

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Angelica Evans, Nicole Wolkov, Christina Harward, Riley Bailey, George Barros, and Frederick W. Kagan
February 19, 2024, 7:15pm ET

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

Click [here](#) to 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.

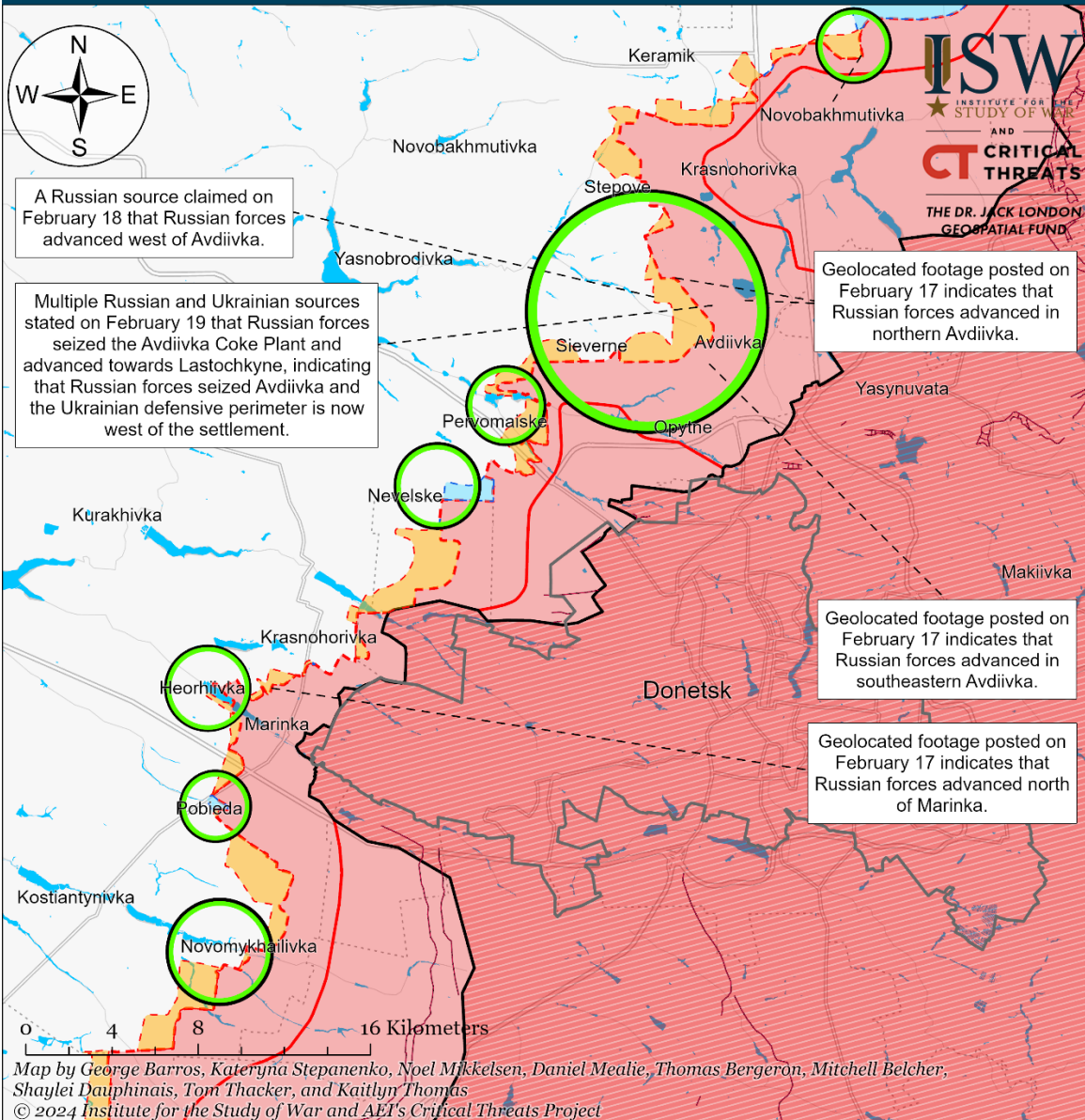
Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30pm ET on February 19. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the February 20 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian actors conducted a cyber operation regarding Russia's seizure of Avdiivka, likely aimed at generating panic in the Ukrainian information space and weakening Ukrainian morale. Ukraine's State Special Communication Service reported on February 18 that Russian actors hacked well-known Ukrainian media outlets and posted fake information on their social media channels.[1] Ukrainian outlets *Ukrainska Pravda*, *Apostrophe*, *Liga.net*, and *Telegraf* reported on February 18 that their social media accounts were hacked and that hackers posted disinformation, specifically about the alleged widespread destruction of Ukrainian forces in Avdiivka.[2] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) issued new claims about the Ukrainian withdrawal from Avdiivka on February 19 aimed at sowing resentment and distrust against the Ukrainian command, and other Russian sources amplified this information operation.[3]

The tempo of Russian offensive operations near Avdiivka has reportedly dramatically slowed following the Russian seizure of Avdiivka. Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Dmytro Lykhoviy reported on February 19 that the number of Russian attacks in the Avdiivka direction significantly decreased in the past day and that Russian forces are currently regrouping and conducting clearing operations in Avdiivka.[4] Lykhoviy noted that Russian shelling and aviation activity has also significantly decreased in the area.[5] Ukrainian officials reported that Ukrainian forces have withdrawn to a new line of defense, which Ukrainian forces previously prepared in advance and fortified at "several levels." [6] Russian forces will likely have to conduct an operational pause before resuming significant offensive operations in the Avdiivka direction or will have to transfer additional reinforcements from other sectors of the front to the area to prevent operations near Avdiivka from culminating. Russian forces have reserves available for such reinforcement in other sectors, but ISW has observed no indication that the Russian command is moving those reserves toward Avdiivka at this time. Lykhoviy and Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash, on the contrary, stated that the Russian command will likely transfer Russian forces accumulated around Avdiivka to other, unspecified areas of the frontline in the near future.[7] Yevlash stated that it will likely take Russian forces at least a week to transfer units from Avdiivka into battle in unspecified frontline areas.[8] ISW has not yet observed any indications of how Russian forces will choose to allocate their manpower currently deployed to the Avdiivka area.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of February 19, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

Note: The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed on February 18 that as of February 17 Russian forces took control of Avdiivka and captured 31.75 total square kilometers. 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.

Ukrainian officials reported that Ukrainian forces shot down two more Russian fighter aircraft, a Su-34 and a Su-35S, in eastern Ukraine on the morning of February 19.[9] Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi reported that the Russian aircraft were striking Ukrainian positions with glide bombs when Ukrainian air defenses destroyed the planes.[10] Ukrainian forces also shot down two Su-34s and one Su-35 over Donetsk Oblast on February 17 and another Su-34 in eastern Ukraine on February 18.[11] Russian forces appear to have temporarily established limited and localized air superiority during the final days of their offensive operation to seize Avdiivka, but Ukrainian air defenders appear to be challenging Russian air operations in eastern Ukraine once again.[12]

The White House is reportedly considering the provision of long-range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine in the event that Congress passes security assistance for Ukraine. *NBC News* reported on February 19 that two US officials stated that the White House is working to provide Ukraine with long-range ATACMS missiles in one of the first packages of military aid to Ukraine if Congress approves funding for further security assistance to Ukraine.[13] The US previously provided Ukraine with a limited number of a different type of ATACMS missile that have a shorter range.[14] Ukraine conducted successful ATACMS strikes in October 2023 but did not have enough supplies to sustain a strike campaign with ATACMS that could have presented operational challenges for Russian forces in Ukraine, particularly for Russian aviation operations and for the storage and supply of ammunition.[15] *NBC News* reported that the US officials also stated that the US has artillery systems and ammunition prepared for immediate transfer to Ukraine if Congress approves funding for US security assistance to Ukraine.[16] Ukrainian long-range strike capabilities allow Ukrainian forces to degrade Russian logistics at depth, and sufficient artillery systems and ammunition are crucial for effective Ukrainian counterbattery fire.

The Russian government eased the requirements for “compatriots” living abroad to apply to resettle in Russia. The Russian government announced on February 17 that it will no longer require “compatriots” abroad to prove their Russian-language proficiency when applying for resettlement in Russia if the individual is a Russian citizen permanently residing abroad; an individual who previously renounced Russian citizenship; an individual who was born or permanently resided in the Soviet Union and had Soviet citizenship; or an individual who has relatives who were born or permanently resided on territory formerly part of the Soviet Union or Russian Empire.[17] The Russian government stated that the changes in the requirements for resettlement in Russia follow a January 1, 2024, Russian presidential decree to “support compatriots from unfriendly countries.” The Kremlin has repeatedly claimed that the *Russkiy Mir* — purposefully vaguely defined as including ethnic Russians, Russian language-speakers, and any territory and people formerly ruled by the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire — includes Ukrainians and that Russia’s invasions of Ukraine were allegedly in defense of “compatriots abroad” in Ukraine.[18] Russian President Vladimir Putin further expanded the definition of the Russian World in a speech in late November 2023 to include “those who consider themselves carriers of the Russian language, history, and culture regardless of their national or religious affiliation.”[19] Putin’s stated goals of “uniting” and maintaining control over the *Russkiy Mir* is part of Russia’s larger imperialist ambitions, and Russia may continue to enact measures in accordance with the purposefully broad Russian World framework to manufacture territorial claims against neighboring states, including NATO members.

Emirati banks reportedly began to limit some transactions with Russian entities and close Russian citizens’ accounts in September 2023 due to the risk of Western secondary sanctions. Russian outlet *Vedomosti* reported on February 19 that three businesspeople working in the UAE and a representative of the Russian “Delovaya Rossiya” organization stated that banks in the UAE are not accepting deposits from or making payments to Russian entities and are closing accounts of companies whose owners are Russian citizens for unclear reasons.[20] *Vedomosti* reported that one of the sources stated that the “purges” began in September 2023. A source close to the Russian Cabinet of Ministers reportedly stated that the Russian government is aware of the problem but considers it “not critical and solvable.” *Vedomosti* sources indicated that the problems with the banks can be solved, for example by using local connections and avoiding any connections with entities under Western sanctions. *Bloomberg* reported in November 2023 that Emirati banks increasingly faced US pressure and began to work to prevent sanctions evasion by rejecting Russian firms.[21] At least two state-owned Chinese banks reportedly ordered reviews of their business with Russian clients in January 2024 and will sever ties with sanctioned Russian entities and entities with ties to the Russian defense industry.[22] Turkish banks have also reportedly started to close Russian companies’ accounts.[23]

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reiterated that Armenia does not support Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine against the backdrop of deteriorating Russian–Armenian relations. Pashinyan stated on February 19 at the Munich Security Conference that “Armenia is not Russia’s ally in the matter of Ukraine.”[24] Pashinyan highlighted the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration that founded the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and recognized the territorial integrity of its 11 signatories, including Russia and Ukraine.[25] Kremlin officials and mouthpieces have increasingly promoted narratives about Russia’s alleged continued influence in Armenia and criticized Pashinyan’s policies.[26]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian actors conducted a cyber operation regarding Russia's seizure of Avdiivka, likely aimed at generating panic in the Ukrainian information space and weakening Ukrainian morale.**
- **The tempo of Russian offensive operations near Avdiivka has reportedly dramatically slowed following the Russian seizure of Avdiivka.**
- **Ukrainian officials reported that Ukrainian forces shot down two more Russian fighter aircraft, a Su-34 and a Su-35S, in eastern Ukraine on the morning of February 19.**
- **The White House is reportedly considering the provision of long-range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine in the event that Congress passes security assistance for Ukraine.**
- **The Russian government eased the requirements for "compatriots" living abroad to apply to resettle in Russia.**
- **Emirati banks reportedly began to limit some transactions with Russian entities and close Russian citizens' accounts in September 2023 due to the risk of Western secondary sanctions.**
- **Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reiterated that Armenia does not support Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine against the backdrop of deteriorating Russian-Armenian relations.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Donetsk City and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitri Medvedev claimed on February 19 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has recruited more than 53,000 military personnel since January 1, 2024.**
- **Russian authorities have reportedly returned Ukrainian children in occupied Ukraine and Russia to relatives in Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of February 19, 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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* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

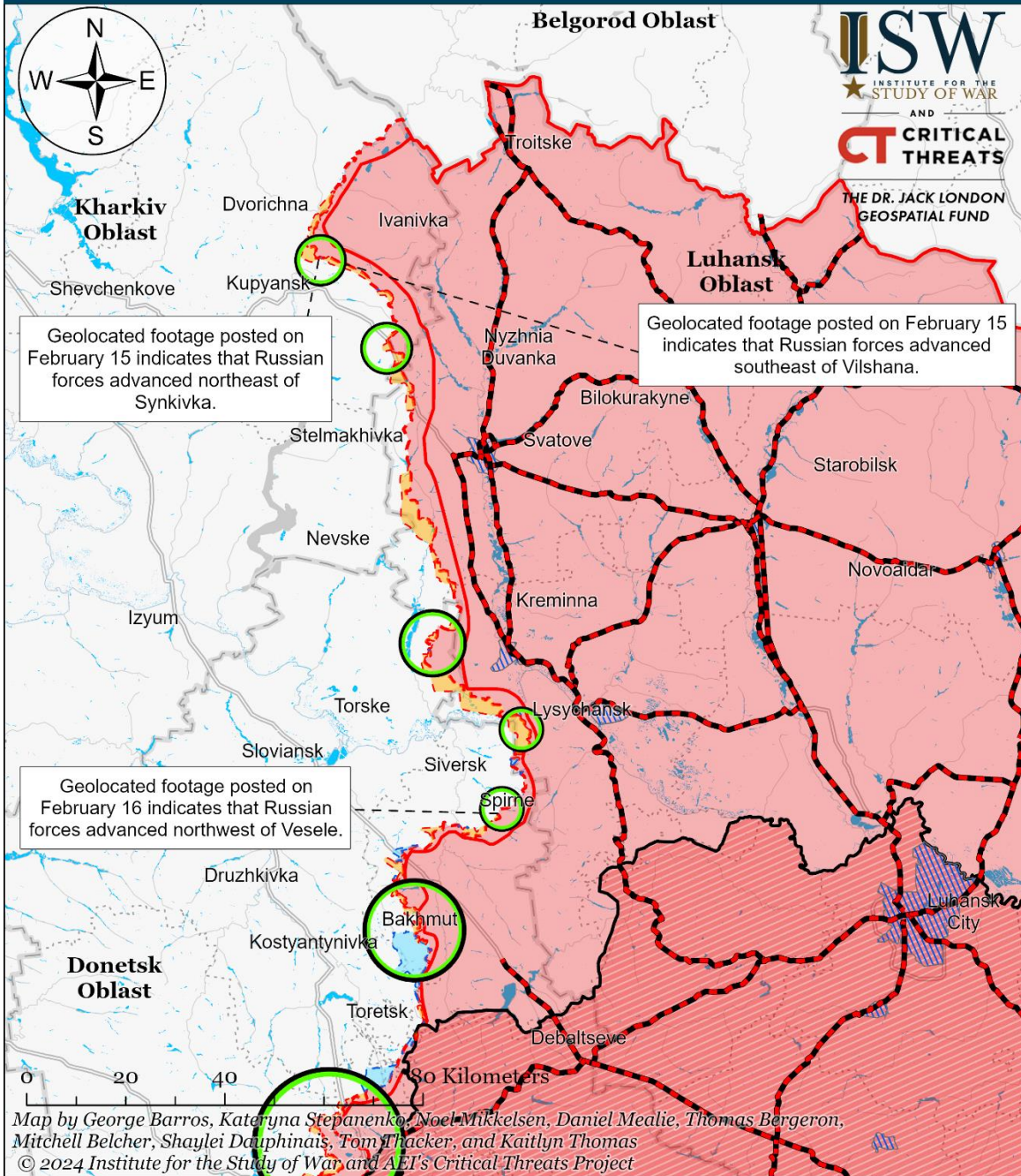
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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)

Rosgvardia has reportedly deployed additional elements to Belgorod Oblast. Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on February 19 that Rosgvardia deployed elements of its 116th Special Purpose Brigade, namely units of the 901st Regiment, to Belgorod Oblast.[27] Mashovets stated on February 7 that elements of the 116th Special Purpose Brigade's 900th and 902nd regiments redeployed to Belgorod Oblast from occupied Donetsk Oblast at the beginning of February.[28] Mashovets stated that Chief of Staff of the Russian Ground Forces Colonel General Alexander Lapin and Rosgvardia Southern District Commander Igor Turchenyuk oversaw the Rosgvardia redeployment from occupied Donetsk Oblast to Belgorod Oblast.[29] Mashovets stated that elements of the 116th Special Purpose Brigade did not deploy to Belgorod Oblast's international border with Ukraine and are operating north of Belgorod City along the E105 highway to Kursk City in the Syrtsevo-Yakovlevo-Stroitel-Dmitriyevka area.[30]

Positional engagements continued along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on February 19, but there were no confirmed changes to this area. Positional engagements continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka, southwest of Kupyansk near Tabaivka, west of Kreminna near Terny, and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[31] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Russian forces have intensified offensive operations near the Zherebets River and are transferring reinforcements to the area in an attempt to establish defensive positions near Terny and Torske (both west of Kreminna and on the east bank of the Zherebets River) and prepare for future offensive actions.[32]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of February 19, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

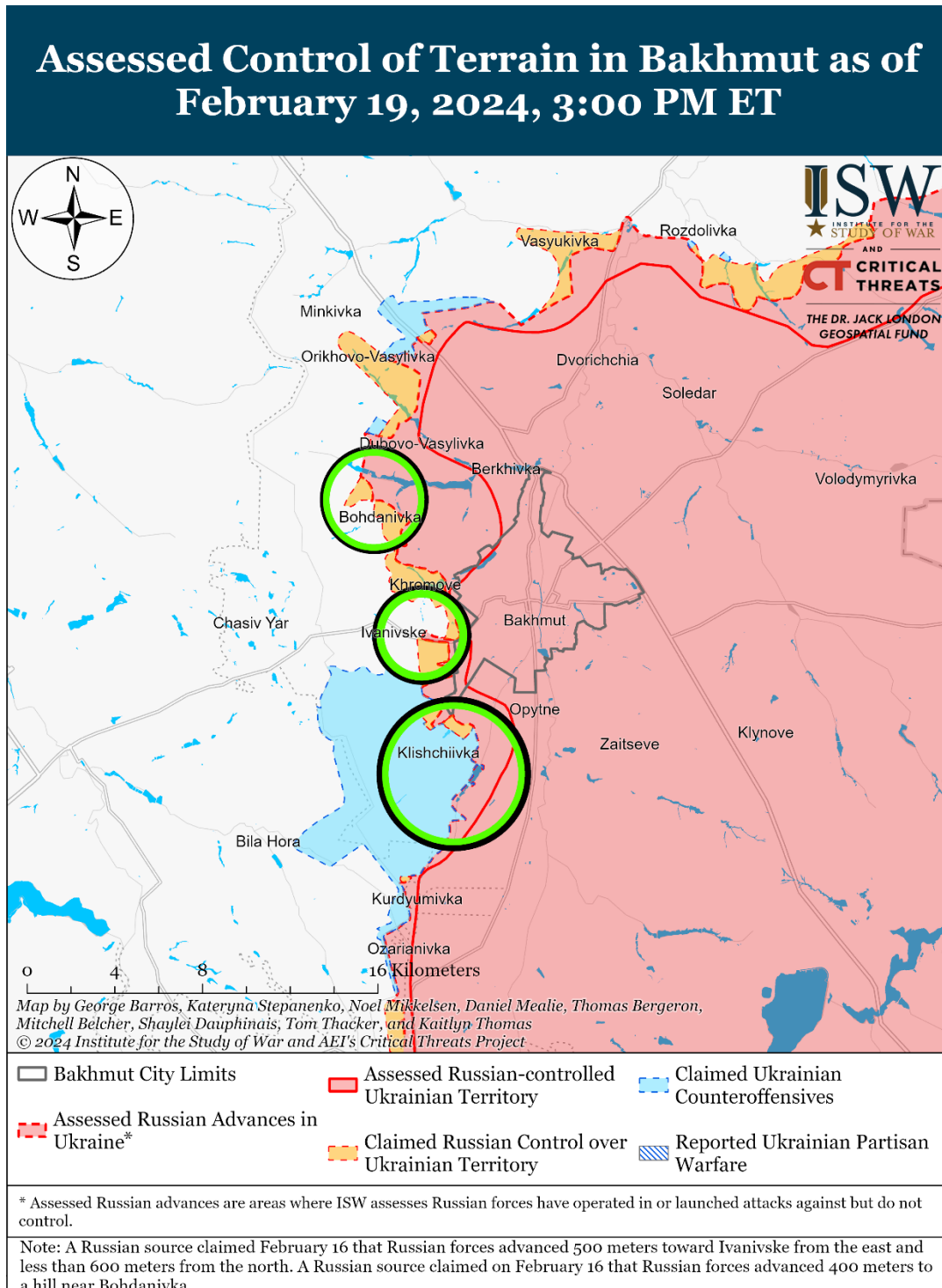


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February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

* 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 and Ukrainian forces continued positional fighting near Bakhmut on February 19. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced one kilometer near Ivanivske (west of Bakhmut).[33] Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional fighting continued northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka; west of Bakhmut near Ivanivske; and southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka, Andriivka, and Pivdenne.[34] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash reported that Russian forces are conducting frontal assaults on Bohdanivka and are attacking the settlement’s flanks.[35] Elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division are reportedly operating in the Bakhmut direction, and elements of the 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Northern Fleet) are reportedly operating near Bohdanivka.[36] Elements of the Chechen Akhmat “Kamerton” detachment are reportedly operating near Klishchiivka.[37]

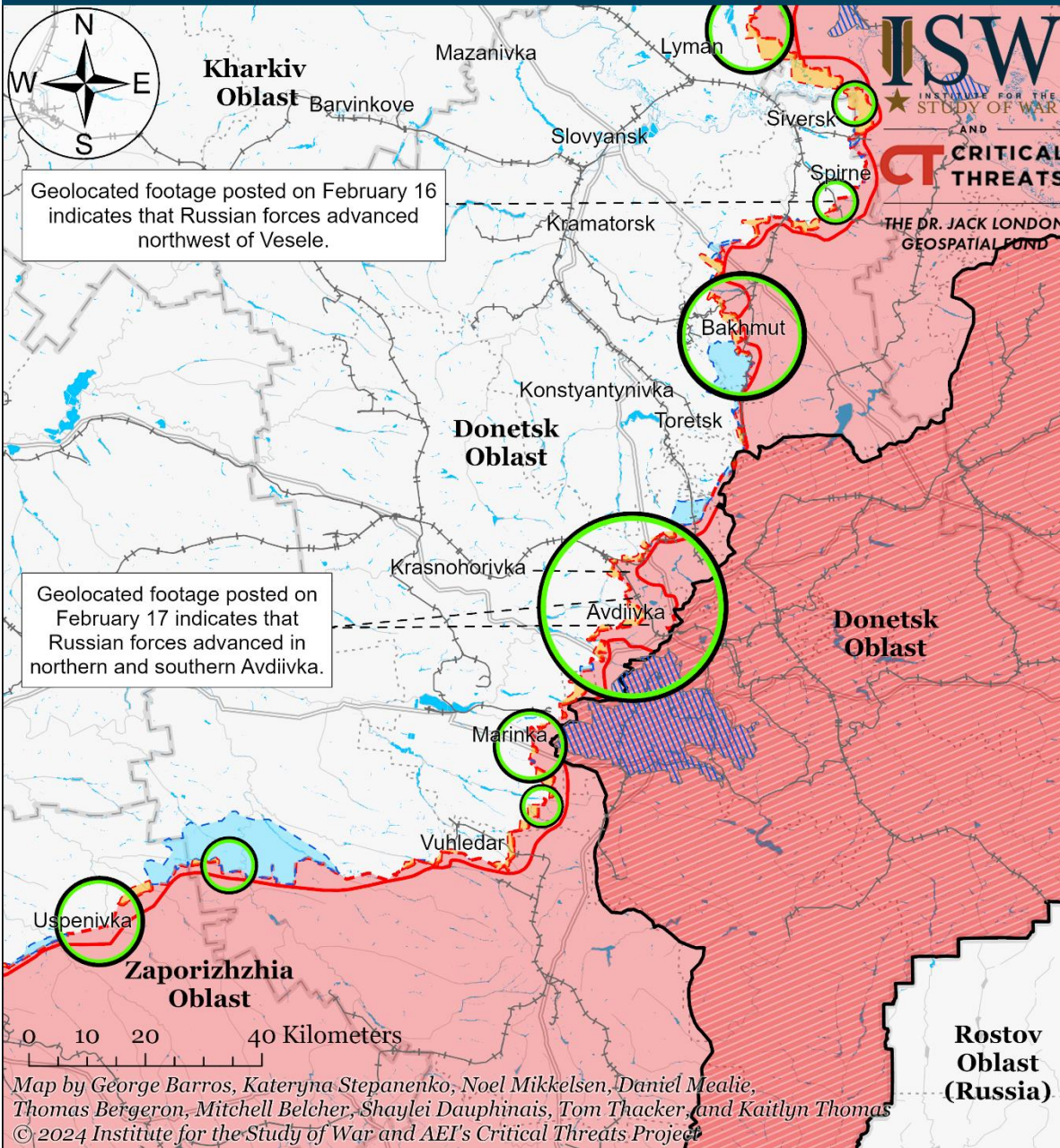


Russian forces have likely seized all of Avdiivka as of February 19, though Russian forces may still be clearing portions of Avdiivka. Ukrainian units operating in the Avdiivka direction reported that all Ukrainian personnel withdrew from the Avdiivka Coke Plant on the far northwest side of Avdiivka, and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces seized the plant.[38] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced northwest of Avdiivka near Stepove and Lastochkyne and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske and Pervomaiske.[39] One Russian milblogger claimed on February 18 that Russian forces seized Lastochkyne, but later withdrew those claims and noted that fighting continues near the settlement.[40] Russian and Ukrainian forces stated on February 19 that positional fighting continues near Novobakhmutivka (northwest of Avdiivka) and Sieverne (west of Avdiivka).[41] Elements of the Russian 41st Combined Arms Army (Central Military District), including its 55th, 35th, and 74th motorized rifle brigades, and the 6th Tank Regiment (90th Tank Division) are operating near Avdiivka.[42] Elements of the 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People Republic [DNR] Army Corps) are operating near Pervomaiske, and elements of the 110th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) are operating near Nevelske.[43]

The Russian MoD published footage on February 18 suggesting that Russian forces were able to strike select small groups of withdrawing Ukrainian forces near Avdiivka, and reports from Ukrainian personnel operating near Avdiivka suggest that Russian forces were able to encircle isolated sub-tactical elements of Ukrainian units during the Ukrainian withdrawal from Avdiivka.[44] ISW has not observed indications that Russian forces were able to destroy or encircle a significant number of Ukrainian personnel during the Ukrainian withdrawal from Avdiivka. The Russian-provided footage and Ukrainian reports appear to explain the dissonance between Russian and Ukrainian characterizations of the Ukrainian withdrawal from Avdiivka in recent days.[45] Russian claims that the Ukrainian withdrawal was chaotic or that Russian forces had encircled Ukrainian troops likely exaggerated these small unit actions intentionally or unintentionally.

Russian forces recently marginally advanced north of Marinka (west of Donetsk City) amid continued positional fighting west and southwest of Donetsk City on February 19. Geolocated footage published on February 17 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced north of Marinka.[46] Russian and Ukrainian forces stated that positional fighting continued west of Donetsk City near Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Pobieda and Novomykhailivka.[47] Elements of the Russian 103rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) are reportedly operating near Heorhiivka.[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of February 19, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

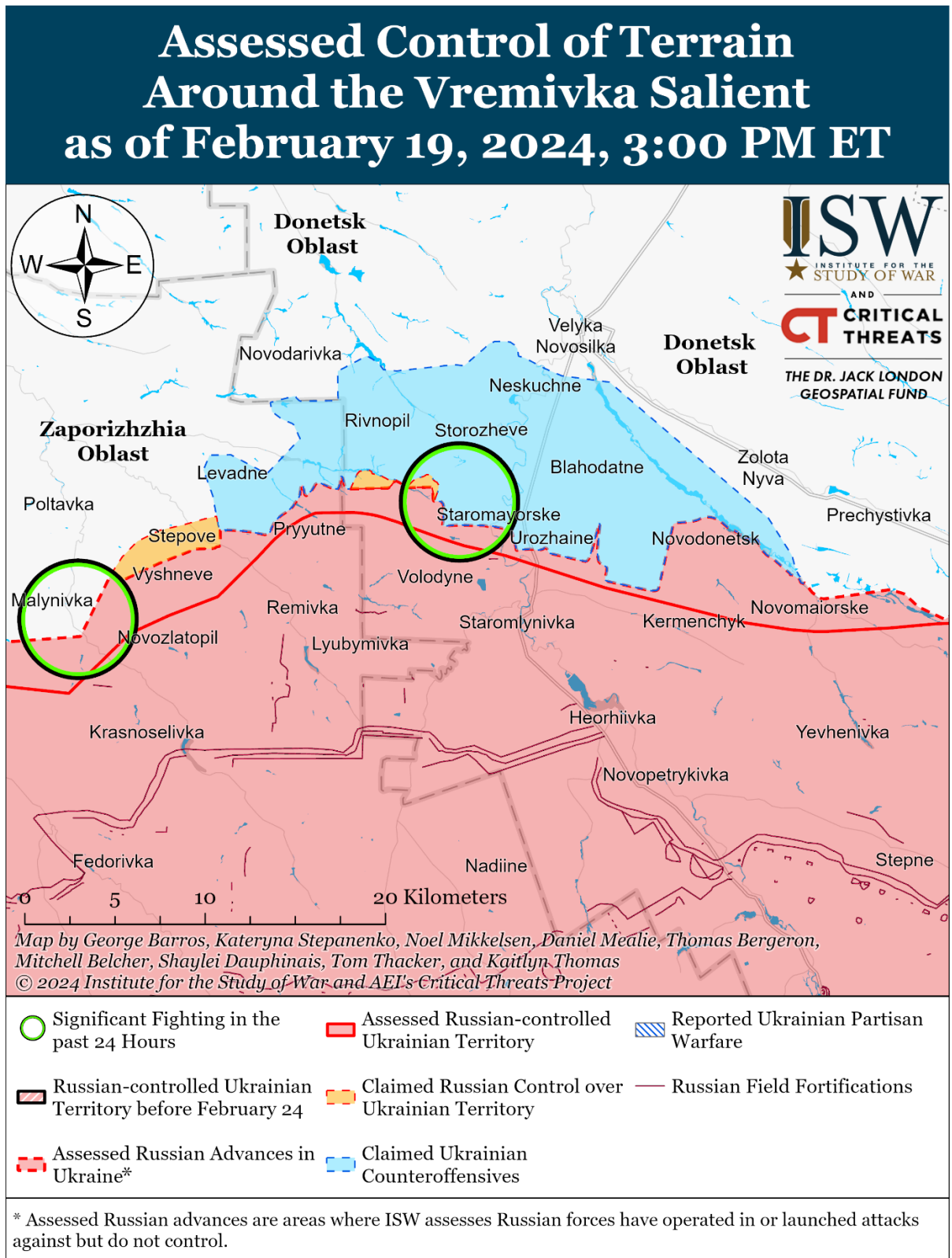


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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

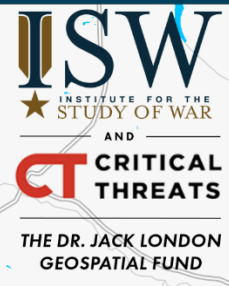
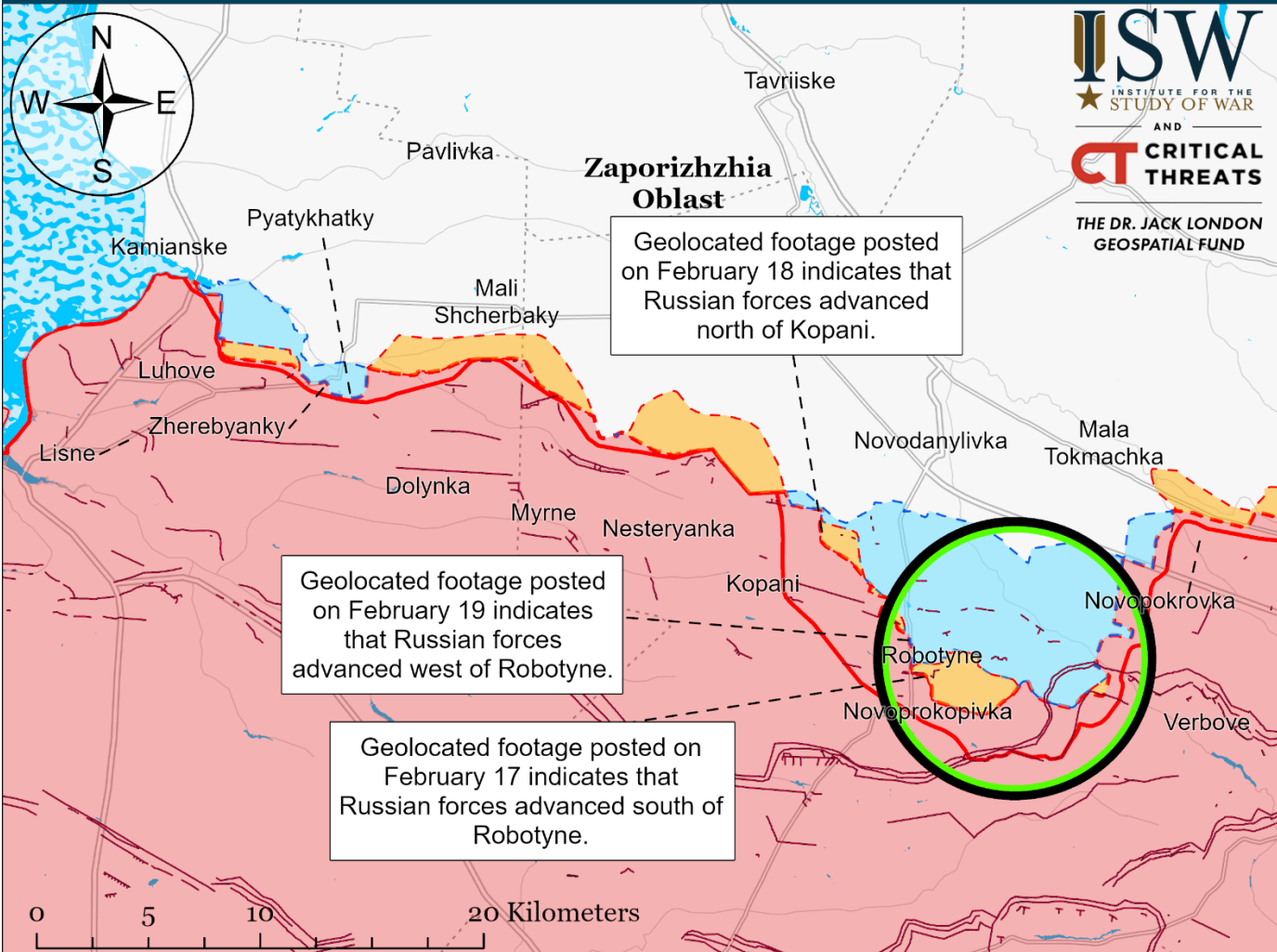
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Positional fighting continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area near Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka) and Prechystivka (southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[49] Elements of the Russian 143rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating north of Pryyutne (southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[50]



Russian forces recently advanced near Robotyne and continued intensified offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on February 19. Geolocated footage published on February 19 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced to the western outskirts of Robotyne.[51] Russian milbloggers claimed on February 18 and 19 that Russian forces advanced over a kilometer deep west of Verbove and up to two kilometers deep near Robotyne.[52] Russian milbloggers widely claimed that Russian forces reached the western and southern outskirts of Robotyne, with select milbloggers claiming that Russian forces entered the settlement and that fighting is ongoing in central Robotyne.[53] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of Russian forces fighting in central Robotyne, and some Russian milbloggers disputed these Russian claims.[54] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are trying to tactically separate Ukrainian forces deployed along the Robotyne-Verbove line.[55] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy stated that Russian forces are attacking in small groups with limited armored vehicle support near Robotyne.[56] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are intensifying indirect fire and air strikes near Kamianske (west of Robotyne) and made unspecified tactical gains in the area.[57] ISW has not yet observed confirmation of Russian advances in the area.[58] Positional fighting occurred near Malynivka (east of Hulyaipole).[59] Elements of the Russian 247th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) are reportedly attacking near Verbove, and elements of the 291st, 70th, and 71st motorized rifle regiments (all of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly attacking near Robotyne.[60] Elements of the Russian 392nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (likely a mobilized unit) are reportedly operating near Pyatykhatky (west of Robotyne), and elements of the 49th Special Airborne Brigade (a newly formed brigade reportedly subordinated to the 58th CAA) reportedly attacked near Kamianske.[61]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of February 19, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



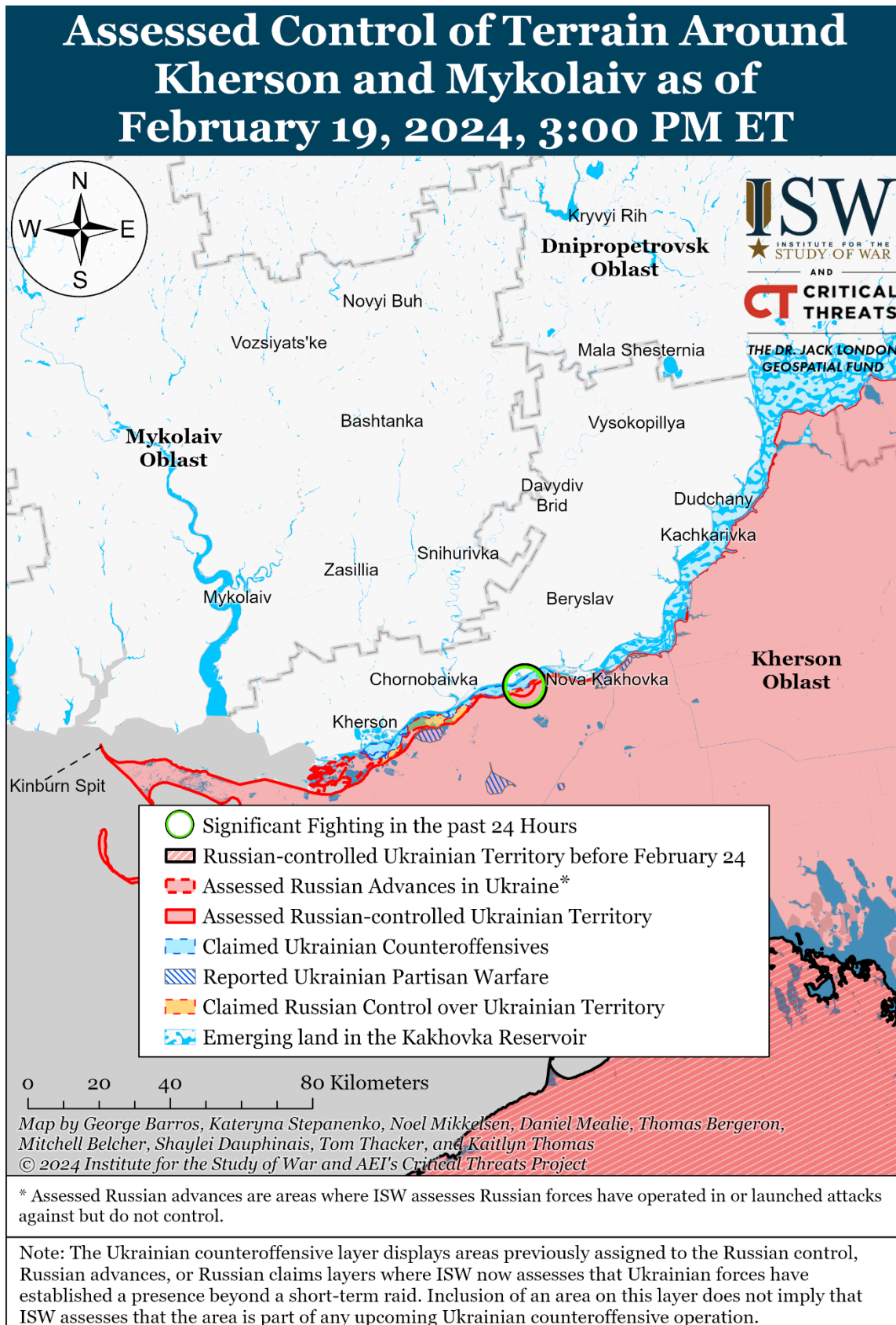
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Meatie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Shaylei Dauphinais, Tom Thacker, and Kaitlyn Thomas
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| Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | 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.

Note: A Russian source claimed on February 19 that Russian forces advanced in an area 1.42 kilometers wide and 1.15 kilometers deep west of Verbove. Multiple Russian sourced claimed on February 19 that Russian forces advanced 500 meters near Robotyne.

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled at least 16 Russian assaults in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast on February 19.[62] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Colonel Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Russian forces continue to conduct infantry assaults in east bank Kherson Oblast in an effort to conserve armored vehicles.[63]



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

The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched four Shahed-136/131 drones from Belgorod Oblast at targets in Kharkiv Oblast and that Ukrainian forces shot down all four drones.[64] Ukrainian officials also stated that Ukrainian forces shot down a Kh-59 missile near Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.[65]

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

Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitri Medvedev claimed on February 19 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has recruited more than 53,000 military personnel since January 1, 2024.[66] Medvedev previously claimed the Russian military recruited 42,000 personnel between November 9 and December 1, 2023.[67] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Deputy Chief Major General Vadym Skibitskyi stated on January 15 that Russia recruits about 30,000 personnel per month.[68]

Efforts to integrate former Wagner Group forces into Rosgvardia have reportedly halted. A Russian milblogger claimed that the creation of Rosgvardia's 1st Volunteer Corps from the Wagner Group's former 15th, 16th, and 17th Assault Detachments has not begun for unknown reasons.[69] The milblogger claimed that personnel who intended to make up the three units left for other unspecified volunteer units. The milblogger previously claimed that Rosgvardia tasked the 15th, 16th, and 17th Assault Detachments with recruiting volunteers after the Kremlin adopted a law allowing Rosgvardia to form its own volunteer formations in December 2023.[70]

Russia is nationalizing Western-owned factories in Russia, likely to further expand Russia's defense industrial base (DIB). Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on February 19 transferring 100 percent of the shares of the Ulyanovsk Machine Tool Plant, which German company Gildemeister Beteiligungen GmbH (a subsidiary of the Japanese-German machine tool manufacturer DMG Mori) owns, to the temporary management of the Russian Federal Property Management Agency.[71] The Ulyanovsk Machine Tool Plant ceased operations in the spring of 2022 after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[72]

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

Nothing significant to report.

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

Ukrainian defense industrial base (DIB) enterprises and their European partners are producing ammunition for Ukrainian forces. Ukrainian Armor stated on February 19 that it delivered a shipment of "thousands" of 122 mm artillery shells that it produced in partnership with an unspecified Eastern European ammunition company to Ukrainian forces.[73]

Russia likely used its trade relations with Ecuador to prevent Ecuador from sending Soviet-era military equipment to Ukraine via the US. Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa announced in January that Ecuador was going to send \$200 million worth of Soviet-era weapons to the US in exchange for modern weapons, but Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Gabriela Sommerfeld stated on February 19 that Ecuador would not send any military equipment to countries that are involved in international armed conflicts.[74] Russia partially lifted its ban on imports of Ecuadorian bananas, which Russia recently imposed allegedly for phytosanitary issues, on February 16.[75]

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 authorities have reportedly returned 11 Ukrainian children in occupied Ukraine and Russia to relatives in Ukraine. Kremlin-appointed Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova stated on February 19 that Russian authorities returned 11 Ukrainian children to Ukraine from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast; occupied Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast; occupied Luhansk City; occupied Simferopol, Crimea; and Krasnoyarsk City.[76] Lvova-Belova stated that Qatari authorities mediated the children's return.

Kherson Oblast Administration Head Oleksandr Prokudin stated on February 19 that Ukrainian authorities returned two families and a child from occupied Kherson Oblast to Ukrainian-controlled areas.[77]

Russian authorities continue to forcibly deport children and their parents from occupied Ukraine to Russia under vacation schemes. Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik stated on February 19 that LNR authorities, the Russian "humanitarian" organization "We Don't Abandon Our Own," and the "We Are Together" Foundation organized a two-week trip to Sochi, Krasnodar Krai for children of deceased Russian military personnel.[78] Pasechnik stated that the children's mothers and grandmothers will also participate in the trip to Sochi.

Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to falsify voting results and voter turnout in occupied Ukraine in the March 16-17 Russian presidential election. The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on February 19 that Russia deployed specially trained groups to occupied Ukraine to oversee falsifications and monitor the work of election commissions ahead of the Russian presidential election.[79] The GUR stated that these Russian groups will attempt to prepare civilians in occupied Ukraine to vote by March 10. The GUR reported that Russian occupation authorities are not requiring citizens to have a Russian passport in order to vote and are promoting an online voter system that allows residents in occupied Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts to vote online "without registration." The GUR stated that Russian occupation officials are falsely claiming that 85 percent of voters in occupied Ukraine support Russian President Vladimir Putin's candidacy. Zaporizhia Oblast Military Administration Head Ivan Fedorov stated that Russian occupation authorities are intensifying measures to falsify voter turnout.[80]

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)

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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[1] https://t.me/dsszzi_official/6758

[2] <https://news.liga.net/politics/news/sayt-liganet-byl-vzloman-neizvestnye-opublikovali-rossiyskuyu-dezinformatsiyu-ob-avdeevke> ; <https://t.me/bbcussian/60841> ; <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2024/02/18/7442445/>

[3] https://t.me/mod_russia/35759 ; https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/7971 ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonov/33327>

[4] <https://suspilne dot media/687616-armia-rf-provodit-zacistki-v-avdiivci-ta-peregrupovuetsa-osuv-tavria/>

[5] <https://suspilne dot media/687616-armia-rf-provodit-zacistki-v-avdiivci-ta-peregrupovuetsa-osuv-tavria/>

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