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January 2, 2025, 8:10pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30 pm ET on January 2. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the January 3 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukraine's decision to not renew its contract to transport Russian gas through Ukrainian territory will likely significantly impact Russian gas revenues despite Kremlin posturing to the contrary. Russian and Ukrainian authorities confirmed that Russian gas ceased flowing through Ukrainian territory as of the morning of January 1, and Russian officials and media largely projected confidence that the cessation of gas supplies through Ukraine will harm Europe but not Russia.[1] The loss of gas revenue will likely negatively affect Russian state energy operator Gazprom, which has been struggling with decreasing gas revenue from Europe since 2022.[2] *Bloomberg* estimated on January 2 that Gazprom will likely lose \$6 billion in gas revenues per year due to the cessation of gas transports through Ukraine.[3] The *BBC Russian Service* noted on January 1 that Gazprom's main source of income in 2021 came from Russia's 45 percent share of the European gas market at the time but that Russia now has only one remaining route to export gas to Europe — the TurkStream pipeline bypassing Ukraine through the Black Sea to Turkey — and that Russian gas currently only accounts for five percent of the European market.[4] The *BBC* noted that Slovakia and Austria — the final destinations of the blocked Russian gas through Ukraine — have both fully met their energy needs through alternative sources. The Kremlin's efforts to project confidence about the cessation of gas transit through Ukraine mirrors its efforts to coerce Europe into authorizing Russian gas transit to Europe through the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in Winter 2021–2022, and the Kremlin's renewed posturing in Winter 2024–2025 likely aim to extract economic or diplomatic concessions from Europe, undermine unity within the European Union (EU), and drive a wedge between the US and EU.[5]

Gazprom is likely attempting to exploit the cessation of gas transits through Ukraine to create an artificial energy crisis to destabilize Moldova. Gazprom shut off gas supplies to Transnistria via Ukraine on January 1, claiming that Moldova failed to pay a debt worth \$709 million.[6] An audit by British and Norwegian audit firms, however, found in 2022 that Moldova owed Gazprom only \$8.6 million.[7] Moldova recently held talks with Gazprom about transporting gas to Transnistria via the TurkStream pipeline that runs from Russia to Turkey, but Gazprom refused and did not make the arrangements to do so by the deadline on December 16.[8] Free Gazprom gas has long powered Transnistria's Cuciurgan power station, which exported a significant amount of electricity to Moldova and used the profits from these sales to support Transnistria's budget.[9] The Cuciurgan power station switched to coal reserves on January 1, which reportedly can last about 50 days.[10] Transnistrian gas company Tiraspoltransgaz stopped gas supplies to most consumers in Transnistria

and shut off most of the hot water and heat on January 1.[11] Moldova increased its electricity imports from Romania to make up for lost supplies from Transnistria.[12] Moldovan gas company Moldovagaz and Moldovan state electricity company Energocom offered on January 1 to provide Tiraspoltransgaz technical and commercial assistance to obtain gas from European markets after successful tests on December 31, 2024 to supply Moldova with gas through Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine.[13]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signaled that Ukraine will increase drone and missile strikes against Russia in 2025 as part of efforts to bring Russia to accept Ukraine's demands for a "just peace" in future negotiations. Zelensky stated in his New Years Eve address on December 31, 2024, that Ukraine seeks to accomplish a "just peace" in the war and announced that Ukraine is once again building its own missiles and produced over one million drones in 2024.[14] Zelensky noted that Ukraine is producing large quantities of "Palyanytsya," "Peklo," "Ruta," "Neptune," and "Sapsan" missiles, some of which Ukrainian forces have yet to use. Zelensky emphasized that the Ukrainian defense industrial base (DIB) produced 30 percent of all military equipment that Ukrainian forces used on the frontlines in 2024. Zelensky described Ukrainian missiles and drones as Ukrainian "arguments for a just peace" and noted that Ukraine can only accomplish such a peace if it is strong.

Russia intends to issue Russian licenses for the operation of all six of Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant's (ZNPP) reactors by 2028 as part of Moscow's long-term efforts to legitimize its illegal occupation of the plant and exploit Ukraine's energy supplies. ZNPP occupation director Yuriy Chernichuk announced on January 1 that Russian occupation officials intend to obtain licenses from Moscow to operate all six of the ZNPP's nuclear reactors by 2028, obtaining a license for the operation of the first reactor by the end of 2025.[15] Ukrainian licenses for the first ZNPP reactor will expire in December 2025, and the Kremlin claimed in 2022 that all licenses would be valid until their expiration or until the ZNPP received Russian licenses.[16] Chernichuk also announced on January 2 that occupation officials plan to replace the ZNPP's foreign-sourced equipment with Russian-made equipment, that Russia will use the ZNPP reactors to supply energy to all of occupied Ukraine, and that Russia will also use the ZNPP to generate power for Russian regions west of the Ural mountains.[17] Chernichuk's stated goal of acquiring licenses for Russia to operate ZNPP's nuclear reactors signals Moscow's long-term territorial intentions and aligns with Russia's broader efforts to de facto legitimize Russia's occupation of the ZNPP and further steal Ukraine's critical energy supply.

Ukrainian forces conducted a missile strike in Kursk Oblast, reportedly against a Russian military command post. Geolocated footage published on January 2 showed a damaged building and Russian military vehicles after a Ukrainian missile strike against Ivanovskoye, Kursk Oblast.[18] Ukrainian sources reported that Ukrainian forces conducted a missile strike, possibly with HIMARS, against the command post of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet [BSF], Southern Military District [SMD]) in the settlement, while Kursk Oblast Acting Governor Alexander Khinshtein claimed that the strike damaged the House of Culture in the area.[19] A Russian milblogger claimed that the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade was holding an award ceremony at the House of Culture.[20]

Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) specified new details about the December 31 Ukrainian naval drone strike against Russian Mi-8 helicopters in the Black

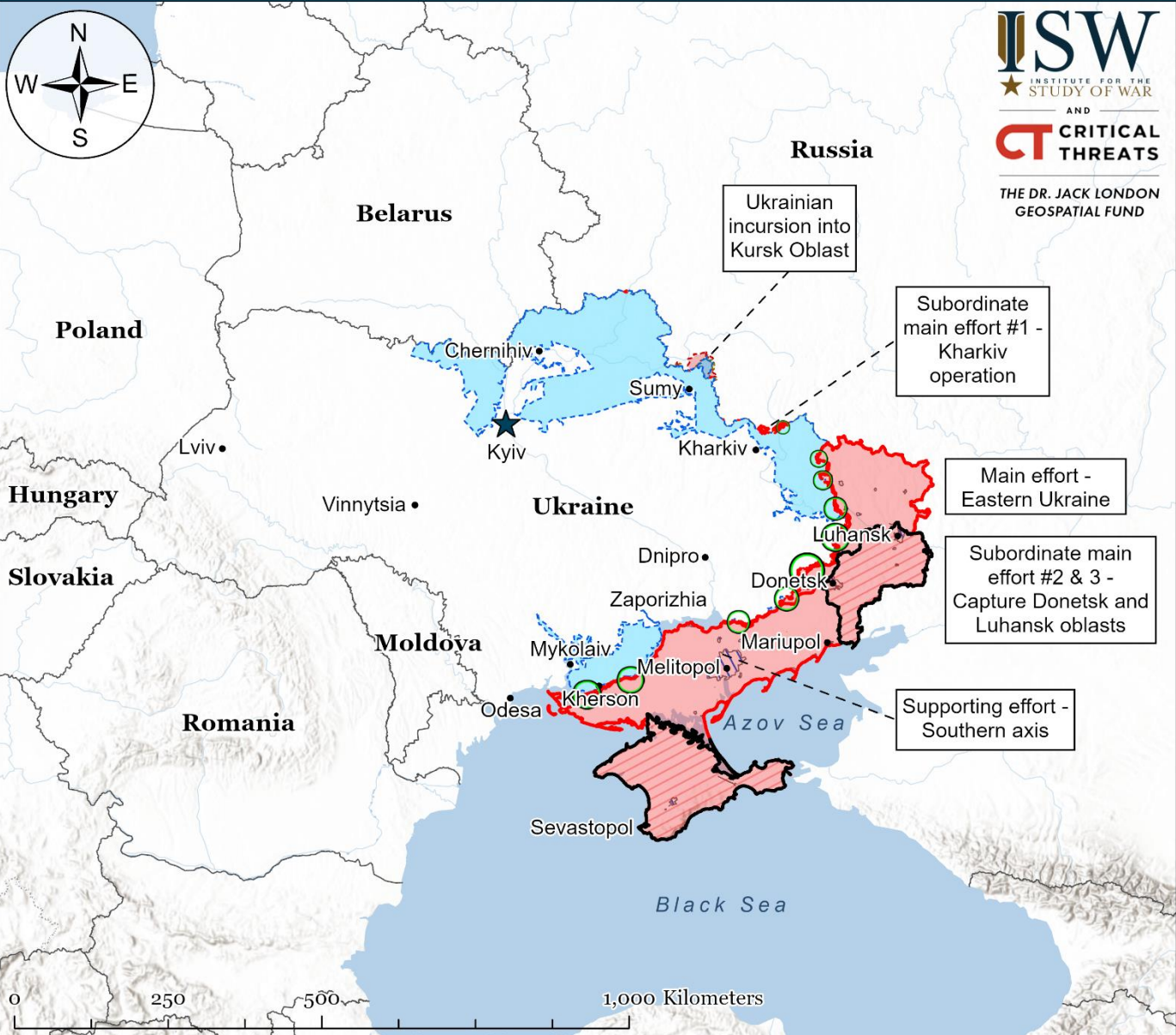
Sea as Ukrainian strikes continue to degrade Russian operations in occupied Crimea. The GUR reported on January 2 that a Ukrainian Magura V5 naval drone used missiles to destroy two Russian Mi-8 helicopters and damage one in the Black Sea on December 31.[21] The GUR previously reported that the naval drone strike only destroyed one helicopter and damaged another.[22] Ukrainian Navy Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk doubted Russian reports that there were eight crewmembers aboard the helicopters but noted that the loss of highly trained helicopter crews is significant.[23] Pletenchuk also noted that Ukrainian strikes against occupied Crimea have deprived Russian forces of sustainable logistics in the area, including by damaging the railway on the Kerch Strait Bridge and ferries that transported railway cars and fuel tankers.[24] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian military vessels are trying to hide from Ukrainian naval strikes in bays and ports and that Russian forces will only be able to repel Ukrainian naval drones equipped with missiles with jet and fighter aircraft.[25] ISW assesses that increased Ukrainian offensive capabilities in the Black Sea will most likely threaten Russian control over occupied Crimea.[26]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukraine's decision to not renew its contract to transport Russian gas through Ukrainian territory will likely significantly impact Russian gas revenues despite Kremlin posturing to the contrary.**
- **Gazprom is likely attempting to exploit the cessation of gas transits through Ukraine to create an artificial energy crisis to destabilize Moldova.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signaled that Ukraine will increase drone and missile strikes against Russia in 2025 as part of efforts to bring Russia to accept Ukraine's demands for a "just peace" in future negotiations.**
- **Russia intends to issue Russian licenses for the operation of all six of Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant's (ZNPP) reactors by 2028 as part of Moscow's long-term efforts to legitimize its illegal occupation of the plant and exploit Ukraine's energy supplies.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted a missile strike in Kursk Oblast, reportedly against a Russian military command post.**
- **Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) specified new details about the December 31 Ukrainian naval drone strike against Russian Mi-8 helicopters in the Black Sea as Ukrainian strikes continue to degrade Russian operations in occupied Crimea.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced near Siversk, Toretsk, Pokrovsk, Kurakhove, and Vuhledar and in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) continues to inadequately supply Russian military personnel with basic equipment and ammunition, forcing soldiers to provide their own materiel.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

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Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, and David Schulert
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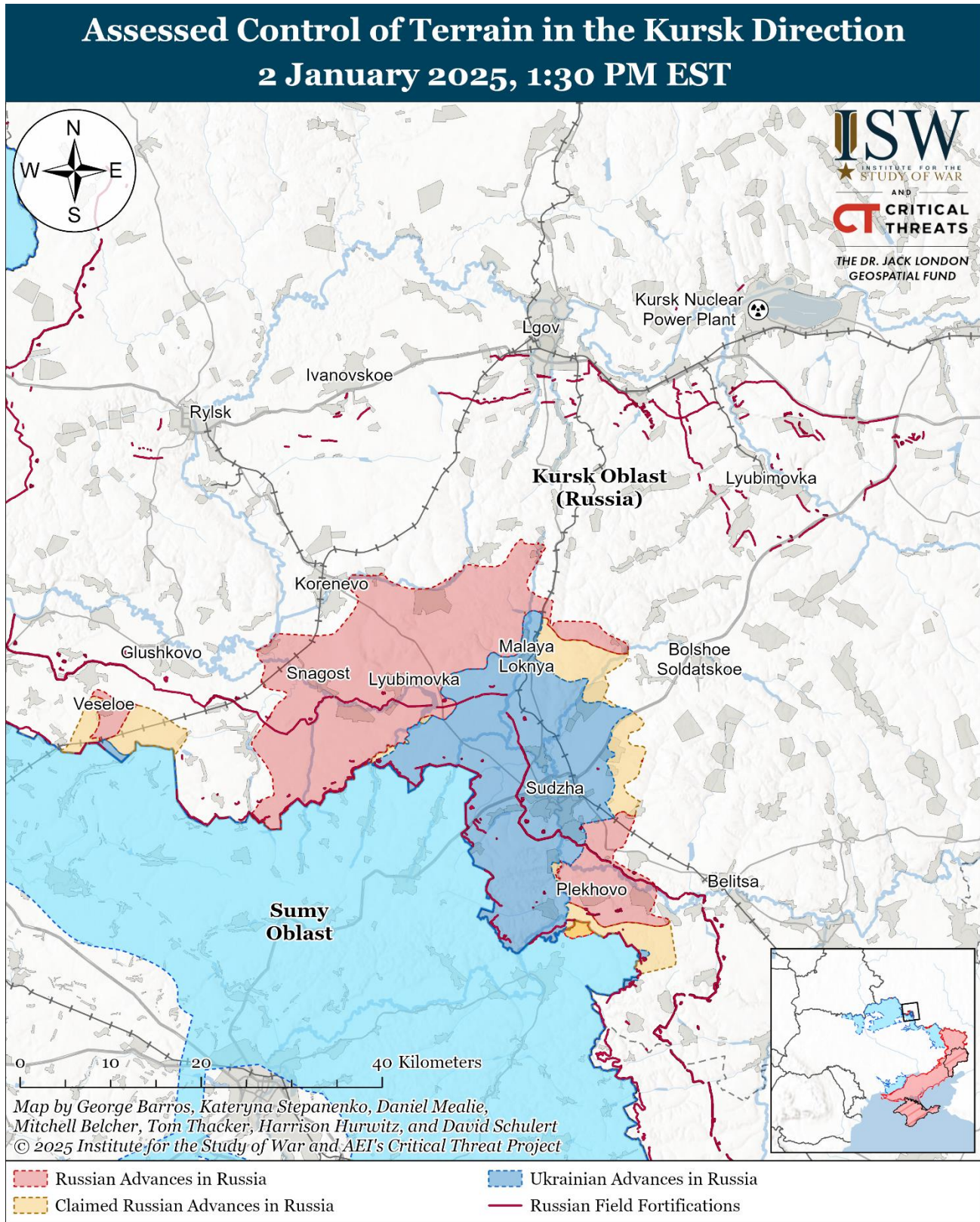
We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military 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.

- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- Russian Main Effort — Eastern Ukraine (comprised of three 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
- Significant Activity in Belarus

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Ukrainian and Russian forces continued combat engagements in Ukraine's salient in Kursk Oblast on January 1 and 2, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Makhnovka (southeast of Sudzha), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[27] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces attacked in the forest areas of Sudzhansky Raion and near Leonidovo (southeast of Korenevo) and Kurilovka (south of Sudzha) on January 1 and 2.[28] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled six Ukrainian counterattacks in Kursk Oblast on January 1.[29] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces have retaken about 40 to 50 percent of Kursk Oblast and that Ukrainian forces control around 500 to 600 square kilometers.[30] ISW assesses that Ukrainian forces are operating in roughly 585 square kilometers in Kursk Oblast and that Russian forces are confirmed to have recaptured roughly 483 square kilometers of territory - roughly 39 percent of the Ukrainian salient in the area. The milblogger added that Ukrainian forces have contained Russian advances near Pogrebki (northwest of Sudzha).[31] Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on January 2 that North Korean forces are continuing to suffer casualties in combat operations in Kursk Oblast and that the Russian military command transferred North Korean forces to positions near Ulanok, Fantasiyevka, and Cherkasskaya Konopolka (all southeast of Sudzha).[32] Elements of the

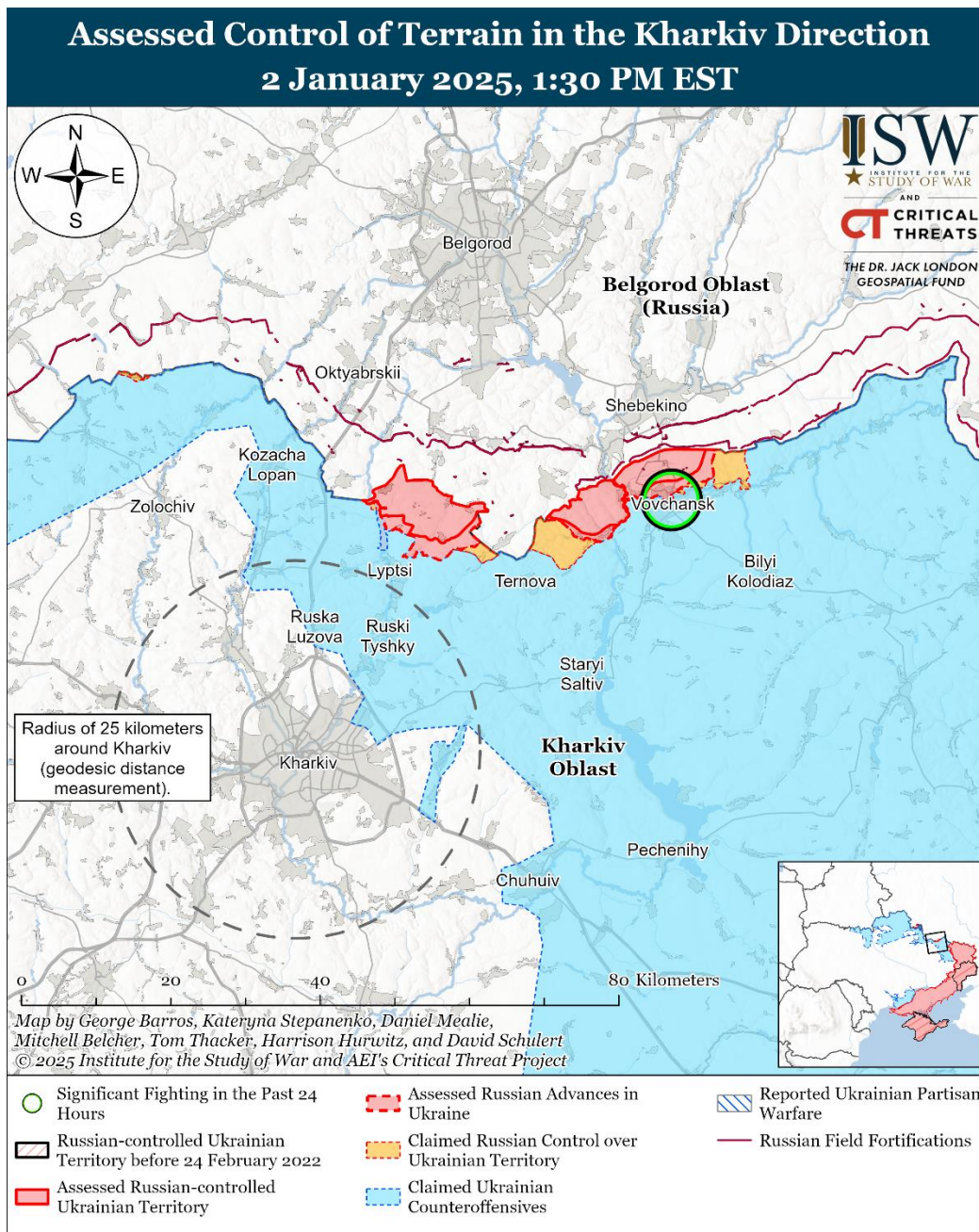
Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet [BSF]) and 56th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) are reportedly operating in the Kursk direction.[33]



Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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)

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City) on December 31 through January 2 but did not make any confirmed advances.[34] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kharkiv direction reported on January 1 that Ukrainian forces are repelling Russian sabotage and reconnaissance groups that are attempting to infiltrate Ukrainian positions in Vovchansk.[35]

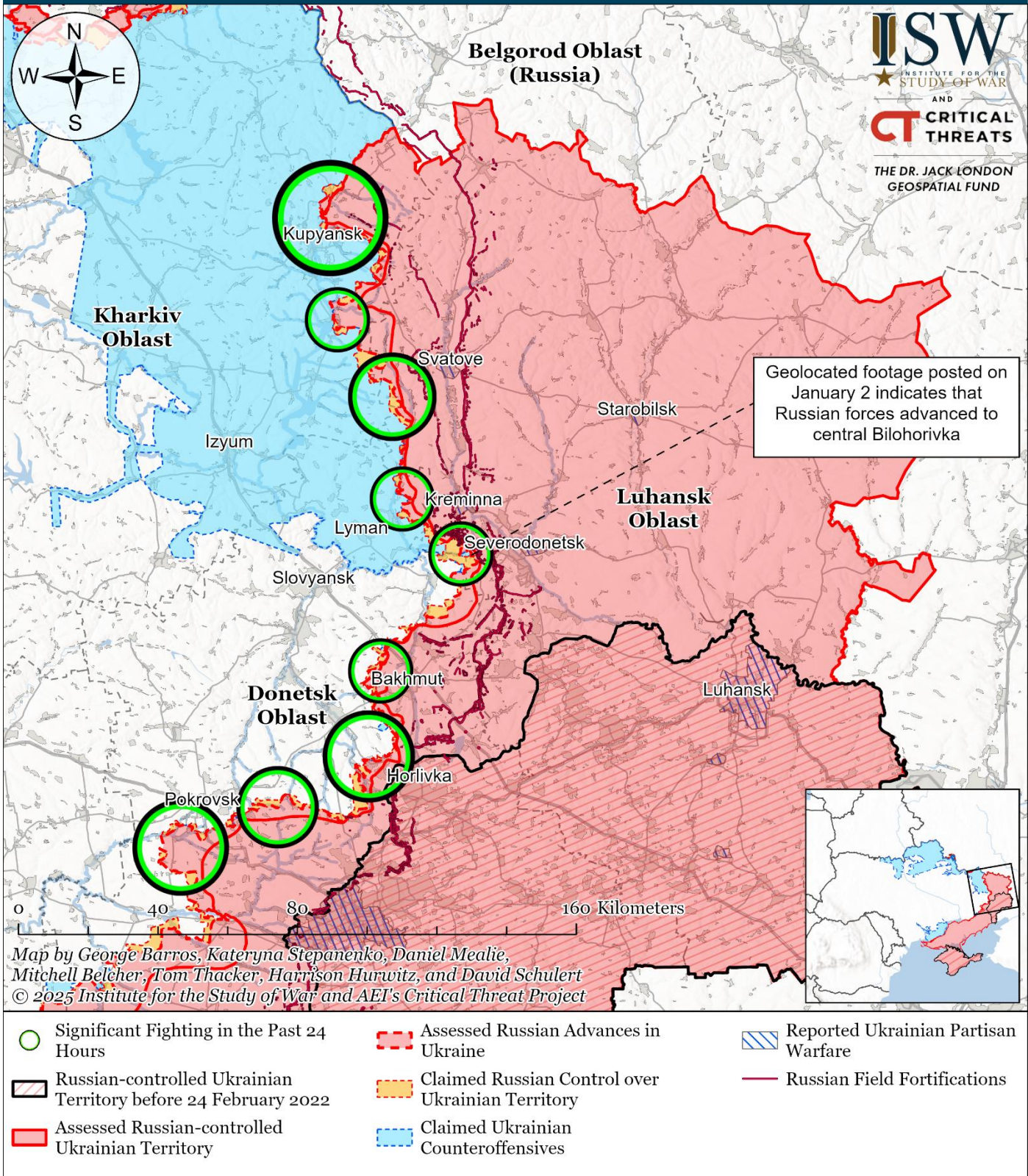


Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces reportedly advanced northwest of Kreminna amid continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on January 1 and 2. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces crossed the Zherebets River and advanced in fields west of Ivanivka (northwest of Kreminna).[36] Russian sources also claimed that Russian forces advanced in southern Terny (northwest of Kreminna), and one milblogger noted that Russian forces have not yet completely seized Terny.[37] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces continued ground attacks north of Kupyansk near Zapadne and Dvorichna; southeast of Kupyansk near Zahryzove, Lozova, Nova Kruhlyakivka, and Kolisnykivka; west of Svatove near Pershotravneve, Kopanky, Zeleny Hai, and Nadiya; southwest of Svatove near Novoyehorivka, Tverdokhlibove, and Novoserhiivka; northwest of Kreminna near Makiivka, Ivanivka,, Yampolivka, Druzhelyubivka, Hrekivka, and Cherneshchyna; west of Kreminna near Torske; and southwest of Kreminna near Dibrova and in the Serebryanske forest area on December 31 to January 2.[38] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Lyman direction stated that Russian forces are operating drones with fiber optic cables but that Ukrainian forces are cutting the fiber optic cables or shooting down the drones with small arms.[39] Elements of the Russian 27th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) are reportedly operating near Kupyansk; elements of the 15th Motorized Rifle Regiment (2nd Motorized Rifle Division, 1st GTA) are reportedly operating near Zahryzove; and elements of the 272nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st GTA), including a TOS thermobaric artillery system, are reportedly operating near Stepova Novoselivka (southeast of Kupyansk).[40]

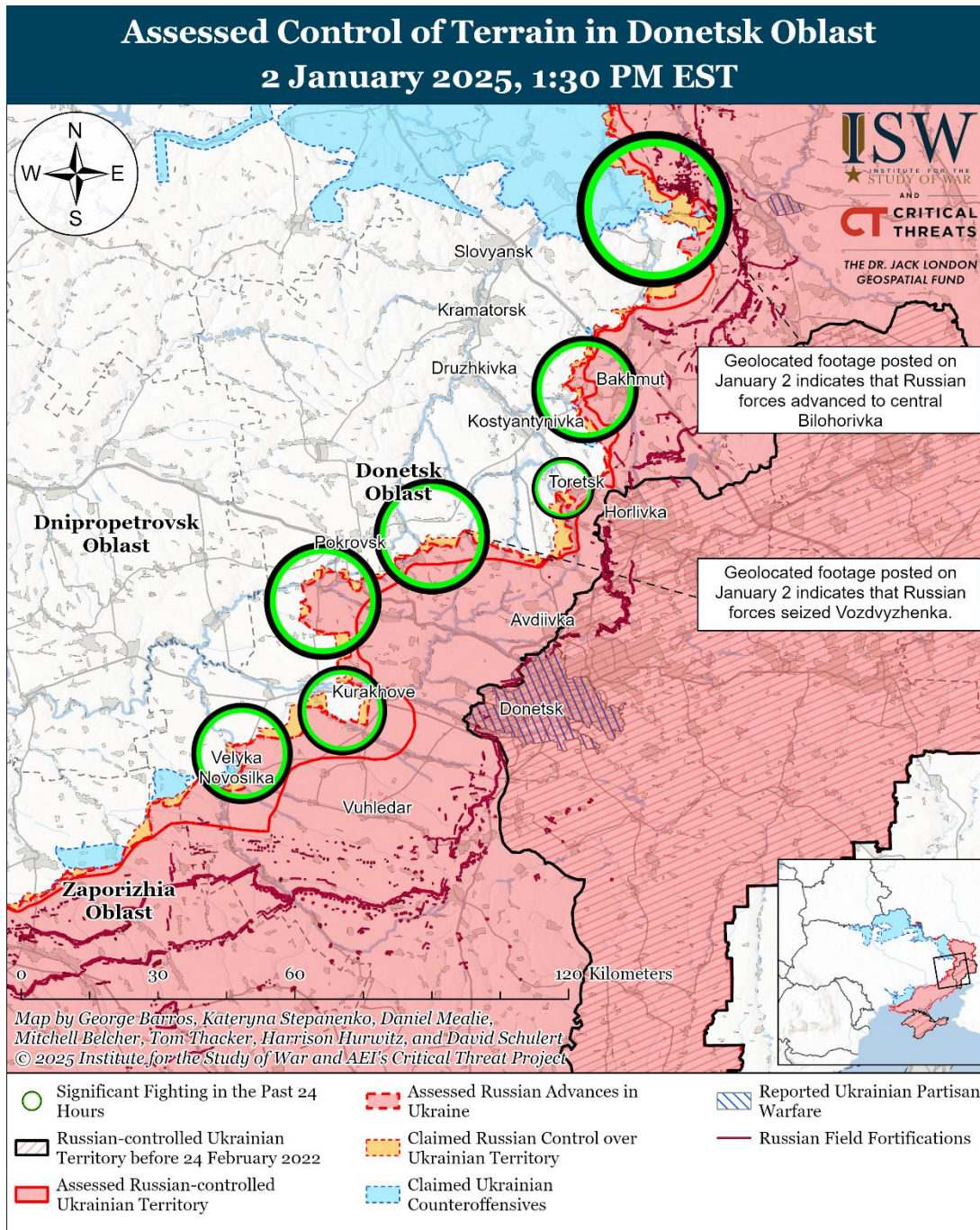
Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast

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

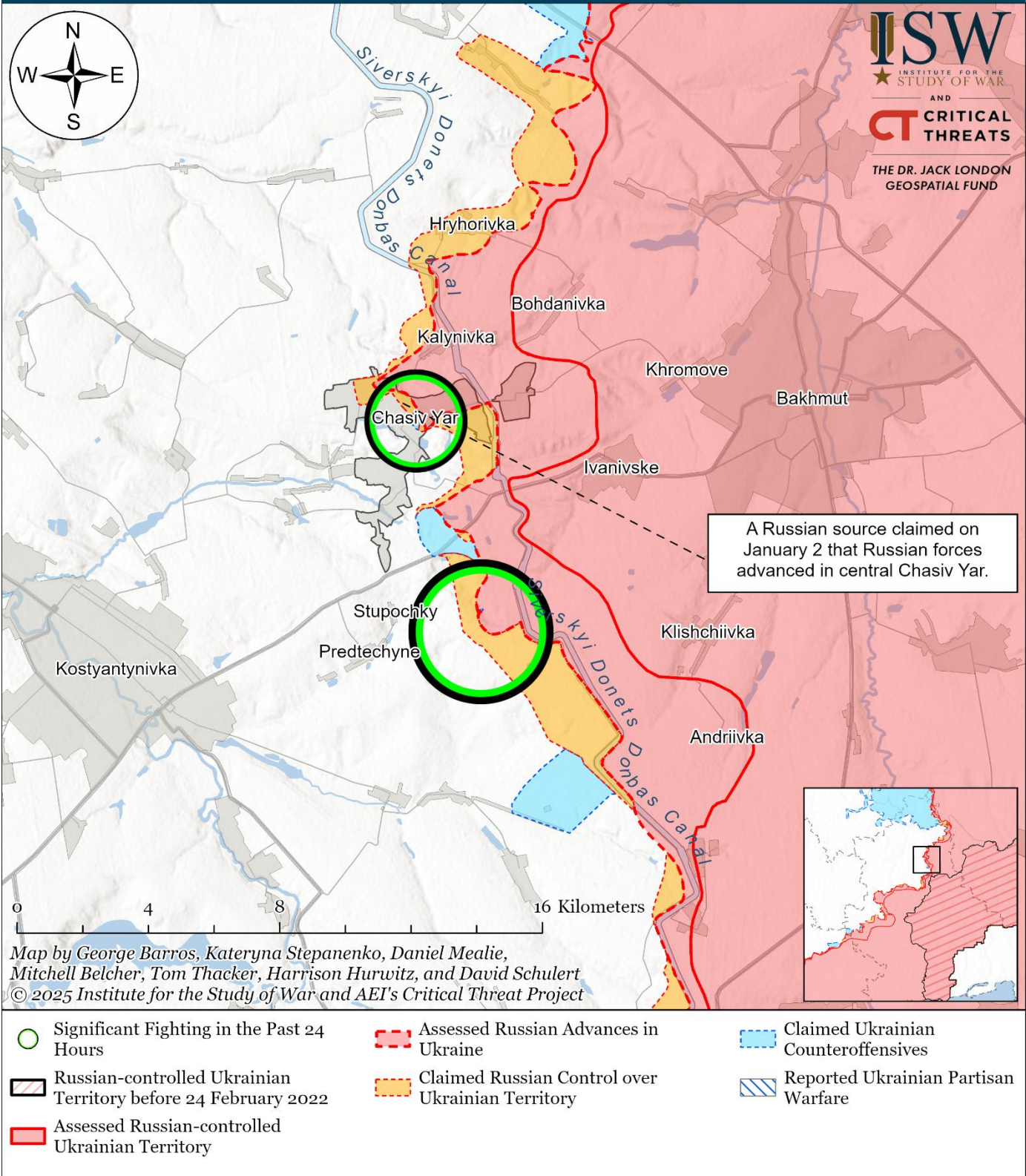
Russian forces recently advanced near Siversk amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 1 and 2. Geolocated footage published on January 2 indicates that elements of the Russian 7th Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd Combined Arms Army [CAA], formerly 2nd Luhansk People’s Republic [LNR] Army Corps [AC]) recently advanced in central Bilohorivka (northeast of Siversk).[41] Russian forces continued ground attacks northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka and Serebryanka on December 31 to January 2.[42]



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction but did not make any confirmed advances on January 1 and 2. Russian milbloggers claimed on January 1 and 2 that Russian forces advanced in northern Chasiv Yar and near the Refractory Plant in central Chasiv Yar, and one milblogger claimed that Russian forces control most of Pivnichnyi Microraion in northern Chasiv Yar.[43] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. A Russian milblogger claimed on January 2 that Russian forces conducted heavy glide bomb and drone strikes against Ukrainian positions in the Chasiv Yar Refractory Plant in order to prepare for future ground assaults.[44] Russian forces continued ground attacks within Chasiv Yar; north of Chasiv Yar near Hryhorivka; and south of Chasiv Yar near Stupochky, Predtechyne, and Bila Hora on December 31 to January 2.[45] Ukrainian military officials reported on January 1 that Russian forces in the Chasiv Yar direction are mostly conducting infantry assaults and only conduct limited mechanized assaults in order to surprise Ukrainian forces.[46] Ukrainian military officials also stated that Russian forces are using the cover of fog and smoke grenades to conceal their ground attacks in Chasiv Yar and Toretsk. Elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division reportedly continue to operate in Chasiv Yar, and elements of the Russian 1008th Motorized Rifle Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd AC) are reportedly recently operating near Klishchiivka (southeast of Chasiv Yar).[47]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Chasiv Yar Direction

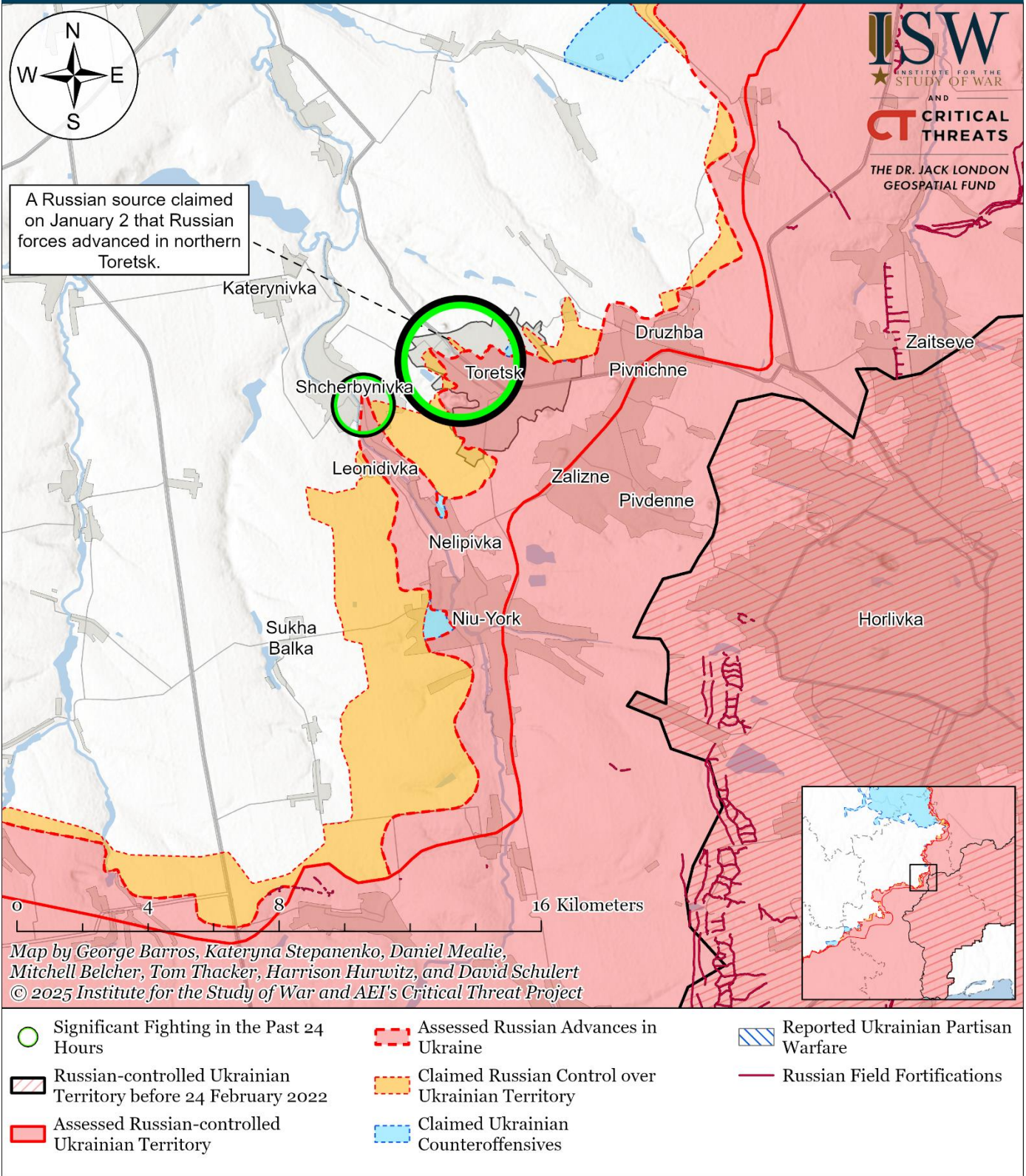
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Russian forces recently advanced in Toretsk amid continued offensive operations in the Toretsk direction on January 1 and 2. Geolocated footage published on January 1 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in northwestern and western Toretsk following a reduced-platoon sized mechanized assault.[48] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on December 31 that Russian forces control roughly 60 percent of Toretsk, and ISW currently assesses that Russian forces occupy roughly 65 percent of the settlement.[49] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced up to Volohodska Street in western Toretsk, along 3 Hirskyi Street and Kachalova Street in northwestern Toretsk, and in northern Toretsk, but ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that drone operators of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly the 1st Donetsk People’s Republic [DNR] AC) conducted drone strikes on Ukrainian vehicles near Toretsk, which enabled elements of the 1st Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) to advance in the area.[51] Russian forces attacked within Toretsk itself, northeast of Toretsk near Dyliivka, west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka, and southwest of Toretsk near Leonidivka on December 31 to January 2.[52] Drone operators of the Russian 132nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) are reportedly operating near Toretsk.[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Toretsk Direction

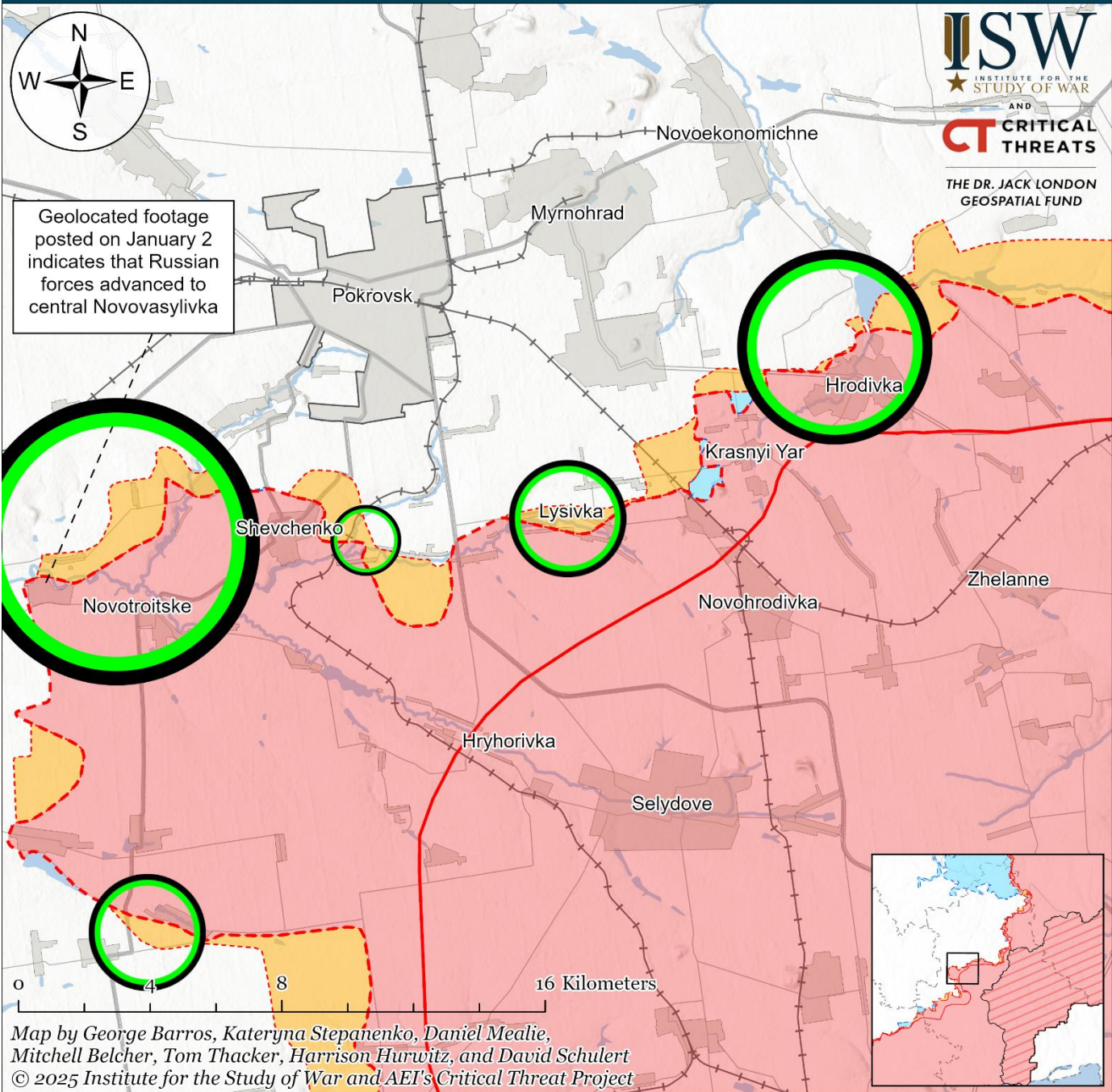
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Russian forces recently advanced east and south of Pokrovsk amid continued offensive operations in the Pokrovsk direction on January 1 and 2. Geolocated footage published on January 2 indicates that Russian forces recently seized Vozdvyzhenka (east of Pokrovsk), confirming several Russian milblogger claims on January 1 that elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) seized the settlement.[54] Additional geolocated footage published on January 2 shows that Russian forces recently advanced west of Zelene (south of Pokrovsk) and north of Novotroitske (southwest of Pokrovsk).[55] Geolocated footage published on January 1 and geolocated on January 2 indicates that Russian forces recently seized Novovasylivka (southwest of Pokrovsk and just west of Novotroitske).[56] A Russian milblogger claimed on January 1 that Russian forces are advancing towards Udachne (west of Pokrovsk along the T0406 Pokrovsk-Mezhova road), and another milblogger claimed that Russian forces have intensified offensive actions east of Myrnohrad (just east of Pokrovsk).[57] Other Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are attacking and advancing in the area directly south of the T0406 road southwest of Pokrovsk, particularly around Solone, Vovkove, and Pishchane.[58] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces seized Solone around January 1, but ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[59] The apparent intensification of Russian attacks both southwest of Pokrovsk towards Udachne and east of Pokrovsk in the Vozdvyzhenka area suggest that Russian forces may intend to envelop Pokrovsk from its western and eastern flanks, as opposed to attacking the town with frontal assaults from the south. Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated on January 1 that Russian forces are trying to bypass Pokrovsk because they lack resources for direct frontal assaults on the town's more urbanized areas.[60] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that fighting continued east of Pokrovsk near Vozdvyzhenka, Promin, Barankivka, and Myrolyubivka; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Novyi Trud, Zelene, and Dachenske; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Shevchenko, Vovkove, Pishchane, Uspenivka, Solone, Kotlyne, Novovasylivka, and Novoolenivka on December 31 and January 1 and 2.[61] Elements of the Russian "Vega" Spetsnaz Detachment (24th Spetsnaz Brigade, Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian General Staff [GRU]) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[62]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction

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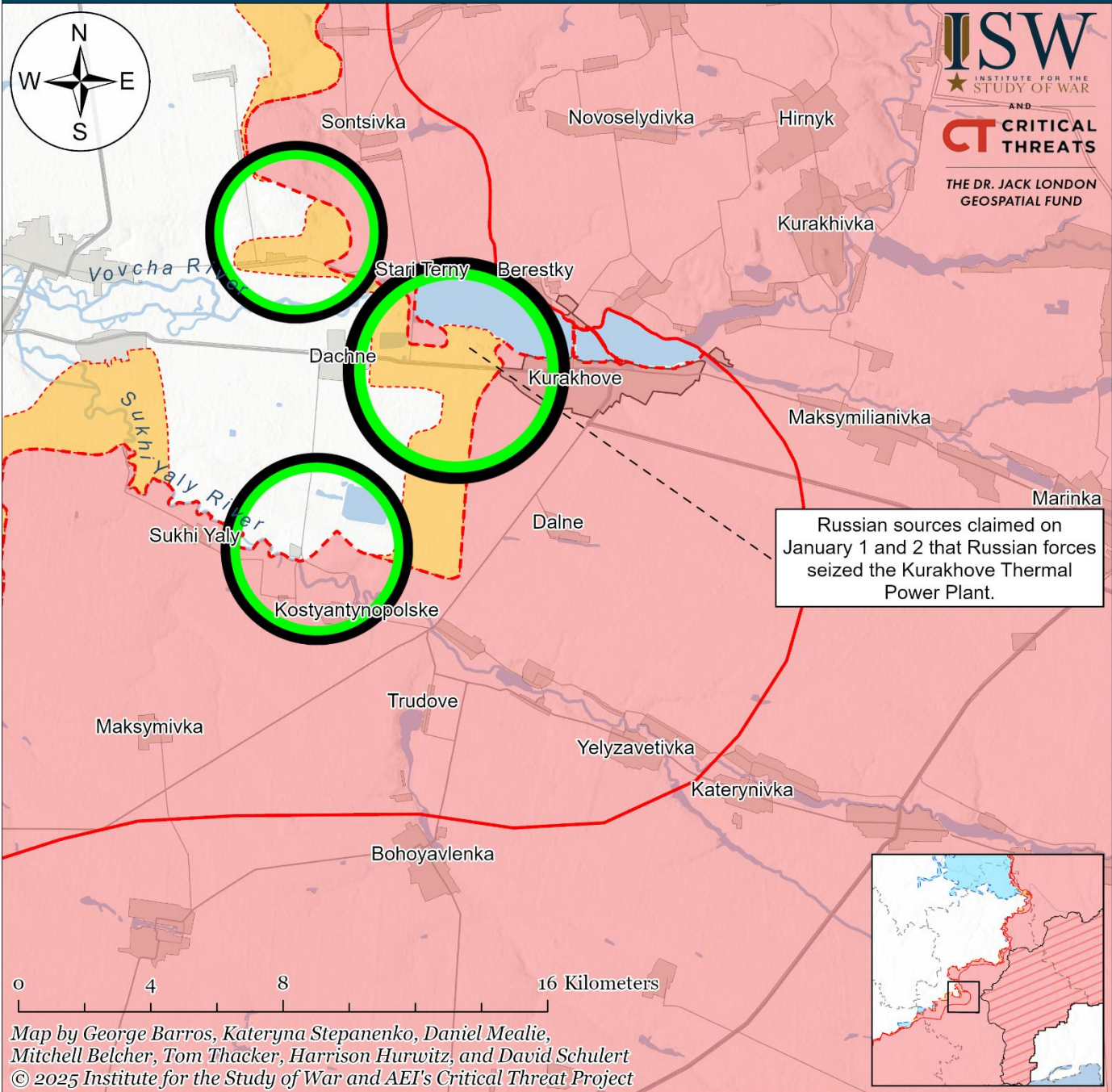
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, and David Schulert
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| Significant Fighting in the Past 24 Hours | Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before 24 February 2022 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare |
| Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | | |

Russian forces recently advanced in the Kurakhove direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 1 and 2. Geolocated footage published on December 31 and January 1 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in western Sontsivka (northwest of Kurakhove) and east of Petropavlivka (just east of Sontsivka), indicating that Russian forces seized Sontsivka.[63] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces seized the Kurakhivske Thermal Power Plant (TPP) west of Kurakhove and advanced south and southwest of Kurakhove and west of Shevchenko (northwest of Kurakhove).[64] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian sources claimed that elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) advanced in Kurakhove's industrial zone.[65] Some Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces entirely seized Kurakhove, but others claimed that Russian forces have not seized the entirety of the town.[66] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have only seized roughly 80 percent of Kurakhove.[67] Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kurakhove itself, northwest of Kurakhove near Petropavlivka and Shevchenko, and west of Kurakhove near Dachne on December 31 and January 1 to 2.[68] A spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kurakhove direction stated on January 2 that Russian forces are trying to advance to the H-15 Kurakhove-Zaporizhzhia City highway and have slightly reduced the intensity of their assaults.[69] The spokesperson stated that Russian forces are using armored vehicles less after significant vehicle losses in October and November 2024 and are constantly bringing in reserves, including new recruits, who have minimal training. Elements of the Russian 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Kurakhove direction; elements of the 68th Tank Regiment (8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Kurakhove; elements of the 110th and 114th motorized rifle brigades (51st CAA) are reportedly operating in Kurakhove; and elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA, SMD) and drone operators of the 346th Spetsnaz Brigade (GRU) are reportedly operating near Dachne.[70]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kurakhove Direction

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Russian sources claimed on January 1 and 2 that Russian forces seized the Kurakhove Thermal Power Plant.

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Daniel Mealie, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, Harrison Hurwitz, and David Schulert
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- Significant Fighting in the Past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before 24 February 2022
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

Russian forces recently advanced in the Vuhledar direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 1 and 2. Geolocated footage published on December 31 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced north of Kostyantynopolske (northwest of Vuhledar).[71] Russian forces conducted offensive operations northwest of Vuhledar near Ulakly, Kostyantynopil, Yantarne, Kostyantynopolske, and Rozlyv on December 31 and January 1 to 2.[72] Elements of the Russian 102nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Uspenivka (north of Vuhledar), and elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA, SMD) and 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) are reportedly operating near Ulakly (northwest of Vuhledar).[73]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Velyka Novosilka on January 1 and 2 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Velyka Novosilka itself, north of Velyka Novosilka near Novyi Komar, northeast of Velyka Novosilka near Rozdolne, south of Velyka Novosilka near Neskychne, and west of Velyka Novosilka near Novosilka on December 31 and January 1 to 2.[74] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking near Velyka Novosilka.[75] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating near Velyka Novosilka stated on December 31 that Russian forces are using mostly infantry and little mechanized equipment during assaults.[76]

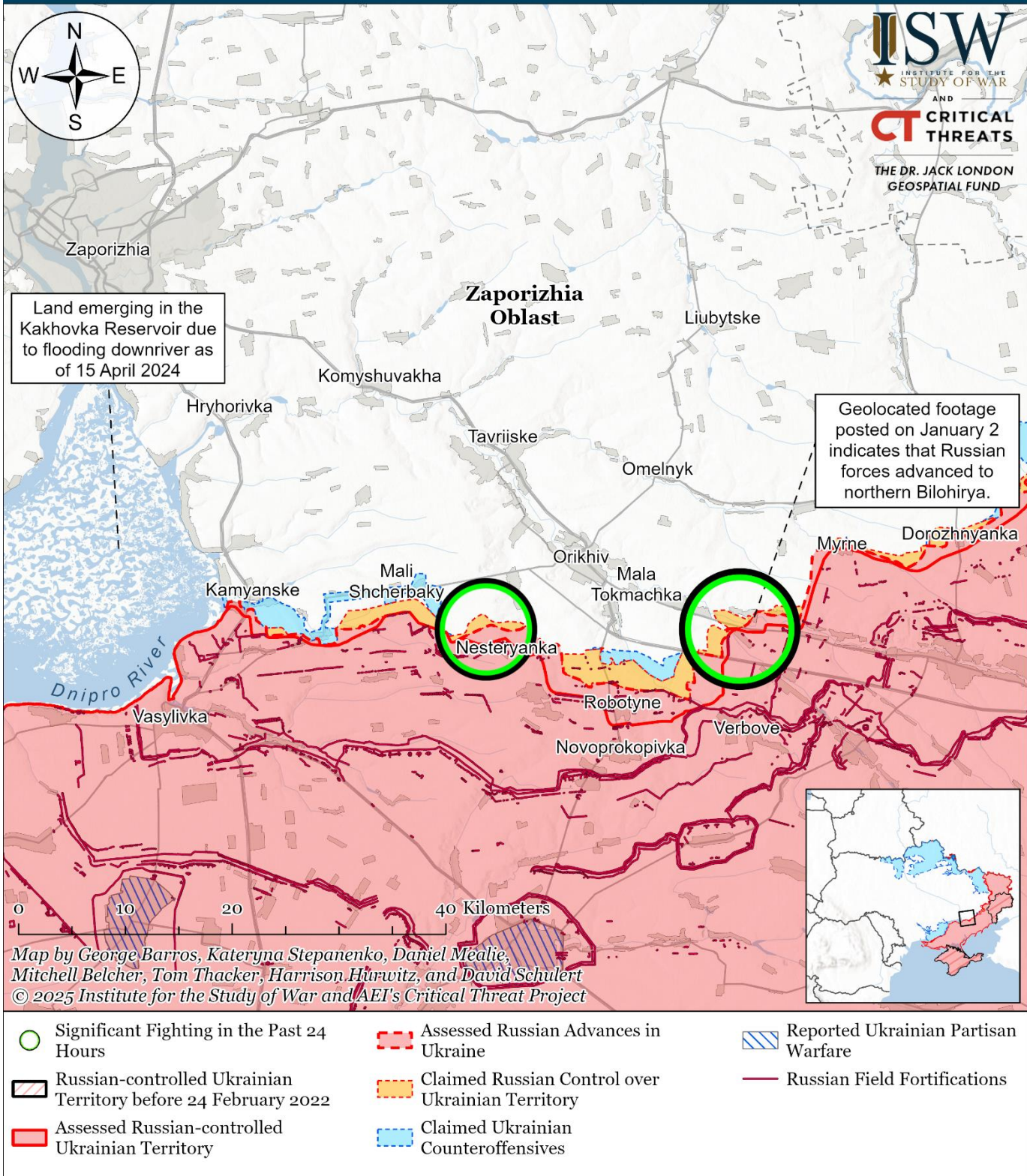
Russian Supporting Effort — Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian and Ukrainian forces did not report fighting in the Hulyaipole (far eastern Zaporizhia Oblast) direction on January 1 and 2. Elements of the Russian 38th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating in the Polohy (Hulyaipole) direction.[77]

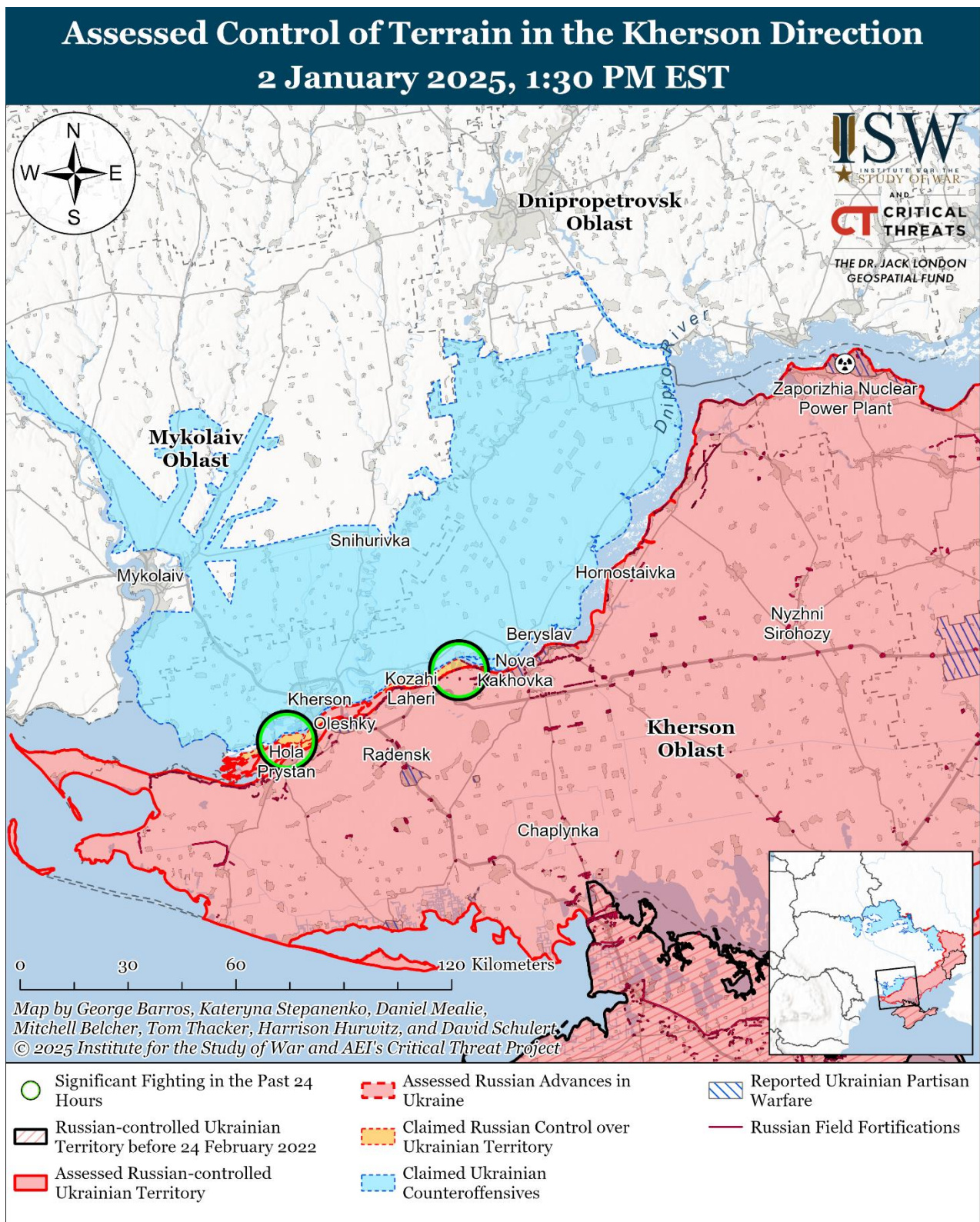
Russian forces recently advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 1 to 2. Geolocated footage published on January 2 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in northern Bilohirya (northeast of Robotyne).[78] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed on January 2 that elements of the Russian 70th Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) raised a flag in central Bilohirya but then withdrew to their previous positions.[79] The milblogger claimed that Bilohirya is a contested "gray zone" but that the Russian raid in the settlement indicates that Russian forces seized Luhivske (just east of Bilohirya). Another Russian milblogger claimed that it is too early to claim that Russian forces control Bilohirya.[80] Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Novoandriivka (northwest of Robotyne) on January 1 and 2.[81] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked near Orikhiv (north of Robotyne) and Kamyanske (northwest of Robotyne) on December 31.[82]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction

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Russian forces continued attacks in the Dnipro direction and on the islands in the Dnipro River Delta on December 31 and January 1 to 2.[83] Drone operators of the Russian 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating in the Kherson direction.[84]



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

Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of December 31 to January 1. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 111 Shahed and other strike drones from Bryansk and Oryol oblasts; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and occupied Crimea.[85] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 63 Shahed and other drones over Poltava, Sumy, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Zaporizhia, Zhytomyr, Khmelnytskyi, Kirovohrad, and Mykolaiv oblasts; that 46 decoy drones were "locally lost" without negative consequences, likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference; and that two decoys flew back over Belarusian and Russian airspace. Ukrainian officials reported that debris from downed Russian drones damaged residential infrastructure in Pecherskyi Raion and transportation infrastructure in Svyatoshynskyi Raion in Kyiv City.[86] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian drone debris damaged the roof of Ukraine's National Bank, residential buildings, and unspecified military infrastructure in Kyiv and that a Shahed drone fell near the Ukrainian Presidential Office in Kyiv.[87] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces struck Odesa Oblast with a cruise missile on the afternoon of December 31, damaging an administration building.[88] Zaporizhia Oblast Military Administration Head Ivan Fedorov reported that 10 Shahed drones flew over Zaporizhia Oblast, five of which Ukrainian forces downed.[89] Khmelnytskyi Oblast Head Serhii Tyurin reported that Ukrainian forces downed two Shaheds over Khmelnytskyi Oblast.[90]

Russian forces also conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of January 1 to 2. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 72 Shahed and other strike drones from Bryansk, Oryol, and Kursk oblasts and Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai.[91] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 47 Shahed and other drones over Poltava, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, Kherson, and Mykolaiv oblasts; that 24 decoy drones were "locally lost", likely due to Ukrainian EW interference; and that one drone remained in the air as of 0800 local time. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported on January 2 that Ukrainian forces destroyed seven Shahed drones over southern Ukraine.[92] Mykolaiv Oblast Administration Head Vitaly Kim reported on January 2 that Ukrainian forces destroyed two Shaheds overnight and that Russian forces launched ballistic missiles, possibly S-400s, on January 1 against Mykolaiv Oblast.[93] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces launched an Iskander ballistic missile strike on an unspecified Ukrainian facility in Dnipro City on January 2.[94] Fedorov reported that Russian forces struck Stepanohirsk, Zaporizhia Oblast with 11 KAB glide bombs on January 2, destroying a five-story residential apartment building.[95]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reported during his New Year's national address on December 31 that Ukrainian forces shot down 1,310 cruise and ballistic missiles and 7,800 Iranian Shahed drones in 2024.[96] Kharkiv City Mayor Ihor Terekhov reported on January 1 that Russian strikes targeting Kharkiv City were less intense in December 2024 than in previous months and that Russian forces struck the city 318 times with missiles, drones, and aerial bombs in 2024.[97] Kremlin newswire *TASS* claimed, citing Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) data, that Russian forces conducted over 1,500 strikes with high precision weapons and drones against targets in Ukraine in 2024.[98]

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

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) continues to inadequately supply Russian military personnel with basic equipment and ammunition, forcing soldiers to provide their own materiel. Russian milbloggers claimed on January 1 that Russian forces are currently suffering from a widespread shortage of smoothbore small arms, such as 12-gauge shotguns, commonly used to defend against first-person view (FPV) drones on the frontlines.[99] The milbloggers claimed that Russian evacuation teams regularly have only one or no smoothbore guns when evacuating wounded personnel and that Russian forces are forced to purchase their own small arms and ammunition despite the Russian MoD's previous efforts to address the small arms shortage on the frontlines. Another Russian milblogger, citing sources inside Rosgvardia, claimed that a previous effort to send hundreds of thousands of small arms that Russian authorities had confiscated from Russian civilians to Russian military units fighting in Ukraine did not solve the arms shortage issue.[100] The milblogger claimed that the Russian MoD and Rosgvardia did not cooperate and coordinate so neither entity transferred the arms to front line units en masse.[101] Another Russian milblogger disputed these claims, alleging that Russian servicemembers stated that they have received many confiscated smoothbore small arms.[102] Russian opposition media outlet *Mobilization News* posted footage on January 2 showing Russian servicemembers complaining about ongoing shortages of basic supplies and armaments[103] The Russian servicemembers stated that Russian personnel are regularly forced to purchase their own food and military equipment to make up for shortages.

Russia and Iran will likely sign a strategic partnership agreement that includes defense and military technological provisions in mid-January 2025. Russian state news outlet *Izvestia* reported on December 26 that Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is expected to sign a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement with Russia in Moscow on January 17, and the Iranian Embassy in Moscow and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov confirmed on January 2 that the visit will occur.[104] Israeli news outlet *Ynet* reported that the deal likely includes provisions for Russia to supply Iran with Su-35 fighter jets, technology transfers for missile and military satellites production, and advanced defense systems like the S-400.[105] *Ynet* reported that Iran likely plans to send shipments of upgraded Iranian strike drone models to Russia in return. A Russian milblogger speculated on January 2 that Iran is preparing to transfer Fath-360 short-range ballistic missiles and Arman or Ababil air defense missile systems to Russia from the Bandar Anzali port on the Caspian Sea.[106] One milblogger claimed that Russia presumably purchased the missile and air defense systems from Iran, but another milblogger claimed that the images of the alleged preparations for these missile transfers do not fully resemble the Iranian Fath-360 and dismissed the speculation.[107]

The Russian government continues to increase financial benefits for Russian military veterans as part of ongoing efforts to incentivize voluntary military service. Russian sources reported on January 1 that the Russian government indexed insurance payments paid to Russian military servicemembers at 4.5 percent - in line with the Russian government's inflation projections.[108] The move increases insurance payouts to Russian military personnel who were wounded or disabled while serving in the military.

Open-source reporting confirmed that at least 90,000 Russian military personnel have been killed in Ukraine since the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022. A Ukrainian open-source intelligence (OSINT) Telegram channel reported on January 1 that it identified over 90,050 Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine.[109] Russian opposition outlet *Mediazona* and the *BBC Russian Service* jointly reported on November 29 that they have used open-source data to confirm at least 80,973 Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine.[110] The number of Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine is likely significantly higher than the 80,000 to 90,000 figure that OSINT sources have identified thus far. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces suffered an average daily casualty rate of 1,585 killed and wounded servicemembers in December 2024.[111]

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

Russia continues to innovate its drone capabilities, including naval drones and electronic warfare (EW) resistance. A Ukrainian source reported on January 1 that recently examined Russian Shahed drones contained Chinese-manufactured satellite navigation Controlled Reception Pattern Antennas (CRPA), which increase the drones' resistance to Ukrainian EW.[112] The Ukrainian source stated that the Chinese CRPA are cheaper than similar Iranian- and Russian-produced components and that Russia may have begun using the Chinese antennas due to supply shortages or the Russian and Iranian antennas' inability to provide adequate protection from Ukrainian EW systems. Russian milbloggers claimed on December 31 and January 2 that Russian forces completed a successful second test of a new domestically produced naval drone model capable of carrying a 150 kilogram payload.[113]

Russia's primary tank manufacturer Uralvagonzavod reported on December 30 that a recently manufactured batch of Russian T-90M Proryv and modernized T-72B3 tanks contained over 100 modifications and adaptations as compared to earlier models produced prior to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.[114] Uralvagonzavod stated that the adaptations include anti-drone nets; reinforced rubber armor; additional protections on the stern, engine, and engine-transmission compartments; integrated EW systems; and improved camouflage capabilities.

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 reporting on activities in Russian-occupied areas today.

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

Belarus assumed the presidency of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) on January 1 and will hold the office until January 1, 2026.[115]

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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