia Oblast, which Russian sources claimed was the site of the 58th Combined Arms Army headquarters.[68] Russian sources claimed that the July 11 Ukrainian Storm Shadow cruise missile strike on the 58th Combined Arms Army headquarters killed Southern Military District Deputy Commander Lieutenant General Oleg Tsokov.[69] ISW assesses that Tsokov's presence at the reported command post of the 58th CAA suggests that he was personally overseeing the army responsible for repelling Ukrainian counteroffensives in key sectors of western Zaporizhia Oblast.[70]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces also struck the outskirts of Tokmak with cluster munitions on July 11.[71] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted the strikes with Western-provided cluster munitions and argued that Ukrainian forces waited until the announcement of the transfer of the munitions to use them.[72] Ukrainian forces have their own stocks of non-Western cluster munitions and ISW has not seen visual confirmation that Ukrainian forces struck Tokmak on July 11.

Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continue to maintain positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast near the Antonivsky Bridge as of July 12.[73] A prominent milblogger claimed that the Ukrainian grouping on the left bank is not conducting offensive operations and that Russian forces are located a few hundred meters to the south.[74] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces have stopped assaults near the Antonivsky bridge because of Ukrainian artillery superiority in the area.[75]

Russian forces are using naval assets to resolve traffic jams at the Kerch Strait Bridge. Russian Navy Commander Maxim Rykhlov stated on July 11 that the Russian Navy deployed two large landing ships to act as vehicle ferries in the Kerch Strait after the Russian Ministry of Transport requested the Navy's help in cases of large traffic congestion in the direction of Crimea.[76] ISW previously assessed that an influx of Russian tourists to Crimea generated serious traffic jams along one of Russian most important ground lines of communication.[77]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of July 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

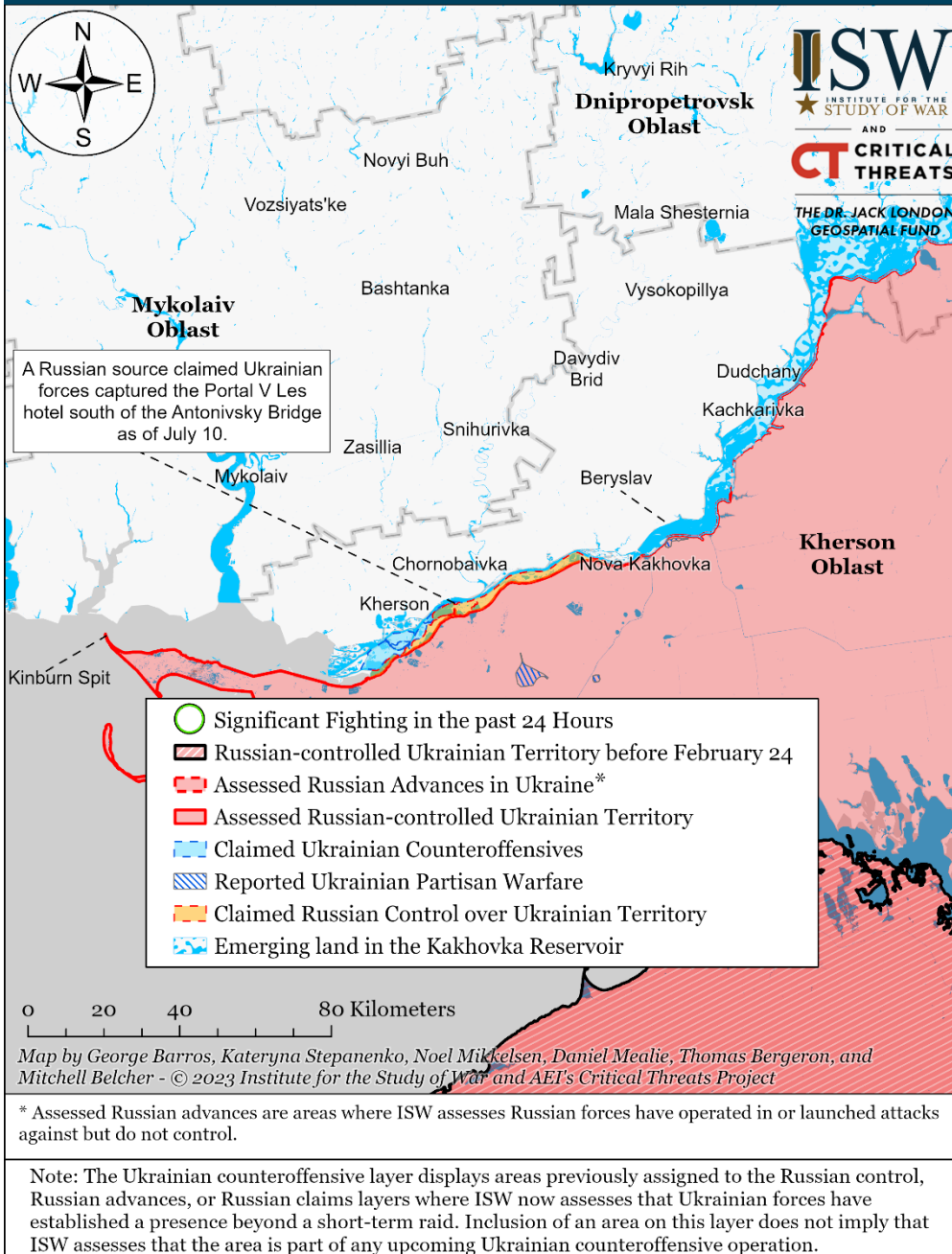


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian 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: Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen stated on July 12 that Ukrainian forces are advancing in the Tavriisk direction and have achieved partial success in the Berdyansk direction. ISW is unable to confirm the geometry of the advance at this time.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of July 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian officials continue to grapple with the issue of securing Russia's international borders. "A Just Russia—For Truth" party leader Sergey Mironov announced on July 12 that he sent a letter to Russian

President Vladimir Putin calling for the recreation of border troops that had previously been liquidated as an independent entity and transferred to the Federal Security Service (FSB) in 2003.[78] Mironov emphasized that in current conditions, it is clear that fully equipped and designated border troops are needed to protect Russian border areas.[79] ISW previously assessed that Mironov is connected to Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin, and Prigozhin notably called for strengthening border defenses prior to the Wagner Group rebellion on June 24.[80] The affiliation of Prigozhin and Wagner-affiliated factions with the issue of border security may coalesce as a new point of tension within the domestic political sphere over the backdrop of past incursions of all-Russian pro-Ukrainian groups into Belgorod Oblast and claimed Ukrainian strikes on various Russian border and rear areas, especially if Wagner-affiliated individuals feel that the existing Russian security apparatus is incapable of adequately securing border areas. Mironov's suggestion to resurrect border troops independent of the FSB is also noteworthy considering reports that FSB Head Alexander Bortnikov was involved in discussions with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko regarding security guarantees for the Wagner Group and Prigozhin following the Wagner rebellion.[81] Mironov and some Wagner-affiliated officials may be considering a contingency under which Wagner fighters are used to staff independent border security organs.

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

Russian occupation authorities are using the promise of medical treatment to coerce residents of occupied territories to receive Russian passports and relocate to Russian territory. The Rostov State Medical University (an entity subordinate to the Russian Ministry of Health) stated on July 11 that four doctors of its doctors are providing medical services in Henichesk, occupied Kherson Oblast.[82] Rostov State Medical University noted that if higher-tech treatment is required, the specialists will arrange for the transfer of patients to the clinic in Rostov Oblast.[83] The Ukrainian Resistance Center noted that transfer to Rostov Oblast for medical treatment is free on the condition that the patient holds a Russian passport, suggesting that Russian authorities are using the promise of medical treatment to coerce people to obtain Russian passports and leave Ukrainian territory.[84]

Russia continues to remove Ukrainian children deeper into occupied areas of Ukraine and deport them to Russia. A prominent Russian milblogger posted a crowd-funding advertisement on July 11 calling for their subscribers to donate to help transport children from Donbas to occupied Crimea.[85] The milblogger claimed that subscriber donations have already provided for the transfer of 200 children from Donbas and that more funds are imminently needed to bring children to the "Olympus" children's camp in Crimea.[86] A Telegram channel affiliated with the Kherson Oblast occupation administration additionally reported that 700 children aged six to 16 years old have gone to "rest and improve their health" in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic.[87] Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko reposted footage from the Russian "Oplot TV" channel claiming that the Mariupol occupation administration has taken guardianship of 444 orphans in Mariupol.[88]

Russian and occupation authorities are planning to create a joint economic macro-region between Russian regions and the occupied territories of Ukraine. The Voronezh Oblast Department for Economic Development stated on July 10 that it has presented a draft agreement on the creation of the "Donbas Commonwealth" macro-region that will unite the industrial, scientific, educational, and cultural potential of Voronezh and Rostov oblasts with occupied Donetsk and Luhansk

oblasts.[89] The Donbas Commonwealth is intended to facilitate the integration of occupied Donetsk and Luhansk into the Russian legal, political, and economic spheres and intensify interaction in the fields of trade, investment, industrial communication, entrepreneurship, construction, transport, and housing and communal services.[90]

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

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

Belarusian maneuver elements continue to conduct tactical-level exercises. Unspecified elements of the Belarusian 6th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade conducted tactical defensive exercises to defend against ground attacks, laying minefields, and firing on targets with small arms, BMP-2 weapons, and drones.[91]

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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