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**March 22, 2025, 5:30 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 22. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the March 23 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff uncritically amplified a number of Russian demands, claims, and justifications regarding the war in Ukraine during an interview on March 21.** Witkoff told American media personality Tucker Carlson in an interview published on March 21 that Russia "100 percent" does not want to invade Europe and that Russia "does not need to absorb Ukraine." [1] Witkoff stated that Russia "reclaimed" five regions in Ukraine — Crimea and Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts — and that Russia "has gotten what [it] wants" and will not want more. The Kremlin has repeatedly and falsely claimed that Crimea and these four oblasts are Russian territory contrary to international law, and Witkoff's statement about Russia "reclaiming" these areas (which Russia has illegally occupied and annexed) amplifies the Kremlin's justifications for its expansionist territorial demands and multiple invasions of Ukraine.

**Vladislav Surkov, a former close adviser to Russian President Vladimir Putin, recently reiterated a number of longstanding Kremlin claims and ambitions that directly contradict Witkoff's assertions in an interview with French media aimed at Western audiences.** Surkov previously served as a long-time close advisor to Putin and organized protests in Crimea against the Ukrainian government in 2014. [2] Surkov also oversaw the Kremlin's 2014-2015 project to promote the creation of "Novorossiia" (an amorphous, invented region in Ukraine that Kremlin officials have claimed includes all of southern and eastern Ukraine and is an "integral" part of Russia) in eastern Ukraine. [3] Putin relieved Surkov of his duties as Presidential Aide in February 2020. [4] Surkov stated in an interview with French outlet *L'Express* on March 19 that a Russian victory

in Ukraine would be the "military or military and diplomatic crushing of Ukraine" and the "division of this artificial quasi-state into its natural fragments." [5] Surkov stated that Russia will achieve this strategic objective — which Surkov stated has not changed since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 — even if there are "maneuvers, slowdowns, and pauses along the way." Surkov stated that the return of Ukraine to Russia's desired and self-defined sphere of influence has been a Russian objective since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Surkov claimed that "Ukraine is an artificial political entity" consisting of "at least" three regions — the "Russian" southern and eastern Ukraine, the "Russian-non-Russian" central area, and the "anti-Russian" west. Surkov claimed that Russia's war in Ukraine "will separate the Russians and the anti-Russians" and will "confine" the "anti-Russians" to their "historical territory" such that they "stop spreading across Russian soil." Surkov claimed that "perhaps" Ukraine will exist as a "real state" in the future but as a much smaller entity. Surkov implied that Europe will be involved in the future partitioning of Ukraine, claiming that "a balanced division of Ukraine will have to include a share for Brussels." Surkov responded to a question about how he sees Russian borders, stating that the ideology of the Russian World (*Russkiy Mir*) "has no borders" and exists "everywhere there is Russian influence," including cultural, military, economic, ideological, or humanitarian influence. Surkov claimed that Russia's influence varies across regions in the world, but "is never zero." Surkov claimed that Russia "will spread out in all directions." The Kremlin has repeatedly used the idea of the Russian World to justify Russian military interventions into former Soviet states and to claim that areas of the former Soviet Union and Russian Empire are historical Russian territories. [6] **Surkov's statements about Russia's claims over southern and eastern Ukraine and the future expansion of *Russkiy Mir* are in direct contrast to Witkoff's statement that Russia has no territorial ambitions beyond Crimea and Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts.**

**Surkov's statements are consistent with those made by Putin and senior Russian officials, who have recently and repeatedly stated that Russia intends to bring Ukraine under Russian control and establish suzerainty over neighboring countries in order to weaken the West and strengthen Russia's global influence.** Senior Russian officials have recently reiterated that any future peace settlement must address the "root causes" of the war, which Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov defined as recently as March 10, 2025, as the alleged "threats to Russia's security from the Ukrainian and Western directions in general" that are due to NATO's eastward expansion and the Ukrainian government's alleged "extermination" of everything that is "connected with Russia and the *Russkiy Mir*," including Russian language, culture, Orthodoxy, and media. [7] Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko acknowledged on March 17, 2025, 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. [8] Putin's 2021 demands also stipulated that NATO commit to not accepting any countries as new members and that NATO not deploy any military forces to states that became NATO members after May 1997; would ban any NATO military activity in Ukraine, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia; would ban deployments of intermediate-range missiles in areas that could reach Russian or NATO state territory; and would ban the United States from deploying intermediate-range missiles in Europe or nuclear missiles outside of US territory. [9] The Kremlin has used the "*Russkiy Mir*" narrative for decades to justify Russian aggression in Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova and to set conditions to influence independent countries once colonized by the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire. [10] Putin and other

senior Russian officials have repeatedly propagated pseudo-history to deny Ukrainian statehood and nationhood and have falsely asserted that Ukraine's Western neighbors have legitimate claims to Ukrainian territory in an effort to sow division between Ukraine and Europe.[11] Putin has recently reamplified Russia's territorial demands that Ukraine cede all of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts, including areas that Russian forces do not currently occupy, amid ongoing bilateral US-Russia negotiations.[12] **Putin and other Russian officials have also recently reamplified Russian narratives that "Novorossiya," which Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov has defined as all of eastern and southern Ukraine including Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, and Odesa oblasts, is an "integral" part of Russia.**[13] Putin has used the term "Novorossiya" to refer to eastern and southern Ukraine since 2014 to set informational conditions to justify Russia's occupation and territorial ambitions and claimed in 2023 that Odesa City, Crimea, and the entire "Black Sea region" have nothing "to do with Ukraine." [14]

**Witkoff uncritically repeated several inaccurate Russian claims regarding the status of the Ukrainian territories that Russia illegally occupies.** Witkoff claimed during the March 21 interview that Russian-occupied Crimea, Donbas, and Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts are "Russian-speaking" and that "there have been referendums [in these regions] where the overwhelming majority of people have indicated that they want to be under Russian rule." [15] Russia has long used similar claims to justify its unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, having used the claim that Russia needs to "protect Russian-speakers" in eastern Ukraine to justify the launch of its full-scale invasion in 2022.[16] Russia has routinely undermined its own myth of "protecting Russian speakers" in Ukraine, however, destroying predominantly Russian-speaking cities in eastern Ukraine, killing Russian-speaking Ukrainians, and deporting Russian-speaking Ukrainian children to Russia in violation of international law.[17] The Russian invasions of Ukraine have never been about protecting Russian speakers.[18]

The assertion that the "overwhelming majority" of Ukrainians living under Russian occupation want to be under Russian control is also demonstrably false. Russian manipulations and coercive control tactics in occupied Ukraine are inconsistent with the claim that all residents of occupied Ukraine "want" to be part of Russia. Russia staged sham referendums in Crimea and parts of Donbas in 2014 and then in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts in 2022 in an attempt to claim that most of the population "voted" to be annexed by Russia.[19] These referendums were all conducted under an intense Russian military presence and without legitimate election observers, and Russian authorities likely falsified attendance statistics and manipulated ballots.[20] Annexation referendums in 2022 did not account for the millions of Ukrainians who fled their homes to avoid living under Russian occupation.[21] Russian forces used physical intimidation to force Ukrainian civilians to vote for annexation during the 2022 referendums, with reports from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast suggesting that Russian occupation authorities instituted "at-home" voting in order to allow Russian security forces to enter the homes of Ukrainians and threaten them into voting for annexation at gunpoint.[22] Russian occupation officials also made their provision of humanitarian aid and basic necessities contingent on Ukrainians voting for annexation in the 2022 referendums.[23]

Russian demographic manipulations and mass indoctrination in occupied Ukraine are also at odds with the claim that Ukrainians living under occupation want to be under Russian control. Russian occupation administrators have had to institute coercive measures to force residents into obtaining Russian passports, threatening to deny Ukrainians access to basic services and medical care —

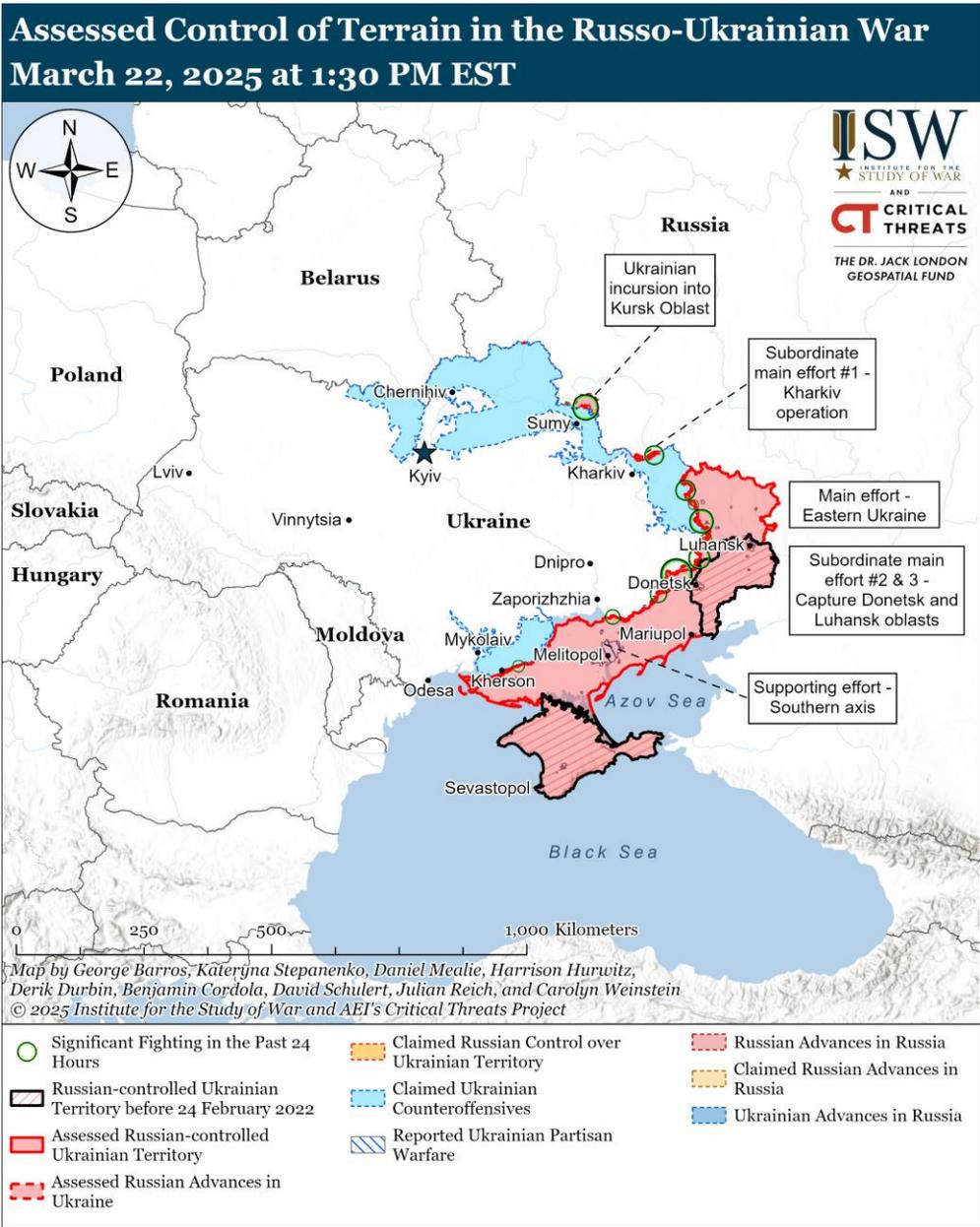
demonstrating that there is no mass support in occupied Ukraine for Russian citizenship offers.[24] The extent of Russian pressure on populations in occupied areas is another strong indicator that residents of these areas do not want to be part of Russia but must be coerced to "Russify" — something that should be unnecessary among people who already identify as Russians. Russia has also embarked on a state-directed effort to deport Ukrainians from occupied Ukraine and to import Russians to live in occupied Ukraine, using manipulated demographic data to create the impression that there are more people willingly living in occupied areas.[25] Russia would not have to forcibly deport millions of Ukrainians to Russia if these Ukrainians actually wanted to be part of Russia.[26]

**Witkoff's statements undermine US President Donald Trump's stated desired end state for the war in Ukraine that achieves an enduring peace and is in the best interests of the United States, Ukraine, and Europe.** Trump has said that the United States will try to return as much territory to Ukraine as possible.[27] Trump also recently stated that the United States is interested in taking control of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), which Russian forces currently occupy — implying that Russia would have to cede this territory in Zaporizhzhia Oblast before the United States can take control of the ZNPP.[28] Witkoff's March 21 presentation of Russia's territorial demands for the entirety of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts — including areas of these four oblasts that Russian forces do not currently occupy — undermines Trump's efforts to achieve a resolution to the war favorable to US interests. Ceding territory in these four oblasts to Russia — either along the current frontlines or along the oblasts' administrative boundaries — would not provide Ukraine with the defensible lines required to reliably defend against renewed Russian aggression in the future, hindering Trump's stated objective of securing a lasting, sustainable peace in Ukraine.[29] Witkoff also claimed that Ukrainian officials have "conceded" that Ukraine will not be a member of NATO — a preemptive US concession to Russia on one of the Kremlin's main demands as Russia continues to make no concessions in return. Witkoff's statements appear to yield to multiple Kremlin demands before the start of official negotiations for a peace settlement, ceding valuable US and Ukrainian leverage over Russia in future negotiations that the United States will need in order to achieve Trump's desired end to the war.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- **US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff uncritically amplified a number of Russian demands, claims, and justifications regarding the war in Ukraine during an interview on March 21.**
- **Vladislav Surkov, a former close adviser to Russian President Vladimir Putin, recently reiterated a number of longstanding Kremlin claims and ambitions that directly contradict Witkoff's assertions in an interview with French media aimed at Western audiences.**
- **Surkov's statements are consistent with those made by Putin and senior Russian officials, who have recently and repeatedly stated that Russia intends to bring Ukraine under Russian control and establish suzerainty over neighboring countries in order to weaken the West and strengthen Russia's global influence.**

- Witkoff uncritically repeated several inaccurate Russian claims regarding the status of the Ukrainian territories that Russia illegally occupies.
- Witkoff's statements undermine US President Donald Trump's stated desired end state for the war in Ukraine that achieves an enduring peace and is in the best interests of the United States, Ukraine, and Europe.
- Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Pokrovsk, and Russian forces recently advanced near Siversk and Pokrovsk and in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast.
- The Kremlin continues to innovate new ways to leverage conscripts to increase the pool of servicemembers eligible for military service in the future.



***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**

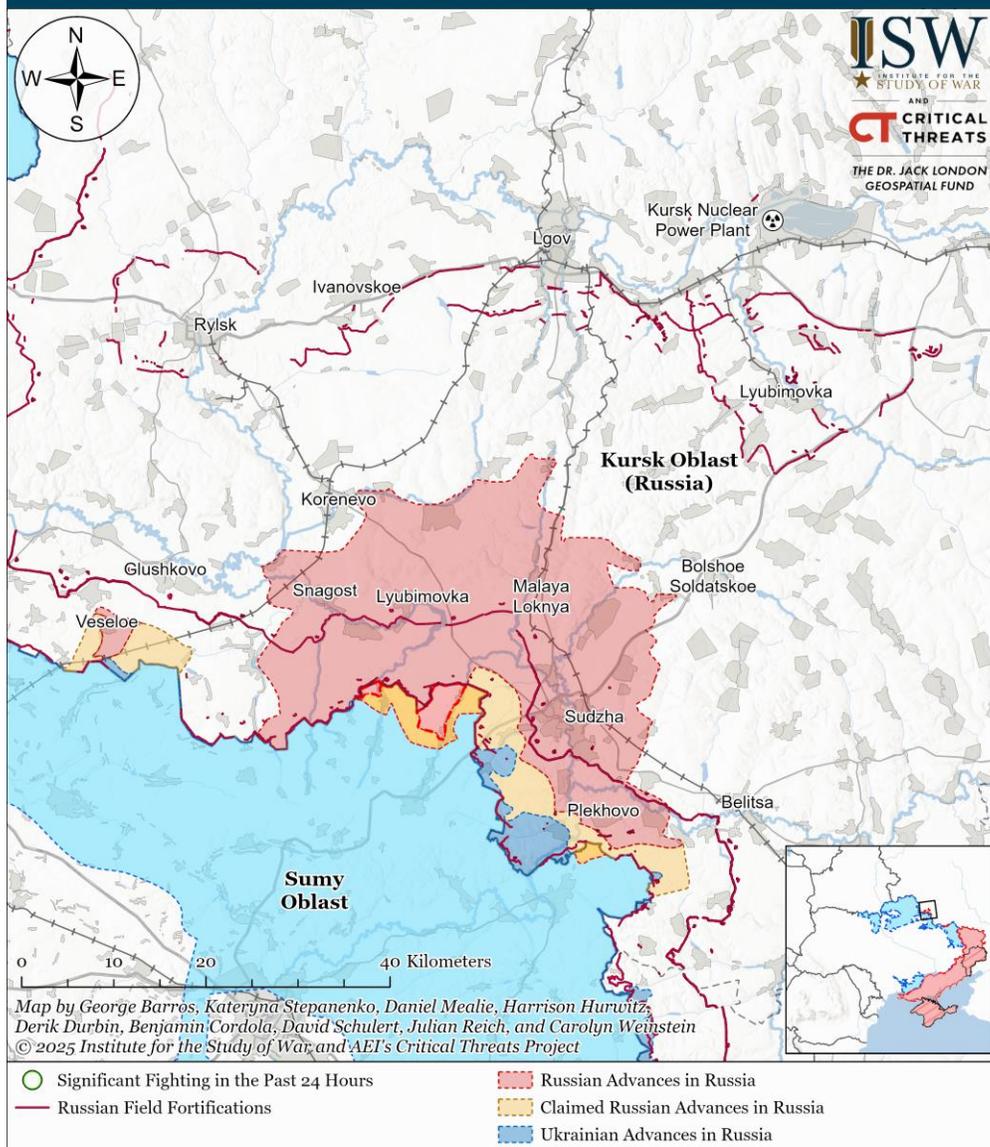
**Russian forces continue attacks against limited Ukrainian positions in Kursk Oblasts but did not advance.**

Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are attacking toward Oleshnya (southwest of Sudzha along the international border).[30] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces have stopped Russian advances along the Gogolevka-Guyevo line (west and south of Sudzha), where Ukrainian forces occasionally counterattack.[31]

A Russian milblogger continued claims that Russian forces are trying to create a "buffer zone" in Sumy Oblast along the international border.[32]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 11th Airborne (VDV) Brigade are reportedly operating near Sudzha.[33]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction March 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### Ukrainian and Russian forces continue limited ground attacks in Sumy Oblast.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces have stopped Russian advances along the Zhuravka-Basivka line (just across the international border in Sumy Oblast), where Ukrainian forces occasionally counterattack.[34]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 56th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) are reportedly operating in Sumy Oblast.[35]

### Ukrainian forces continued limited attacks in Belgorod Oblast.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that reports that Ukrainian forces advanced to the outskirts of Grafovka (northwest of Belgorod City) from Prilesye (southwest of Grafovka) are unconfirmed.[36]

Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked along the Demidovka-Repyakhovka line (northwest of Belgorod City along the international border).[37] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces maintain positions near Prilesye and south of Demidovka.[38]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have begun conducting raids after recent attacks with armored vehicles in the area were unsuccessful.[39] Other Russian milbloggers claimed that the Russian military command redeployed reinforcements near Demidovka.[40] A Russian insider source claimed that there is conflicting information about Ukrainian forces entering the Russian rear of Grafovka and Demidovka.[41]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian "Aida" Akhmat Spetsnaz Detachment, BARS Belgorod, and Orlan detachment are reportedly operating in Belgorod Oblast.[42]

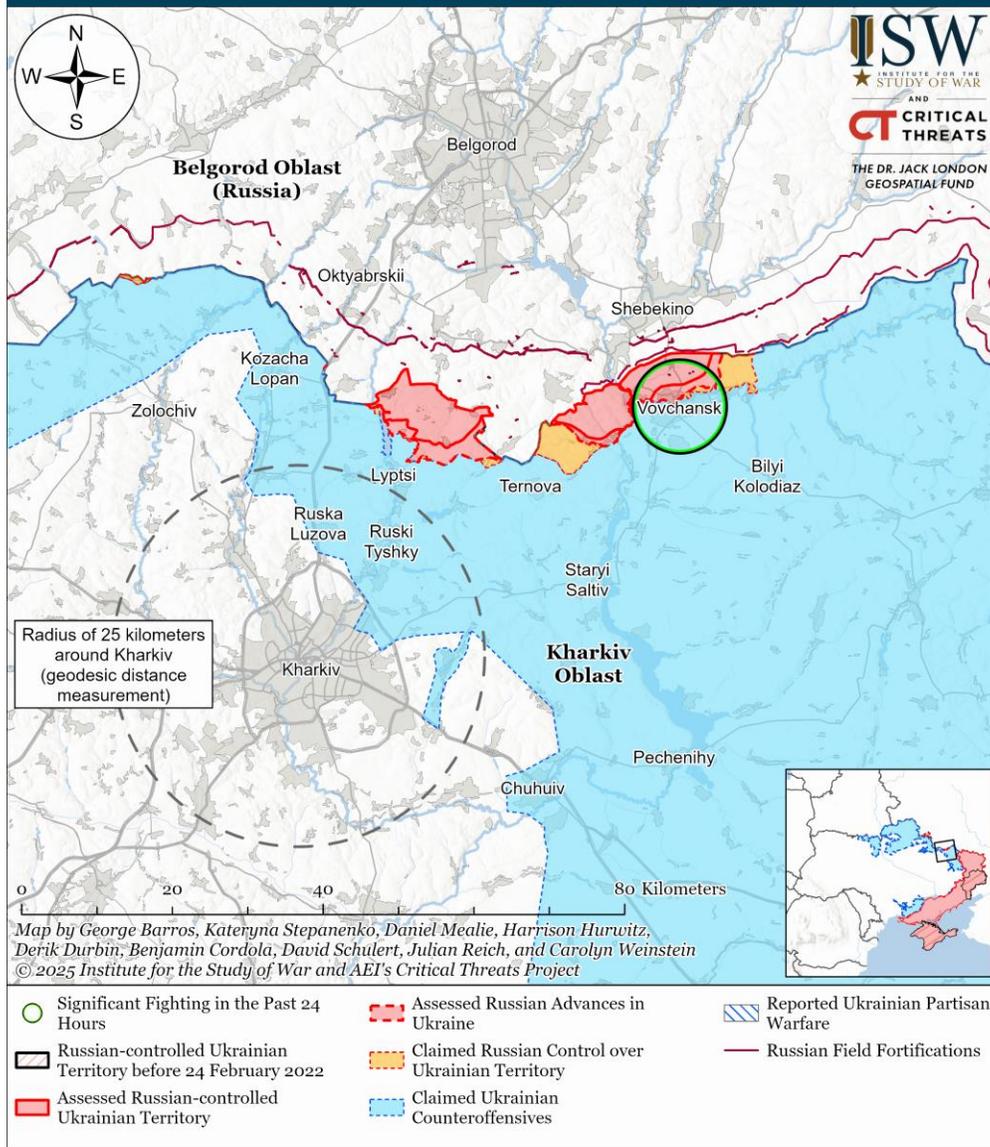
### **Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

**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 the Kharkiv direction on March 21 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on March 21 and 22.[43]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kharkiv Direction March 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### **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)**

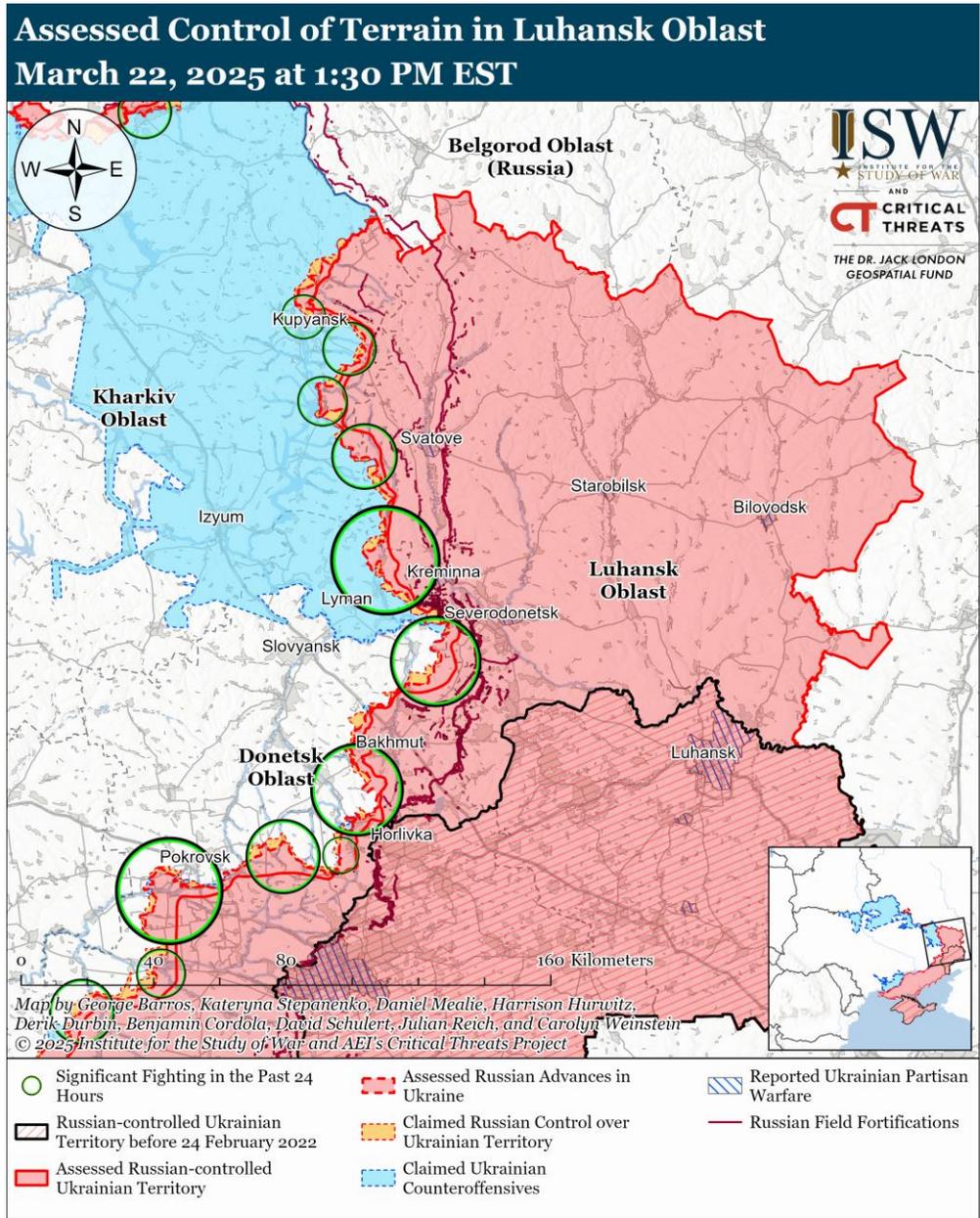
**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on March 22 but did not advance.**

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Zapadne (north of Kupyansk).[44]

Russian forces attacked northwest of Kupyansk near Mala Shapktivka, north of Kupyansk near Holubivka and Kindrashivka, northeast of Kupyansk near Krasne Pershe, and southeast of Kupyansk near Pishchane on March 21 and 22.[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted

successful counterattacks near Synkivka (northeast of Kupyansk) and that half of the settlement is now a contested "gray zone." [46]

Head of the Kupyansk City Military Administration Andriy Besedin reported that Russian forces have conducted over 3,000 strikes against Kupyanskyi Raion since the start of March, including 57 glide bomb strikes. [47]



**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on March 22 but did not advance.**

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced along Tsentralna Street in central Bohuslavka (northeast of Borova). [48]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Kruhlyakivka and Zahryzove and east of Borova near Kopanky and Nadiya on March 21 and 22.[49] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces seized Nadiya and advanced near Zelenyi Hai (east of Borova) after Russian forces retreated.[50]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 2nd Motorized Rifle Division (1st Guards Tank Army, Moscow Military District [MMD]) are reportedly operating near Zahryzove.[51]

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on March 22 but did not advance.**

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in fields southwest of Nove (north of Lyman).[52]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Lyman near Yampolivka, Kolodyazi, Ivanivka, and Zelene Dolnya and toward Novomykhailivka and Nove and east of Lyman near Torske and Dibrova on March 21 and 22.[53]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 144th Motorized Rifle Division (20th Combined Arms Army [CAA], MMD) are reportedly operating in the Lyman direction. [54]

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

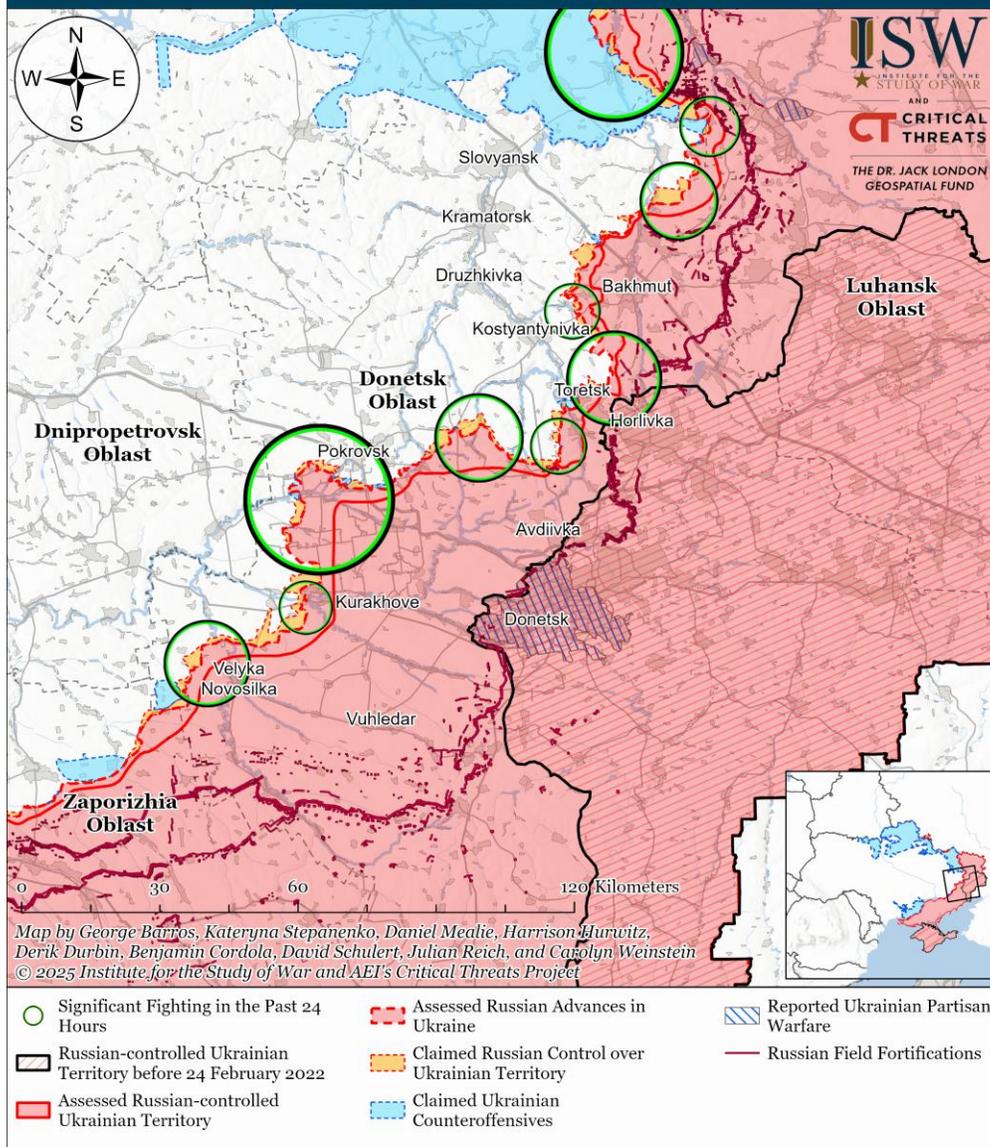
**Russian forces recently advanced in the Siversk direction.**

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 21 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced west of Bilohorivka (northeast of Siversk).[55]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka, southeast of Siversk near Ivano-Darivka, and south of Siversk near Rozdolivka on March 21 and 22.[56]

Ukrainian Luhansk Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Dmytro Zaporozhets stated on March 22 that Russian forces operating in the Siversk direction began requesting additional motorized vehicles, possibly due to shortages of armored vehicles or because the terrain in the area is more open.[57]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast March 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on March 22 but did not advance.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division pushed Ukrainian forces from the Zakhidne neighborhood (western Chasiv Yar) and advanced in Shevchenko Microraion (southern Chasiv Yar).[58]

Russian forces continued attacking near and within Chasiv Yar itself; south of Chasiv Yar toward Predtechyne; and southeast of Chasiv Yar toward Andriivka on March 21 and 22.[59] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked in Shevchenko Microraion.[60]

Zaporozhets stated on March 22 that Russian forces are conducting the most intense shelling in the Kramatorsk direction (northwest of Chasiv Yar) and are less intensely shelling Ukrainian positions in the Chasiv Yar and Toretsk directions.[61]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 5th Anti-Aircraft Missile Regiment (98th VDV Division) and 27th Artillery Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd Army Corps [AC]) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.[62]

### **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Toretsk direction on March 22 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked near Toretsk; north of Toretsk near Dachne and Dyliivka; east of Toretsk near Druzhba; and southwest of Toretsk near Panteleymonivka on March 21 and 22.[63]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 77th Motorized Rifle Regiment (likely a reconstituted Soviet-era unit) and elements of the 102nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Toretsk direction.[64]

### **Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction.**

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 21 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced in southwestern Nadiivka (southwest of Pokrovsk).[65]

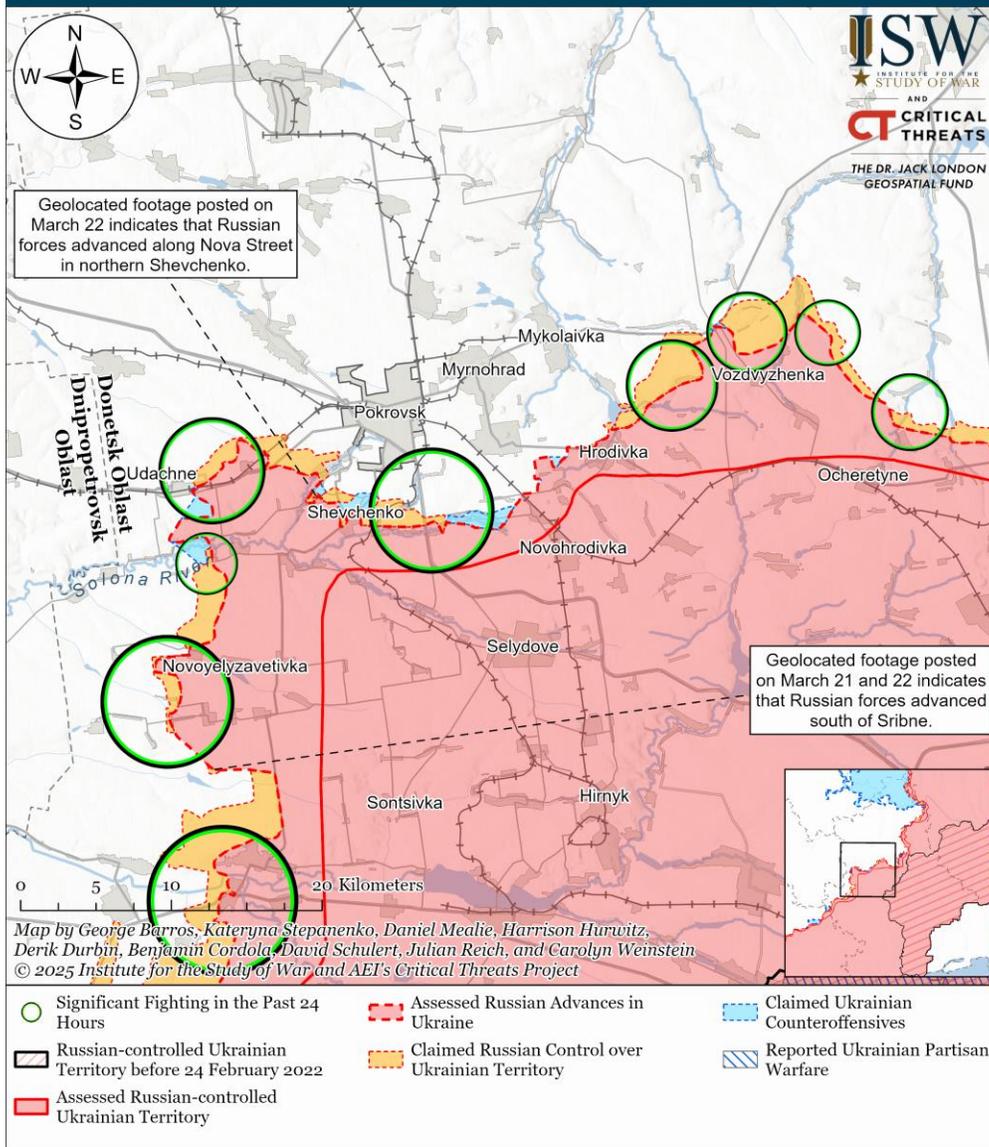
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced within northern Shevchenko (southwest of Pokrovsk) and south of Sribne (southwest of Pokrovsk).[66]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces completely seized Shevchenko and Upsenivka (southwest of Pokrovsk).[67] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced near Bohdanivka and Zaporizhzhia (both southwest of Pokrovsk).[68]

Russian forces attacked near Pokrovsk itself; east of Pokrovsk near Promin, Zelene Pole, Tarasivka, Yelyzavetivka, Novotoretske, Vodyane Druhe, and Kalynove; south of Pokrovsk near Novoukrainka; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Zvirove, Kotlyne, Udachne, Uspenivka, Preobrazhenka, Nadiivka, Zaporizhzhia, Novoandriivka, and Bohdanivka and in the directions of Kotlyarivka and Novooleksandrivka on March 21 and 22.[69] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Uspenivka and Solone (southwest of Pokrovsk).[70]

The deputy commander of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Novopavlivka direction stated on March 22 that Russian forces conduct assaults on motorcycles and only conduct assaults with armored vehicles once or twice per month in the area.[71] The deputy commander stated that Russian forces conduct drone and artillery preparation before conducting motorcycle assaults from several directions at once. The deputy commander also noted that Russian forces are using first-person view (FPV) drones with fiber-optic cables to strike Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs).

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction March 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on March 22 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked west of Kurakhove near Kostyantynopil, Andrivka, and Oleksiivka and southwest of Kurakhove near Bahatyr and Rozlyv on March 21 and 22.[72]

### **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velyka Novosilka direction on March 22 but did not advance.**

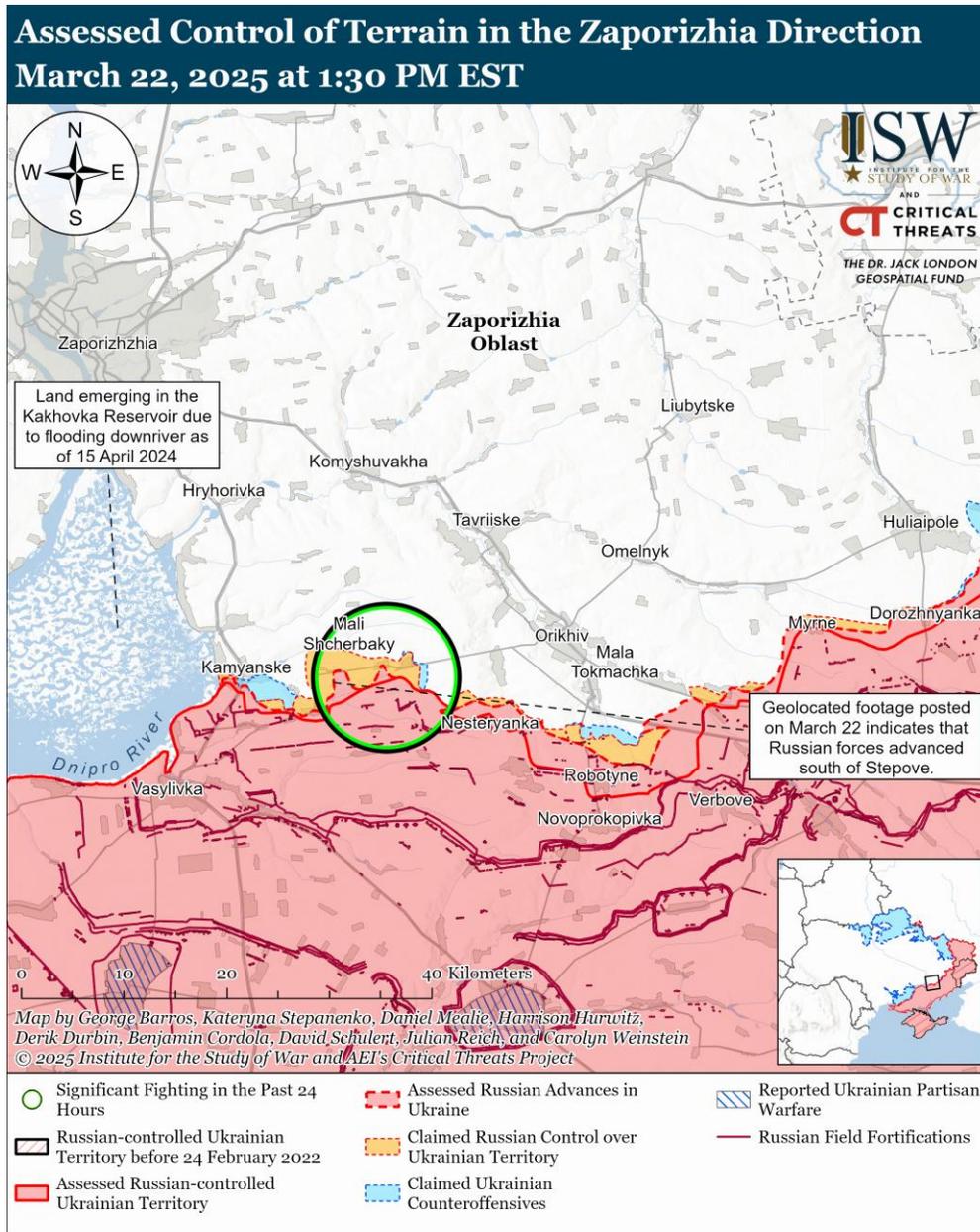
Russian forces continued attacking west of Velyka Novosilka near Novosilka; northwest of Velyka Novosilka near Shevchenko, Vilne Pole, and Pryvilne; and north of Velyka Novosilka near Dniproenerhiya on March 21 and 22.[73]

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

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

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on March 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced south of Stepove (northwest of Robotyne).[74]

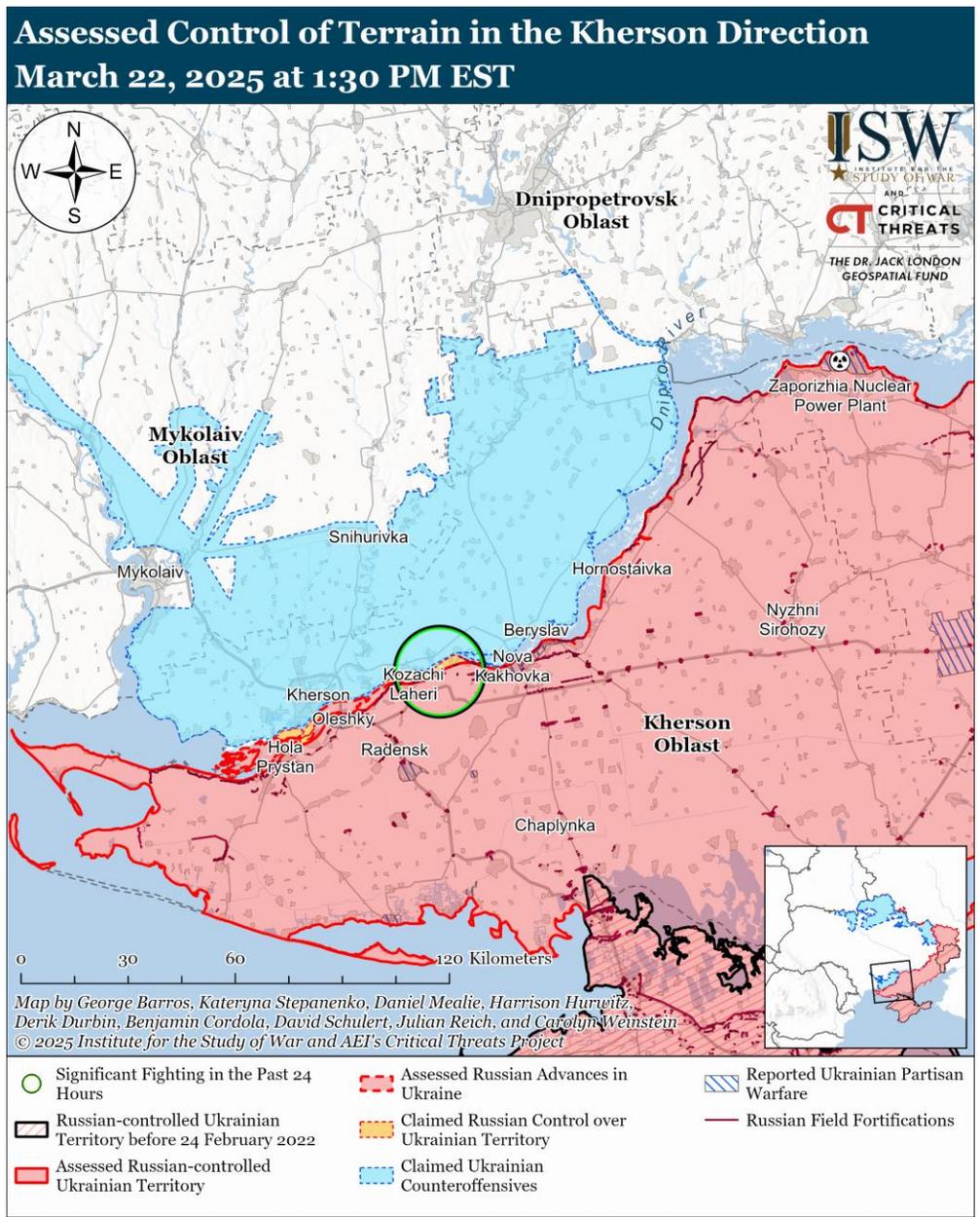
Russian forces attacked northwest of Robotyne near Lobkove, Stepove, Mali Shcherbaky, and Shcherbaky on March 21 and 22.[75]



**Russian forces attacked in the Kherson direction on March 22 but did not advance.[76]**

## **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 21 to 22. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 179 Shahed and decoy drones from the directions of Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; Primorsko-Akhatarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea.[77] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces shot down 100 drones over southern, northern, and central Ukraine and that 63 drones were "lost," likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW). Ukrainian officials reported that Russian drones struck Zaporizhia, Kharkiv, Sumy, and Kyiv oblasts.[78]



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

The Kremlin continues to innovate new ways to leverage conscripts to increase the pool of servicemembers eligible for military service in the future. The Russian State Duma passed a bill in its first reading on March 21 that grants military registration and enlistment offices the right to take conscripts into military service up to one year after the conclusion of a conscription period.[79] The proposed bill also allows Russian federal subjects (regions) to create a unified recruitment point analogous to the one that currently exists in Moscow Oblast. The proposed bill will only impact compulsory military service and not the mobilization reserve.[80] The bill would expand the types of decisions military registration and enlistment offices can make about conscripts and allow these offices to expedite the dispatch of conscripts to military service without having to undergo the standard psychological and medical evaluations. The bill would expand the purview of military registration offices to send personnel to military service, thus increasing the size of the Russian armed forces. ISW has observed other indicators that Russia is unwilling and unprepared to demobilize its military, even in the event of a potential ceasefire in Ukraine.[81]

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

The Russian defense industrial base (DIB) continues efforts to expand Russia's air defense capabilities. The Kalashnikov Concern, a subsidiary of Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec, announced on March 19 that it presented a fully functional model of the "Krona" short-range air defense missile system.[82] The Kalashnikov Concern first presented a "Krona" model in early February 2025 and noted that this system is designed to protect strategic government and infrastructure facilities in the Russian rear from medium-range drone strikes.[83] The Kalashnikov Concern confirmed that the "Krona" is equipped with 9M340 and 9M333 guided anti-aircraft missiles.[84]

## **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)**

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://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acvu2LBumGo>
- [2] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32020R1267&qid=1714067858465>
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