

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 6, 2023

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November 6, 2023, 6:50pm ET

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

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

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

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:00pm ET on November 6. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 7 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Imprisoned ardent nationalist and former Russian officer Igor Girkin argued that Russian forces will be “even less capable of offensive operations than they are now” by spring 2024 given the current nature of Russian offensive operations along the frontline.^[1] Girkin’s wife, Miroslava Reginskaya, published a hand-written letter from Girkin dated October 26, in which he summarized the frontline situation in Ukraine for the month of October. Girkin claimed that the situation for Russian forces is “gradually deteriorating” and that Russian forces are showcasing “growing weakness (compared to [Ukraine’s] capabilities,” despite Russia’s “generally successful repulsion” of the Ukrainian offensive over the summer and fall of 2023. Girkin argued that Russian forces were not only unable to start broad offensive operations at the beginning of the fall season but were also unable to complete even limited offensive operations to achieve operationally significant goals – namely around Kupyansk, Lyman, and Avdiivka. Girkin claimed that Russian forces failed to advance in the Kupyansk direction and are now impaled in battles on “the distant approaches to the city,” while also failing to change the situation in the Lyman direction. Girkin added that tactical advances around Avdiivka led to significant losses in Russian manpower and equipment and did not lead to the further development of the Russian offensive. Girkin observed that the Avdiivka offensive demonstrated Russian forces’ inability “to achieve superiority on a very narrow sector of the front” despite Russia’s careful preparations, good coordination of strike forces and means for the initial stage of the offensive, and the abundance of ammunition “unheard of since the assault on Bakhmut.”

Girkin suggested that Russian efforts to repel Ukrainian localized attacks across the frontline and simultaneous fall-winter offensive operations will likely degrade Russian offensive and defensive potential by spring 2024. Girkin noted that Russian forces would need to spend the rest of the fall-winter campaign on the defensive to try to eliminate emerging operational crises – such as the Ukrainian presence in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. Girkin argued that Russian forces will continue to be “incapable of any broad offensive actions” even if

Ukrainian forces are unable to “knock out” Russian frontline units, fail to achieve a breakthrough over the fall-winter season, and are exhausted. Girkin, however, added that such a “positional scenario” is not guaranteed and that he fears that Ukrainian forces may be successful in breaking Russian forces that have already been exhausted by months of combat. Girkin’s suggestion that ongoing Russian offensive operations are harming the prospects for future Russian operations is notable because Russian forces still must repel Ukrainian offensive operations while attempting to initiate their own offensives. The timing of current Russian offensives around Avdiivka was also somewhat odd and suboptimal because the rainy and muddy weather has predictably hindered Russian operations.[2] ISW continues to assess that fall and winter weather conditions are unlikely to preclude Russian or Ukrainian offensives.[3]

Girkin implied that additional Western military aid to Ukraine and the lack of mobilization in Russia could allow Ukraine to end positional warfare and conduct successful offensive operations in 2024. Girkin stated that Ukrainian forces are continuing to use Western-provided materiel to target the Russian rear and even destroy the Berdyansk airfield in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast against the backdrop of Russian offensives in Avdiivka. Girkin implied that Ukrainian forces would continue to devastate the Russian rear over the winter as Russian forces continued to push for limited offensive operations. Girkin stated that once Ukraine receives Western-provided F-16 fighter jets, Ukrainian forces could have localized advantages for a short period of time on any section of the frontline. Girkin added that Ukraine could be “seriously strengthened in military-technical terms” with Western military equipment. Girkin also claimed that Ukraine currently has superiority in manpower over Russian forces due to a lack of mobilization in Russia and that the Kremlin is unlikely to call up mobilization before spring 2024 due to upcoming presidential elections. Girkin noted that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is unlikely to recruit “hundreds of thousands” of new contract servicemen because Russia has exhausted the recruitment potential for new contract servicemen and volunteers. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi’s long essay, “Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win It,” similarly argues that Western-provided military equipment and air superiority among other things will allow Ukraine to overcome positional warfare.[4]

Russian milbloggers appear to be grappling with how Russian forces can overcome wider operational challenges in Ukraine, likely in response to Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi’s recent essay on the subject of “positional warfare.” Select milbloggers argued that specific changes in battlefield tactics will allow Russian forces to achieve their desired operational objectives in the current difficult operational environment.[5] Another milblogger argued that Russia should not celebrate Zaluzhnyi’s discussion of Ukrainian difficulties with positional warfare and that Russian forces need to prepare for a long, challenging war.[6] The milblogger argued that Russia is currently no closer to victory in Ukraine and expressed concerns that Russian forces will likely face a renewed Ukrainian counteroffensive in the winter.[7] The milblogger’s discussion of a large Ukrainian counteroffensive effort in the winter suggests that he expects that Russian forces will not completely seize the initiative in the coming months and therefore will not be able to launch a larger offensive effort that would preclude Ukrainian forces from committing resources to counteroffensive operations. The wider Russian information space has offered a relatively muted response to Zaluzhnyi’s essay, and Russian ultranationalists appear to be applying Zaluzhnyi’s discussions about the challenges of the operational environment in Ukraine to Russia’s offensive campaign and not coming to very optimistic conclusions.[8]

Select Russian milbloggers specifically argued that the use of small infantry assault groups will allow both Russian and Ukrainian forces to better achieve operational objectives along the front. Russian milbloggers argued on November 3 and 6 that concentrated attacks with large forces attempting to break through a stable defense to full depth is increasingly ineffective and suggested that small infantry groups with comprehensive support may be more effective at achieving significant operational effects in the current operational environment.[9] One of the milbloggers argued that the initial phases of the ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive and the ongoing Russian offensive effort near Avdiivka are similar in that both operations made some initial advances at the cost of irretrievable manpower and equipment losses.[10] The milblogger argued that throughout the war in Ukraine, heavy losses during such large, mechanized assaults have prompted Russian and Ukrainian forces to increasingly rely on smaller ad-hoc infantry groups in subsequent operations.[11] The Ukrainian command changed tactics to rely more on infantry assaults following early setbacks in the counteroffensive in June 2023, and Ukrainian forces proceeded to make significant advances in the following months.[12] It remains to be seen if Russian forces will show the same adaptability near Avdiivka, especially since repeated offensive failures suggest that the Russian General Staff has failed to internalize and disseminate lessons learned from previous costly large, mechanized assaults.[13] The milblogger argued that it would be more advantageous to prepare specialized small infantry assault groups with sufficient technological capabilities, specifically in reconnaissance and communication, ahead of offensive operations instead of switching to small infantry assault tactics only after larger, mechanized assaults prove too costly to continue.[14]

Russian sources suggested that some Ukrainian forces may already be fielding the small infantry assault groups that these sources are advocating for. A Russian milblogger noted that Ukrainian forces already appear to be employing this adaptation in ongoing ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast, where the milblogger claimed that small Ukrainian assault groups operating at the operational-tactical level have been able to divert considerable Russian combat resources and attention from elsewhere along the front.[15] The milblogger argued that lower-level Russian commanders have previously made some progress in preparing such small infantry groups south of Bakhmut but that the Russian command's insistence on manpower-intensive frontal assaults quickly rendered these groups combat ineffective.[16] The milblogger's observations suggest that Ukrainian forces may be once again successfully adapting to aspects of the battlefield in Ukraine while Russian forces struggle to do so. Select elements of the Russian military have shown the propensity for successful adaptation, particularly in defensive operations during the Ukrainian counteroffensive in western Zaporizhia Oblast, but the Russian command will likely continue to struggle with instituting any successful change in tactics and capabilities writ-large throughout the theater.[17]

The war in Ukraine is likely exacerbating an emerging identity crisis within Russian society resulting from tensions between Russian identity and Russian nationalism. Russian "Vostok" Battalion Commander and Russian Orthodox ideologue Alexander Khodakovsky wrote two long Telegram posts on November 6 about what it means to be "Russian," acknowledging a schism in Russian national identity that has largely resulted from the ideological arguments advanced to justify and mobilize support for Russia's war in Ukraine.[18] Khodakovsky shared an anecdote of an unidentified Chechen general who, he claimed, conducted a "genetic study" to identify "the ethnic composition" of his Russian friends and found out that "Russian genes" were not dominant.[19] Khodakovsky used this anecdote to offer commentary on what it means to be "Russian," and concluded that it is not "ethnogenetic," but rather a matter of morals and ideologies,

observing that *Russian nationalism* is "hysteria" resulting from a lack of consolidated *Russian identity*.^[20] Khodakovsky thereby appears to offer the suggestion that when one fixates on a genetic definition of what it means to be Russian, the destructive and toxic ideologies of nationalism appear and erase broader and more socio-cultural and linguistic definitions of identity. Khodakovsky warned that a population that lacks a coherent identity can easily destroy itself from within.^[21]

Khodakovsky's musings offer insight into some socio-cultural implications of Russia's pursuit of ideological goals in its war in Ukraine. In several ways, the war has narrowed the conception of what it means to be Russian among Russian ideologues, particularly as concepts of identity are increasingly defined by hyper-nationalist and pro-war information space voices who amplify the Kremlin's ideological line on the war and redirect it at domestic audiences.^[22] Whereas Russian identity was largely defined before the war linguistically and culturally as enshrined in the Russian concepts of "compatriots abroad" and "Russkyi Mir," the war has focused Russian identity more narrowly on Russian ethnonationalism that echoes the Kremlin's ideological justifications for the war.^[23] Russia's deliberate campaign to "Russify" Ukraine through the invasion has generated clear social impacts within Russia itself, particularly aimed at ethnic minority and migrant communities, which have paradoxically been forced by the Russian government to bear the brunt of force generation efforts for the war.^[24] Russian nationalist commentators have increasingly fixated on demographic transitions facing Russia particularly relating to the balance between "Russians" and "minorities" within the Russian population, further reinforcing concepts of what it means for Russia to be a fundamentally "Russian" state.^[25] Khodakovsky responded to this apparent schism in Russian society by underlining some of the inherent dangers of defining what it means to be Russian as a matter of genetics and notably drew criticism from some more virulently nationalist commentators for being "Russophobic" in his conclusions.^[26] Both Khodakovsky's observations and the immediate response to his conclusions underline a fundamental dilemma facing Russia as it continues its war in Ukraine—the dilemma of how to reconcile the hyper-nationalist ideologies on which the Kremlin increasingly relies to justify the war and demand greater sacrifices from its people with Moscow's desire to continue to increase the burden of mobilization on disenfranchised minority communities, while also maintaining a sense of Russian identity that society can coalesce behind as the war continues.

Russian forces conducted missile and drone strikes against rear areas in southern Ukraine on the evening of November 5 and on the night of November 5 to 6 as well as the largest series of glide bomb strikes to date against targets in Kherson Oblast on November 5. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces launched a Kh-59 cruise missile at Dnipro City and a Kh-31P anti-radar missile at Odesa City on November 5.^[27] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command stated that Ukrainian air defenses shot down the Kh-59 missile and that the Kh-31P missile struck an infrastructure facility in Odesa City.^[28] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces also conducted missile and drone strikes on the night of November 5 to 6 with a Kh-31 anti-radar missile and a Kh-59 cruise missile launched from occupied Kherson Oblast, a P-800 Onyx anti-ship missile and an Iskander-M ballistic missile launched from occupied Crimea, and 22 Shahed-131/136 drones launched from Cape Chauda, occupied Crimea.^[29] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces destroyed the Kh-59 missile and 15 drones.^[30] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the Russian strikes targeted port infrastructure in Odesa Oblast and civilian infrastructure in Kherson City and damaged residential buildings, port infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, and other civil infrastructure.^[31] Ukrainian Odesa Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Kiper reported that a

Russian strike partially damaged the Odesa National Art Museum.[32] Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko stated that Russian forces launched 87 glide bombs on populated areas in Kherson Oblast on November 5 - the largest number of glide bombs that Russian forces have launched to date since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[33]

The Russian military appears to have increased its stock of high-precision missiles due to reported increases in Russian missile production more rapidly than previous forecasts had suggested. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Spokesperson Vadym Skibitskyi stated on November 6 that Russian forces have a total of 870 high-precision operational-strategic and strategic missiles in reserve. Skibitskyi previously stated on August 28 that Russian forces had a total of 585 long-range missiles in reserve, indicating that Russian forces have increased their missile reserves by 285 missiles since August.[34] Skibitskyi added on November 6 that Russian forces produced a total of 115 long-range high-precision missiles in October: 30 Iskander-M cruise missiles, 12 Iskander-K cruise missiles, 20 Kalibr cruise missiles, 40 Kh-101 cruise missiles, 9 Kh-32 cruise missiles, and 4 Kinzhal ballistic missiles.[35] Skibitskyi stated on August 28 that Russian defense enterprises were struggling to produce several dozens of specific types of missiles a month due to foreign component shortages, and the increase of 285 missiles in Russian reserves since late August — with 115 of that total being produced in October alone — indicates that Russia has increased its domestic production of missiles faster than had been forecasted.[36]

Skibitskyi also commented on Russian domestic drone production on November 6, stating that the GUR has not observed the movement of Shahed drones from Iran to Russia as Iran has fulfilled its first Shahed supply contracts with Russia.[37] Skibitskyi stated that Iran may still send small batches of Shaheds to Russia, however.[38] Skibitskyi also stated that Russia has begun to increase the domestic assembly of Shahed drones with components from Iran including at the factory in Alabuga, Tatarstan Republic.[39] Skibitskyi added that predicted Russian missile and drone strikes against Ukrainian energy infrastructure in the upcoming winter will likely not be as “primitive” as the strike series during the winter of 2022-2023.[40] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has recently commented on Ukraine's urgent need for air defense systems.[41]

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[42] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Krasnohorivka (6km northwest of Avdiivka) between November 3 and November 5, thereby forcing Russian troops to withdraw from part of the railway track in the area.[43] The Russian “Russkiy Legion” (BARS-13) irregular armed formation claimed that Ukrainian forces were successfully pressuring Russian forces near Stepove and the “Tsarska Okhota” restaurant south of Avdiivka.[44]

Key Takeaways:

- **Imprisoned ardent nationalist and former Russian officer Igor Girkin argued that Russian forces will be “even less capable of offensive operations than they are now” by spring 2024 given the current nature of Russian offensive operations along the frontline.**

- **Russian milbloggers appear to be grappling with how Russian forces can overcome wider operational challenges in Ukraine, likely in response to Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi’s recent essay on the subject of “positional warfare,” and not coming to optimistic conclusions.**
- **Select Russian milbloggers specifically argued that the use of small infantry assaults groups will allow both Russian and Ukrainian forces to better achieve operational objectives along the front. Russian sources suggested that some Ukrainian forces may already be fielding the small infantry assault groups that these sources are advocating for.**
- **The war in Ukraine is likely exacerbating an emerging identity crisis within Russian society resulting from tensions between Russian identity and Russian nationalism.**
- **Russian forces conducted missile and drones strikes against rear areas in southern Ukraine on the evening of November 5 and on the night of November 5 to 6 as well as the largest series of glide bomb strikes to date against targets in Kherson Oblast on November 5.**
- **The Russian military appears to have increased its stock of high-precision missiles due to reported increases in Russian missile production more rapidly than previous forecasts had suggested.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas on November 6.**
- **Russian occupation officials are expanding military recruitment and registration offices in occupied territories, likely in support of coercive mobilization efforts.**
- **Russian officials continue to weaponize youth engagement programs to consolidate social control of occupied areas of Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 6, 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 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 Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

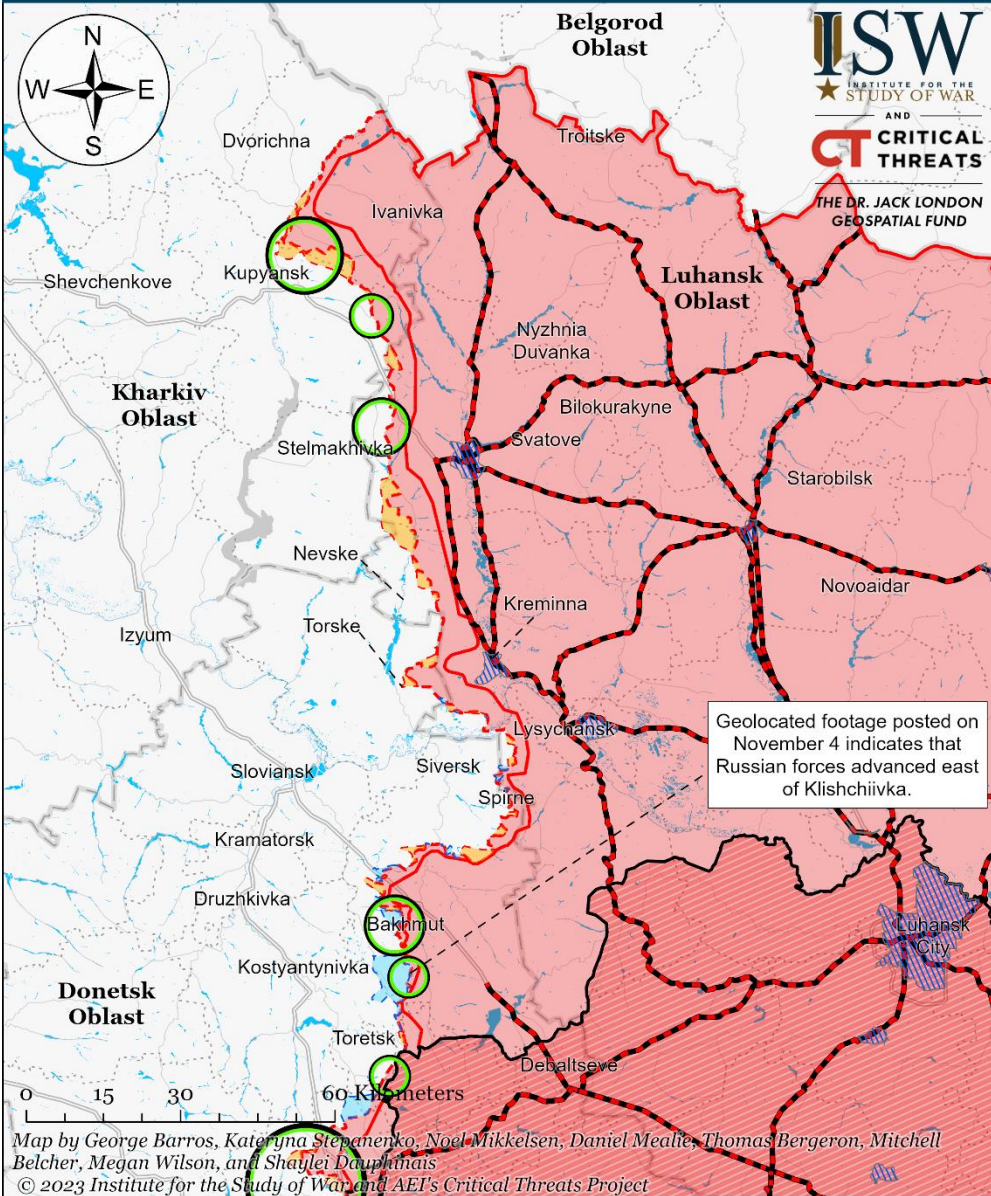
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line and made confirmed advances on November 6. Geolocated footage published on November 6 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Pershotravneve (24km east of Kupyansk).[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Stepova Novoselivka (18km southeast of Kupyansk).[46] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and stated that Russian forces did not conduct any offensive actions in the Lyman direction.[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that there were meeting engagements in the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna).[48] The Ukrainian Assistant Head of the 15th “Steel Border” Mobile Border Detachment Ivan Shevtsov stated on November 5 that about 250 former Wagner fighters have arrived in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction to manage assault operations by regular Russian forces and “Storm” and “Storm-Z” units consisting mostly of convicts.[49]

The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka, Zahoruykivka (15km east of Kupyansk), Tymkivka (18km east of Kupyansk) near Kupyansk on November 6.[50]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- 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

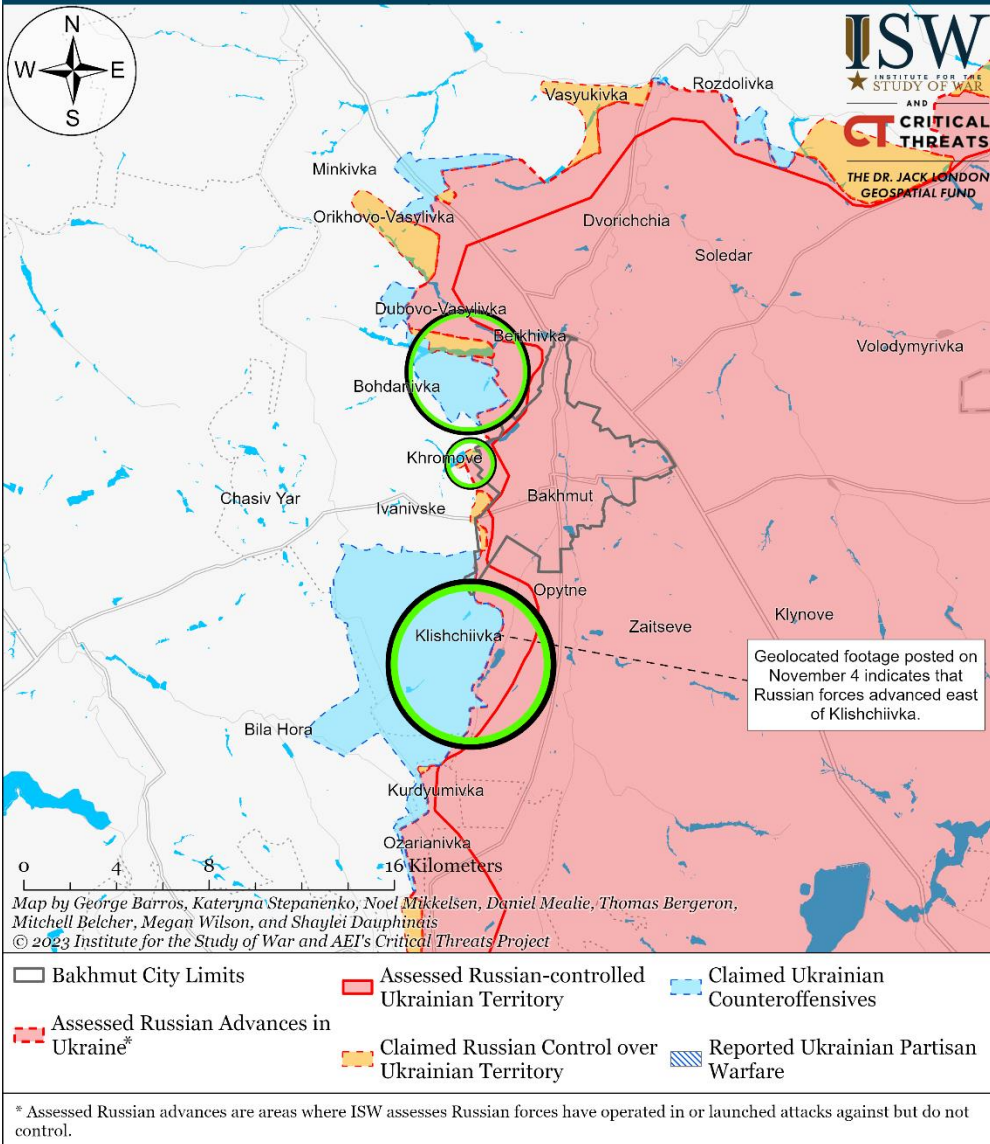
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – 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 Bakhmut direction on November 6 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage posted on November 6 shows that Russian forces made marginal advances northward along a road near Vasyukivka (about 12km north of Bakhmut).[51] A Ukrainian source and several Russian milbloggers additionally claimed that Russian forces made gains near the Bekrhivka reservoir (directly northwest of Bakhmut), with some sources claiming that Russian forces control the whole reservoir and some claiming that they only control the southern shore.[52] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of purported Russian gains in the Berkhivka area. Russian sources amplified footage reportedly showing elements of the Russian 58th Special Purpose Brigade (formerly the 3rd Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Spetsnaz Brigade) fighting near Bakhmut.[53] A Russian BARS (Combat Reserve)-affiliated source claimed that Russian forces are successfully pushing Ukrainian forces away from positions between Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[54] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully tried to regain lost positions near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) and attacked near Bohdanivka (7km west of Bakhmut), Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), and Pivdenne (21km southwest of Bakhmut) but did not advance.[55]

Ukrainian forces counterattacked in the Bakhmut direction on November 6 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces "periodically" counterattack across the railway line between Klishchiivka and Andriivka, and another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are attacking along the entire Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut) line.[56] The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions south of Bakhmut.[57]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

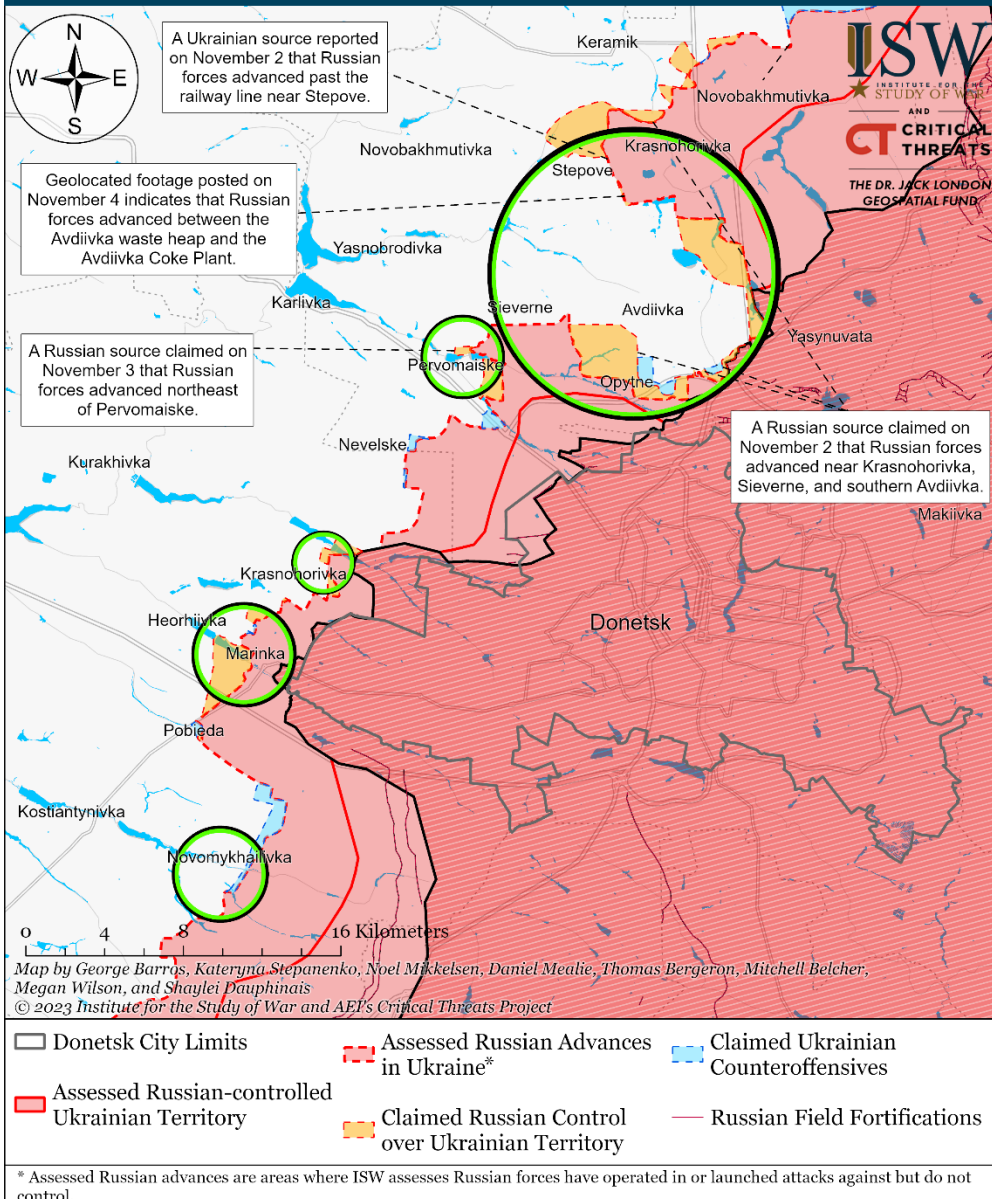


Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 6 and reportedly advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces broke through the railway line near Stepove (7km northwest of Avdiivka) and maintained control of the waste heap area north of Avdiivka.[58] Ukrainian military observe Konstantyn Mashovets similarly noted that elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army, Central Military District) conducted a successful attack near Stepove and pushed Ukrainian forces out of a stronghold in the area.[59] Mashovets also reported that Russian forces captured territory in a segment of the front behind the railway line near the northern part of the Avdiivka Coke Plant (just north of Avdiivka), although ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of Mashovets' claims.[60] Russian sources claimed that fighting continues south, east, and north of Avdiivka and that Russian forces continue to

advance in some areas.[61] Several Russian milbloggers remarked that Russian offensive operations towards Avdiivka have already been an operational success because they have alleviated the intensity of Ukrainian artillery strikes on Donetsk City and its environs.[62] Ukrainian military observer Yuri Butusov warned that Russian forces are preparing for another wave of renewed assaults on Avdiivka with fresher reserves, and Mashovets noted that Russian forces have recently deployed understrength elements of the 239th Tank Regiment (90th Tank Division, 41st Combined Arms Army, Central Military District) to the Avdiivka area to further support offensive operations.[63] The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Stepove, Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka), Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (10km southwest of Avdiivka).[64]

Ukrainian forces reportedly counterattacked near Avdiivka and restored some lost positions as of November 6. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Krasnohorivka (6km northwest of Avdiivka) between November 3 and November 5, thereby forcing Russian troops to withdraw from part of the railway track.[65] The Russian "Russkiy Legion" (BARS-13) irregular armed formation claimed that Ukrainian forces were successfully pressuring Russian forces near Stepove and the "Tsarska Okhota" restaurant south of Avdiivka.[66]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

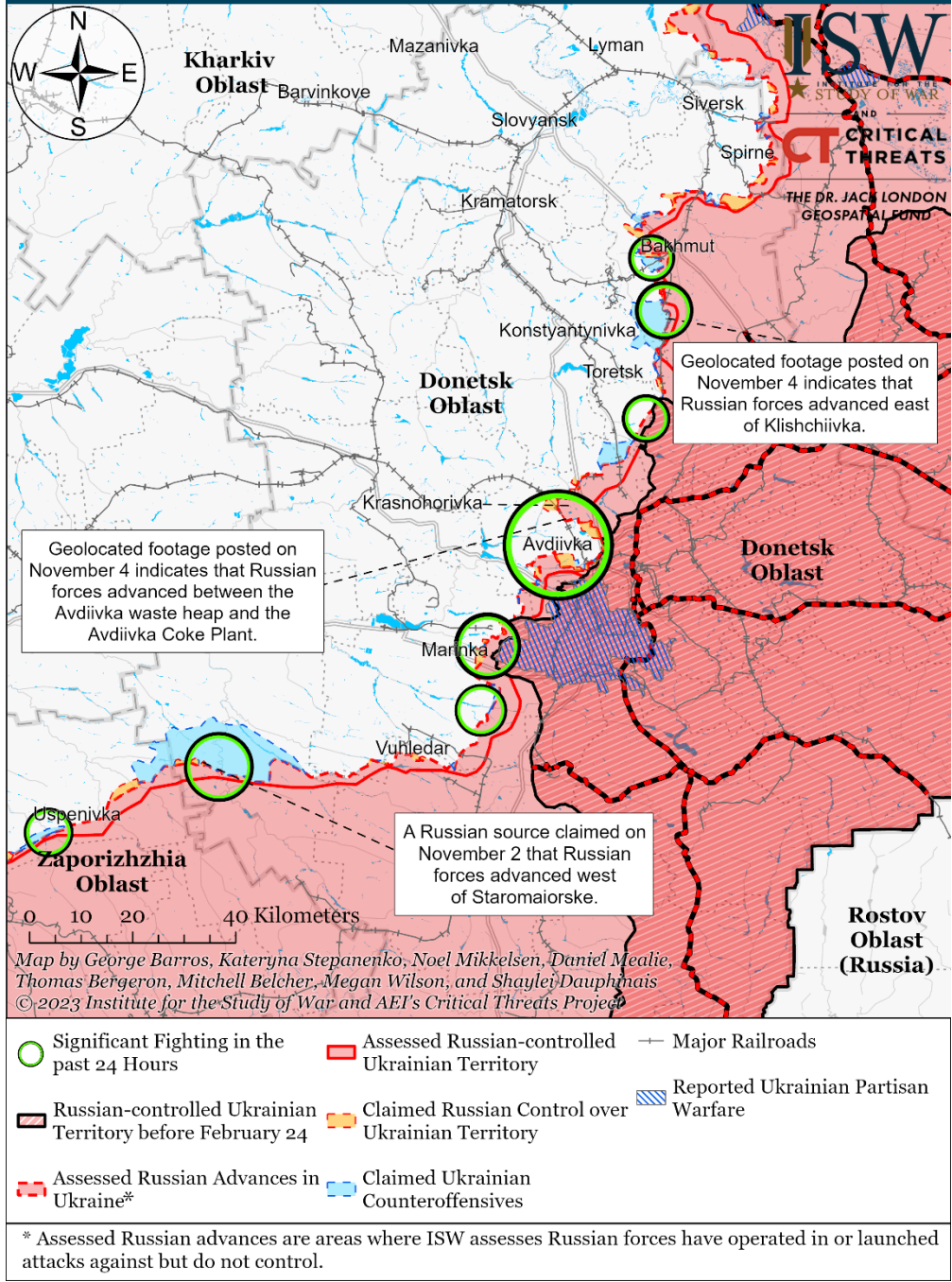


Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 6 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage posted on November 6 shows that Russian forces have advanced south of Novomykhailivka, about 12km southwest of Donetsk City.[67] The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian attacks near Marinka and Krasnohorivka (both on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka.[68] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces attacked on the western outskirts of Marinka on November 5.[69] A Russian milblogger posted footage purportedly of elements of the 68th Army Corps (Eastern Military District) striking Ukrainian positions in the Novomykhailivka area.[70]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on November 6.

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a strike on Russian military assets in occupied southern Donetsk Oblast on November 5. Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that a Ukrainian missile struck near an ammunition warehouse in Siedove (45km east of Mariupol), and geolocated footage shows a large explosion near Siedove on the night of November 5.[71] Ukrainian sources speculated that the strike hit an ammunition depot and damaged Russian helicopters and other military equipment.[72] Russian milbloggers offered diverging claims on which missiles Ukrainian forces may have used, claiming that they were either air-launched cruise missiles or ground-launched ballistic missiles such as ATACMS.[73] ISW has not observed confirmation of a Ukrainian ATACMS launch as of the time of this publication. Some Russian sources denied the strike outright and claimed that the damage to the warehouse was caused by an accidental fire.[74]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

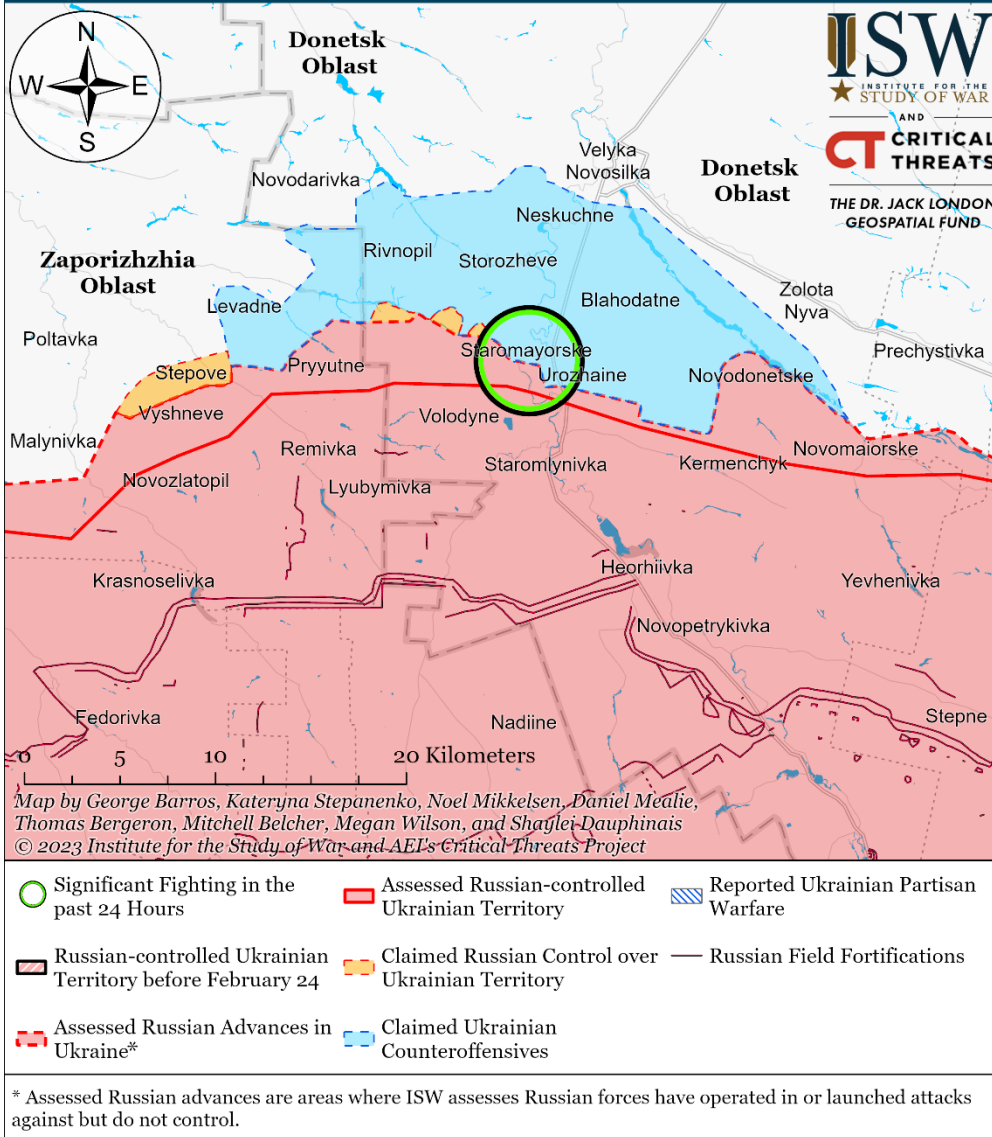


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces conducted ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 6 but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces managed to reach Staromayorske (10km south of Velyka Novosilka) from the southwest and counterattacked from the direction of Zavitne Bazhannya (12km south of Velyka Novosilka).[75] The milblogger also claimed that Russian advances from the Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) area are putting pressure on Ukrainian positions in Staromayorske.[76] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Staromayorske, however.[77] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces remain active near Pryyutne and Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[78] The Russian “Vostok” Battalion, which operates in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, claimed that current poor weather is unsuitable for high combat activity and that there are mostly artillery duels along the frontline.[79] A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles are ongoing in western Donetsk and eastern Zaporizhia oblasts.[80]

Russian forces made limited confirmed territorial gains in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast on an unspecified date. Geolocated footage published on November 6 indicates that Russian forces slightly advanced east of Zahirne (11km southwest of Hulyaipole).[81]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

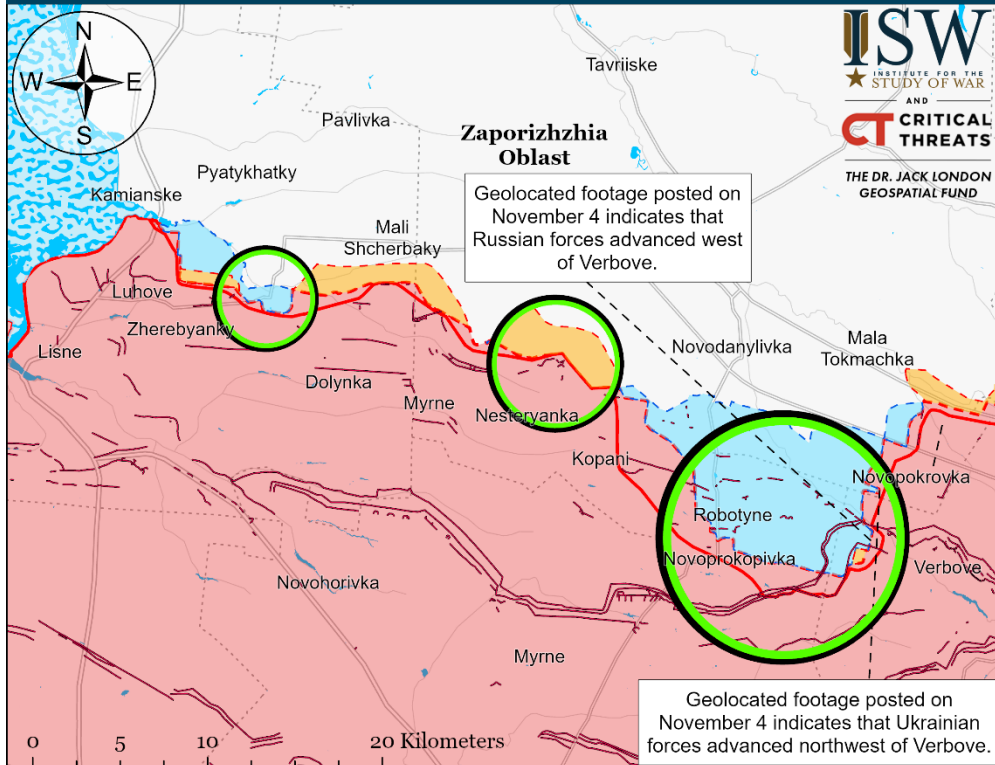


Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not make claimed or confirmed advances.[82] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Robotyne.[83] A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles are ongoing near Verbove (8km east of Robotyne) and that Ukrainian forces are trying to disrupt Russian defense systems in the area, likely implying Russian fortifications.[84] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conduct periodic local attacks with limited forces near Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne), Robotyne, Verbove, and Novoprokopivka (just south of Robotyne) that are unsuccessful.[85] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces took advantage of poor weather and limited visibility to conduct assaults near Verbove but were not successful.[86]

Russian sources claimed that Russian forces made incremental territorial gains in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 6, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Robotyne and seized two unspecified Ukrainian positions after counterattacking in the area.[87] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Robotyne and attempted to advance from Verbove.[88] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets assessed that unspecified elements of the 42nd Guards Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District [SMD]) decided to “prove themselves” through a series of unsuccessful attacks south of Robotyne after the Russian command rotated other elements of the 42nd Division and subordinated them to the 136th Motorized Rifle Brigade (58th Combined Arms Army).[89]

Russian forces conducted localized attacks southwest of Orikhiv in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 6 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults north of Nesteryanka (10km southwest of Orikhiv) and near Pyatykhatky (23km southwest of Orikhiv).[90] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces are attacking in the Zaporizhia direction and attacked near Pyatykhatky from the direction of Kopani. A Russian milblogger claimed that neither Ukrainian nor Russian forces control Kamyanske (30km west of Orikhiv).[91]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



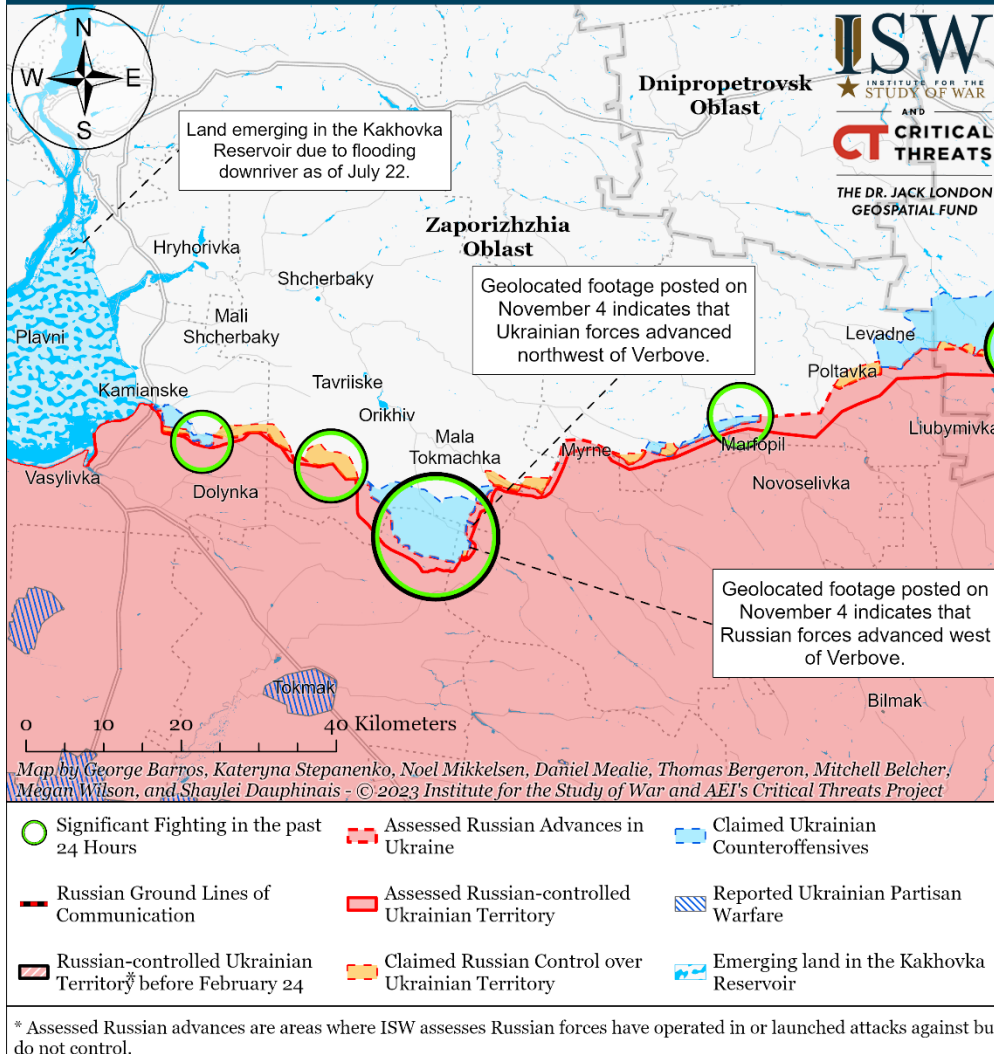
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AND
**CT CRITICAL
THREATS**
THE DR. JACK LONDON
GEOSPATIAL FUND

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

- 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
- Russian Field Fortifications

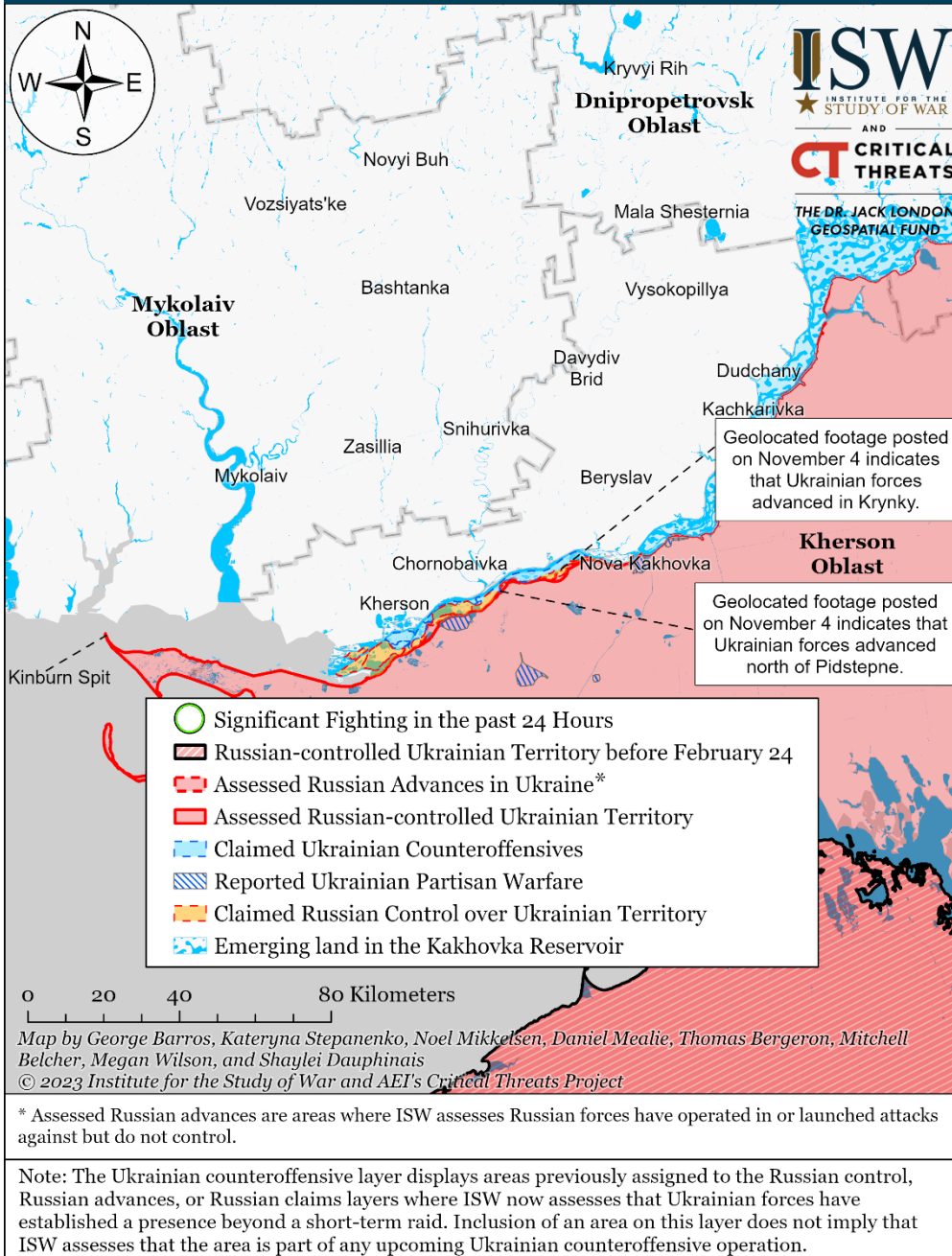
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces retained their positions in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast as of November 6.[92] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces still maintain positions in one part of Krynky (30km east of Kherson City and about 2km inland from the Dnipro River shoreline) despite Russian efforts to push Ukrainian forces from the east bank of the Dnipro River.[93] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces expanded control over their positions north of Pidstepne (17km east of Kherson City).[94] Another Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian attack near Krynky and that elements of the Russian 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla) are shelling Ukrainian positions in west (right) bank Kherson Oblast.[95] Mashovets also assessed that the Russian military command plans to commit two more “Storm-Z” assault detachments to the zones of responsibility of the Russian 26th Motorized Rifle Regiment (70th Guards Motorized Rifle Division, SMD) or the 144th Motorized Rifle Brigade (SMD) from the direction of Korsunka (43km northeast of Kherson City).[96]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Geolocated footage from November 4 confirms that Ukrainian forces hit the Russian *Askold* missile carrier, a Karakurt-class corvette that the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) launched in 2021, at the Zalyv Shipyard in Kerch, Crimea.[97] Open-source geolocation project GeoConfirmed observed that Ukrainian forces targeted *Askold* missile carrier with multiple deep strike missiles.[98]

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

Russian occupation officials are expanding military recruitment and registration offices in occupied territories, likely in support of coercive mobilization efforts. Russian senator for occupied Kherson Oblast Konstantin Basyuk stated on November 4 that he met with the Kherson Oblast occupation military commissar to discuss the opening of military recruitment and registration offices in Henichesk, Nova Kakhovka, Kakhovka, and other unspecified settlements in Kherson Oblast.[99] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on November 6 that Russian occupation officials have already formed new military recruitment and registration offices in occupied southern Ukraine.[100] Basyuk asserted that enlistment in the Russian Armed Forces is wholly voluntary for residents in occupied Kherson Oblast, but ISW has routinely observed Russian occupation officials coerce and force residents into military service.[101]

Russian officials in Moscow Oblast are reportedly intensifying contract recruitment efforts. Russian opposition outlet *Mobilization News* reported on November 6 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) began a temporary contract recruitment campaign that will last between November 1 and November 26, during which Russian officials will offer individuals from Moscow Oblast million ruble (\$10,790) lump sum payments.[102] A Russian insider source claimed that on November 6 the recruitment campaign was for an unspecified “elite” unit and that Moscow Oblast Governor Andrey Vorobyov is actively raising funds for the recruitment campaign.[103]

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)

Russian officials continue to weaponize youth engagement programs to consolidate social control of occupied areas of Ukraine. Several Russian officials, including Donetsk Oblast occupation head Denis Pushilin, Luhansk Oblast occupation head Leonid Pasechnik, and Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo, and First Deputy Head of the Russian Presidential Administration Sergei Kiriyenko attended the "Big Change" youth competition at the "Artek" children's center in occupied Crimea.[104] The competition is reportedly meant for children aged 14-16 and revolves around the theme "Serve Fatherland and Remember," which disseminates Russian patriotic ideals and ideologies to youth in occupied Ukraine. Pushilin noted that he spoke to a girl from occupied Donetsk Oblast at Artek, suggesting that Russian occupation officials may be using this program to further remove children from their homes in occupied Ukraine and expose them to Russian military-patriotic education.[105]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Nothing significant to report.

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)

A Ukrainian military observer stated on November 6 that Belarusian forces replaced elements of the Belarusian 383rd Air Assault Battalion of the 36th Airborne Assault Brigade with elements of the 3rd Airborne Battalion of the 103rd Airborne Brigade near the border with Ukraine.[106]

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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