



## Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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**May 12, 2024, 8:15pm ET**

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

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

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

**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 2pm ET on May 12. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 13 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Russian President Vladimir Putin replaced Sergei Shoigu with Andrei Belousov as Russian Minister of Defense on May 12, moving Shoigu to the position of Security Council Secretary in place of Nikolai Patrushev. These high-level reshuffles following the Russian presidential election strongly suggest that Putin is taking significant steps towards mobilizing the Russian economy and defense industrial base (DIB) to support a protracted war in Ukraine and possibly prepare for a future confrontation with NATO.** The Russian Federation Council posted a list of Putin's proposed cabinet ministers on May 12, which notably confirms that Putin has "proposed" Belousov as the new Minister of Defense (Putin's proposals are orders).[1] Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told Kremlin newswire *TASS* that Shoigu, who has served as Russian defense minister since 2012 — will assume the position of Security Council Secretary and act as Putin's deputy on the Russian Military-Industrial Commission.[2] Peskov also announced that Putin dismissed Patrushev from his former position as Security Council Secretary "due to [his] transfer to another job," which was not specified and that the Kremlin will announce his new role in the "near future." [3] Peskov also noted that Army General Valery Gerasimov will remain Chief of the Russian General Staff, and a change in this position is not foreseen at this time.[4] Gerasimov is also currently the overall theater commander for Russian forces in Ukraine.

**Belousov's appointment to the position of Russian Defense Minister is a significant development in Putin's efforts to set full economic conditions for a protracted war.** Belousov has no military experience and is an economist by trade — he served as Russian Minister of Economic Development from 2012–2013, following a career in economic analysis and forecasting between 1981 and 2006.[5] His lack of military experience is not anomalous — Shoigu also lacked experience in uniform before he took over the Defense Ministry.[6] Belousov then served as First Deputy Prime Minister from 2020 until his new 2024 appointment.[7] Belousov is also a known advocate for greater government involvement in the economy.[8] Peskov announced Belousov's

appointment to state newswire *TASS* on May 12 and explained that "it is very important to fit the economy of the security bloc [domestic security power vertical] into the country's economy," suggesting that the Kremlin intends for Belousov to integrate and streamline the DIB and industries affiliated with Russia's security and defense forces with wider domestic economic policy.<sup>[9]</sup> Several Russian insider sources similarly responded to Belousov's new position and claimed that it shows that Putin has serious concerns over corruption levels and misuse of funds within the Russian military, conflicts between the military and the Russian DIB, and the perceived inefficacy of the Russian MoD as a whole.<sup>[10]</sup> An unnamed Russian federal official told Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* that Belousov will work in his new role to "competently organize work and logistics processes, ensure the necessary production and supplies, orient the economy towards the 'special military operation,' and squeeze the technological maximum out of the defense industry."<sup>[11]</sup> A prominent Kremlin-awarded milblogger noted that Belousov's new role "means the beginning of a large-scale audit and restructuring of all financial models" in the Russian MoD.<sup>[12]</sup>

**Belousov's nearly decade-long tenure as an economic minister in the Russian federal government and his more recent involvement managing various domestic DIB innovation and drone projects, prepare him well to lead the struggling Russian MoD apparatus.** The Russian MoD under Shoigu struggled with allegations of high-level corruption and bureaucratic inertia, facing constant scathing critiques from Russian military commentators.<sup>[13]</sup> Belousov has a stronger reputation for being an effective technocrat, and insider sources have claimed that he has a positive relationship with Putin.<sup>[14]</sup> Belousov met with Putin in November 2023 to discuss DIB projects and technological cooperation and has spoken to Putin about issues with Russia's domestic drone production.<sup>[15]</sup> Belousov also more recently highlighted a draft state order for 4.4 billion-rubles (roughly \$48 million) for the production of drones until 2030, as well as plans to financially support drone producers and train drone developers and operators.<sup>[16]</sup> The focus on maximizing the technological innovation and output of the Russian DIB, particularly in the drone sphere, is likely to be extremely valuable to the Kremlin's war effort —the Kremlin has recently had to reckon with a gap between Russian drone production and contemporary battlefield realities.<sup>[17]</sup> Belousov personally announced in January 2023 that Russia had finalized the "Unmanned Aircraft Systems" project, which provides 696 billion rubles (about \$7 billion) for the production of 32,000 drones per year until 2030.<sup>[18]</sup> Putin likely intends Belousov to use his experience in a civilian government position to bridge federal economic policies with the Russian MoD agenda, thereby more fully mobilizing the Russian DIB at a larger and longer-term scale and integrating it with domestic economic policy. This effort sets conditions for a fuller economic mobilization, suggesting that the Kremlin continues to prepare for a protracted war in Ukraine.

**Shoigu's replacement of Patrushev as Security Council Secretary is in line with Putin's general pattern of quietly sidelining high-level security officials by granting them peripheral roles within the Russian security sphere rather than simply firing them.** The Russian Security Council is an advisory body that also plays a role in executing security-related policies and developing Russian strategic culture, making Shoigu's appointment as Security Council Secretary and de facto demotion from the prestigious post of Russian Defense Minister less humiliating.<sup>[19]</sup> Putin has removed Shoigu from the direct MoD chain of command but granted him continued influence in the security space. Shoigu has remained an important and loyal subordinate, and sometimes a scapegoat, and Putin likely benefits from maintaining Shoigu's leadership and experience in some official capacity. Shoigu's removal also follows two high-profile incidents — the removal of his reported

ally Deputy Defense Minister Timur Ivanov on corruption charges and Putin's meeting with Shoigu's political adversary and Tula Oblast Governor Alexei Dyumin to discuss DIB updates, which were likely leading indicators of the Kremlin's preparations to remove Shoigu from his long-held position.[20]

Putin has previously similarly sidelined his failed generals by appointing them to peripheral security and defense related positions outside of the direct chain of command, sometimes allowing them to redeem themselves and return to Putin's favor as ISW has assessed.[21] Putin's removal of Patrushev from the Security Council is noteworthy, however, since several Western and Russian reports that Patrushev is a close personal ally of Putin—the *Wall Street Journal* alleged in December 2023 that Patrushev was the individual responsible for the assassination of Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin in August 2023.[22] WSJ reported that Patrushev's 2008 appointment as Security Council Secretary was largely a formality and that Patrushev serves as de facto head of all Russian security services, making him the second most powerful person in Russia.[23] WSJ also reported that Patrushev acts as a "hybrid intelligence official and diplomat" and routinely pays visits to world leaders on Putin's behalf. ISW cannot yet confirm what Patrushev's new role will be but considering Patrushev's reported personal importance to Putin's regime stability and Putin's longtime tendency to balance Russian *siloviki* (strongmen with political influence) such as Patrushev within the power vertical, Patrushev's next position will be an important reflection of Putin's intent. The Kremlin may establish a new role or office for Patrushev to lead, such as establishing a higher-ranking position to manage the *siloviki* faction.

**Aside from Patrushev's dismissal, Putin largely reappointed the heads of core Russian security services, suggesting that he maintains a core cadre of loyal *siloviki*.** Putin reappointed Vladimir Kolokoltsev as Minister of Internal Affairs, Sergei Naryshkin as Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), Alexander Bortnikov as Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), and Viktor Zolotov as Director of Rosgvardia.[24] ISW previously assessed that Russian security services and affiliated *siloviki*, particularly Bortnikov, were key constituencies for Putin's election to his fifth term, and Putin has relied heavily on the work of the aforementioned security agencies to maintain regime stability, particularly following the failed Wagner Group rebellion.[25] Kolokolstev has been instrumental in coordinating the Kremlin's migrant policy (which has been especially relevant in the aftermath of the March 22 IS attack on Crocus City Hall); Naryshkin has been an important player in establishing information conditions and propagating justifications for the war; Putin has personally praised Bortnikov and the FSB for protecting Russian sovereignty; and Zolotov has spearheaded efforts to absorb former Wagner Group fighters into Rosgvardia.[26] These *siloviki* form the backbone of Putin's core cabinet, and their reappointment suggests that Putin will continue to rely on, and empower them, into his next term.

**Russian offensive efforts to seize Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City) are in large part a consequence of the tacit Western policy that Ukrainian forces cannot use Western-provided systems to strike legitimate military targets within Russia.** Russian forces appear to be attempting to encircle Vovchansk as Russian forces approach city itself via Buhruvatka, Starytsya, and Izbytske to the west along the C-210817 road and via Vovchanskyi Khutory to the east along the O-210825 road.[27] The Russian seizure of any of these settlements would cut these Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) to Vovchansk and make the remaining GLOCs (T-2104 highway) increasingly crucial to the city's defense. Russian forces have also increasingly targeted bridges across nearby water features to isolate the Ukrainian defense of Vovchansk from other areas.[28] Ukrainian

military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets assessed that Vovchansk is the main Russian effort in the northern Kharkiv Oblast direction and that Russian forces intend to bypass Vovchansk itself from the southwest and south.[29] Mashovets noted that Vovchansk's proximity to the international border affords Russian forces "many opportunities," including allowing Russian forces to conduct operations with limited forces and means to achieve a specific result; provides Russian forces with a "small shoulder of delivery" to allow stable control and fire support without moving their artillery; and allows for quick fuel and weapons deliveries to the frontline.

**Russian forces are reaping the benefits of the West's long-term restriction on Ukraine using Western-provided weapons to strike legitimate military targets on Russian territory — territory that Russian forces now depend on to sustain their offensive operations in northern Kharkiv Oblast.** Western officials have prohibited Ukraine from using Western-supplied weapons to strike targets on Russian territory, and Ukrainian officials have repeatedly stated their adherence to this condition.[30] UK Foreign Minister David Cameron only recently greenlit Ukrainian forces to use UK-provided weapons to strike targets in Russian territory, but this is insufficient for Ukraine's interdiction needs in Russian territory and came too late to allow Ukrainian forces to inhibit Russia's ability to concentrate forces along the international border.[31] Ukrainian forces have previously used US-provided HIMARS to devastating effect, particularly in forcing Russian forces to withdraw from the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast in November 2022 and continue to use HIMARS and other US- and Western-provided weapons to strike Russian force concentrations in rear and deep rear areas in occupied Ukraine.[32] Ukrainian forces regularly conduct drone strikes against infrastructure and airfields in Russia, but these lack the same interdiction effects that Ukrainian forces now need to generate to undermine the Russian offensive operations.[33] Ukrainian forces would greatly benefit from being able to use advanced long-range weapons systems to disrupt Russian logistics nodes and routes that are currently supplying the Kharkiv offensive but must instead rely on their limited and depleted stock of indigenous weapons.

**Kremlin information operations encouraging Western self-deterrence likely aimed to allow Russian forces to build up and launch offensive operations without the threat of Ukrainian strikes against military and logistics assets.** Russian President Vladimir Putin, senior Kremlin officials, and pro-Kremlin mouthpieces have regularly threatened Western states and accused them of "provocations" for continuing to provide military assistance to Ukraine.[34] Kremlin mouthpieces have maintained this rhetorical line even after the passage of a \$61 billion dollar US military assistance package to Ukraine in late April, likely in support of an effort to prevent Ukrainian forces from using these weapons to degrade Russia's various ongoing offensive efforts.[35] The Kremlin will likely continue to leverage this information operation as part of its ongoing reflexive control campaign to inhibit Ukraine's ability to use all its available weapons to defend against the current Russian offensive operations in northern Kharkiv Oblast, forcing Ukraine to allocate other resources to a less effective defense and creating opportunities for Russian forces on other sectors of the front to exploit.[36]

**Ukrainian forces continue to conduct repeat strikes on Russian oil and defense industrial infrastructure, prompting Russian milbloggers to complain about Russian forces' clear and continued inability to defend against these strikes.** Ukrainian outlets

*Ukrainska Pravda* and *RBK Ukraine* cited sources in Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) as stating that the GUR conducted strikes with Ukrainian-made drones against the Kaluganefteprodukt oil depot in Kaluga Oblast, the Novolipetsk Metallurgical Plant in Lipetsk Oblast, and the Lukoil oil refinery in Volgograd Oblast overnight on May 11 to 12.[37] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces destroyed two drones over Lipetsk Oblast and one drone over Volgograd Oblast.[38] Volgograd Oblast Governor Andrey Bocharov claimed that a falling Ukrainian drone detonated and started a fire at the Volgograd oil refinery, and Lipetsk Oblast Governor Igor Artamonov claimed that Russian forces repelled a strike on infrastructure in the Lipetsk City industrial zone.[39] Russian opposition media published footage on May 12 of a fire at the Volgograd oil refinery.[40] ISW cannot independently verify the reported Ukrainian strikes against Kaluga and Lipetsk oblasts. Ukrainian forces reportedly struck the Lukoil Volgograd oil refinery on the night of May 10 to 11 and on February 3, struck the Novolipetsk Metallurgical Plant on the night of April 23 to 24 and February 23 to 24, and struck the Kaluganefteprodukt oil depot on April 28.[41]

A Russian milblogger extensively complained about Russian forces' inability to repel Ukrainian strikes on Russian infrastructure, claiming that the Russian military command consistently underestimates Ukrainian capabilities and that Russian forces should learn from Ukraine's ability to adapt to Russian strike methods.[42] The milblogger criticized the way Russian forces are trying to combat drone strikes with outdated Soviet-era weapons and without reconnaissance equipment. Another prominent, Kremlin-awarded milblogger agreed with the first milblogger, claiming that Russian forces lack an understanding of asymmetric warfare and that the Russian military command is slow to make changes.[43] The milblogger also blamed the issue on Russian military commanders who submit dishonest reports to the senior Russian military command — a common complaint among Russian milbloggers.[44] The milblogger claimed that Ukraine and the West are "more flexible, smarter, and more efficient" than Russian forces. The milblogger oddly and preemptively noted that this statement does not "discredit" the Russian military, which is a crime in Russia, but is instead an "adequate assessment" of the potential of the "enemy" that Russia is fighting.

**Several German politicians from different political parties expressed support for using NATO air defense systems stationed in NATO member states to shoot down Russian drones over western Ukraine.** German outlet *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) reported on May 11 that German Bundestag members Roderich Kiesewetter of the Christian Democrat Union Party, Agnieszka Brugger of the Green Party, and Marcus Faber of the Free Democratic Party expressed support for using NATO air defenses in countries bordering Ukraine, such as Poland and Romania, to intercept Russian drones over western Ukraine to allow Ukrainian air defenders to focus on protecting frontline areas.[45]

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin replaced Sergei Shoigu with Andrei Belousov as Russian Minister of Defense on May 12, moving Shoigu to the position of Security Council Secretary in place of Nikolai Patrushev. These high-level reshuffles following the Russian presidential election strongly suggest that Putin is taking significant steps towards mobilizing the Russian economy and defense industrial base (DIB) to support a protracted war in Ukraine and possibly prepare for a future confrontation with NATO.**

- **Belousov's nearly decade-long tenure as an economic minister in the Russian federal government and his more recent involvement managing various domestic DIB innovation and drone projects, prepare him well to lead the struggling Russian MoD apparatus.**
- **Shoigu's replacement of Patrushev as Security Council Secretary is in line with Putin's general pattern of quietly sidelining high-level security officials by granting them peripheral roles within the Russian security sphere rather than simply firing them.**
- **Russian offensive efforts to seize Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City) are in large part a consequence of the tacit Western policy that Ukrainian forces cannot use Western-provided systems to strike legitimate military targets within Russia.**
- **Ukrainian forces continue to conduct repeat strikes on Russian oil and defense industrial infrastructure, prompting Russian milbloggers to complain about Russian forces' clear and continued inability to defend against these strikes.**
- **Several German politicians from different political parties expressed support for using NATO air defense systems stationed in NATO member states to shoot down Russian drones over western Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Lyptsi and Vovchansk in northern Kharkiv Oblast.**
- **Former Roscosmos (Russian space agency) head and ultranationalist figure Dmitry Rogozin highlighted Russian forces' continued difficulty repelling Ukrainian drones on the frontline.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 12, 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 – Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives
- Significant Activity in Belarus

**Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

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**Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Kharkiv Oblast (Russian objective: Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City)**

***NOTE: ISW is adding a section to cover Russian offensive operations along the Belgorod-Kharkiv axis as these offensive operations comprise an operational effort separate from Russian offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line. ISW may enlarge the scope of this section should Russian forces expand offensive operations along the Russian-Ukrainian international border in northeastern Ukraine.***

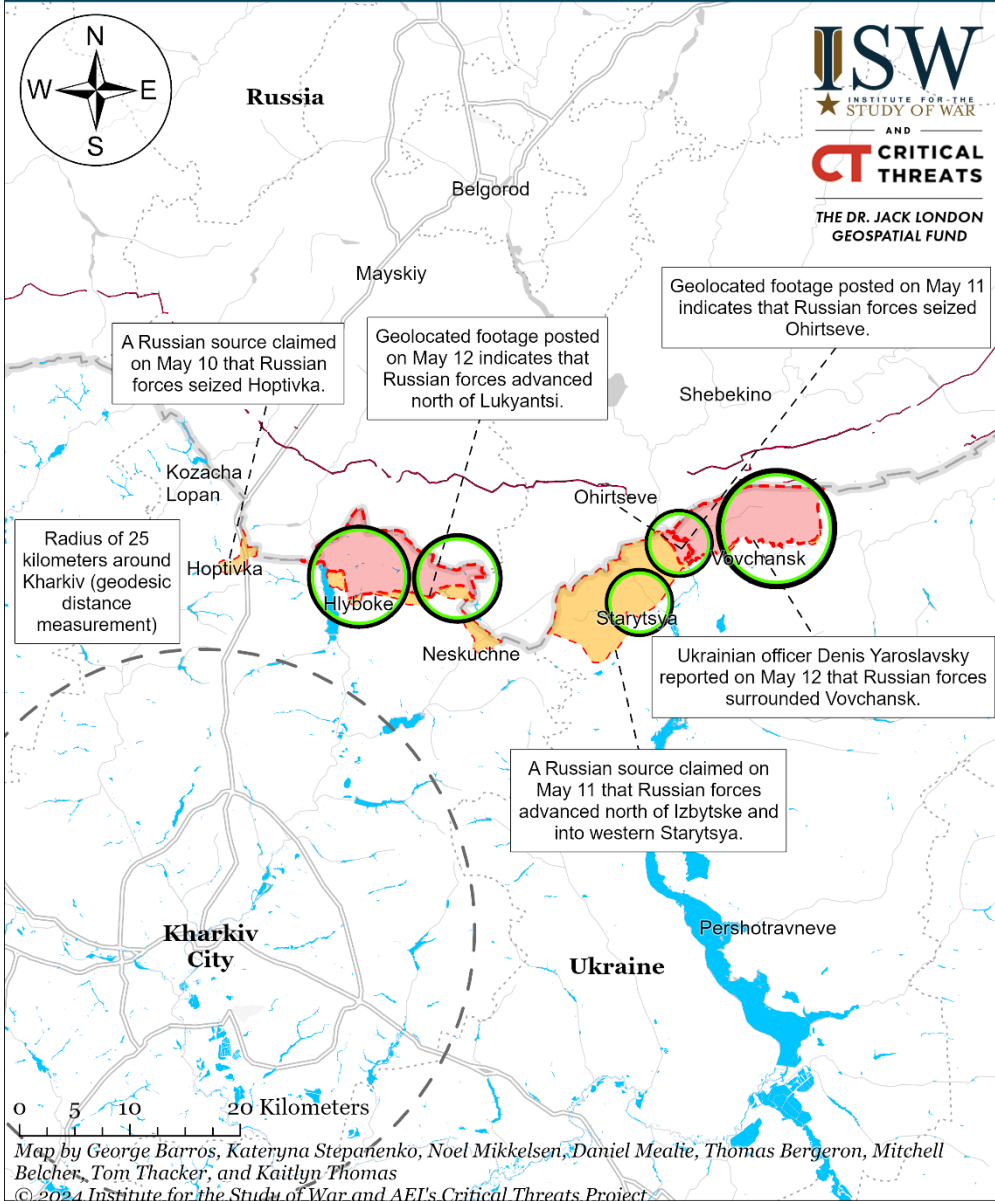
Russian forces recently made additional confirmed tactical advances in northern Kharkiv Oblast in the Vovchansk direction (northeast of Kharkiv City) and continued limited offensive operations in this area on May 12. Geolocated footage published on May 11 shows Russian forces operating in southern Ohirtseve (west of Vovchansk), suggesting that Russian forces have seized the entirety of Ohirtseve.[46] A Ukrainian officer fighting in the Vovchansk direction noted that the situation is extremely difficult because Ukrainian forces lack adequate fortifications in the area, reporting that Russian forces have surrounded Vovchansk and that meeting engagements are already occurring within the settlement.[47] Several Russian milbloggers discussed fighting within Vovchansk.[48] ISW therefore assesses that Russian forces also likely seized Hatyshche (just northwest of Vovchansk) and Tykhe (just east of Vovchansk) given the Ukrainian officer's report that Russian forces have surrounded Vovchansk and Russian milblogger claims of street fighting within Vovchansk. The Ukrainian General Staff additionally reported that Russian forces attacked near Buhruvatka (west of Vovchansk), suggesting that Russian forces have likely consolidated positions between the international border and



the Buhruvatka-Starytsya area.[49] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported that Russian forces have advanced 2.5 kilometers in the Vovchansk direction and noted that the Russian command has deployed at least four motorized rifle battalions of the 11th Army Corps (Leningrad Military District [LMD]) to the Vovchansk direction.[50] A milblogger claimed that Russian forces have advanced seven kilometers deep along a 30-kilometer-wide front in the Vovchansk direction.[51]

Russian forces also recently made confirmed advances in the Lyptsi (north of Kharkiv City) direction and continued limited offensive operations in this area on May 12. Geolocated footage published on May 12 shows that Russian forces advanced up to a windbreak south of Pylna and north of Lukyantsi (northeast of Lyptsi).[52] Russian and Ukrainian sources reported fighting in the Lyptsi direction near Hlyboke (north of Lyptsi) and Lukyantsi.[53] Mashovets noted that the Russian offensive towards Lyptsi is auxiliary to the Russian effort towards Vovchansk and stated that Russian forces have advanced between 3.2 to 3.7 kilometers towards Hlyboke and Lukyantsi.[54] Mashovets reported that Russian forces have about three motorized rifle battalions in the Lyptsi direction and that the Russian command is bringing reserves from the 11th and newly-formed 44th army corps (both LMD) to the Zhuravlevka-Ustinka-Vergilivka area in Belgorod Oblast, northeast of the Lyptsi axis.[55] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have advanced eight kilometers deep along a 20-kilometer-wide front at the western penetration into northern Kharkiv Oblast, referring to the Lyptsi direction.[56] Ukrainian sources noted that some settlements in the northern Kharkiv direction remain contested "gray zones" despite Russian advances in these settlements, suggesting that Ukrainian forces are conducting frequent counterattacks to contest control of these areas.[57]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of May 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

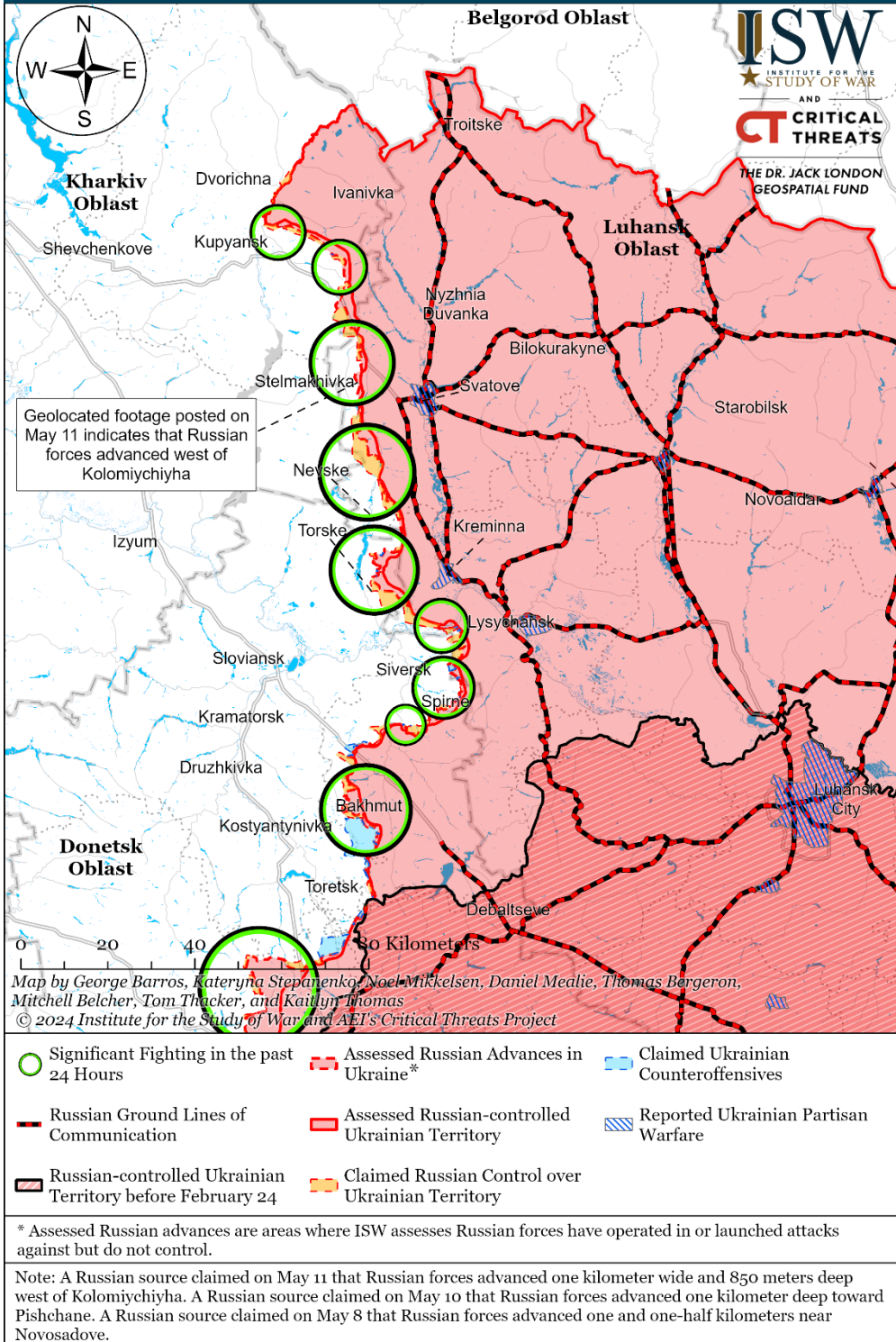
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Ukrainian source stated on May 12 that Russian forces seized about 100 square kilometers near the Kharkiv Oblast border. A Russian source claimed on May 12 that Russian forces advanced 30 kilometers wide and seven kilometers deep near Ohirtseve. A Russian source claimed on May 12 that Russian forces advanced approximately four kilometers in the Kharkiv direction. A Ukrainian source claimed on May 12 that Russian forces advanced between 3.2 and 3.7 kilometers towards Hlyboke and Lukyantsi. A Russian source claimed on May 12 that Russian forces seized a total of 88.98 square kilometers in the Kharkiv direction. A Russian source claimed on May 12 that Russian forces advanced 20 kilometers wide and eight kilometers deep at the western Russian penetration in the Kharkiv direction. A Russian source claimed on May 12 that Russian forces seized approximately 27 square kilometers in the Vovchansk direction.

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

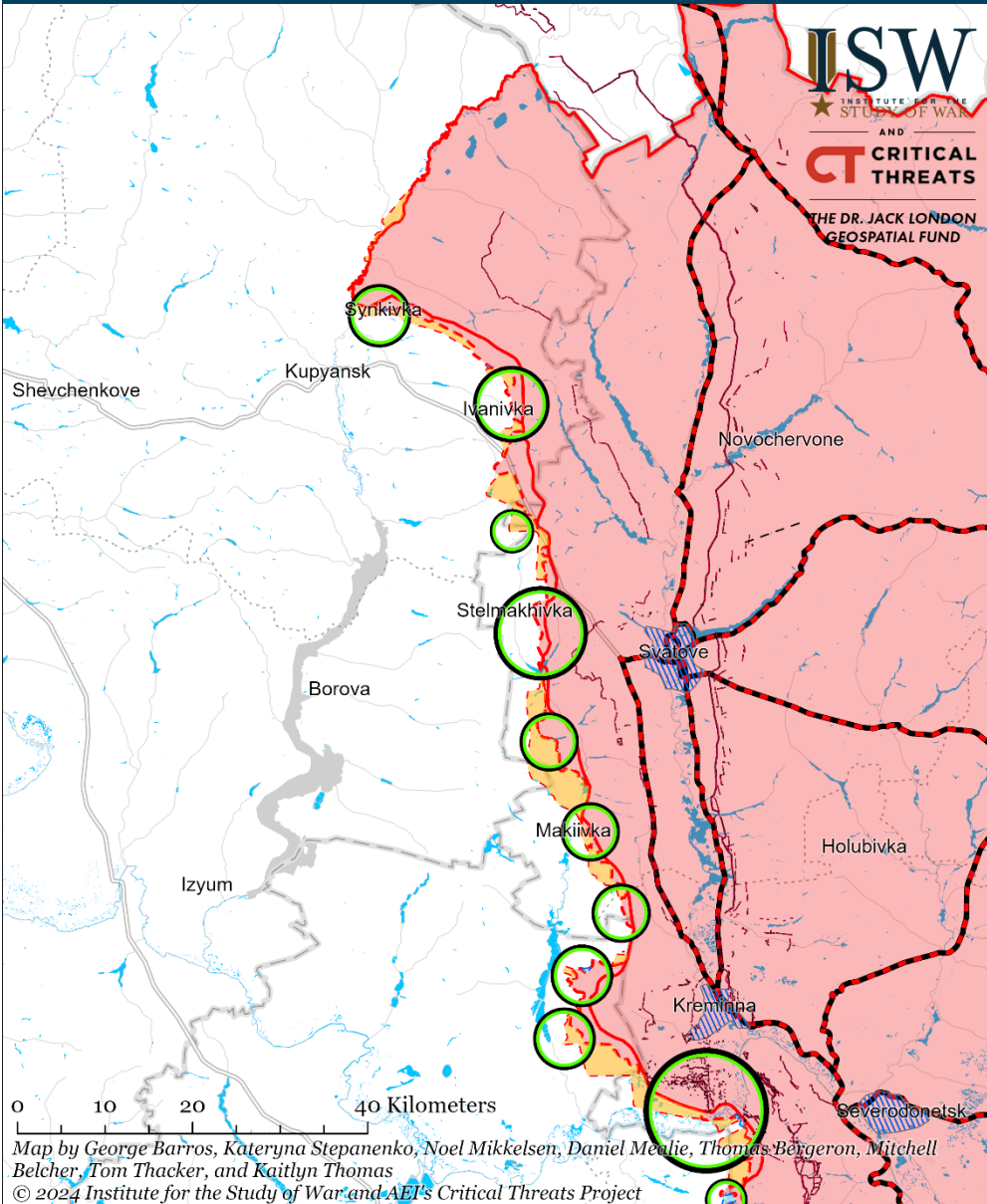
Russian forces continued ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on May 12, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Russian forces continued ground assaults northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; northwest of Svatove near Ivanivka, Berestove, and Stelmakhivka; west of Svatove near Andriivka; southwest of Svatove near Novoyehorivka and Makiivka; northwest of Kreminna near Nevske; west of Kreminna near Terny and Novosadove; and south of Kreminna near the Serebryanske forest area and Bilohorivka.[58]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of May 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kupyansk as of May 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

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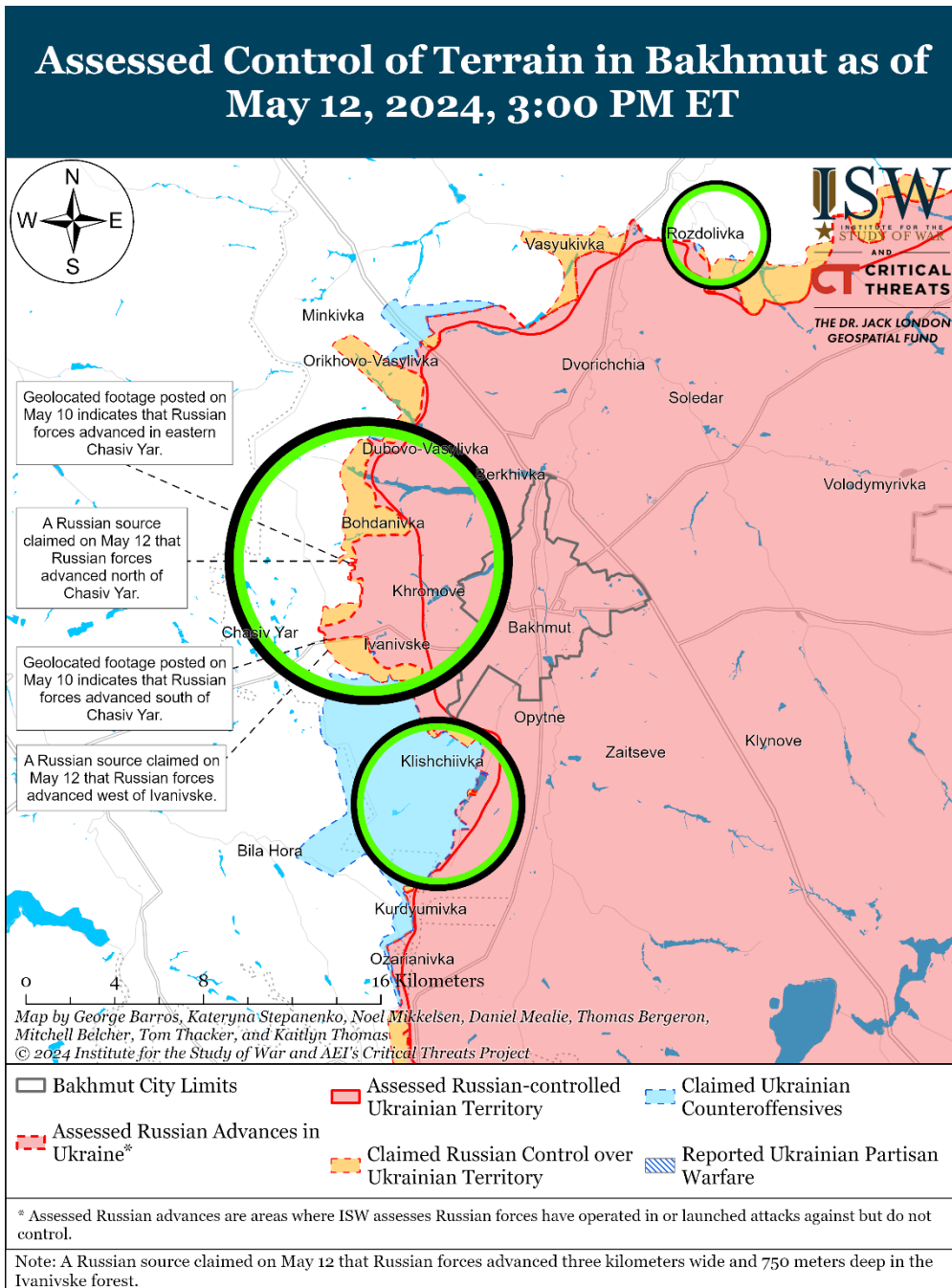
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine \*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- 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 May 11 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer wide and 850 meters deep west of Kolomiychiha. Russian and Ukrainian sources claimed on May 10 that Russian forces advanced up to five kilometers along a ten-kilometers-wide front and seized 30 square kilometers of territory in Kharkiv Oblast. A Western media source claimed on May 10 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer near Vovchansk, citing unspecified senior military officials.

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

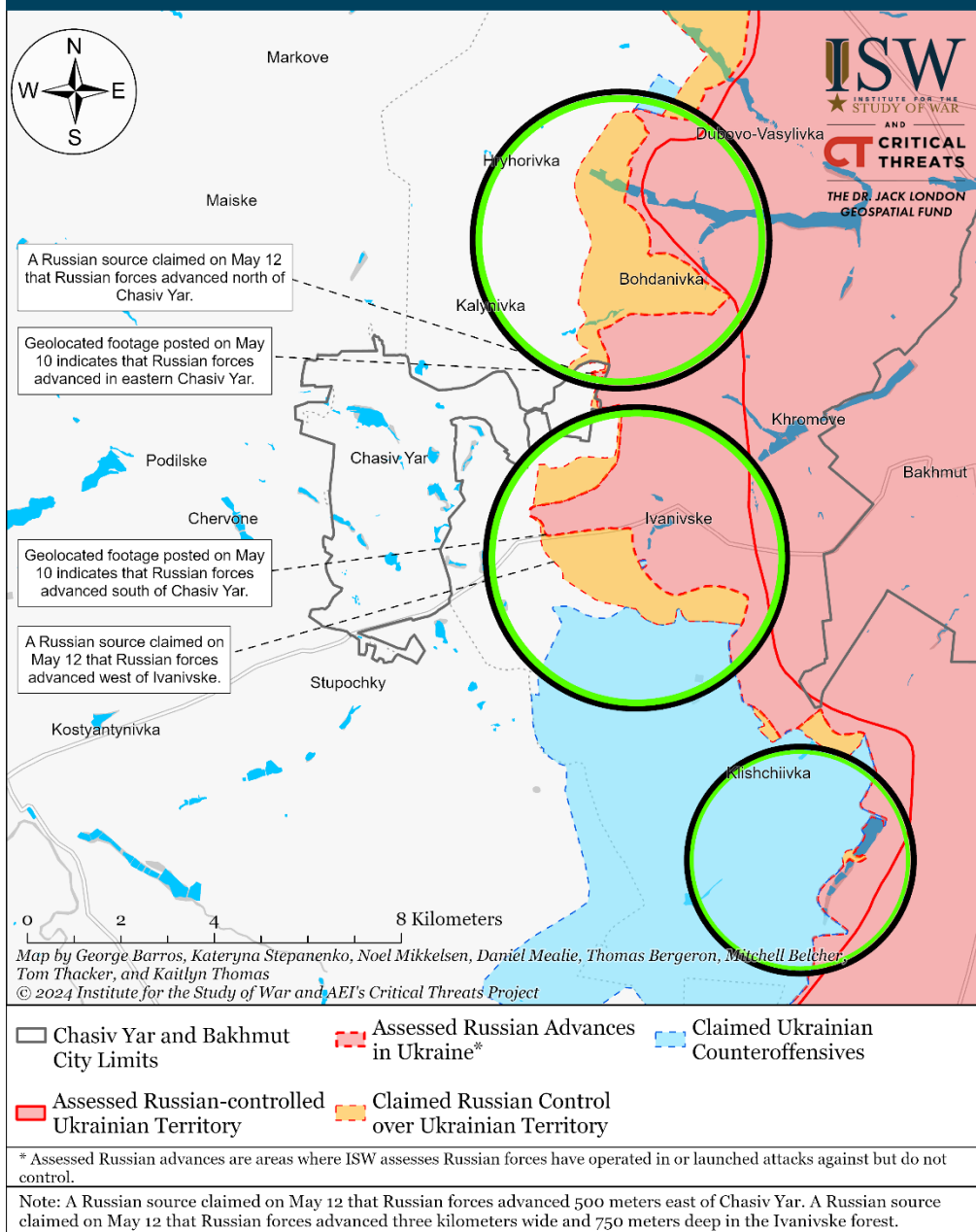
The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Siversk direction (northeast of Bakhmut) near Verkhokamyanske (southwest of Siversk), Rozdolivka (south of Siversk), Spirne, and Vyimka (both southeast of Siversk).[59] Elements of the Russian 2nd Artillery Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] Army Corps [AC]) are reportedly operating near Berestove (southeast of Siversk).[60]



Russian forces reportedly advanced near Chasiv Yar on May 12, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Ivanivske (east of Chasiv Yar), with one milblogger claiming that Russian forces advanced up to three kilometers wide and up to 750 meters deep in the forest area near the settlement.[61] Other Russian milbloggers

claimed that Russian forces have completely seized the Stupky-Holubovskiy-2 nature reserve (southeast of Chasiv Yar) and advanced north and northeast of the Kanal Microraion (easternmost Chasiv Yar).[62] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces also resumed assault operations in Klishchiivka (southeast of Chasiv Yar).[63] Russian forces continued offensive operations north of Chasiv Yar near Hryhorivka; east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske; in eastern Chasiv Yar near the Novyi and Kanal microraions; southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka and Andriivka; and south of Chasiv Yar near Niu York.[64] A Ukrainian servicemember operating in the Bakhmut direction stated that Russian forces have intensified their assaults in the area and that Ukrainian forces are struggling to destroy Russian forces' "shed tanks" that have additional protection (referring to Russian vehicles with welded metal tanks to protect against drone strikes, also known colloquially as "turtle tanks").[65] The Ukrainian servicemember reported that Russian forces use tanks to fire on Ukrainian positions while two Russian infantry fighting vehicles loaded with infantry follow the tank to disembark infantry. The Ukrainian servicemember stated that Russian forces have increased the number of aviation, artillery, and drone strikes in the Bakhmut direction but that these strikes are less precise than Ukrainian strikes. Elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar, and elements of the 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th AC, LMD) are reportedly operating from Bohdanivka (northeast of Chasiv Yar) towards Kalynivka (north of Chasiv Yar).[66]

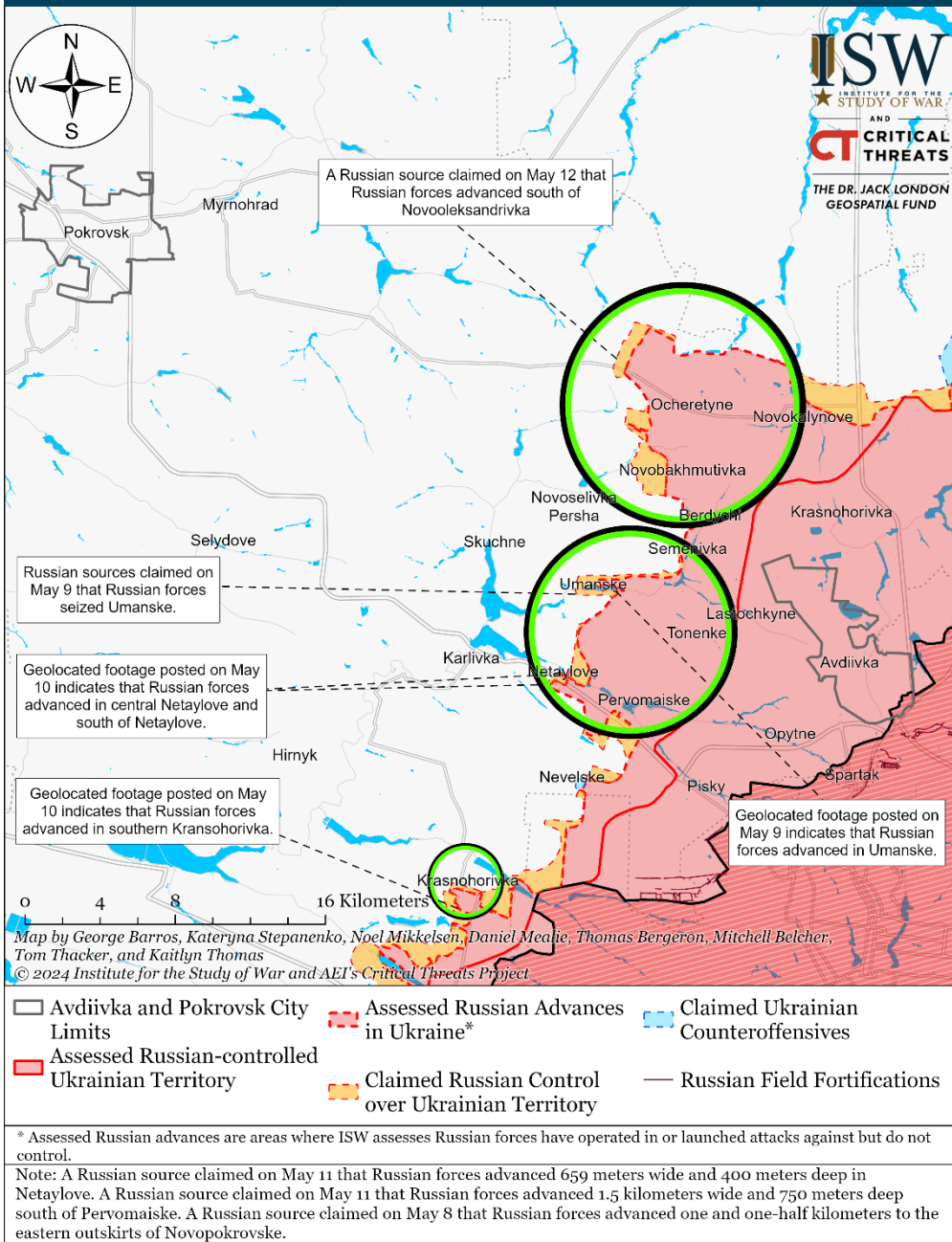
# Assessed Control of Terrain near Chasiv Yar as of May 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces reportedly advanced near Avdiivka on May 12, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces approached the outskirts of Novooleksandrivka (northwest of Avdiivka and west of Arkhanhelske) and advanced towards Kalynove (northwest of Avdiivka and northeast of Arkhanhelske).[67] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces also advanced west of Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka) along the railway.[68] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces continued offensive operations northwest of Avdiivka near Novooleksandrivka, Kalynove, Sokil, Yevhenivka, Solovyove, Novopokrovske, Semenivka, Novoselivka Persha, and Berdychi; and west of Avdiivka near Umanske, Yasnobrodivka, and Netaylove.[69]



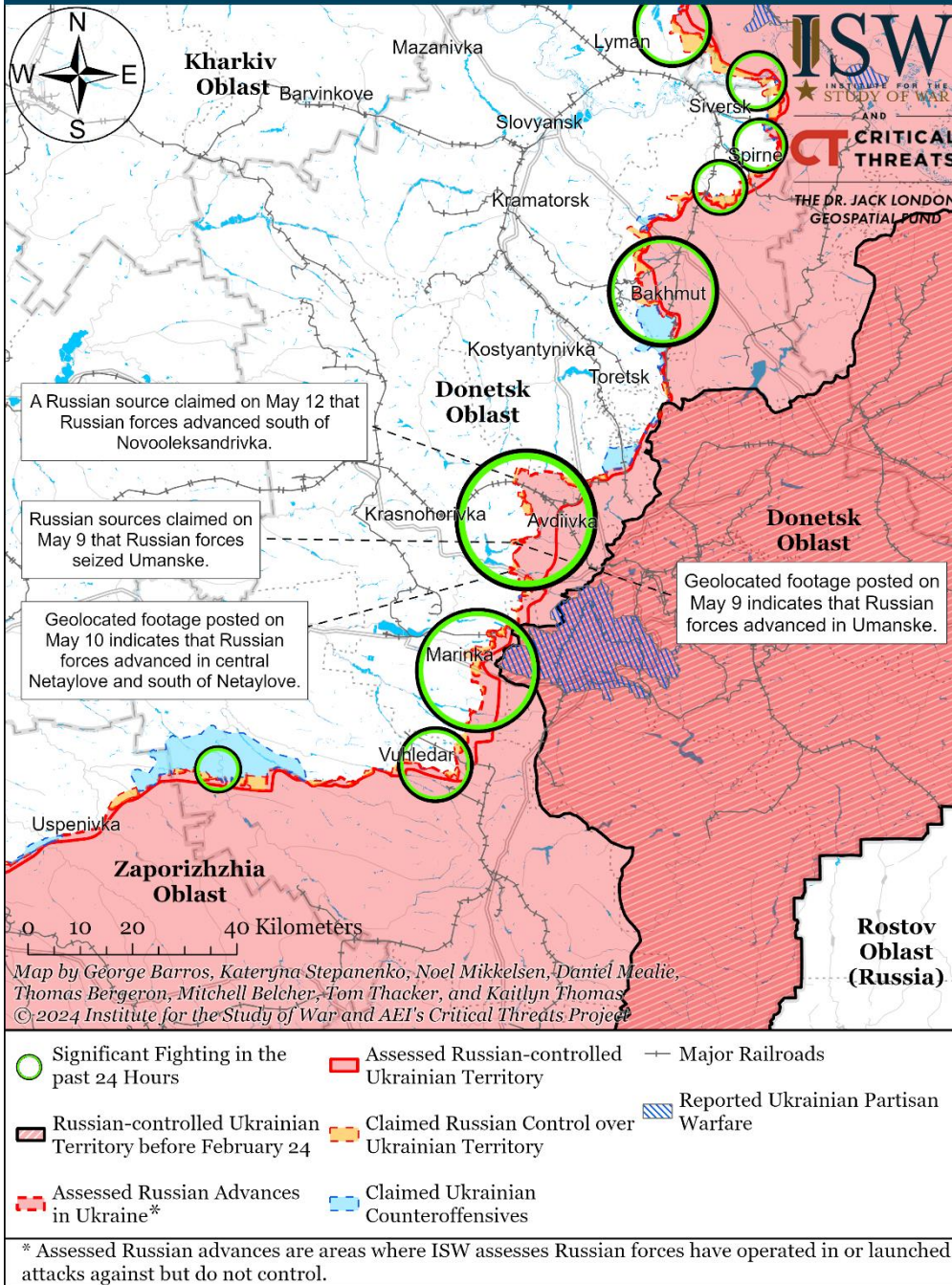
# Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of May 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces reportedly advanced west of Donetsk City amid continued Russian ground attacks west and southwest of Donetsk City on May 12. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in central Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City), with one milblogger claiming that Russian forces advanced up to 3.72 kilometers wide and 1.15 kilometers deep.[70] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces continued offensive operations west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka; southwest of Donetsk City near Kostyantynivka, Solodke, and Paraskoviivka; and northeast of Vuhledar near Vodyane.[71] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Nazar Voloshyn stated that Russian forces continue to storm Krasnohorivka with small assault groups and occasionally use armored vehicles during attacks on the settlement's eastern

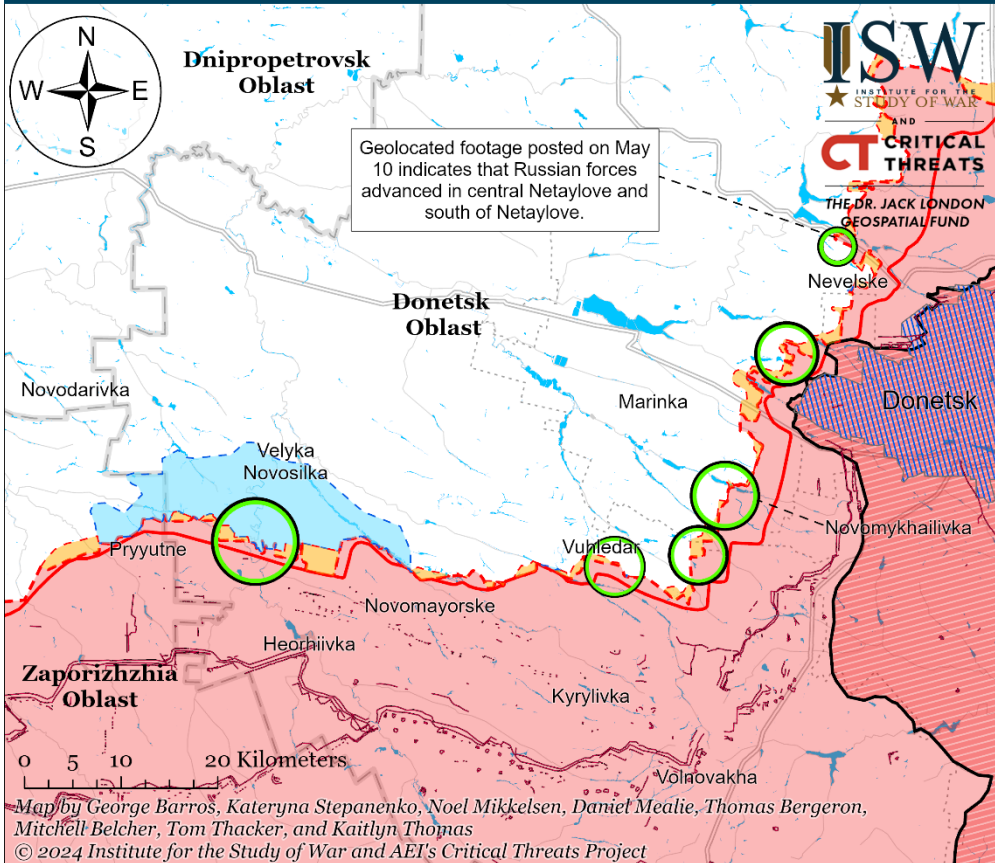
outskirts.[72] Voloshyn reported that Russian forces in the brick factory in central Krasnohorivka lack ammunition and armored vehicle support as Ukrainian forces cut the Russian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) supplying the Russian forces in the factory. A Ukrainian deputy commander reported that Russian forces are wearing civilian clothes to enter Krasnohorivka to disguise themselves as Ukrainian locals and then change into Ukrainian military uniforms upon entering the settlement.[73] International law defines such actions as perfidy, which is a prohibited act.[74] Elements of the Russian 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating near Novomykhailivka; elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Krasnohorivka; elements of the 255th Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating in the direction of Kurakhove; and elements of the 57th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating near Vuhledar.[75]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional engagements continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on May 12, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Positional engagement continued south of Velyka Novosilka near Urozhaine and Staromayorske.[76] Elements of the Russian 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces [VKS] and EMD) are reportedly operating near Blahodatne (south of Velyka Novosilka).[77]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Donetsk Oblast as of May 12, 2024, 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	Russian Field Fortifications
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives	

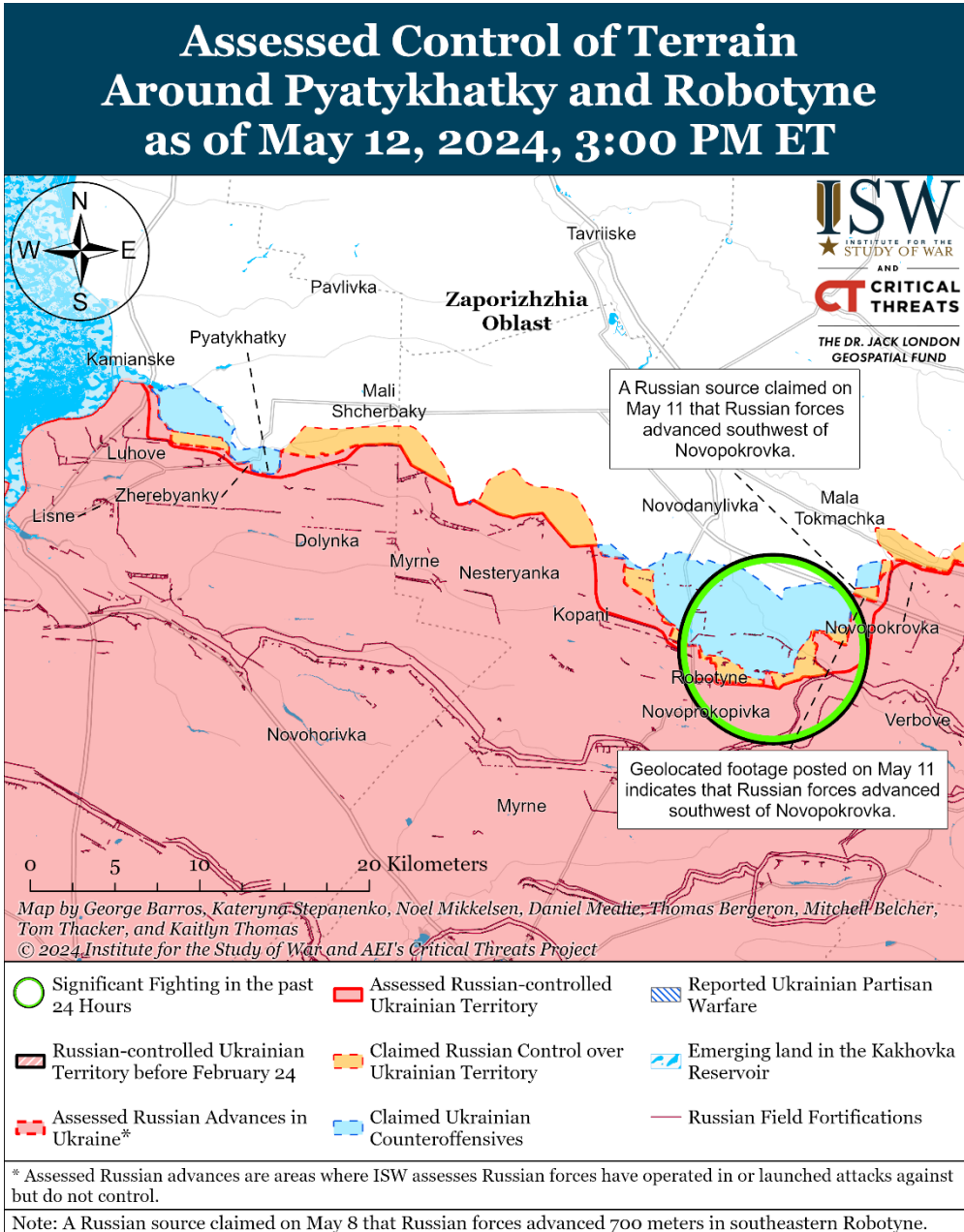
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on May 12 that Russian forces advanced 3.72 kilometers wide and 1.15 kilometers deep in Krasnohorivka. A Russian source claimed on May 9 that Russian forces advanced 500 meters in Staromayorske. A Russian source claimed on May 8 that Russian forces advanced 1.15 kilometers along a 3.3-kilometers-wide front in Urozhaine. A Russian source claimed on May 8 that Russian forces advanced 500 meters southwest of Urozhaine.

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

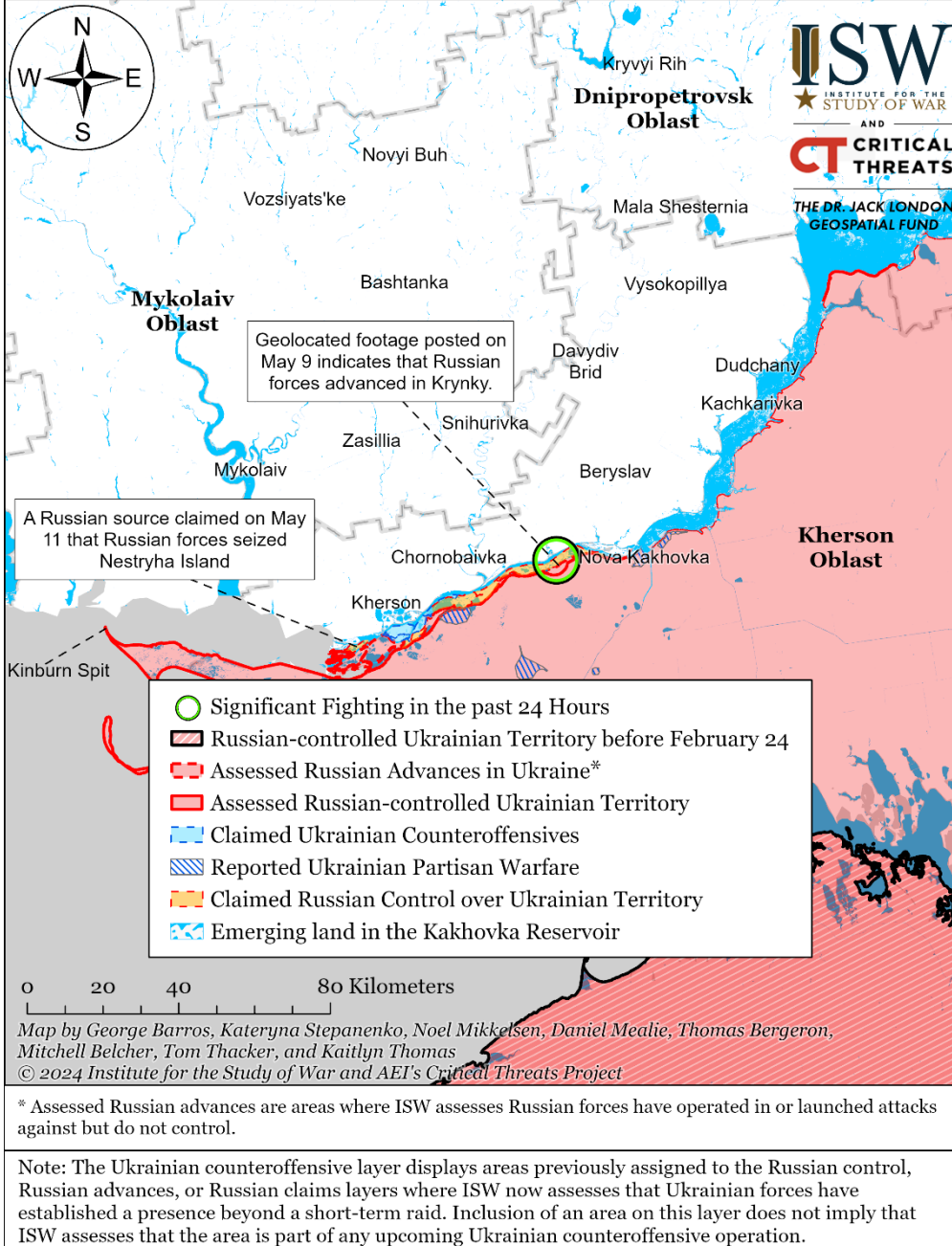
Russian forces reportedly advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast on May 12, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division advanced west of Luhivske (northeast of Robotyne) and west and southwest of Novoprokovka (northeast of Robotyne), although ISW has not observed visual evidence

of these claims.[78] Positional engagements also continued near Robotyne, Verbove (east of Robotyne), and Novodanylivka (north of Robotyne).[79]



Russian forces reportedly advanced in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on May 12, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area.[80] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 61st Naval Infantry Brigade (a district-level unit operating under the Leningrad Military District [LMD], formerly Northern Fleet) completely seized Nestryha Island in the Dnipro River Delta southwest of Kherson City, although ISW has not observed visual evidence confirming this claim.[81] Ukrainian military officials reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Krynyky.[82]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Crimean occupation administration head Sergei Aksyonov claimed on May 12 that Russian air defense shot down a Ukrainian drone near occupied Simferopol.[83]

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

Ukrainian Zaporizhia Oblast Head Ivan Fedorov reported that Russian forces launched at least one ballistic missile against Zaporizhia Oblast on May 12.[84] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command stated that Ukrainian air defenses shot down a cruise missile over Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast on May 12.[85]

**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)**

Former Roscosmos (Russian space agency) head and ultranationalist figure Dmitry Rogozin highlighted Russian forces' continued difficulty repelling Ukrainian drones on the frontline. Rogozin claimed that Russian and Ukrainian drones and electronic warfare (EW) systems are always shifting frequencies and adapting to achieve localized superiority over each other.[86] Rogozin argued that the Russian military should consider expanding cheaper methods than EW systems to suppress Ukrainian drones. Rogozin suggested that Russian forces use smoke screens and oily aerosols to impair drone visibility, illuminate the sky to detect night drones and destroy them with small arms, and use remote-controlled rapid-fire robotic equipment and interceptor drones to down Ukrainian drones. Rogozin claimed that the Russian military has these capabilities but not in sufficient quantities.

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

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

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

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

**Russian Information Operations and Narratives**

Russian milbloggers are intensifying rhetoric aimed at degrading Ukrainians' trust in their government and undermining Ukrainian morale. Russian milbloggers amplified claims portraying Ukrainian government officials as inept, fleeing, and refusing to help Ukrainian civilians amid the Russian offensive effort in northern Kharkiv Oblast.[87]

A prominent Kremlin-awarded milblogger continued issuing rhetoric aimed at capitalizing on domestic protests in Armenia and Georgia to promote further internal destabilization and especially discredit Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.[88]

## **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)**

Belarus and Iran continue to intensify bilateral cooperation. Belarusian state-owned outlet *Belta* reported on May 12 that Belarusian petrochemical enterprises signed cooperation agreements with Iranian petrochemical industry representatives at the Iran Oil Show.[89] Belarus and Iran have pursued increased military, economic, and technical cooperation in the past yet, which Russia is likely partially benefiting from via the Union State framework.[90]

**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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