

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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February 17, 2024, 7:10pm 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 3:40pm ET on February 17. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the February 18 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

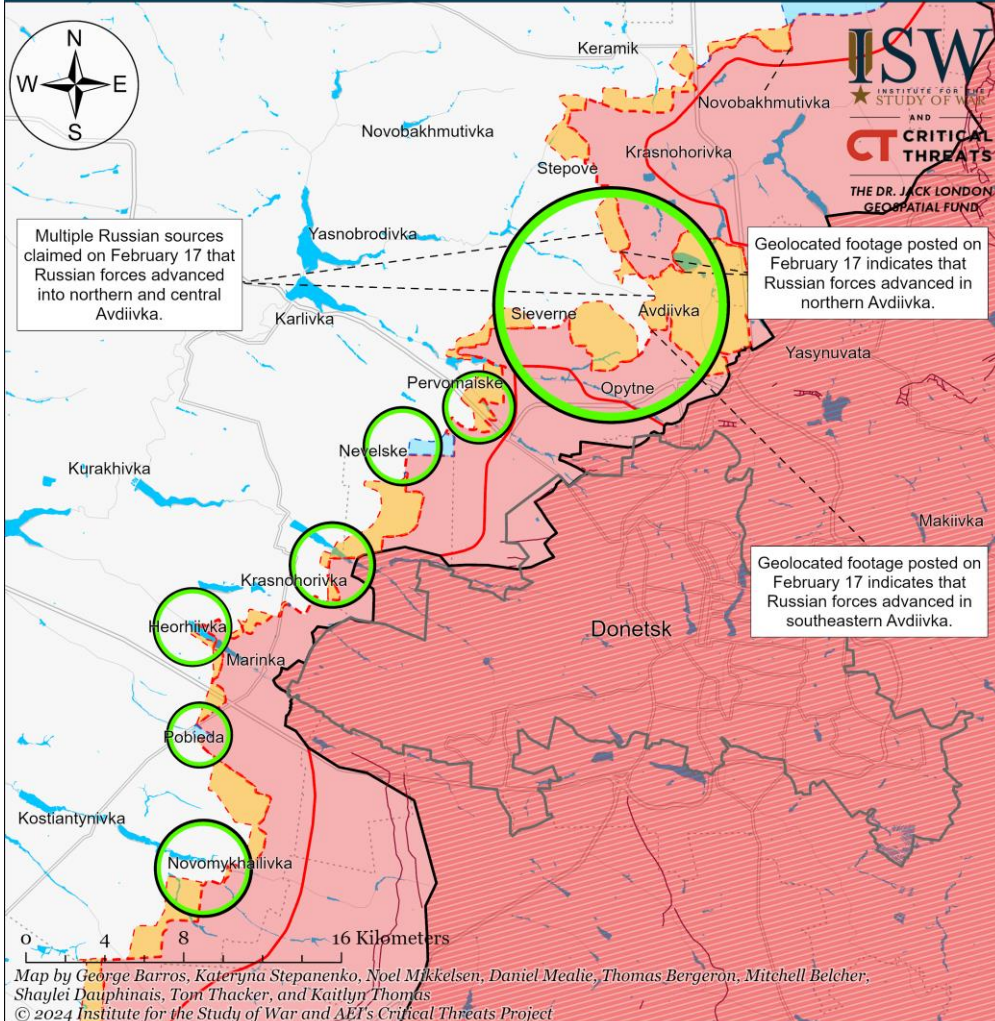
*Note: An expert analyst called our attention to the fact that we have not been using the doctrinal expression “Close Air Support” (CAS) in connection with Russian air operations around Avdiivka accurately. The analyst rightly pointed out that CAS requires close coordination with the maneuvering ground units, which ISW has not observed, and does not assess has occurred. We used the expression (incorrectly) because the glide-bomb attacks were clearly meant to shape and support tactical actions, which is one of the purposes of CAS. But Russian air operations around Avdiivka were not properly CAS, and we were mistaken to use that expression. ISW apologizes for this mistake.*

**Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu claimed that Russian forces have established “full control” over Avdiivka, Donetsk Oblast as Russian forces continued to advance in the settlement on February 17, and Ukrainian forces have likely withdrawn from Avdiivka.** Shoigu reported to Russian President Vladimir Putin on the evening of February 17 that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces are completing the capture of Avdiivka and clearing areas where Shoigu claimed Russian forces had trapped Ukrainian forces.[1] Putin credited the 30th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]); 35th, 55th, and 74th Motorized Rifle Brigades (all of the 41st CAA, CMD); 1st, 9th, and 114th Motorized Rifle Brigades and 1454th Motorized Rifle Regiment and 10th Tank Regiment (all of the 1st Donetsk People’s Republic [DNR] Army Corps [AC]); and the 6th, 80th, and 239th Tank Regiments (all of the 90th Tank Division, 41st CAA, CMD) for capturing Avdiivka under the leadership of Russian Center Group of Forces commander Colonel General Andrei Mordvichev.[2]

Geolocated footage published on February 17 shows that Russian forces advanced into northern Avdiivka along the railway line, in the eastern part of the Avdiivka Coke Plant, and in the industrial area near the Avdiivka quarry in northeastern Avdiivka.[3] Additional geolocated footage shows that Russian forces advanced into central Avdiivka from the south and captured the City Administration and Palace of Culture buildings.[4] Russian milbloggers largely claimed that Russian forces captured

most of Avdiivka except for some of the western outskirts and advanced up to Lastochkyne (west of Avdiivka), though some prominent milbloggers claimed that pockets of Ukrainian forces remain in the western part of the Avdiivka Coke Plant, in the Khimik Microrraion in southwestern Avdiivka, and in the residential area in southeastern Avdiivka.[5]

## Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of February 17, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Shaylei Dauphinais, Tom Thacker, and Kaitlyn Thomas  
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Donetsk City Limits	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Russian Field Fortifications

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

Note: A Russian source claimed on February 16 that Russian forces penetrated Ukrainian defenses at the so-called "Zenit" fortified area and advanced two kilometers near Avdiivka. A Russian source claimed on February 16 that Russian forces captured the so-called "Brevno" fortified area and advanced at least 300 meters westward near Avdiivka. A Russian source claimed on February 16 that Russian forces captured 70 percent of the Vinohradniki-2 area of Avdiivka. A Russian source claimed on February 16 that Russian forces advanced 180 meters along a 500-meters-wide front in a forested area west of the Vinohradniki-2 area of Avdiivka. A Russian source claimed on February 16 that Russian forces advanced two kilometers along a two-kilometer-wide front near the so-called "Cheburashka" fortified area near Avdiivka. A Russian source claimed on February 16 that Russian forces captured 50 percent of Pervomaiske. Russian sources claimed on February 14 that Russian forces control 17.5 percent of Avdiivka. A Russian source claimed on February 14 that Russian forces advanced up to 930 meters along a 1.4-kilometers-wide front northeast of Opytne.

Ukrainian officials indicated that Ukrainian forces inflicted heavy losses on Russian forces during the defense of and withdrawal from Avdiivka — the Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Press Service reported that Ukrainian forces inflicted losses of 20,018 personnel, 199 tanks, and 481 armored combat vehicles in the Tavriisk direction (from Avdiivka through western Zaporizhia Oblast) between January 1 and February 15, with the majority of those losses inflicted near Avdiivka.[6] A Ukrainian soldier reportedly operating near Avdiivka stated that Russian forces lost hundreds of personnel just on February 17 and suffered massive losses on February 16.[7] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy stated that some Ukrainian forces were captured during the withdrawal from Avdiivka but that the withdrawal largely occurred according to plan and that Russian forces did not complete their intended encirclement of Ukrainian forces.[8]

**Russian sources largely characterized the Ukrainian withdrawal as disorganized and costly and claimed that Russian forces managed to encircle large Ukrainian groups in Avdiivka, but ISW has observed no evidence supporting these Russian claims.** Russian ultranationalist milbloggers largely amplified the same few videos of a handful of Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) captured near Avdiivka to claim that Russian forces managed to surround large groups of Ukrainian forces in the settlement.[9] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Ukrainian forces suffered exorbitant losses in Avdiivka due to a disorderly withdrawal, and Shoigu similarly claimed that Ukrainian forces lost over 1,500 personnel in the past 24 hours.[10] Russian milbloggers usually publish and heavily amplify footage of the capture of Ukrainian POWs and footage of war dead during battles of high informational importance, and the footage that Russian milbloggers have amplified thus far is not consistent with Russian claims about Ukrainian casualties and the capture of Ukrainian POWs.[11] The Russian milbloggers also amplified limited footage of a handful of Ukrainian personnel withdrawing under fire to support claims that the withdrawal was disorganized, but this footage alone does not indicate that there were large chaotic Ukrainian withdrawals.[12] Some milbloggers also amplified footage showing Ukrainian forces walking freely in the open while withdrawing.[13]

The lack of footage supporting Russian claims that the withdrawal was not orderly or that Russian forces took many Ukrainian POWs does not by itself disprove the Russian claims, but this lack of such footage is very unusual for the information environment when Russian forces capture a settlement. The Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) publishes extensive drone footage of areas in which the 1st DNR Army Corps operates, including the Avdiivka area, and Russian forces tend to publicize extensive Ukrainian losses to demonstrate the scale of their success.[14] Though the current Russian information space does not glorify battlefield horrors as much as Wagner Group affiliated sources did during the captures of Soledar and Bakhmut in winter and spring 2023, Avdiivka is such a prominent area of the front that the lack of filming or amplifying footage of such events is unusual if those events occurred as claimed.[15]

**Russian forces appear to have temporarily established limited and localized air superiority and were able to provide ground troops with air support during the final days of their offensive operation to capture Avdiivka, likely the first time that Russian forces**

**have done so in Ukraine.** The spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating near Avdiivka stated on February 17 that Russian forces launched 60 KAB glide bombs at Ukrainian positions in Avdiivka over the past day, and a Ukrainian soldier operating in the area stated that Russian forces launched up to 500 glide bombs at Avdiivka in recent days.[16] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy stated that Russian forces conducted 73 airstrikes in the Tavriisk direction (Avdiivka through western Zaporizhia Oblast) on February 14, a record number, as Russian forces intensified their tactical turning movement in Avdiivka.[17] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on February 17 that Russian forces launched 250 FAB glide bombs at one specific area in Avdiivka alone in the past 48 hours.[18] Russian sources widely credited the Russian use of glide bombs with allowing Russian forces to overcome Ukrainian defenses in Avdiivka, and some Russian milbloggers asserted that Russian forces have air superiority in the area.[19]

Russian forces have gradually increased their use of glide bombs throughout the theater since early 2023, but the recent mass use of glide bombs in Avdiivka is the first time that Russian aviation has used these bombs at scale to provide air support to advancing infantry troops.[20] A Russian Storm-Z instructor claimed that Russian forces have previously struggled to conduct mass airstrikes in air support operations and expressed hope that Russian aviation operations in Avdiivka will herald a change in Russian operations elsewhere along the frontline.[21] The Russian ability to conduct these mass strikes for several days in the most active part of the frontline suggests that Ukrainian forces were not able to deny them access to the airspace around Avdiivka, and Russian forces likely leveraged this temporary localized air superiority to facilitate the capture of much of the settlement.

**Delays in Western security assistance may lead to further significant constraints on Ukrainian air defenses that could allow Russian forces to replicate the air support that facilitated Russian advances in Avdiivka at scale in Ukraine.** Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov stated on February 17 that one of the main lessons learned from the defense of Avdiivka is that Ukrainian forces need modern air defense systems to prevent Russian forces from using glide bombs.[22] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated that Ukrainian air defenses need to shoot down the Russian Su-34 and Su-35 attack aircraft that launch the glide bombs in order to stop the strikes.[23] Glide bombs have a range up to 70 kilometers, and Russian forces widely began using the glide bombs in an effort to allow tactical aircraft to conduct strikes from further behind the frontline in order to minimize Russian fixed and rotary wing losses in Ukraine.[24] Ukrainian forces need large numbers of air defense systems that can effectively target Russian aircraft at these ranges. Ukrainian officials have stressed that Ukraine is facing a “critical shortage” of air defense missiles, and the *New York Times* reported on February 9 that American officials assess that Ukrainian air defense missile stocks will run out in March 2024 without further replenishment by Western security assistance.[25]

**Limited effective air defense systems, dwindling air defense missiles stocks, and continued Russian missile and drone strikes against rear population centers are likely forcing Ukraine to make difficult choices about what areas of the frontline receive air defense coverage.[26] Recurring temporary localized and limited Russian air superiority would likely allow Russian forces to more aggressively pursue operational**

**advances along the frontline. Widespread interrupted air superiority would allow Russian forces to conduct routine large-scale aviation operations and bomb Ukrainian cities beyond the frontline to devastating effect.**

**Ukrainian forces reportedly shot down three Russian fighter aircraft—two Su-34s and one Su-35—over Donetsk Oblast on February 17, likely having committed scarce air defense assets to help cover the withdrawal of Ukrainian forces from Avdiivka.** Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated that Ukrainian forces shot all three of the aircraft down while they were sortied to conduct glide bomb strikes.[27] Russian sources largely disputed the shootdowns, but claims diverged between various Russian milbloggers. Some Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian sources are lying about the shootdowns, others claimed that the Su-34s returned to their base, but the fate of the Su-35 is unclear, and some others claimed that Russian forces accidentally shot down the Su-35 in a friendly fire incident.[28] Ukrainian Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Mykola Oleshchuk posted Cospas-Sarat satellite data, however, that apparently shows the locations of the downed planes.[29] Ukrainian forces possess the capabilities to shoot down such high-value aviation assets when modern air defense systems and missiles are available and may have used those systems during the critical period of the withdrawal of Ukrainian ground forces from Avdiivka.[30]

**Russian authorities arrested several hundred demonstrators on February 17 amid slightly larger demonstrations responding to imprisoned opposition politician Alexei Navalny’s death.** Russian opposition news outlets reported that Russian law enforcement has detained at least 350 people in over 30 Russian cities as crowds gathered to lay flowers in honor of Navalny over the last two days, including an estimated 230 people on February 17 alone.[31] Russian opposition sources also published footage of unspecified Russian actors picking up flowers laid at the Solovetsky Stone in Moscow City and other temporary memorials to Navalny throughout Russia on the night of February 16 to 17, attempting to erase any evidence of previous demonstrations.[32] Russian authorities seemed to tolerate smaller public gatherings immediately following the announcement of Navalny’s death but appeared less tolerant of and engaged in more concerted efforts to suppress the second day of larger demonstrations.

**The US Department of Justice (DoJ) announced on February 17 that the US sent \$500,000 of forfeited Russian funds to Estonia to repair Ukraine’s energy infrastructure.**[33] The DoJ reported that the US acquired the funds after breaking up an illegal procurement network attempting to import US-made high-precision machine tools to Russia.[34] US Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monavog stated that this announcement demonstrates the resolve of the US and Estonia in cutting off Russia’s access to critical Western technology.[35]

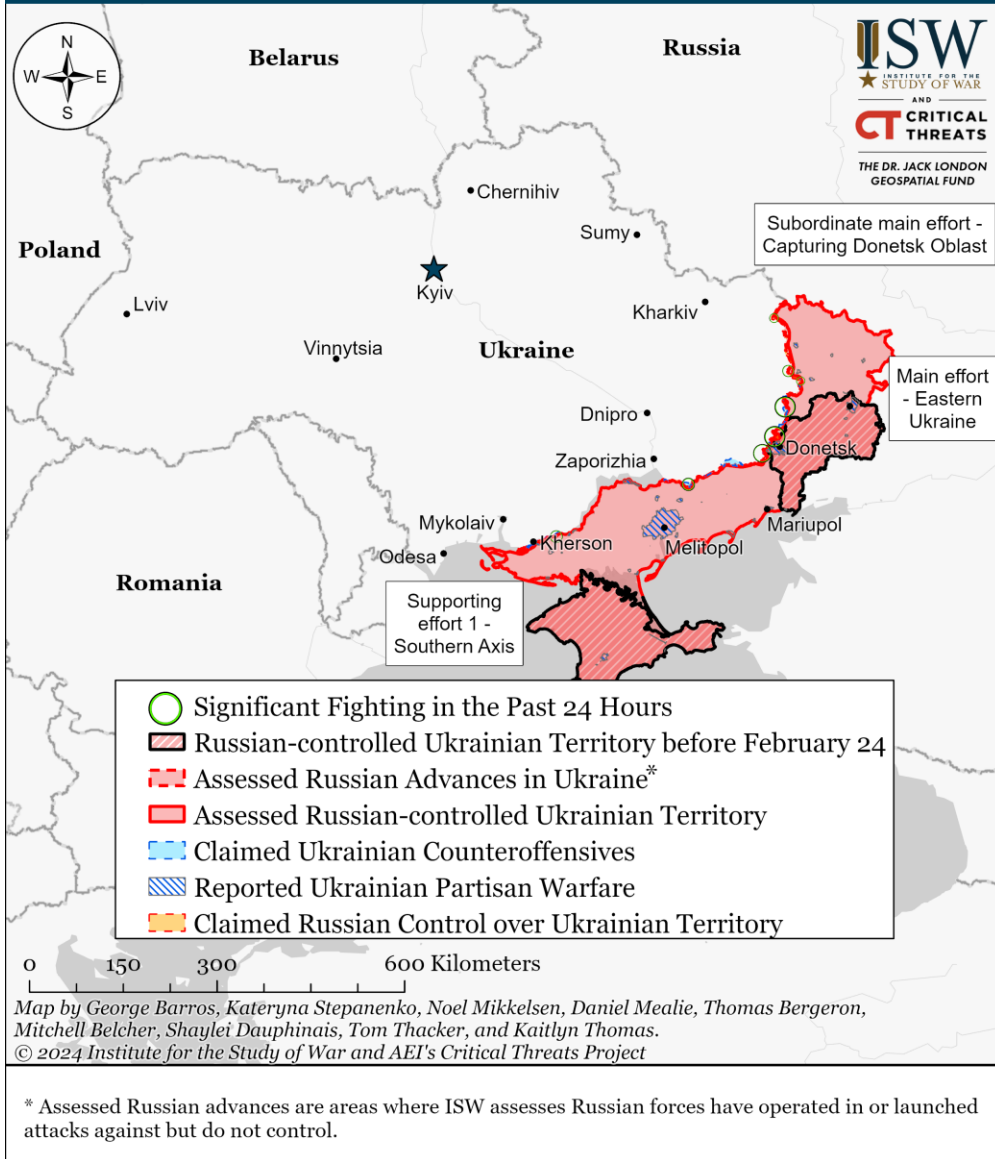
### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu claimed that Russian forces have established “full control” over Avdiivka, Donetsk Oblast as Russian forces continued to advance in the settlement on February 17, and Ukrainian forces have likely withdrawn from Avdiivka.**



- **Russian sources largely characterized the Ukrainian withdrawal as disorganized and costly and claimed that Russian forces managed to encircle large Ukrainian groups in Avdiivka, but ISW has observed no evidence supporting these Russian claims.**
- **Russian forces appear to have temporarily established limited and localized air superiority and were able to provide ground troops with close air support during the final days of their offensive operation to capture Avdiivka, likely the first time that Russian forces have done so in Ukraine.**
- **Delays in Western security assistance may lead to further significant constraints on Ukrainian air defenses that could allow Russian forces to replicate the close air support that facilitated Russian advances in Avdiivka at scale in Ukraine.**
- **Ukrainian forces reportedly shot down three Russian fighter aircraft—two Su-34s and one Su-35—over Donetsk Oblast on February 17, likely having committed scarce air defense assets to help cover the withdrawal of Ukrainian forces from Avdiivka.**
- **Russian authorities arrested several hundred demonstrators on February 17 amid slightly larger demonstrations responding to imprisoned opposition politician Alexei Navalny’s death.**
- **The US Department of Justice (DoJ) announced on February 17 that the US sent \$500,000 of forfeited Russian funds to Estonia to repair Ukraine’s energy infrastructure**
- **Russian forces made confirmed advances near Bakhmut and Avdiivka and in western Zaporizhia Oblast**
- **Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to propagandize and militarize Ukrainian youth in occupied areas.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of February 17, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



***We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.***

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

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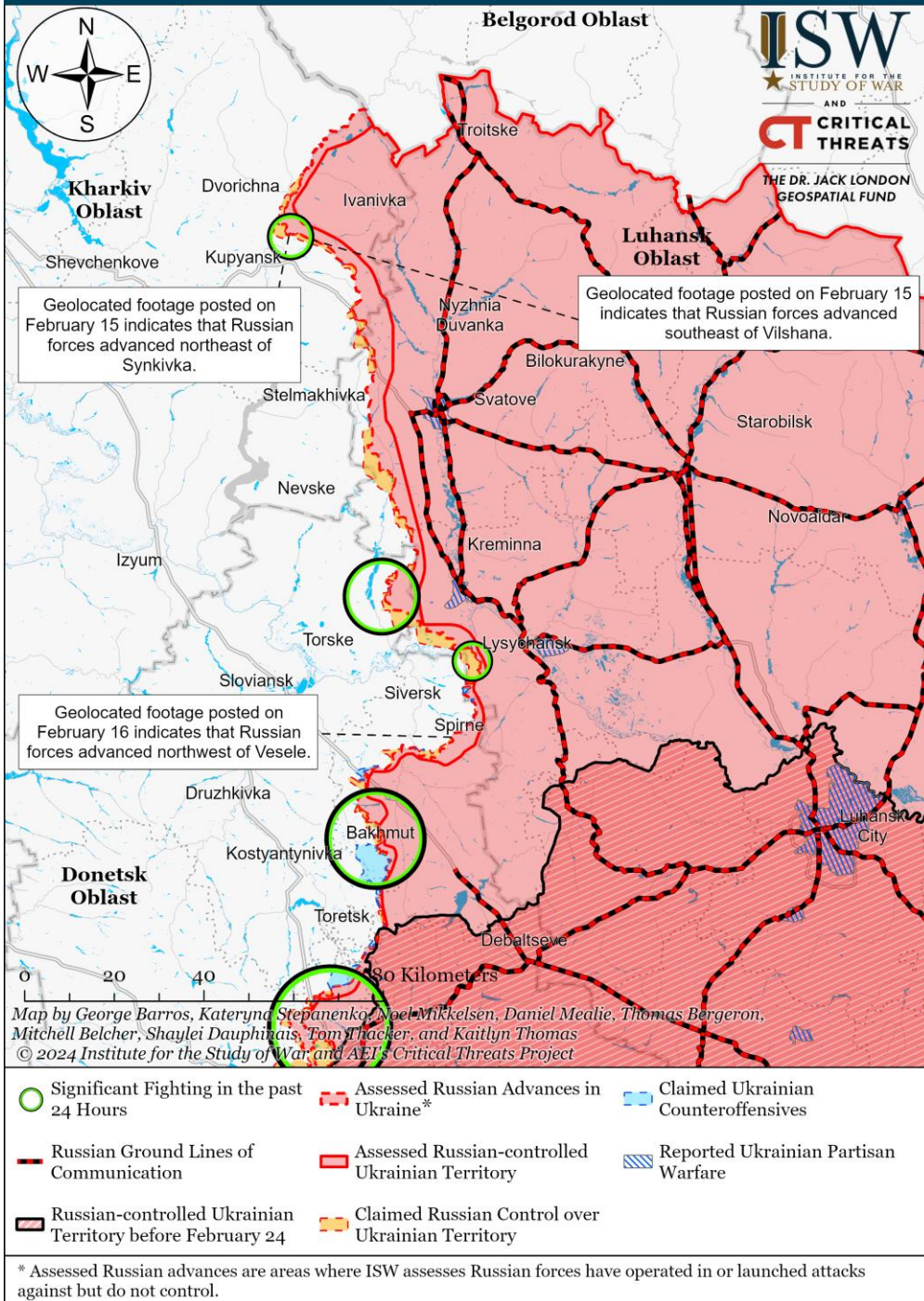
**Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

**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 reportedly advanced west of Kreminna amid continued positional fighting along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on February 17. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced east of Terny (west of Kreminna), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[36] Positional fighting continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; west of Kreminna near Terny, Yampolivka, and Torske; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[37] The spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kupyansk direction stated on February 17 that Russian forces continue to transfer new personnel and equipment to the area in order to conduct tactical-level rotations and replenish losses.[38] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces struck Kupyansk with up to 12 glide bombs.[39]



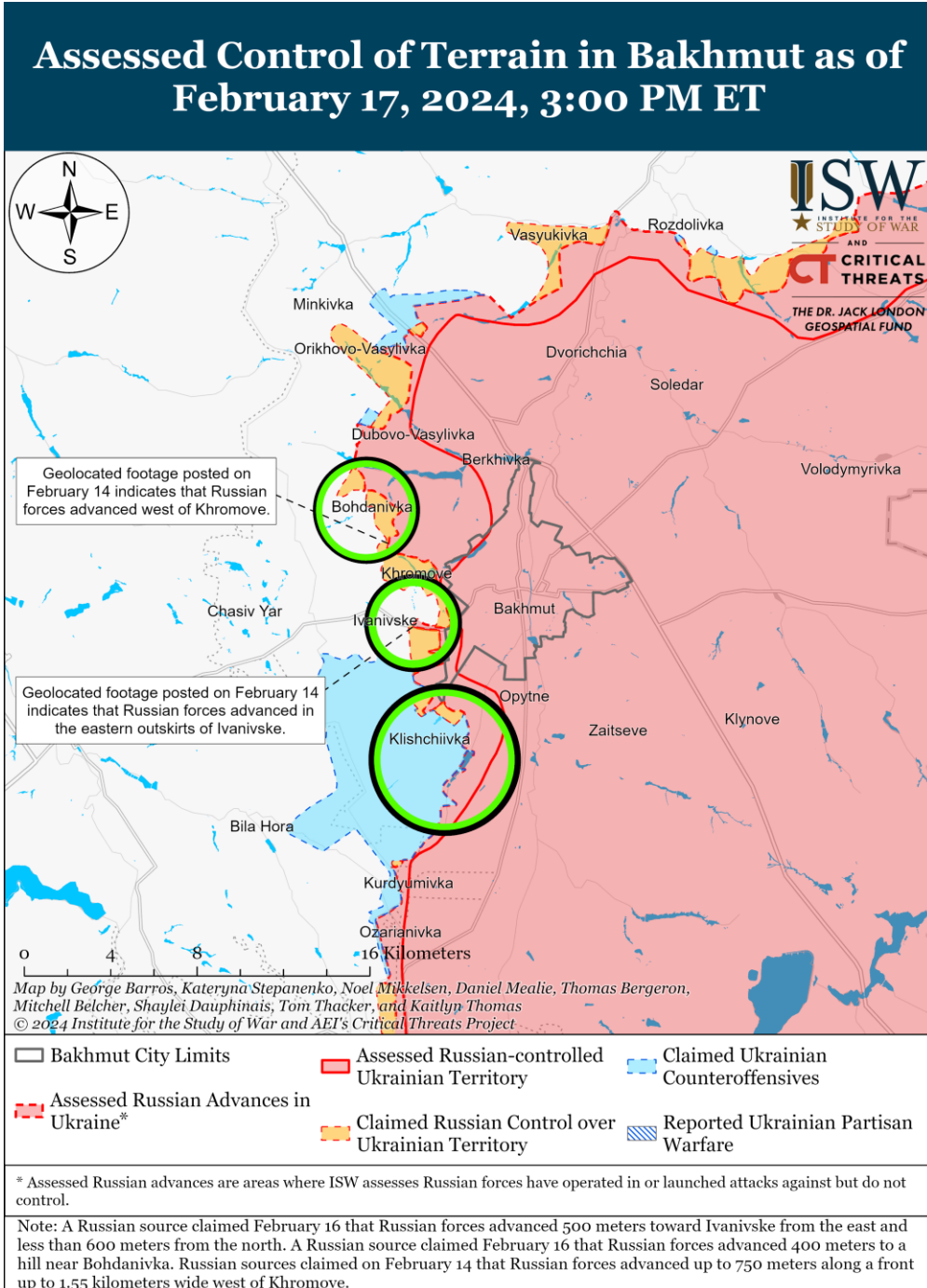
# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of February 17, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



## **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 recently marginally advanced near Bakhmut as of February 17. Geolocated footage published on February 17 shows that Russian forces marginally advanced southeast of Bohdanivka

(northwest of Bakhmut).[40] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces recently advanced towards Ivanivske (west of Bakhmut) 600 meters from the north and 500 meters from the east.[41] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced near Vyimka (northeast of Bakhmut).[42] ISW has not observed confirmation of either Russian claim. Positional fighting continued near Bohdanivka and Ivanivske; southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka and Andriivka; and south of Bakhmut near Pivdenne and Niu York.[43]

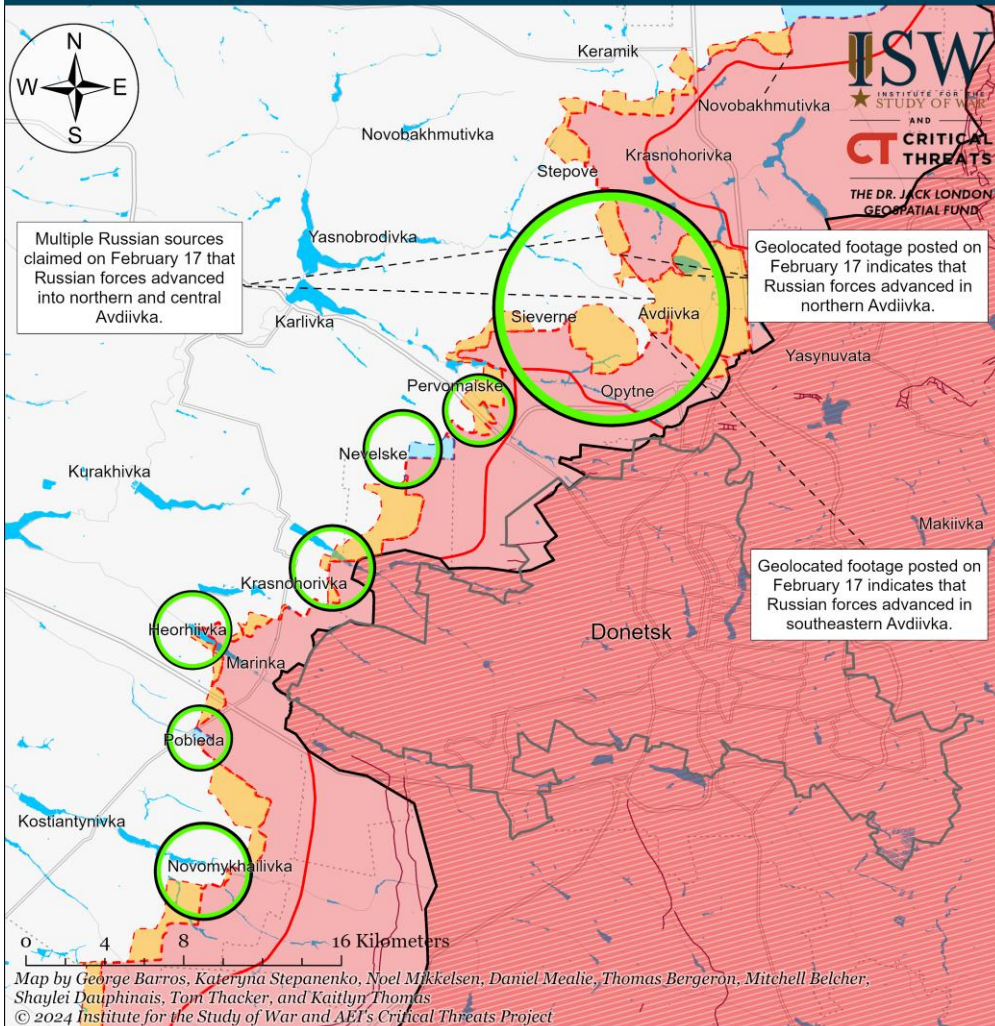


See the topline text for ISW’s daily update on the situation in Avdiivka.

Limited positional fighting continued southwest of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske and Nevelske on February 17.[44]



# Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of February 17, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Donetsk City Limits	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Russian Field Fortifications

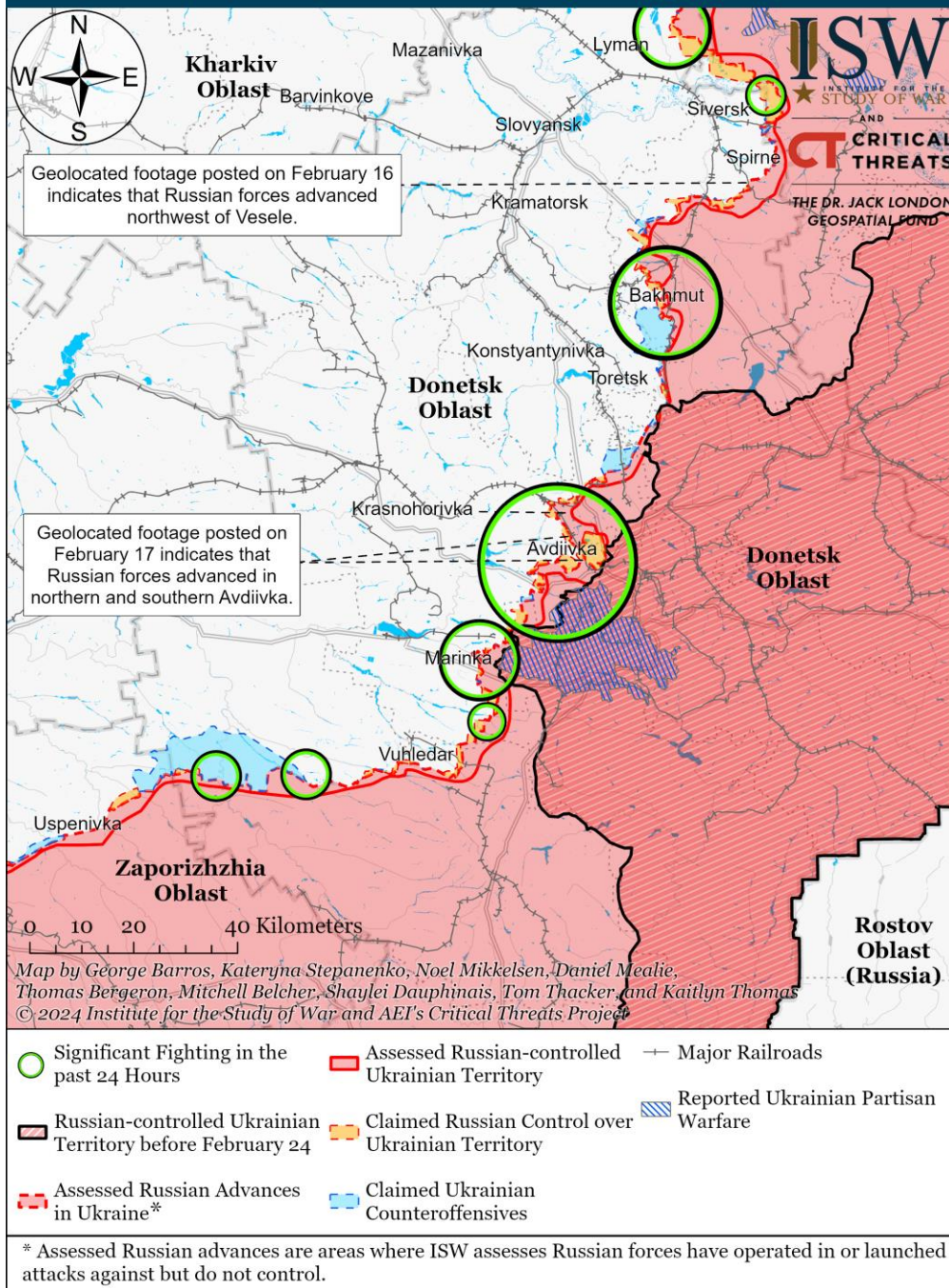
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Positional fighting continued west of Donetsk City near Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Pobieda and Novomykhailivka on February 17.[45] Elements of the Russian 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) continue to operate near Novomykhailivka, and elements of the 11th Air and Air Defense Forces Army (Russian Aerospace Forces and Eastern Military District) reportedly operate near Vodyane (southwest of Donetsk City and near Vuhledar).[46]



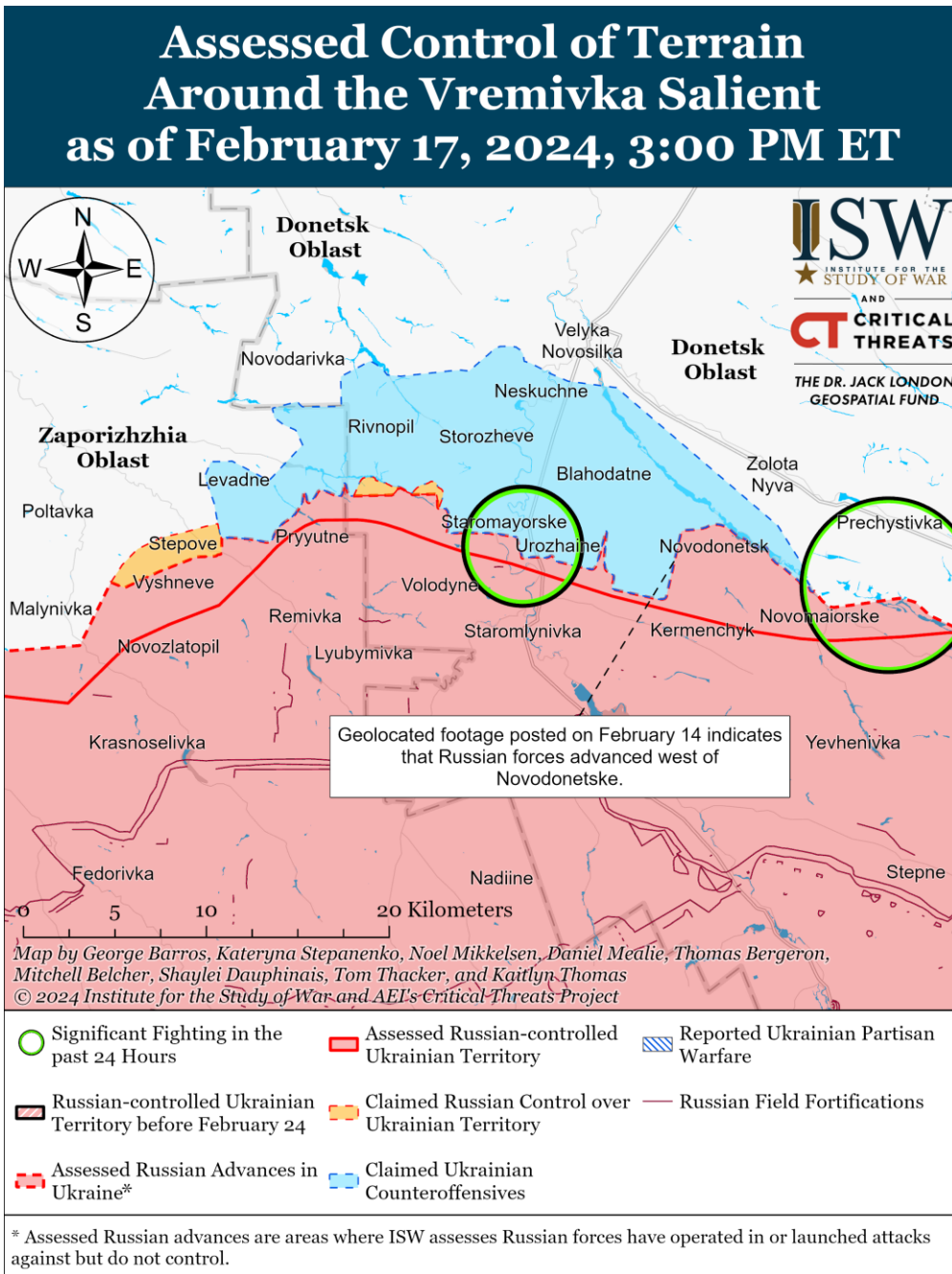
# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of February 17, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

The Ukrainian General Staff reported limited positional engagements in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia border area near Prechystivka (southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka) on February 17.<sup>[47]</sup> The Russian 11th Air and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces and Eastern

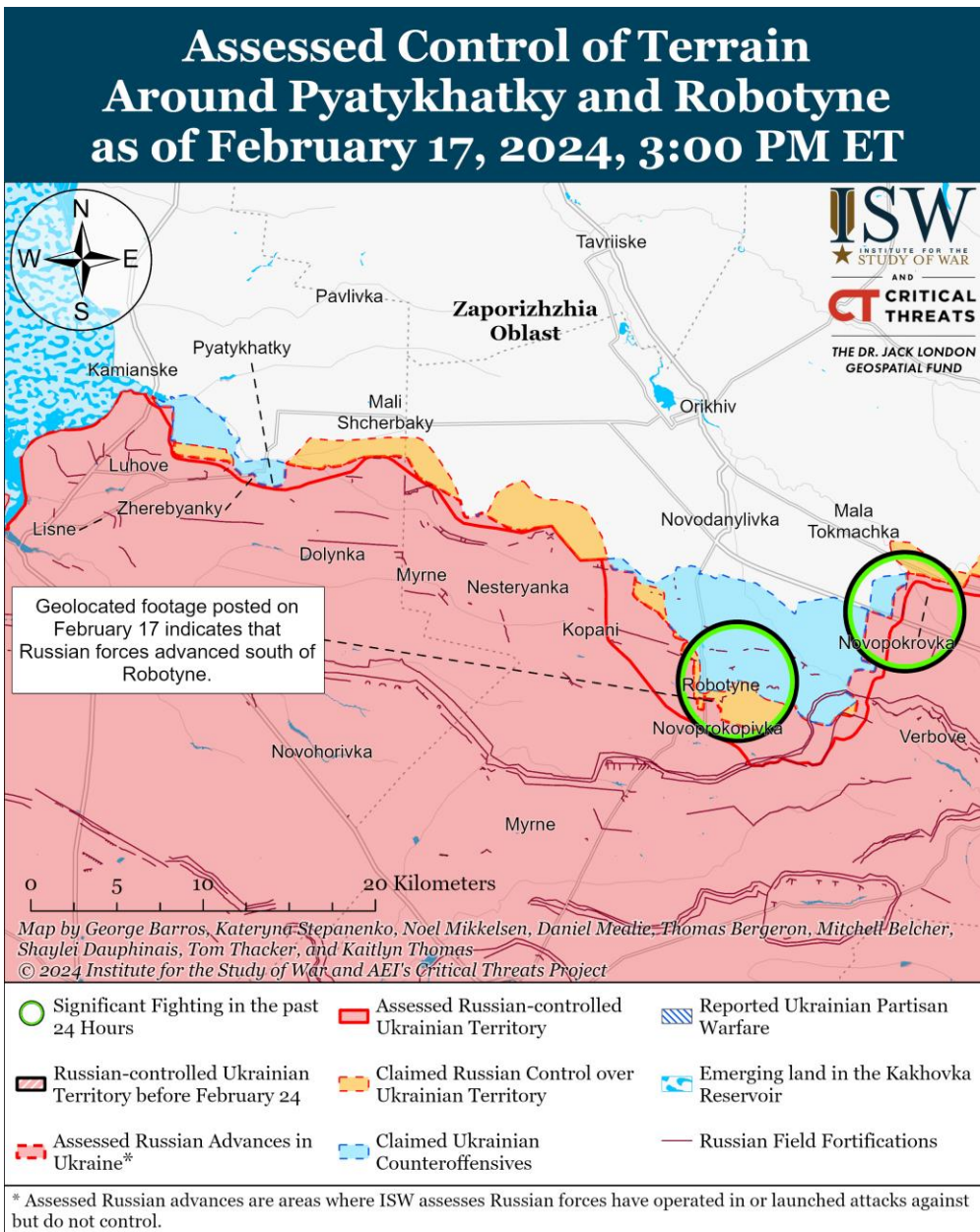
Military District) is reportedly conducting glide bomb strikes against Ukrainian positions in Staromayorske.[48]



Russian forces recently made a confirmed advance in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast amid increased Russian claims that Russian forces have resumed offensive operations in this sector of the front. Geolocated footage posted on February 17 shows that Russian forces recaptured a position south of Robotyne.[49] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces launched a renewed offensive effort towards Robotyne and are now actively storming the settlement, with some milbloggers claiming that Russian forces have advanced as far as the western outskirts of Robotyne.[50] One milblogger claimed that Russian airborne (VDV) forces began an offensive operation near Robotyne a week ago and have advanced up to 1.5 kilometers.[51] ISW has not yet observed visual evidence of Russian gains in Robotyne itself, nor of Russian offensive preparations or activation in this area. Some Russian



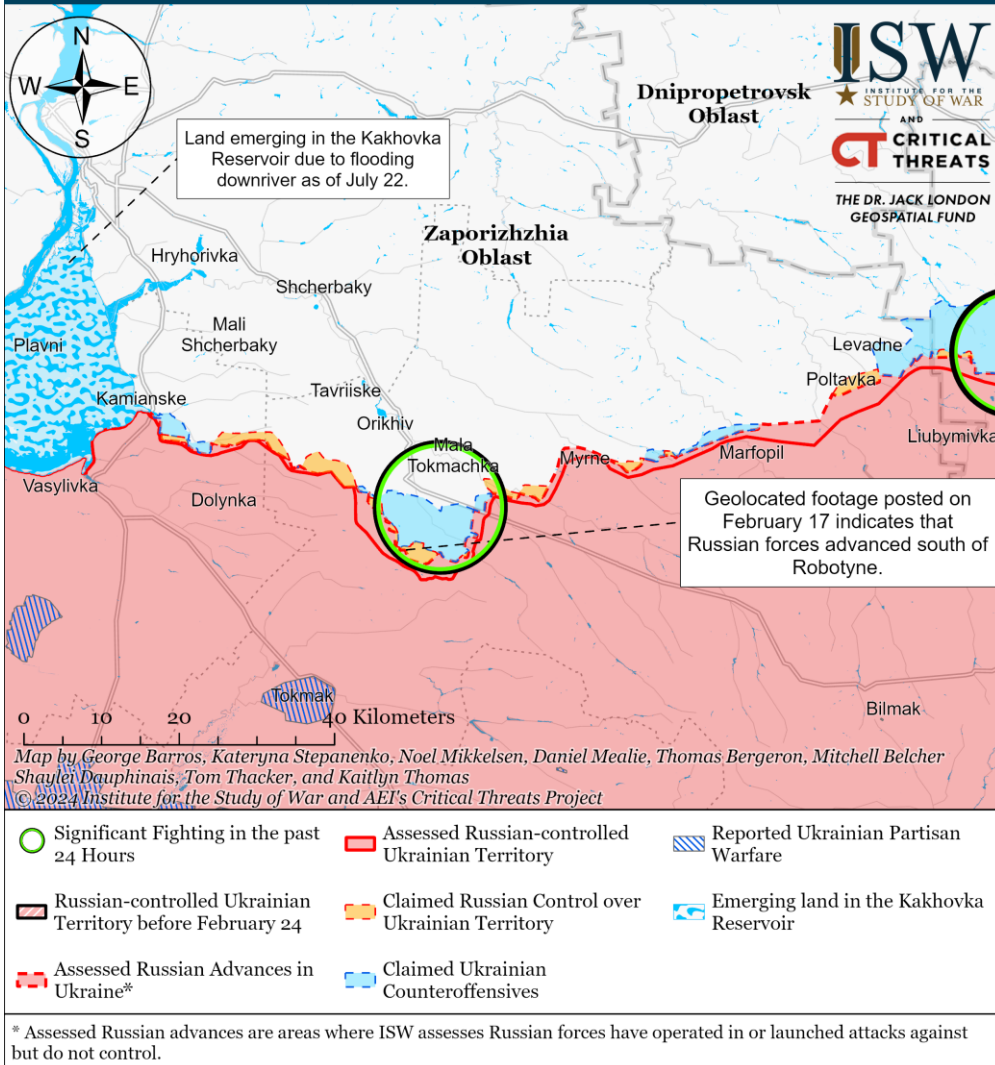
milbloggers refuted claims of offensive activation near Robotyne and reported that Russian forces have only intensified aviation and artillery activity, not ground attacks.[52] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Robotyne, Verbove (east of Robotyne), and Mala Tokmachka (northeast of Robotyne).[53] Elements of the Russian 70th and 71st Motorized Rifle Regiments (both of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) and the 7th and 76th VDV Divisions are reportedly operating in the Robotyne area.[54] Elements of the Russian 49th Special Airborne Brigade (a newly formed brigade that is reportedly subordinated to the 58th CAA) are reportedly preparing for assaults near Kamyanske, about 35km northwest of Robotyne.[55]



Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a missile strike on Russian rear areas in occupied Zaporizhzhia Oblast on February 17. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported explosions in Melitopol and Russian air defense intercepting objects near Tokmak.[56]

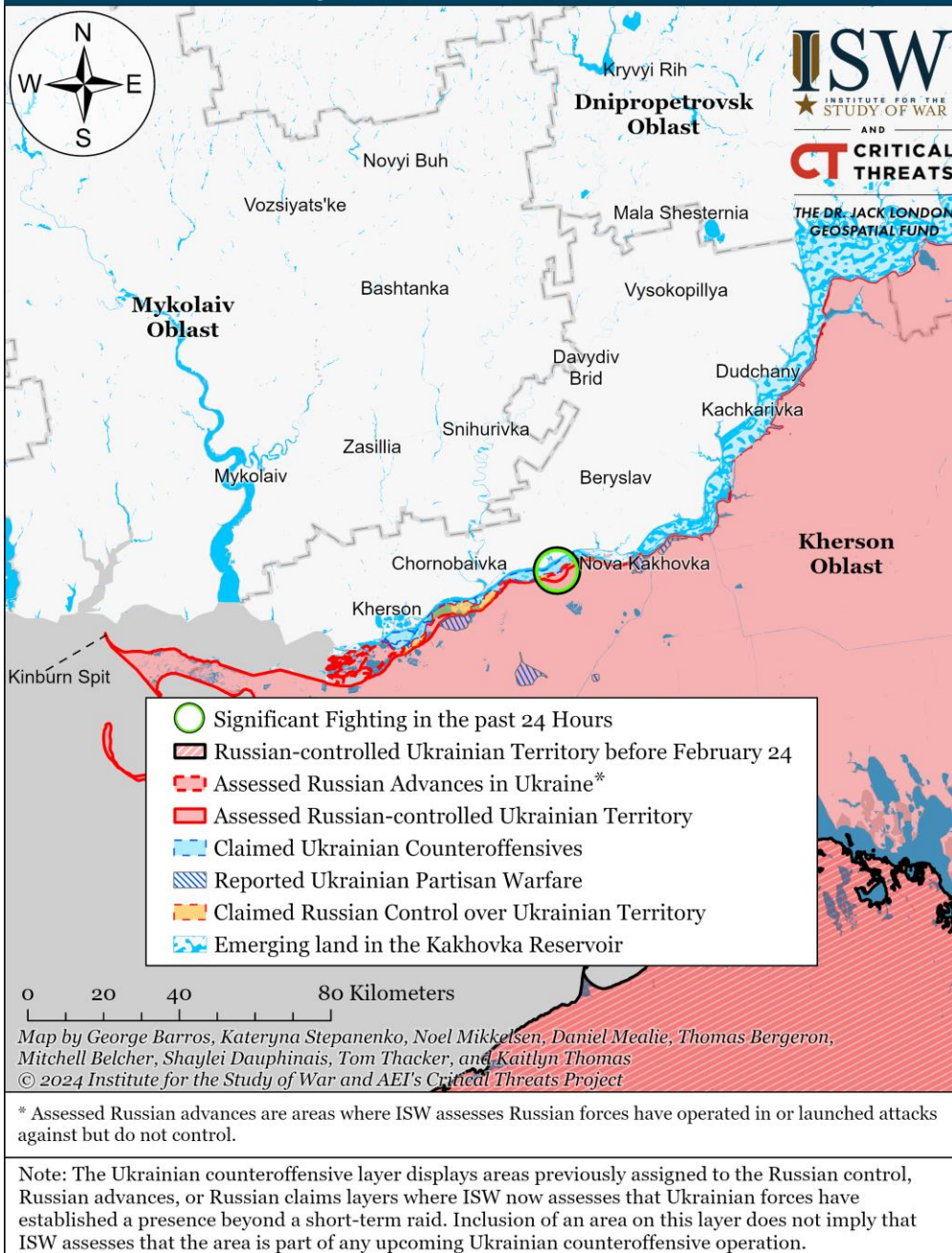


# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of February 17, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional engagements continued in east bank Kherson Oblast on February 17, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area.[57]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of February 17, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

Nothing significant to report.

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

Nothing significant to report.

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

A Russian milblogger reported on February 17 that Russian forces are testing the “Hermes” missile system in Ukraine and at training grounds in Russia.[58] Russian media previously reported on February 7 that the “Hermes” system would likely soon arrive at the front in Ukraine.[59] The “Hermes” is a guided missile system that can be launched in ground or air mode and can also be used as an anti-ship missile or coastal defense system.[60] The Tula Instrument Design Bureau is in charge of the development and production of the “Hermes” system.

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

Ukraine and its European allies continue efforts to build up their respective defense industrial bases (DIB) and innovate and adapt new battlefield technology. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated on February 17 that the European Union (EU) is currently considering ways to integrate Ukrainian domestic defense production with European companies and that the EU intends to open an innovation office in Kyiv.[61] Von der Leyen stated that the European Commission will announce a new plan to build up Europe’s DIB in the coming weeks that will emphasize increasing investment in European DIB companies and learning from Ukrainian battlefield innovations. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Lieutenant General Ivan Havrylyuk stated on February 17 that Ukrainian manufacturers are modernizing and producing new anti-tank guided missile (ATGMs) systems, drones, ammunition for thermobaric artillery systems and grenade launchers, and air defense systems that should increase the stealth of Ukraine’s air defense operations.[62]

Ukrainian state-owned joint-stock company Ukroboronprom (Ukrainian Defense Industry) stated on February 17 that it signed a cooperation agreement with German Dynamit Nobel Defense company, a subsidiary of the Israeli Rafael company.[63]

### **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 occupation authorities continue efforts to propagandize and militarize Ukrainian youth in occupied areas. Zaporizhia Oblast occupation head Yevgeny Balitsky announced on February 17 that Russian State Nuclear Energy Corporation Rosatom helped create a “youth chamber” in the Enerhodar city council, which will be the first youth self-government body in occupied Ukraine.[64] Balitsky noted that youth chambers will help occupation authorities form a personnel reserve from which to recruit and staff local governments. The Enerhodar youth chamber, along with other similar youth civic engagement programs, are likely meant to force Ukrainian adolescents to engage with Russian-controlled local political processes and prepare them for service in occupation administrations later in life. Ukrainian Zaporizhia Oblast Head Ivan Fedorov stated that Russian occupation authorities are creating military camps to teach children military skills, and that schools in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast are functioning as propaganda and militarization centers.[65] Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Artem

Lysohor similarly reported that the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) is starting a cadet corps for daughters of LNR servicemembers who have died in the war in order to militarize young girls by exposing them to military-patriotic programming and pro-Russian military ideologies and potentially prepare them for military service when they come of age.[66]

## **Russian Information Operations and Narratives**

A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed on February 17 that Moldovan laws simplifying travel between Moldova and Romania and adopting Romanian as the official state language of Moldova are antithetical to Moldova's national interests and endanger the rights and cultures of people living in Transnistria and Gagauzia.[67] Kremlin officials and mouthpieces have recently intensified rhetorical efforts aimed at preventing Moldova's integration into the European Union (EU) and setting conditions to justify future Russian aggression against Moldova.[68]

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

Nothing significant to report.

**Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.**

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[2] <https://tass dot ru/politika/20016943>

[3] [https://t.me/WarArchive\\_ua/11086?single](https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/11086?single); [https://t.me/creamy\\_caprice/4443](https://t.me/creamy_caprice/4443);  
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<https://twitter.com/franfran2424/status/1758820039719874990>;  
[https://twitter.com/hy3zeo\\_m/status/1758812946715509111](https://twitter.com/hy3zeo_m/status/1758812946715509111) ; [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/22003](https://t.me/grey_zone/22003) ;

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<https://t.me/wargonzo/18238> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/18242>; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/34756](https://t.me/dva_majors/34756);  
[https://t.me/multi\\_XAM/1341](https://t.me/multi_XAM/1341); [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/113294](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/113294) ; [https://t.me/multi\\_XAM/1347](https://t.me/multi_XAM/1347);  
<https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/54059> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/113236](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/113236);  
[https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/113316](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/113316); <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/7438> ;  
<https://t.me/epoddubny/19092>; <https://t.me/readovkaru/5863>; <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/14656> ;  
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[65] [https://t.me/ivan\\_fedorov\\_zp/4666](https://t.me/ivan_fedorov_zp/4666)

[66] <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/17109>

[67] <https://t.me/rybar/57230> ; [https://maisigurinue\\_dot\\_md/en/crossing-the-state-border-at-leuseni-albita-is-to-be-done-on-the-one-stop-principle/](https://maisigurinue_dot_md/en/crossing-the-state-border-at-leuseni-albita-is-to-be-done-on-the-one-stop-principle/) ; [https://perma\\_dot\\_cc/NF25-2VR4](https://perma_dot_cc/NF25-2VR4)

[68] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar021424> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar013124> ;  
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar012724>

