

**Nicole Wolkov, Christina Harward, Grace Mappes, Davit Gasparyan, Olivia Gibson, Daria Novikov, and Frederick W. Kagan with Nate Trotter**

**March 17, 2025, 5:40 pm 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 interactive map of Ukraine's offensive in Kursk Oblast.

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 11:15 am ET on March 17. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the March 18 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Russian President Vladimir Putin appears to have been partially successful in holding the ceasefire proposal hostage as part of his efforts to extract preemptive concessions from US President Donald Trump in negotiations to end the war.** Trump stated on March 17 that he plans to speak with Putin on March 18 and "want[s] to see if [he and Putin] can bring the war to an end."<sup>[1]</sup> Trump added that he and Putin will "be talking about land," "power plants," and "dividing up certain assets."<sup>[2]</sup> The United States and Ukraine agreed on March 11 to a 30-day ceasefire proposal that is contingent on Russia's "acceptance and concurrent implementation."<sup>[3]</sup> The proposal stated that Ukraine and the United States intend to name their negotiating teams and immediately begin negotiations toward an enduring peace — noting the distinction between the temporary ceasefire and future negotiations on a peace settlement. Putin rejected the temporary ceasefire proposal on March 13 and claimed that the cessation of hostilities "should be such that it would lead to long-term peace and eliminate the initial causes" of the war.<sup>[4]</sup> Putin thus rejected one of the main principles of the US-Ukrainian proposal — that the temporary ceasefire precedes formal negotiations to end the war. The US-Ukrainian temporary ceasefire proposal noted that the United States and Ukraine discussed the return of prisoners of war (POWs), detained civilians, and forcibly deported Ukrainian children — all of which will require future talks with Russia. The US-Ukrainian temporary ceasefire proposal did not mention talks with Russia about Ukrainian territory, energy infrastructure, or assets. Putin also suggested on March 13 that he may call Trump to discuss "issues" involved in the ceasefire proposal, such as Ukraine's continued ability to mobilize forces and receive military aid from partners and allies — issues notably not included in the US-Ukrainian temporary ceasefire proposal. Putin is attempting

to change the sequence of talks in order to push Trump into making preemptive concessions on issues that are not part of the US-Ukrainian temporary ceasefire but are part of Russia's war aims. The acceptance of these Russian demands in the context of negotiations for an immediate ceasefire would cede valuable US and Ukrainian leverage during future negotiations to secure a lasting peace in Ukraine.

**Russian officials continue to demonstrate that Russia's aim of destroying Ukrainian sovereignty remains unchanged since before Russia launched its full-scale invasion in 2022.** Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko claimed in an interview with Kremlin-affiliated outlet *Izvestiya* on March 17 that Russia continues to demand that Ukraine be a neutral state and that NATO states refuse to accept Ukraine as a member.<sup>[5]</sup> Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha stated to *RBK Ukraine* on March 17 that no country should have a "veto" over Ukraine's choice to participate in alliances, including the EU or NATO.<sup>[6]</sup> Sybiha noted that Ukraine's NATO aspirations are enshrined in the Ukrainian Constitution and reflect a "strategic choice of the Ukrainian people." A Russian "veto" of Ukraine's choices about these matters would amount to a denial of Ukraine's ability to make choices about its alliances and security arrangements as a sovereign and independent state. Grushko acknowledged during his interview that Russia's demands for Ukrainian neutrality and NATO's refusal to allow Ukraine into the alliance are the same demands that Russia made in 2021 before its full-scale invasion of Ukraine — demonstrating how Russia's demands to destroy Ukraine as an independent, sovereign state have remained unchanged.<sup>[7]</sup>

**The Kremlin continues to reject the prospect of European peacekeepers in Ukraine, in opposition to US and Ukrainian positions on the matter and impeding the establishment of a stable, lasting peace to end the war.** Grushko stated on March 17 that Russia will not accept peacekeepers from the EU, NATO, or individual Western states in post-war Ukraine as Russia considers all of these possible peacekeeping contingents to be "NATO contingents."<sup>[8]</sup> Grushko claimed that any talks about future international peacekeeping missions in Ukraine should only occur after the conclusion of the final peace agreement to end the war and only if parties to the peace agreement agree that the peace agreement requires international support. The Kremlin appears to be trying to dictate the timing and sequence of talks, demanding that final peace talks precede any discussions about peacekeeping missions in post-war Ukraine.<sup>[9]</sup> Russia continues to make clear its rejection of any European involvement in post-war Ukraine — in contradiction to US and Ukrainian positions on the matter. Trump stated on February 26 that Europe should be responsible for security guarantees for Ukraine, and the joint US-Ukrainian March 11 statement outlining the temporary ceasefire proposal stated that Ukraine reiterated its positions that European partners should be involved in the peace process.<sup>[10]</sup> Sybiha stressed the importance of European support to assist in monitoring and enforcing the terms of a permanent ceasefire in Ukraine and noted that Ukraine is already discussing specific details with those European countries willing to deploy peacekeeping forces to Ukraine.<sup>[11]</sup> Significant European involvement in post-war Ukraine is critical for any peace settlement that aims to establish an enduring peace in Ukraine.

**A strong Ukrainian military backed by security guarantees remains the most important component of a sustainable peace in Ukraine and deterrence of future Russian aggression.** Sybiha emphasized that there can be no restriction on Ukraine's defensive capabilities or military strength in any future peace agreement and that Ukraine must keep working towards a self-

sufficient defense industrial sector to deter further Russian aggression.[12] Sybiha, responding to a question about Ukraine's fundamental stipulations in "any" future negotiations, stated that Ukraine will not compromise its territorial integrity and sovereignty and "will never recognize occupied territories." Discussions on the permanent status of occupied Ukrainian territory should properly only be a part of negotiations on a permanent settlement of the war.

**The United States announced its withdrawal from war crimes monitoring agencies related to the war in Ukraine — essentially a unilateral concession to Russia with no Russian concessions in return.** The *New York Times*, citing an internal letter from the US Department of Justice (DoJ), reported on March 17 that the US DoJ notified the International Center for the Prosecution of Crimes of Aggression (ICPA) against Ukraine that the United States would withdraw from the organization by the end of March 2025 after having participated in the organization since November 2023.<sup>[13]</sup> The EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), the ICPA's parent organization, confirmed to *SkyNews* that the United States is withdrawing from the ICPA.<sup>[14]</sup> The ICPA is responsible for investigating the leaders directly accountable for crimes committed in the context of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.<sup>[15]</sup> The *New York Times* also reported that the Trump administration intends to scale back the US DoJ's War Crimes Accountability Team (WarCAT), which the US DoJ established in 2022 to coordinate the DoJ's efforts to hold Russians accountable for war crimes committed in Ukraine.<sup>[16]</sup>

**Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky replaced Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Anatoliy Barhylevych with Major General Andriy Hnatov on March 16.**<sup>[17]</sup> Zelensky appointed Hnatov to Deputy Chief of the Ukrainian General Staff on January 26, 2025, and Hnatov previously served as the Khortytsia Group of Forces Commander and Joint Forces Commander.<sup>[18]</sup> Zelensky appointed Barhylevych to serve as the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense (MoD)'s Inspector General, who monitors compliance with military standards and reform processes.<sup>[19]</sup>

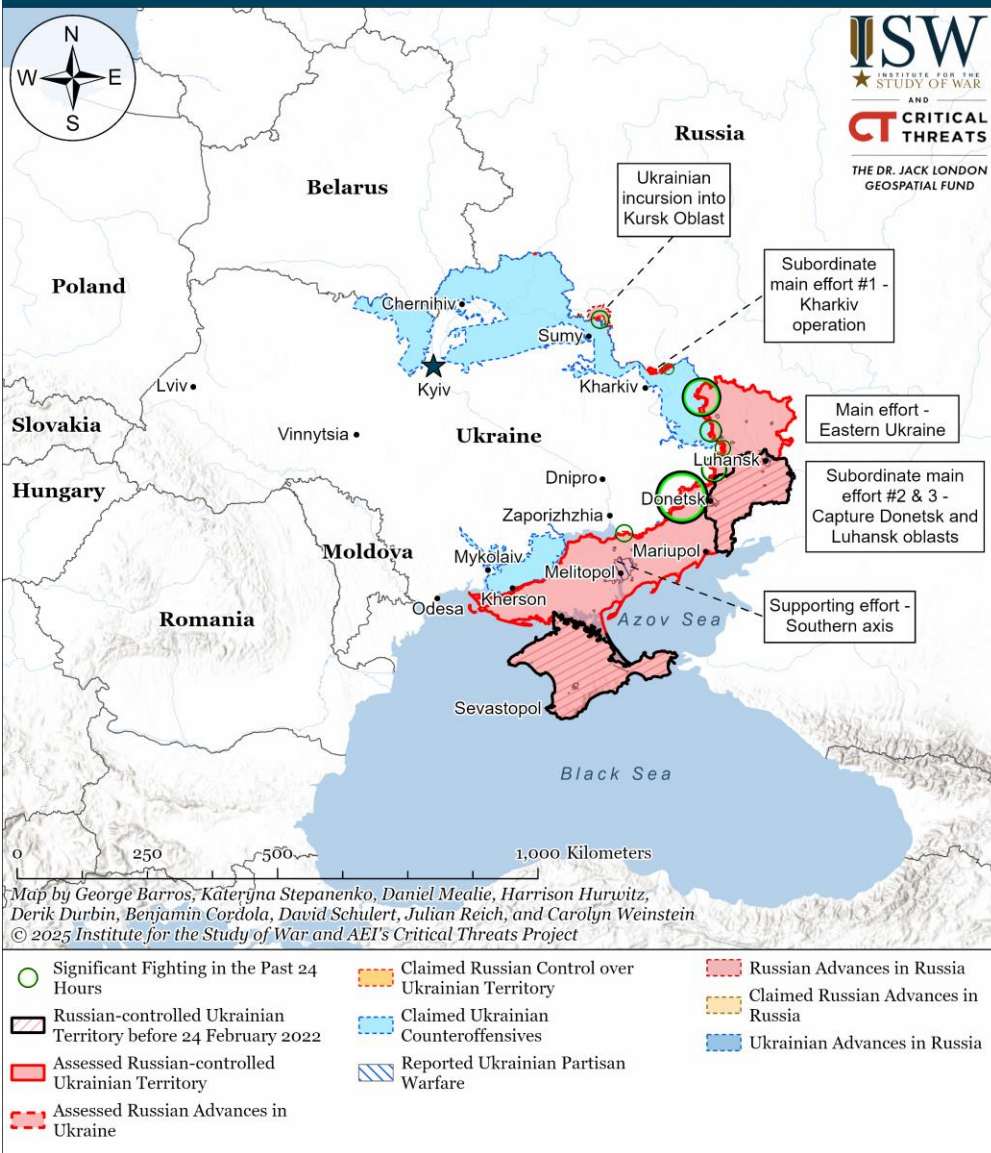
### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin appears to have been partially successful in holding the ceasefire proposal hostage as part of his efforts to extract preemptive concessions from US President Donald Trump in negotiations to end the war.**
- **Russian officials continue to demonstrate that Russia's aim of destroying Ukrainian sovereignty remains unchanged since before Russia launched its full-scale invasion in 2022.**
- **The Kremlin continues to reject the prospect of European peacekeepers in Ukraine, in opposition to US and Ukrainian positions on the matter and impeding the establishment of a stable, lasting peace to end the war.**
- **A strong Ukrainian military backed by security guarantees remains the most important component of a sustainable peace in Ukraine and deterrence of future Russian aggression.**

- **The United States announced its withdrawal from war crimes monitoring agencies related to the war in Ukraine – essentially a unilateral concession to Russia with no Russian concessions in return.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky replaced Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Anatoliy Barhylevych with Major General Andriy Hnatov on March 16.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Toretsk, and Russian forces recently advanced near Toretsk and Velyka Novosilka and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Russian occupation officials continue to develop analogues to the federal "Time of Heroes" programming in occupied Ukraine as part of long-term efforts to integrate occupied Ukraine into Russia and militarize society in occupied Ukraine.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

## March 17, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



***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**

**Russian forces continued ground operations to push Ukrainian forces from their remaining positions in Kursk Oblast on March 17 but did not make confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: Russian security forces claimed on March 17 that Russian forces seized Gogolevka (west of Sudzha), and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced south of the settlement.<sup>[20]</sup> The Russian Ministry of Defense's (MoD) Main Military-Political Directorate Deputy Head and Akhmat Spetsnaz Commander, Major General Apti Alaudinov, claimed that Russian forces continue to advance into unspecified areas in Sumy Oblast as part of Russian efforts to create a "buffer zone" after Russian forces seize all of Kursk Oblast.<sup>[21]</sup>

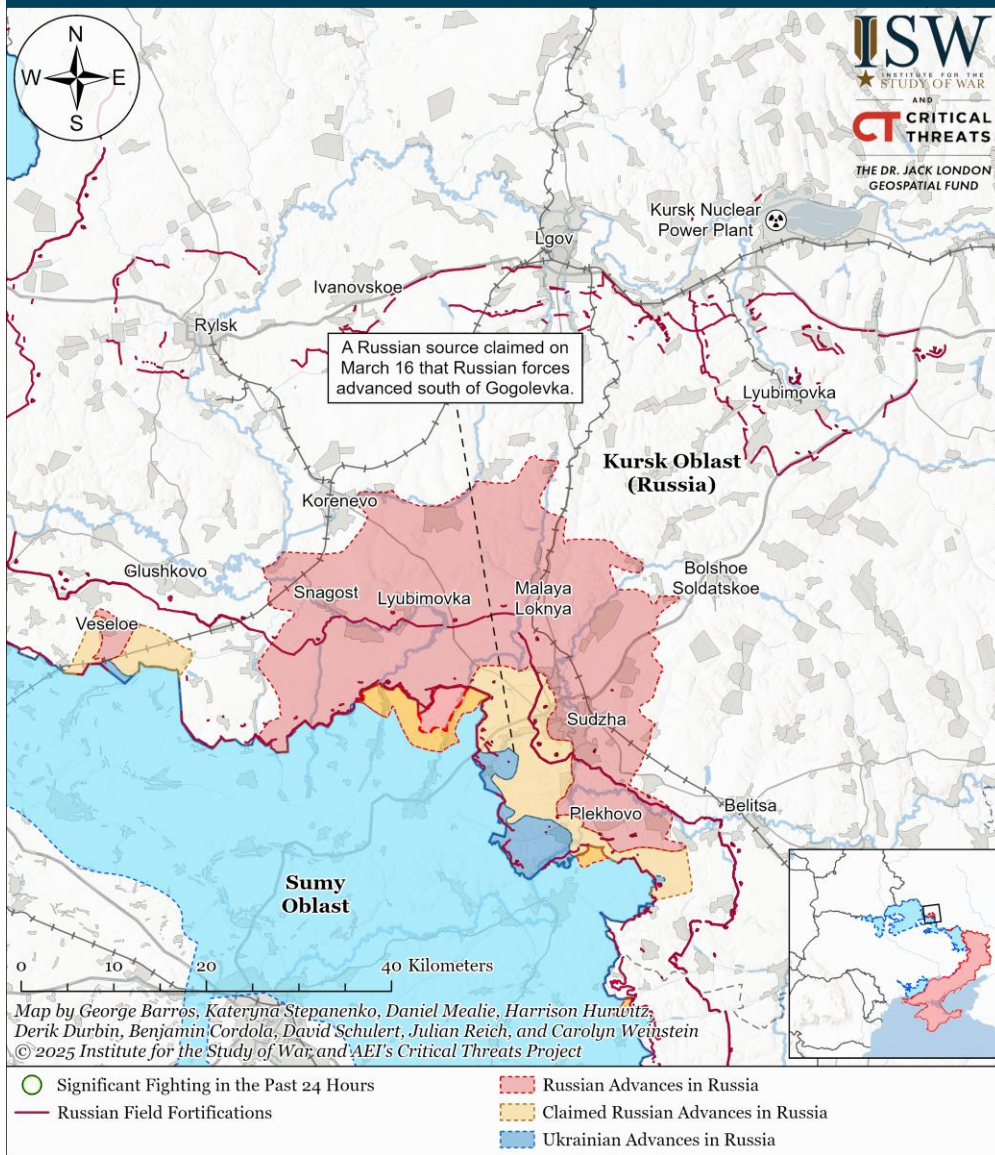
Russian forces continued attacking west of Sudzha near Gogolevka, south of Sudzha near Kurilovka and Guyevo, and near the international border in Sumy Oblast near Basivka on March 16 and 17.<sup>[22]</sup> Ukraine's State Border Service Spokesperson Andriy Demchenko stated that small Russian assault and sabotage and reconnaissance groups continue attacking the Novenke-Zhuravka area along the international border in Sumy Oblast.<sup>[23]</sup>

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla) are reportedly operating near Guyevo.<sup>[24]</sup>

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a drone strike against an oil depot in Astrakhan Oblast on the night of March 16 to 17. Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation Head Lieutenant Andriy Kovalenko stated that drones struck a fuel depot in Astrakhan Oblast.<sup>[25]</sup> Astrakhan Oblast Governor Igor Babushkin claimed that Ukrainian drones struck an oil depot and that falling drone debris caused a fire.<sup>[26]</sup>



## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction March 17, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



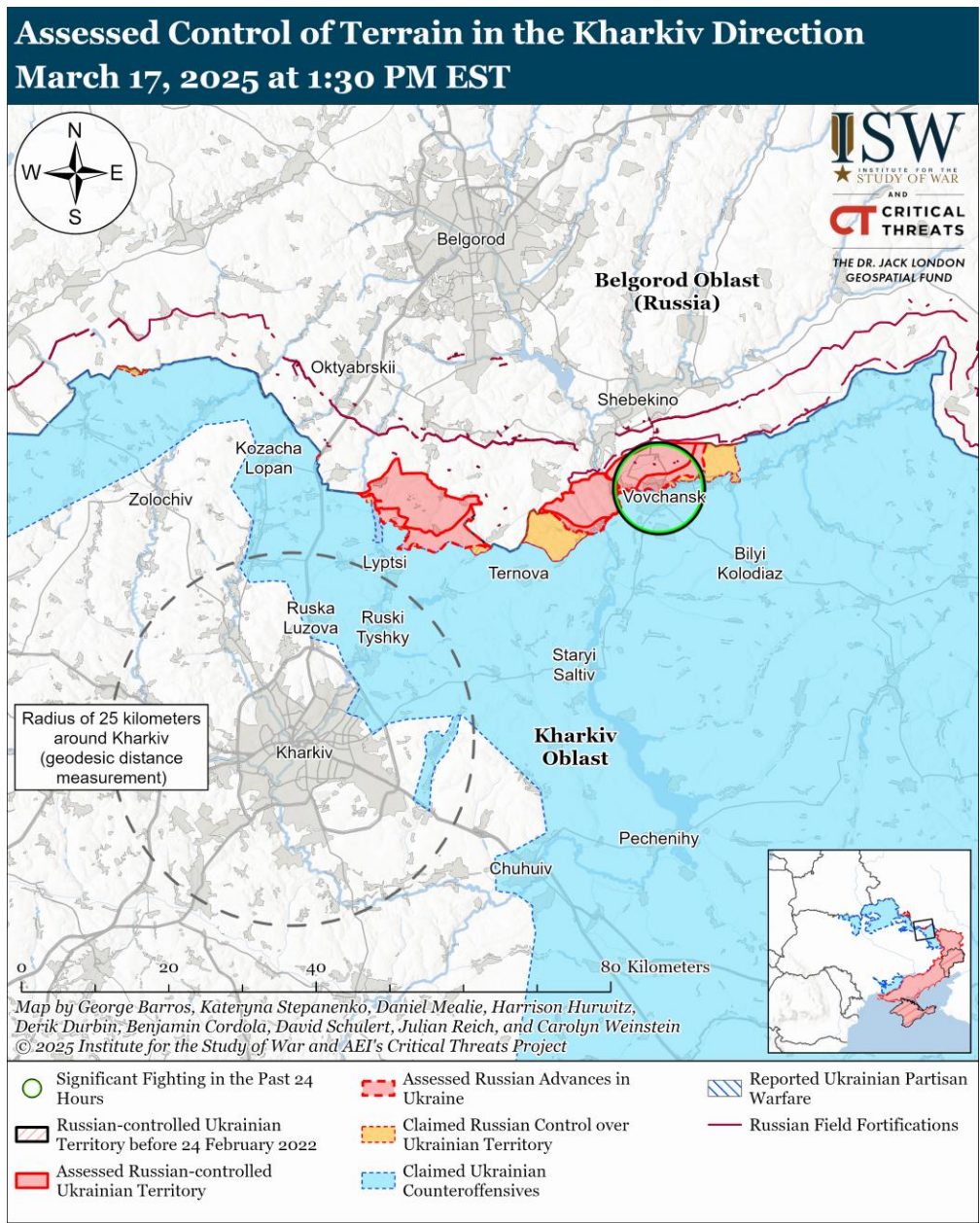
### **Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

**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 in northern Kharkiv Oblast on March 17 but did not advance.**

Russian forces continued attacking north of Kharkiv City near Lyptsi and northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on March 16 and 17.<sup>[27]</sup>

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Rosgvardia “Steel” Brigade and the "Vakha" Battalion of Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz are reportedly operating in the Kharkiv direction.<sup>[28]</sup>



**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)**

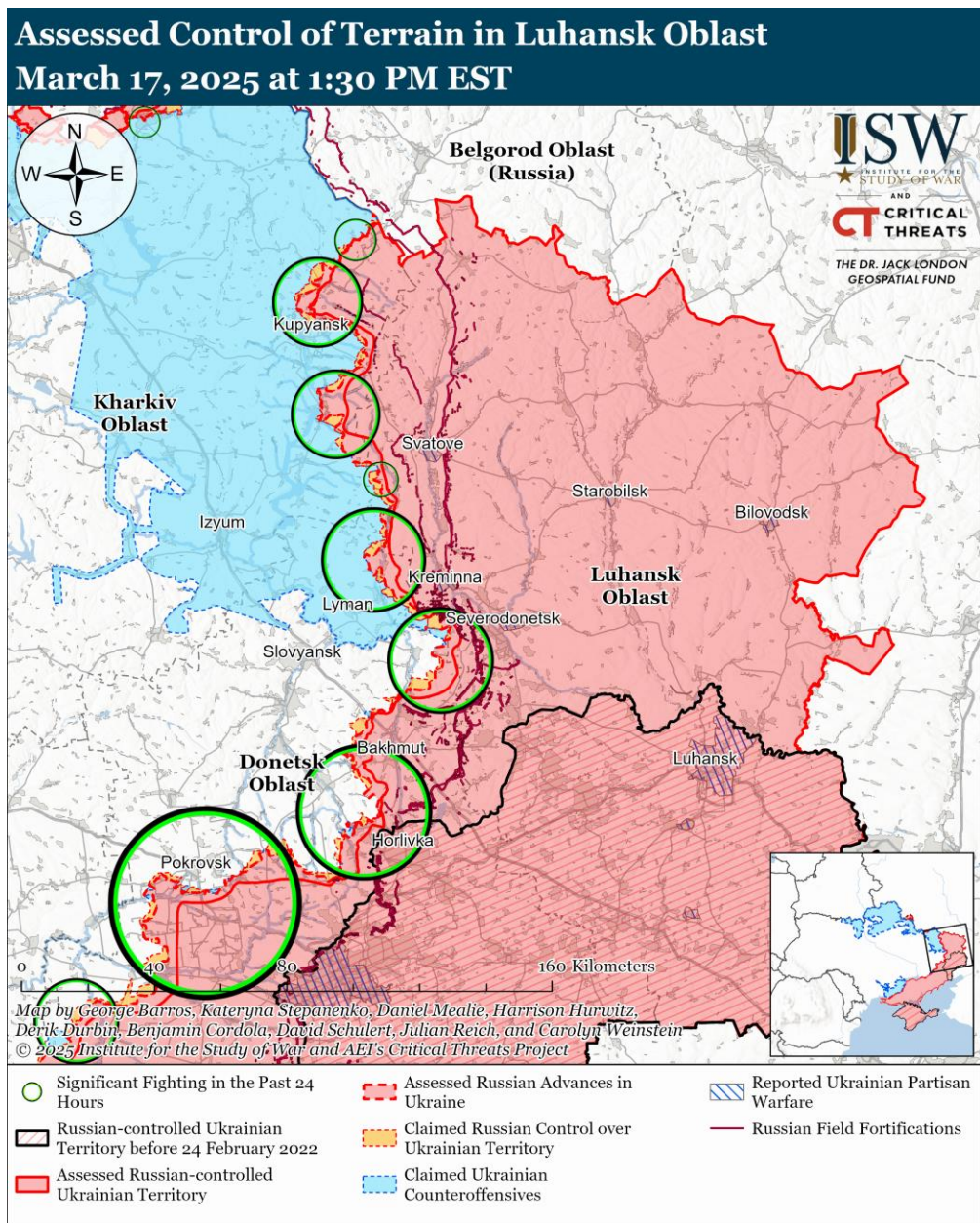
**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on March 17 but did not make any confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced east of Kamyanka (northeast of Kupyansk near the international border) and west of Petrivka (south of Kamyanka).<sup>[29]</sup>



Russian forces conducted offensive operations toward Kupyansk itself; northeast of Kupyansk near Dvorichna, Zapadne, and Kamyanka and toward Kutkivka; north of Kupyansk toward Holubivka; and east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka on March 16 and 17.<sup>[30]</sup>

The deputy commander of a Ukrainian drone regiment operating in the Kupyansk direction stated that Russian forces near Dvorichna lack equipment and crossings and so are "trapped" on the west (right) bank of the Oskil River.<sup>[31]</sup> The deputy commander stated that Russian forces are constantly transferring personnel to the area and assaulting in groups of two to three people.



**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on March 17 but did not advance.**

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Borova near Lozova, Kruhlyakivka, Bohuslavka, Zahyrzove, and Nova Kruhlyakivka and southeast of Borova near Novoyehorivka on March 16 and 17.<sup>[32]</sup>

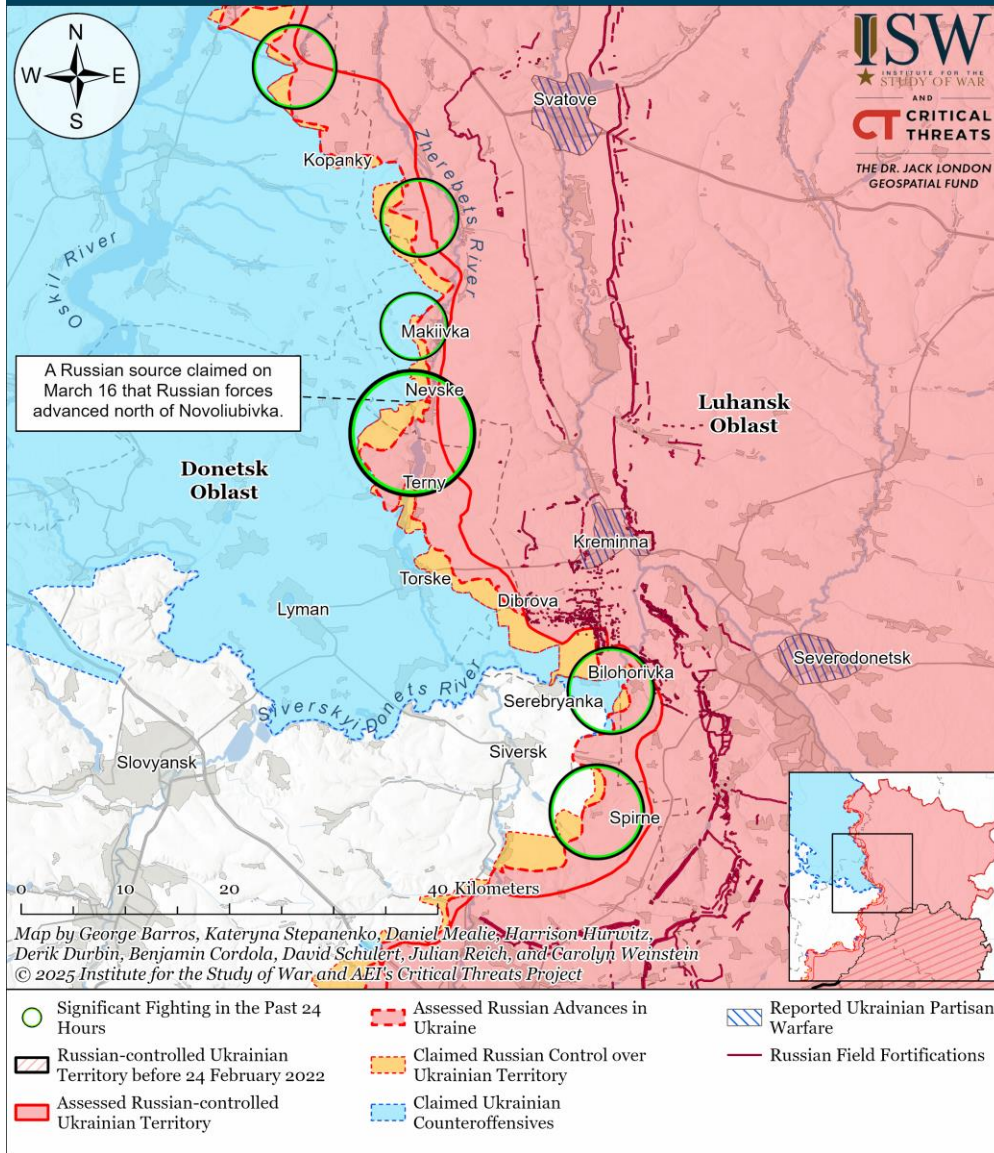
**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on March 17 but did not make any confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Balka Zhuravka (formerly Nevske, northeast of Lyman) and north of Novolyubivka (west of Zhuravka).<sup>[33]</sup>

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Lyman near Zarichne and Yampolivka and toward Novomykhailivka, Nove, Olhivka, Zelena Dolyna, and Katerynivka on March 16 and 17.<sup>[34]</sup>

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 144th Motorized Rifle Division (20th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) are reportedly operating in the Lyman direction.<sup>[35]</sup>

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Svatove-Kreminna Direction March 17, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



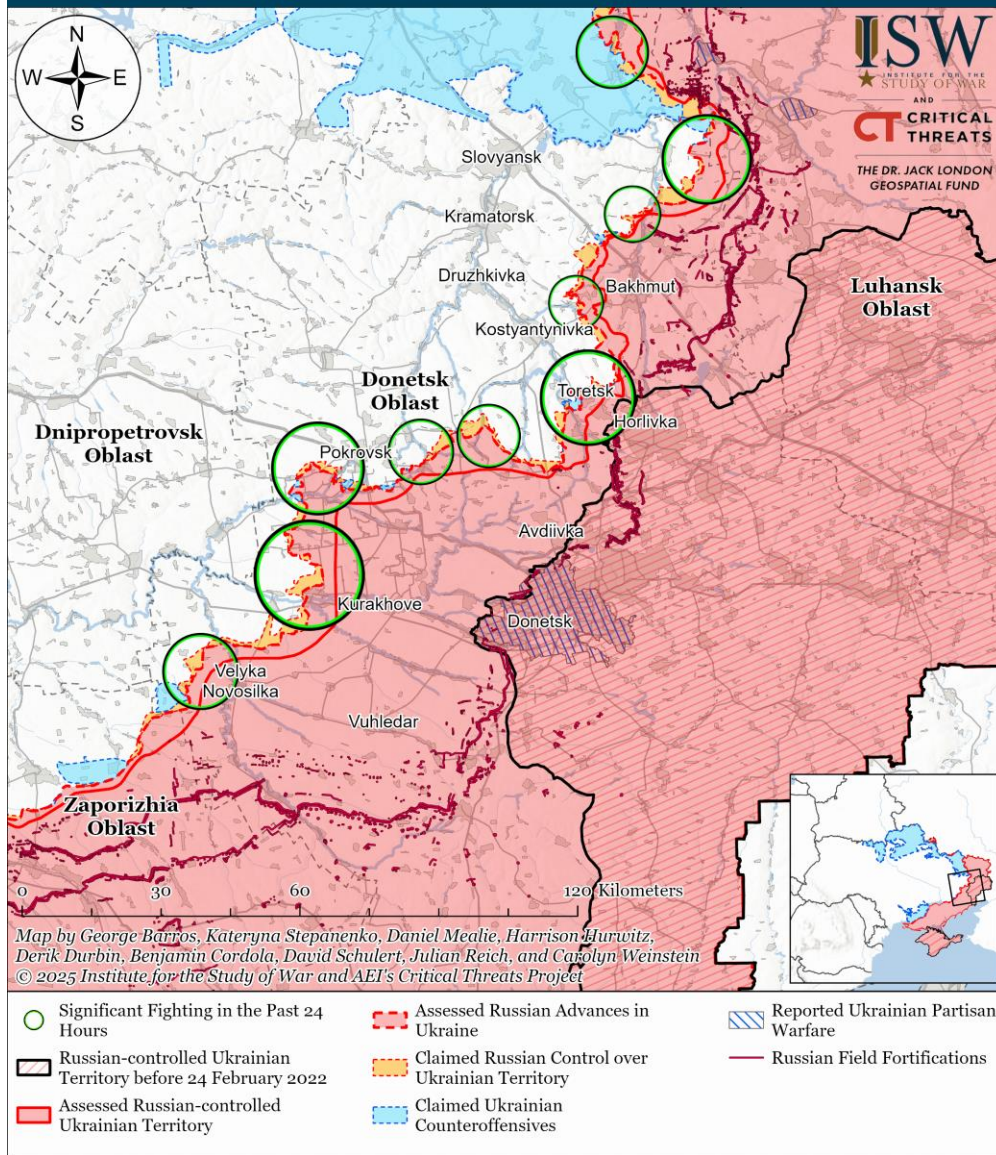
### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on March 17 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka, east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske, and southeast of Siversk near Ivano-Darivka on March 16 and 17.<sup>[36]</sup>



## Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast March 17, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on March 17 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked near Chasiv Yar itself; northeast of Chasiv Yar near Orikhovo-Vasylivka; southeast of Chasiv Yar near Kurdyumivka and Ozaryanivka; and south of Chasiv Yar near Stupochky, Dyllivka, and Predtechyne on March 16 and 17.<sup>[37]</sup>

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 299th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (98th VDV Division) and 11th Engineering Brigade (Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.<sup>[38]</sup>

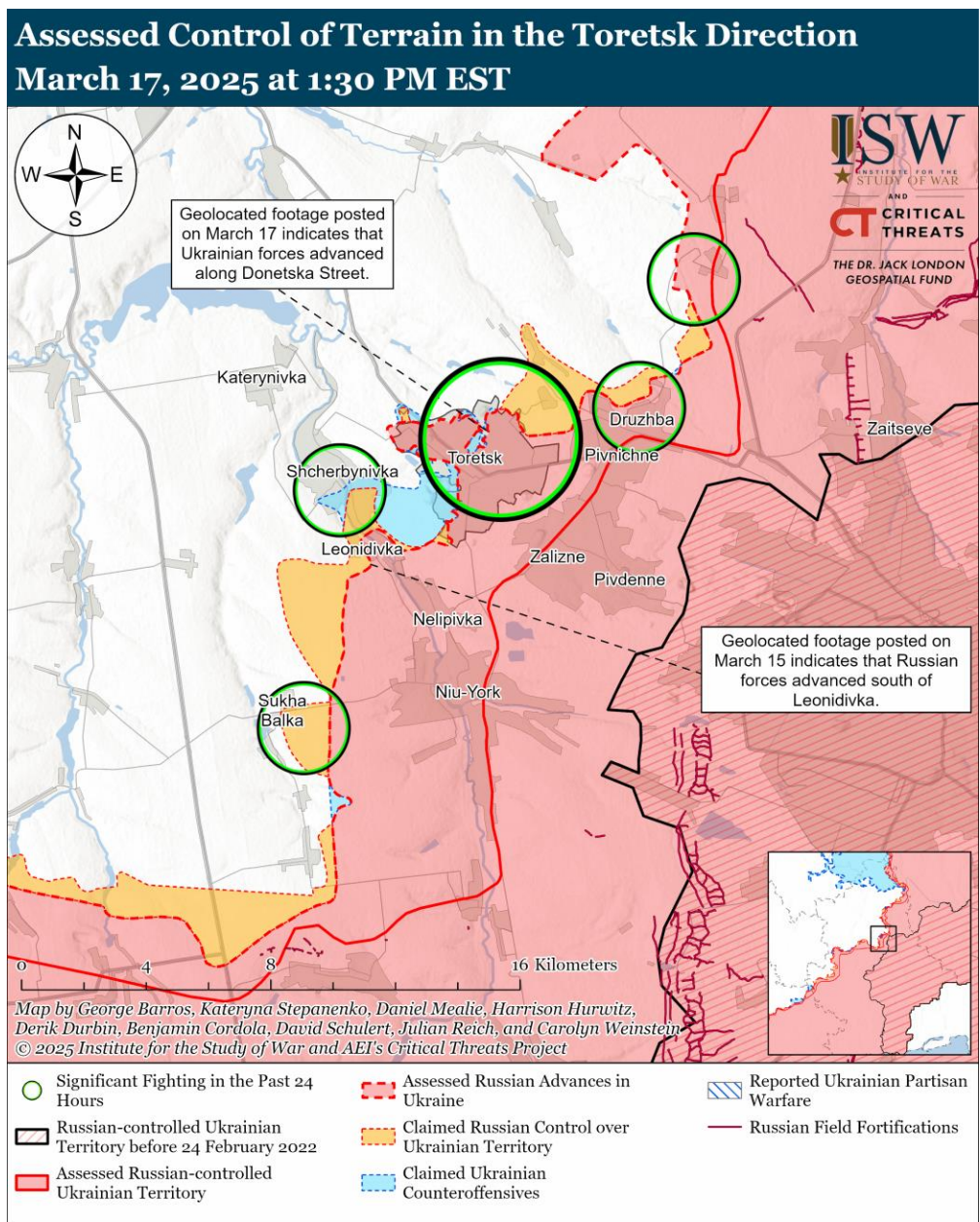
### Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Toretsk direction.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 17 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced along Donetska Street in northern Toretsk.[39]

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 15 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced south of Leonidivka (southwest of Toretsk).[40]

Russian forces attacked near Toretsk itself; northeast of Toretsk near Dachne; east of Toretsk near Druzhba; and southwest of Toretsk near Sukha Balka and Leonidivka on March 16 and 17.[41] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are trying to gain a foothold in eastern Zabalka Microraion in southern Toretsk.[42]

A Russian milblogger claimed that heavy street fighting continues in Toretsk and that only a few houses separate Russian and Ukrainian positions in some areas, causing confusion on the ground.[43]





**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Pokrovsk direction on March 17 but did not make confirmed advances.**

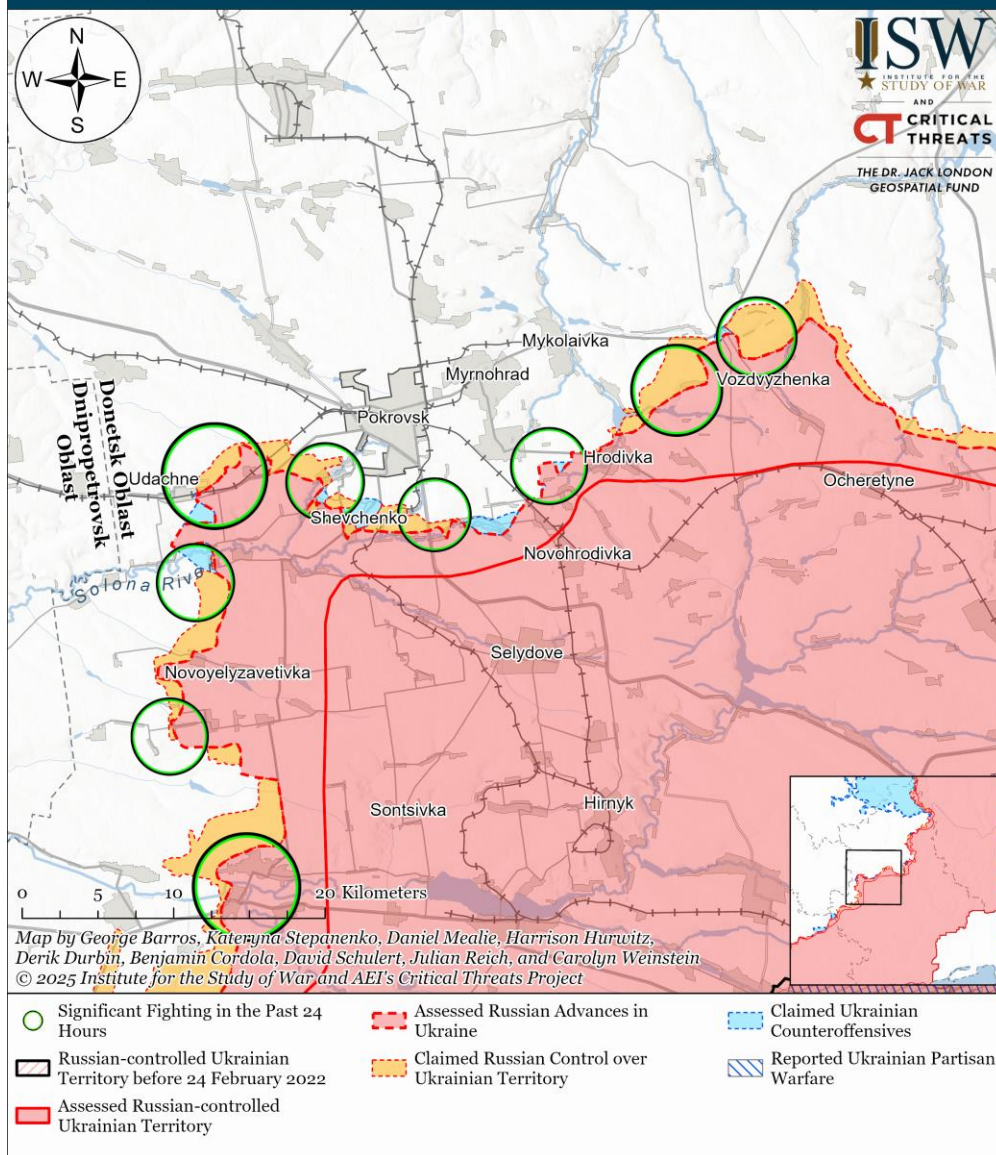
Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced in southwestern Lysivka (southeast of Pokrovsk) and in eastern Udachne (southwest of Pokrovsk).<sup>[44]</sup>

Russian forces continued ground attacks east of Pokrovsk near Vodyane Druhe, Svyrydonivka, Promin, Yelyzavetivka, and Mykolaivka; south of Pokrovsk near Novopavlivka; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Kotlyne, Pishchane, Zvirove, Udachne, Novooleksandrivka, Novoserhiivka, Yasenove, Preobrazhenka, and Bohdanivka on March 16 and 17.<sup>[45]</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking near Novoukrainka (south of Pokrovsk) and Lysivka.<sup>[46]</sup>

Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces in the Pokrovsk direction are only conducting mechanized assaults once every two or three weeks after conducting daily mechanized assaults in previous weeks and that Russian forces now primarily conduct infantry assaults or motorized assaults.<sup>[47]</sup> Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov reported that Russian forces lost roughly 300 armored vehicles in the Pokrovsk direction in January and February 2025.<sup>[48]</sup>

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian "Vega" Spetsnaz Detachment (24th Guards Spetsnaz Brigade, Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian General Staff [GRU]), drone operators of the 35th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]), and elements of 1st "Slavic" Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC], SMD) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.<sup>[49]</sup>

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction March 17, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on March 17 but did not make confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced one kilometer near Rozlyv (southwest of Kurakhove).<sup>[50]</sup>

Russian forces conducted offensive operations west of Kurakhove near Kostyantynopil on March 16 and 17.<sup>[51]</sup>

### **Russian forces recently advanced in the Velyka Novosilka direction.**

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 17 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced south of Pryvilne (west of Velyka Novosilka).<sup>[52]</sup>

Unconfirmed claims: Russian sources claimed that Russian forces occupied eastern Vilne Pole (west of Velyka Novosilka and Pryvilne) and advanced north of the settlement.<sup>[53]</sup>

Russian forces conducted offensive operations north of Velyka Novosilka near Skudne; northwest of Velyka Novosilka near Vesele; west of Velyka Novosilka near Novosilka, Pryvilne, and Vilne Pole and toward Shevchenko; and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Novopil on March 16 and 17.<sup>[54]</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Pryvilne and Burlatske (northwest of Velyka Novosilka).<sup>[55]</sup>

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 14th Spetsnaz Brigade (GRU) are reportedly operating in the Shakhtarske (east of Velyka Novosilka) direction.<sup>[56]</sup>

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

#### **Ukrainian forces reportedly struck a Russian command post in the Hulyaipole direction.**

Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets amplified reports on March 16 that Ukrainian forces struck the command post of the Russian 189th Motorized Rifle Regiment (35th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) in the Hulyaipole direction on March 15, killing the regiment's commander and 20 personnel.<sup>[57]</sup>

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 38th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating in the Polohy direction.<sup>[58]</sup>

#### **Russian forces recently advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**

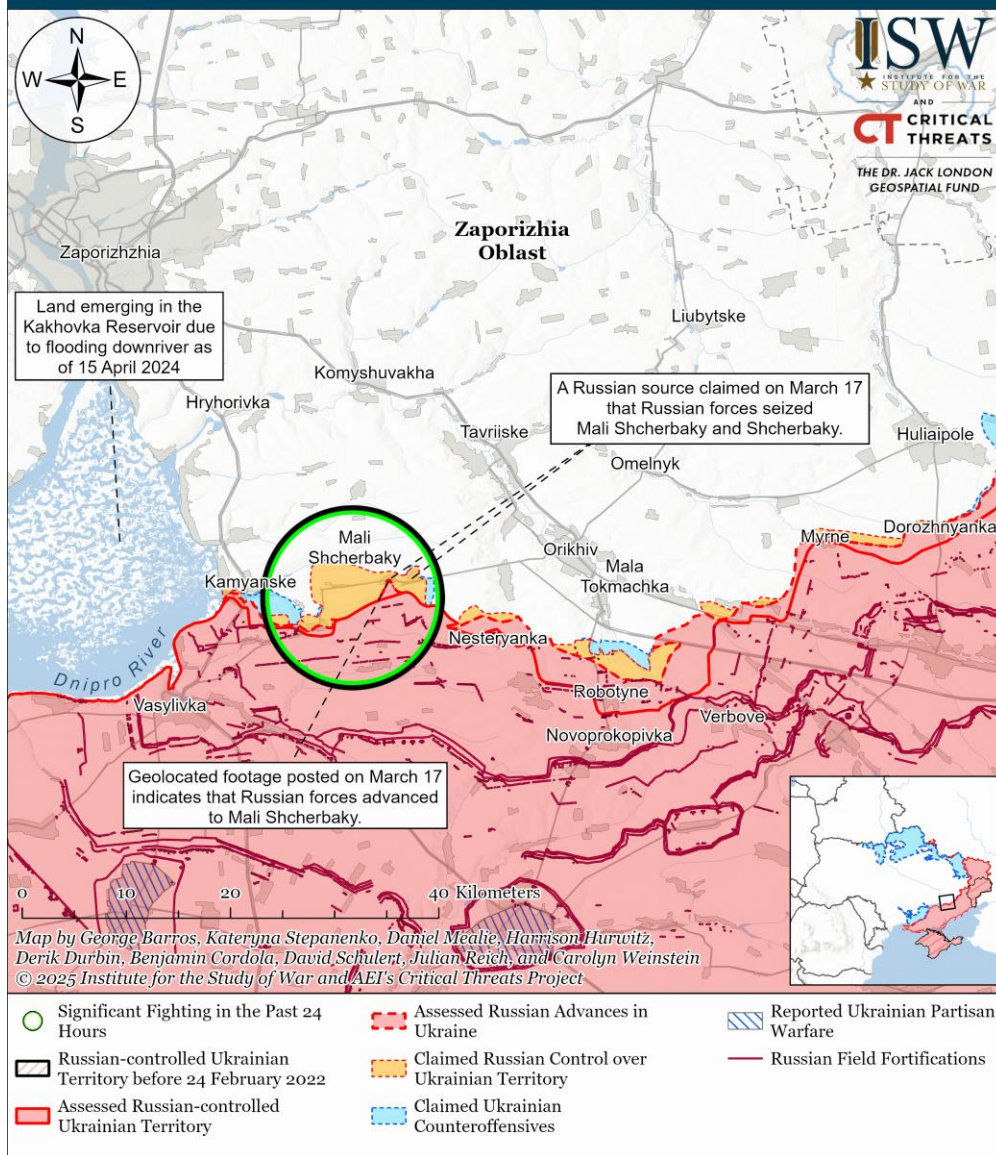
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 17 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in central Mali Shcherbaky (northwest of Robotyne).<sup>[59]</sup>

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces, including elements of the 108th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division), seized Mali Shcherbaky and Shcherbaky (just east of Mali Shcherbaky).<sup>[60]</sup> Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also advanced west and east of Mali Shcherbaky.<sup>[61]</sup> The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces seized Stepove (just west of Mali Shcherbaky) and advanced north of the settlement.<sup>[62]</sup>

Russian forces attacked northwest of Robotyne near Stepove, Lobkove, Mali Shcherbaky, and Zherebyanky on March 16 and 17.<sup>[63]</sup>

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 135th Motorized Rifle Regiment (19th Motorized Rifle Division, 58th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) and the BARS-Sarmat Detachment (Russian Combat Army Reserve) are reportedly operating in the Kamyanske-Nesteryanka direction (northwest of Robotyne).<sup>[64]</sup> Elements of Russia's 108th and 247th VDV regiments (both of the 7th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Pyatykhatky (southwest of Shcherbaky), Mali Shcherbaky, and Shcherbaky.<sup>[65]</sup> Elements of the "Shaman" detachment of the Russian 1455th Motorized Rifle Regiment (reportedly of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Novoandriivka (northwest of Robotyne).<sup>[66]</sup>

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction March 17, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

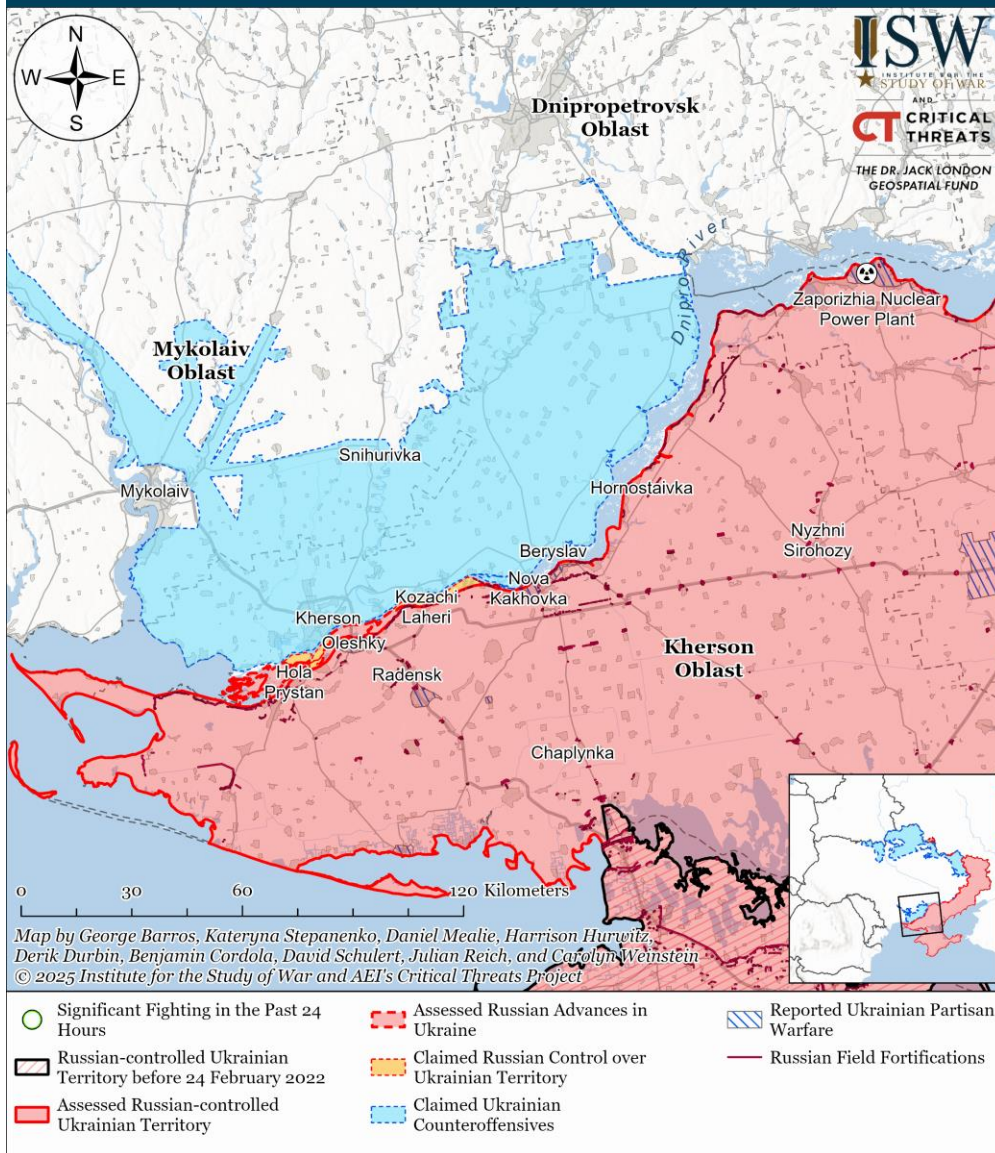


### Neither Ukrainian nor Russian sources reported fighting in the Kherson direction on March 17.

Ukrainian Navy Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk stated on March 17 that no Russian ships have been operating in the Black Sea for five days (roughly since March 12) and assessed that Ukraine's recent strike using the "Long Neptune" missile may be deterring Russian naval operations in the Black Sea.[67]



## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction March 17, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### **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 March 16 to 17. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 174 Shahed and decoy drones from the directions of Bryansk, Kursk, and Oryol cities; Shatalovo, Smolensk Oblast; and Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai.[68] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 90 drones over Kharkiv, Poltava, Sumy, Cherkasy, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, and Odesa oblasts and that 70 decoy drones were "lost," likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference. Official Ukrainian sources reported that Russian drones damaged civilian infrastructure in Odesa, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kirovohrad, Sumy, Chernihiv, and Kyiv oblasts.[69]



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

Russian occupation officials continue to develop analogs to the federal "Time of Heroes" programming in occupied Ukraine as part of long-term efforts to integrate occupied Ukraine into Russia and militarize society in occupied Ukraine. Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed on March 17 that several hundred residents of occupied Kherson Oblast registered for the "Heroes of Kherson" program and that the application period for the program will end on March 31.<sup>[70]</sup> Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik reported that occupation officials initiated the testing phase for the "Heroes of Luhansk" program after the first nine candidates took entrance exams and that the selection phase for the program will end on April 17.<sup>[71]</sup>

The Kremlin continues to nationalize private enterprises to support Russia's defense industrial base (DIB). Russian business outlet *Kommersant* reported on March 17 that the Dalnegorsk District Court in Primorsky Krai granted the Russian state the full shares of JSC GMK Dalpolimetall.<sup>[72]</sup> Dalpolimetall is a mining and metallurgical enterprise that specializes in extracting lead and zinc concentrates, including for ammunition and military equipment production. Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* reported that the company's reported revenue in 2023 amounted to 3.5 billion rubles (\$41.9 million) and that the company's assets are valued at about 32 billion rubles (\$383 million), with mine assets valued at 270 billion rubles (roughly \$3.2 billion).<sup>[73]</sup>

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

Western sanctions continue to push the Russian aviation industry to seek alternative components for aircraft engines. Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec posted footage on March 16 showing the first flight of a Superjet 100 commercial aircraft using the Russian-produced PD-8 aircraft engine.<sup>[74]</sup> Rostec stated that the creation of the domestically produced PD-8 engine is part of the company's import substitution program and that Rostec is replacing about 40 imported systems and components on the Superjet 100, including the fuselage, engine, avionics, auxiliary power system, integrated control system, and power supply systems.

## **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.*

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

Russia and Belarus continue to leverage the Union State framework to strengthen joint import substitution initiatives.<sup>[75]</sup> Russian Federation Council Chairperson Valentina Matviyenko claimed on March 17 that Belarus and Russia are now import-independent in several critical areas, including in the production of machine tools and electronics.

**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://www.reuters.com/world/trump-says-will-speak-with-putin-tuesday-about-ending-war-ukraine-2025-03-17/>
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