

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, January 12, 2024

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George Barros, and Frederick W. Kagan

January 12, 2024, 5:45pm ET

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

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

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

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:30pm ET on January 12. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the January 13 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukraine and the United Kingdom (UK) signed an agreement on bilateral security guarantees pursuant to the G7's July 2023 joint declaration of support for Ukraine. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv on January 12 and signed the UK-Ukraine Agreement on Security Cooperation.[1] The agreement covers joint efforts supporting Ukraine's future accession to NATO, including comprehensive assistance to Ukraine to protect and restore its territorial integrity, preventing new Russian aggression against Ukraine, and supporting Ukraine's integration into certain Western institutions.[2] The agreement also states that the UK government will work with its domestic defense industrial base (DIB) to help develop Ukraine's own DIB. The UK is the first country to sign a final agreement with Ukraine on the basis of the G7's July 2023 joint declaration of support for Ukraine, and at least 24 non-G7 countries have joined the declaration.[3]

Sunak also announced a military assistance package valued at 2.5 billion GBP (roughly \$3.19 billion), which includes long-range missiles, air defense components, artillery ammunition, and maritime security provisions, and at least 200 million GBP of this package is specifically allocated to producing and procuring drones, most of which the UK expects to produce.[4] Sunak also announced an additional 18 million GBP to support frontline humanitarian efforts and fortify Ukraine's energy infrastructure against Russian strikes. Sunak reiterated the UK's commitment to long-term support for Ukraine and stated that the new UK-Ukraine security pact will last "100 years or more." [5]

US National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby stated on January 11 that the US has suspended security assistance to Ukraine and will not resume sending aid to Ukraine until the US Congress approves funding. [6] Kirby stated that the US provided the last package of aid to Ukraine that the US had enough funding for, which was a \$250 million security assistance package announced on December 27, 2023. [7]

Ukrainian Digital Transformation Minister Mykhailo Fedorov expressed confidence in Ukraine’s ability to produce one million first-person view (FPV) drones in 2024.[8] Fedorov stated on January 12 that the number of Ukrainian enterprises producing drones increased from seven to 200 between 2022 and the end of 2023.[9] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on December 19, 2023, that Ukraine plans to produce one million drones and expand artillery production in 2024.[10] Production of a million drones per year requires a monthly average production of more than 83,000 FPV drones per month, and Ukraine already produced 50,000 FPV drones per month as of December 2023.[11]

Pentagon Spokesperson Brigadier General Patrick Ryder stated on January 11 that there is no credible evidence of the illegal diversion of US-provided advanced conventional weapons to Ukraine.[12] Ryder stated that the US has given Ukraine unprecedented access to information regarding US-provided equipment and that Ukraine fully understands and supports the US need to report on defense articles that are accountable to Department of Defense (DoD) standards.[13] The US DoD Office of the Inspector General published a report earlier on January 11 that stated that DoD limitations were largely responsible for a failure to properly document certain US-provided military assistance to Ukraine.[14] The DoD Office of the Inspector General report stated that it was not responsible for determining whether US defense articles allocated to Ukraine have been misappropriated and did not attempt to do so.[15]

The US Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) announced on January 11 sanctions against several Russian entities reportedly involved in the transfer of North Korean ballistic missiles to Russia.[16] OFAC announced sanctions against one (1) employee of the Russian state-owned cargo transport service 224th Flight Unit State Airlines, a weapons testing facility called Ashuluk Firing Range in Astrakhan Oblast, and Russian defense manufacturer Vladimirovka Advanced Weapons and Research Complex in Astrakhan Oblast.[17] Western and Ukrainian officials have previously reported that Russian forces have launched at least one ballistic missile acquired from North Korea at Ukraine.[18]

Actors in the Russia-backed breakaway republic of Transnistria may be setting information conditions for a possible false-flag operation in Transnistria as part of wider Kremlin efforts to destabilize Moldova. The Transnistrian Ministry of State Security (MGB) issued a press release on January 12 claiming that Moldovan special forces are training “special combat groups” of more than 60 people to destroy critical facilities, sabotage military installations, and capture or destroy senior Transnistrian officials and law enforcement officers.[19] ISW previously reported that the MGB is a Russian-dominated organization that is commonly understood to be a “department of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB)” that likely takes orders directly from Moscow.[20] The MGB and Transnistrian officials have previously made similar, less escalatory claims likely also as part of the Kremlin’s efforts to set informational conditions aimed at destabilizing Moldova and justifying any future Russian campaigns in the region by framing Russia as a protector of allegedly threatened Russian-language speakers in Moldova.[21]

Russian occupation officials appear to be deliberately censoring information about Ukrainian children whom Russian authorities have illegally removed to occupied Crimea. A *Reuters* special report published on January 11 details how Russian occupation officials and Russian authorities facilitate the removal and deportation of Ukrainian children from orphanages and children's homes under the direct guidance of Kremlin-appointed Children's Rights Commissioner

Maria Lvova-Belova.[22] *Reuters* found that Lvova-Belova personally visited a children's home in occupied Henichesk, Kherson Oblast, in early 2023 and encouraged Ukrainian children, many of whom were separated from their parents due to the war or other circumstances but are not officially orphans, to obtain Russian passports so that Russian families can adopt the children.[23] *Reuters* also identified Crimea occupation head Sergey Aksyonov as directly involved in removing Ukrainian children from Kherson Oblast to children's homes in Crimea, consistent with ISW's assessment about the involvement of Russian occupation authorities in the removal and deportation process.[24] According to *Reuters*, an unspecified Crimean occupation official stated that all information about Ukrainian orphans in Crimea is "strictly confidential" on Aksyonov's direct order and that all requests about children are immediately reported to the occupation administration. The suggestion that Russian occupation authorities are deliberately trying to hide information about Ukrainian children from the public is notable—it indicates that Russian authorities are uninterested in repatriating these children, which undermines the Russian information operations that the removal and deportation of children is a temporary humanitarian endeavor and that Russia's ultimate interest is in returning these children to their homes and families.[25]

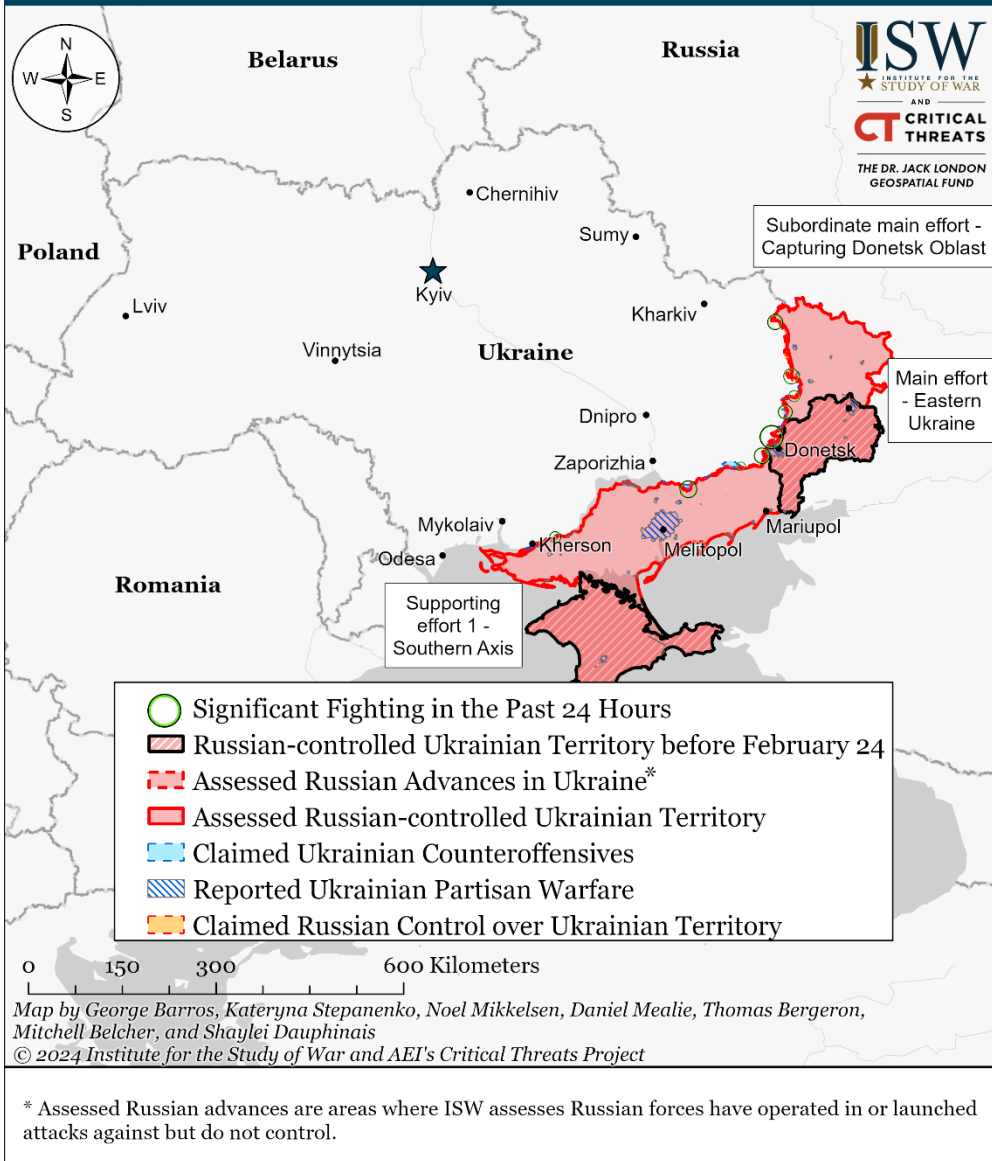
Imprisoned Russian ultranationalist and former Russian officer Igor Girkin accused the Kremlin of hesitating to conduct operationally significant offensive operations in Ukraine or a new wave of mobilization in Russia as Ukraine “build[s] up [its] strength” for a future counteroffensive effort. Russian milblogger and serviceman Mikhail Polynkov published a letter reportedly written by Girkin on December 8, 2023 to his Telegram channel on January 11 wherein Girkin claimed that Russia currently has “no plans” for a broad offensive in Ukraine and that Russia's war in Ukraine is developing according to a “very bad” scenario.[26] Girkin writes that the Kremlin's unwillingness to conduct a new wave of mobilization in Russia is prompting the Russian military to fill “holes” in its units with convicts and contract servicemen (*kontraktniki*). Girkin claimed that most of the reported 452,000 servicemen who enrolled in the Russian military in 2023 are already serving in Ukraine or “will not get there at all,” meaning that without a new wave of mobilization in spring 2024, Russia will not have the manpower required to conduct operationally significant offensive operations later this year. Girkin claimed that the Russian military and the Kremlin are choosing to “wait” until Ukraine “falls apart” or agrees to peace negotiations, while the Ukrainian military is receiving foreign aid and building up strength for future counteroffensive efforts. Girkin warned that Ukraine's ability to learn lessons on the battlefield may make its next counteroffensive operation more successful while the Russian military is still led by “the same morons” who insist on conducting costly frontal infantry assaults to capture settlements.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukraine and the United Kingdom (UK) signed an agreement on bilateral security guarantees pursuant to the G7's July 2023 joint declaration of support for Ukraine.**
- **US National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby stated on January 11 that the US has suspended security assistance to Ukraine and will not resume sending aid to Ukraine until the US Congress approves funding.**
- **Ukrainian Digital Transformation Minister Mykhailo Fedorov expressed confidence in Ukraine's ability to produce one million first-person view (FPV) drones in 2024.**

- **Pentagon Spokesperson Brigadier General Patrick Ryder stated on January 11 that there is no credible evidence of the illegal diversion of US-provided advanced conventional weapons to Ukraine.**
- **The US Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) announced on January 11 sanctions against several Russian entities reportedly involved in the transfer of North Korean ballistic missiles to Russia.**
- **Actors in the Russia-backed breakaway republic of Transnistria may be setting information conditions for a possible false-flag operation in Transnistria as part of wider Kremlin efforts to destabilize Moldova.**
- **Russian occupation officials appear to be deliberately censoring information about Ukrainian children whom Russian authorities have illegally removed to occupied Crimea.**
- **Imprisoned Russian ultranationalist and former Russian officer Igor Girkin accused the Kremlin of hesitating to conduct operationally significant offensive operations in Ukraine or a new wave of mobilization in Russia as Ukraine “build[s] up [its] strength” for a future counteroffensive effort.**
- **Russian forces made confirmed marginal advances northeast of Bakhmut, northwest of Avdiivka, southwest of Donetsk City, west of Verbove, and in (east) left bank Kherson Oblast amid continued positional fighting along the entire front.**
- **The Russian State Duma will consider a draft law allowing foreigners with a criminal record to serve in the Russian Armed Forces.**
- **Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko confirmed that Russian authorities have deported over 2,100 Ukrainians, including 500 children, to Russia for medical reasons in 2023.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of January 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

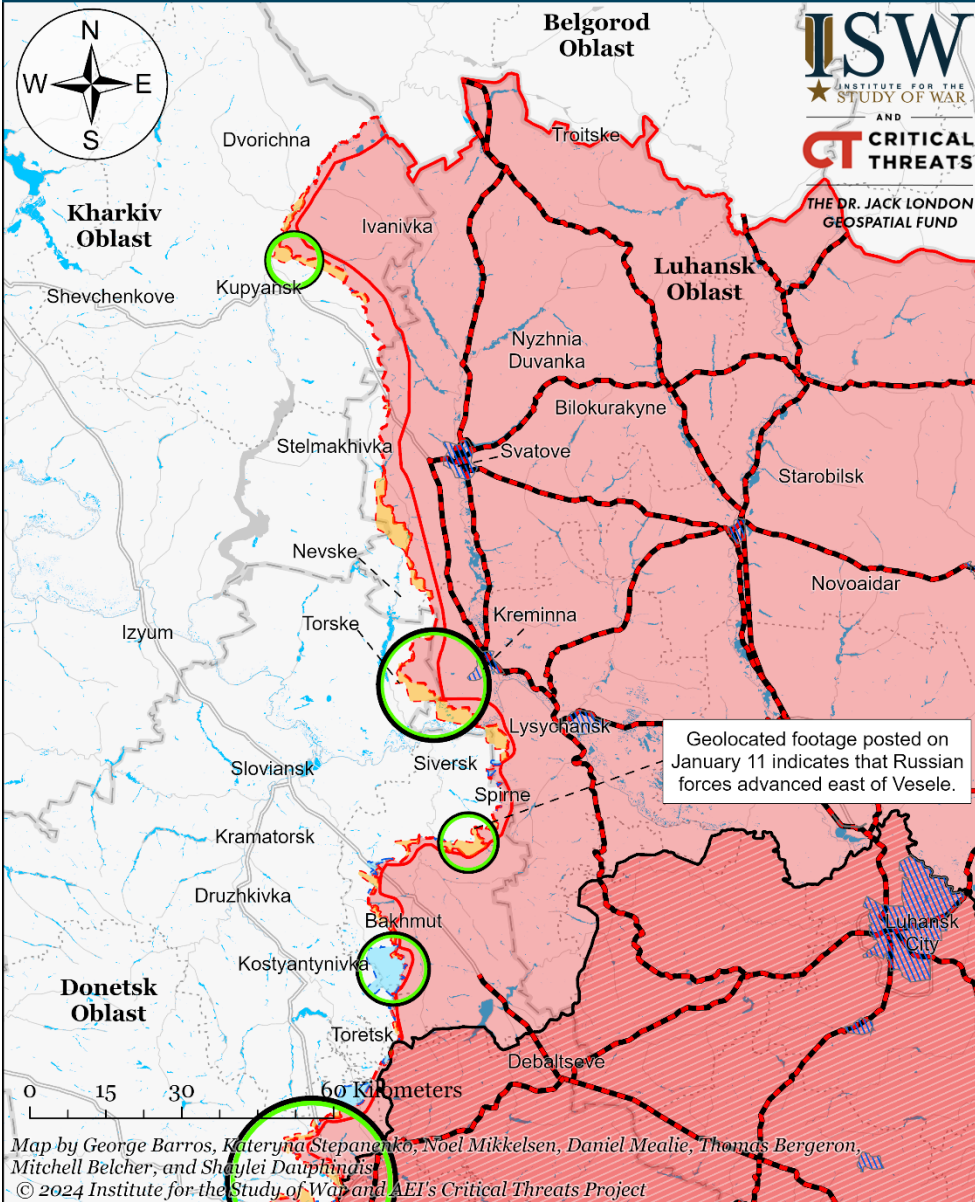
Russian and Ukrainian forces continued positional engagements along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on January 12 but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Kharkiv Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Synhubov responded to a question about a recent reported 1.5km Ukrainian advance in the Kupyansk direction and stated that these reports are likely associated with Ukrainian forces recapturing previously lost positions.[27] ISW has not observed confirmation of recent Ukrainian advances in the Kupyansk direction. Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional fighting continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Ivanivka, Pishchane, and Berestove; southwest of Svatove near Makiivka; west of Kreminna near Terny, Torske, and Yampolivka; and south of Kreminna near Hryhorivka.[28] Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated that 150 to 300 Russian personnel serving in irregular Russian formations in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions conduct active actions each day and that these units primarily focus on breaking through Ukrainian defenses.[29] Synhubov stated that Russian forces are preparing for another offensive effort near Synkivka, where they renewed assaults in the past week and continue to accumulate forces, conduct rotations, and train units for future actions.[30] Elements of the Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) 7th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Army Corps) are reportedly operating near Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna) and elements of the LNR 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Army Corps) are reportedly operating near Berestove, Donetsk Oblast.[31]

A prominent Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger expressed concerns about the Russian Western Grouping of Forces’ ability to conduct effective offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction.[32] The milblogger claimed that Russian infantry with armored vehicle support conducted assaults in columns in open areas near Synkivka in December 2023 and that Ukrainian artillery units and drone operators easily repelled these assaults by targeting advancing Russian columns.[33] The milblogger claimed that the elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces in the Kupyansk direction conduct only infantry-led frontal assaults and lack sufficient artillery support.[34] The milblogger claimed that such “incompetence” is systematic throughout the Russian Western Grouping of Forces and compared the grouping to the Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces, which Russian sources have routinely maligned as having serious command and coordination issues.[35] The Russian milblogger’s description of poorly designed and ineffective mechanized assaults across terrain with high visibility suggests that the Russian command has yet to internalize and disseminate lessons learned from failed mass mechanized

assaults near Avdiivka in October 2023 to Russian forces throughout Ukraine, particularly across different military district and grouping of forces commands.[36] ISW previously assessed as of January 2024 that the Western Grouping of Forces appears to be relatively less degraded and better-rested than other Russian force groupings and may therefore be better able to conduct an offensive effort than Russian forces elsewhere in Ukraine.[37] It remains unclear if the Russian Western Grouping of Forces will be able to conduct large-scale assaults to achieve operationally significant gains in a way that would be significantly more effective than the disorganized and costly Russian offensive operations that have been underway around Avdiivka since October 2023, however.[38] The Russian milblogger's description of the grouping suggests that Russian forces in the Kupyansk direction may face similar difficulties during a possible intensified effort to capture Kupyansk.

Synehubov stated on January 12 that there is no concentration of Russian forces in Belgorod Oblast sufficient to conduct offensive actions along the international border with Ukraine.[39] Synehubov stated that several Russian Storm-Z units recently transferred to Belgorod Oblast and conducted demonstrative actions along the border with Kharkiv Oblast.[40] ISW previously assessed that the Russian military is likely currently able to conduct only tactical-level actions into Kharkiv Oblast from Belgorod Oblast, which at most would serve as feints to draw and fix Ukrainian forces away from a possible Russian operational effort in the Kupyansk direction.[41]

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



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

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

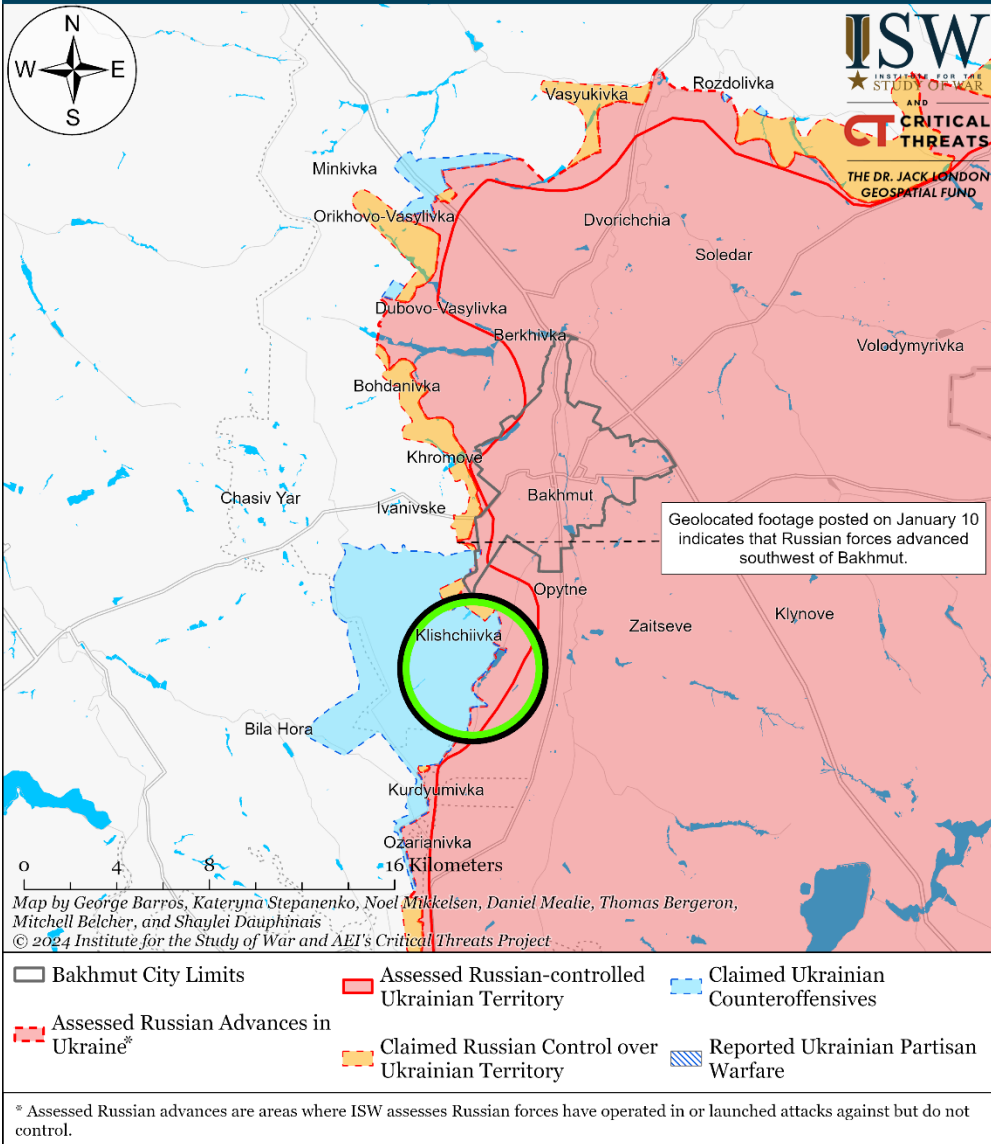
Note: A Russian source claimed on January 11 that Ukrainian forces captured 1.7 square kilometers of territory near Orlyanske. A Russian source claimed on January 10 that Russian forces advanced up to three kilometers in the Serebryanske Forest.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Geolocated footage published on January 11 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced east of Vesele (northeast of Bakhmut).[42] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on January 12 that Russian forces are trying to improve their tactical positions near Vesele, where Ukrainian forces repelled several Russian assaults.[43]

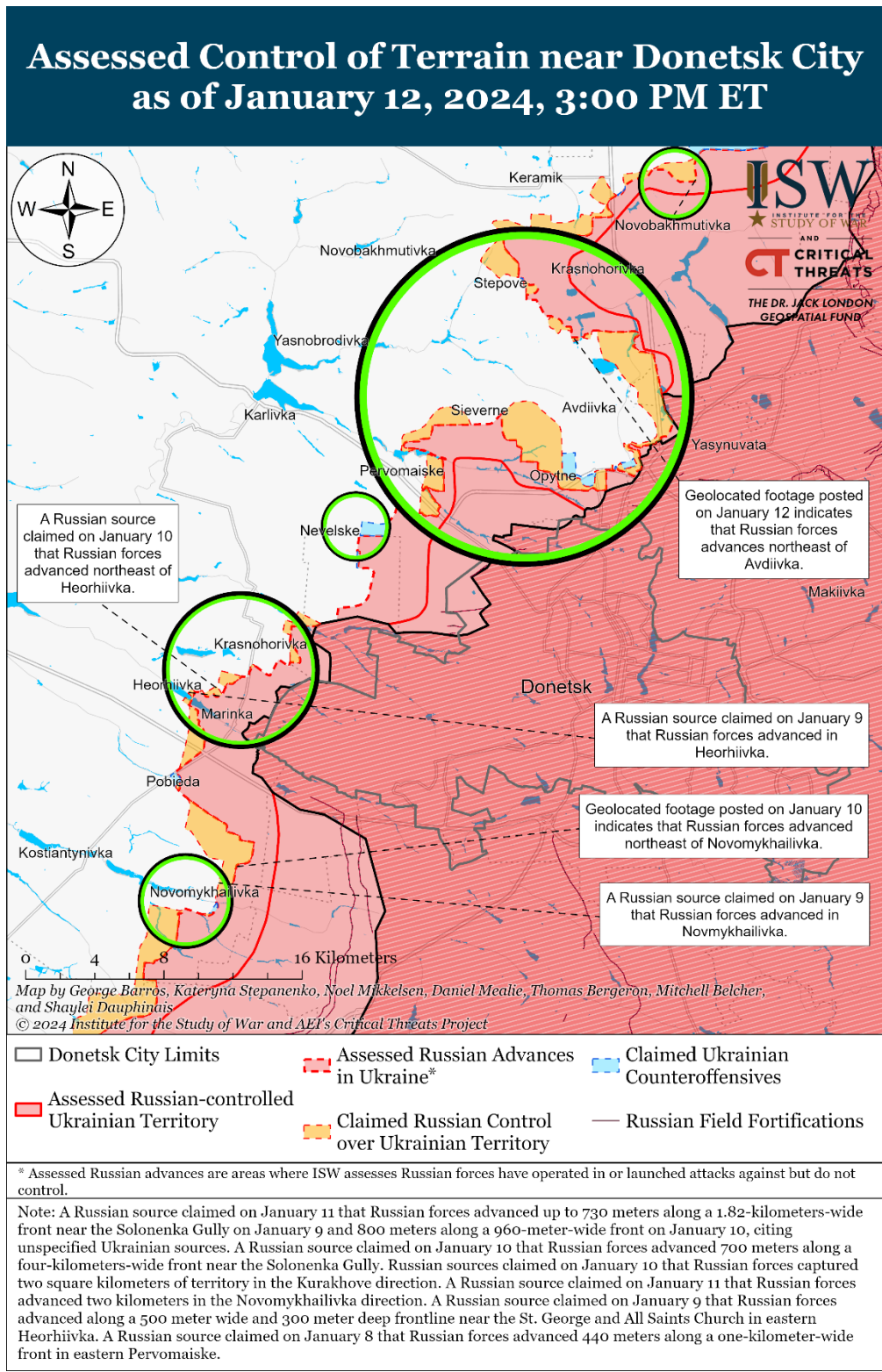
Positional engagements continued near Bakhmut on January 12, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported positional fighting northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka, west of Bakhmut near Khromove and towards Ivanivske, and southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[44] A Russian milblogger continued to characterize Russian offensive operations west of Bakhmut as a “creeping offensive” towards Chasiv Yar.[45] Other Russian sources discussed the challenges that Russian forces are facing northwest of Bakhmut, particularly in attacks on Vasyukivka, Mynkivka, and Bohdanivka.[46] One Russian source noted that Vasyukivka is located at low elevation and is surrounded by Ukrainian positions on tactical heights, and claimed that mobilized assault units refused to conduct assaults after entering Bohdanivka, forcing an unspecified Spetsnaz brigade to attack Ukrainian positions instead.[47] Elements of the 106th Guards Airborne Assault (VDV) Division are reportedly operating northeast of Bakhmut in the Soledar direction.[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of January 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



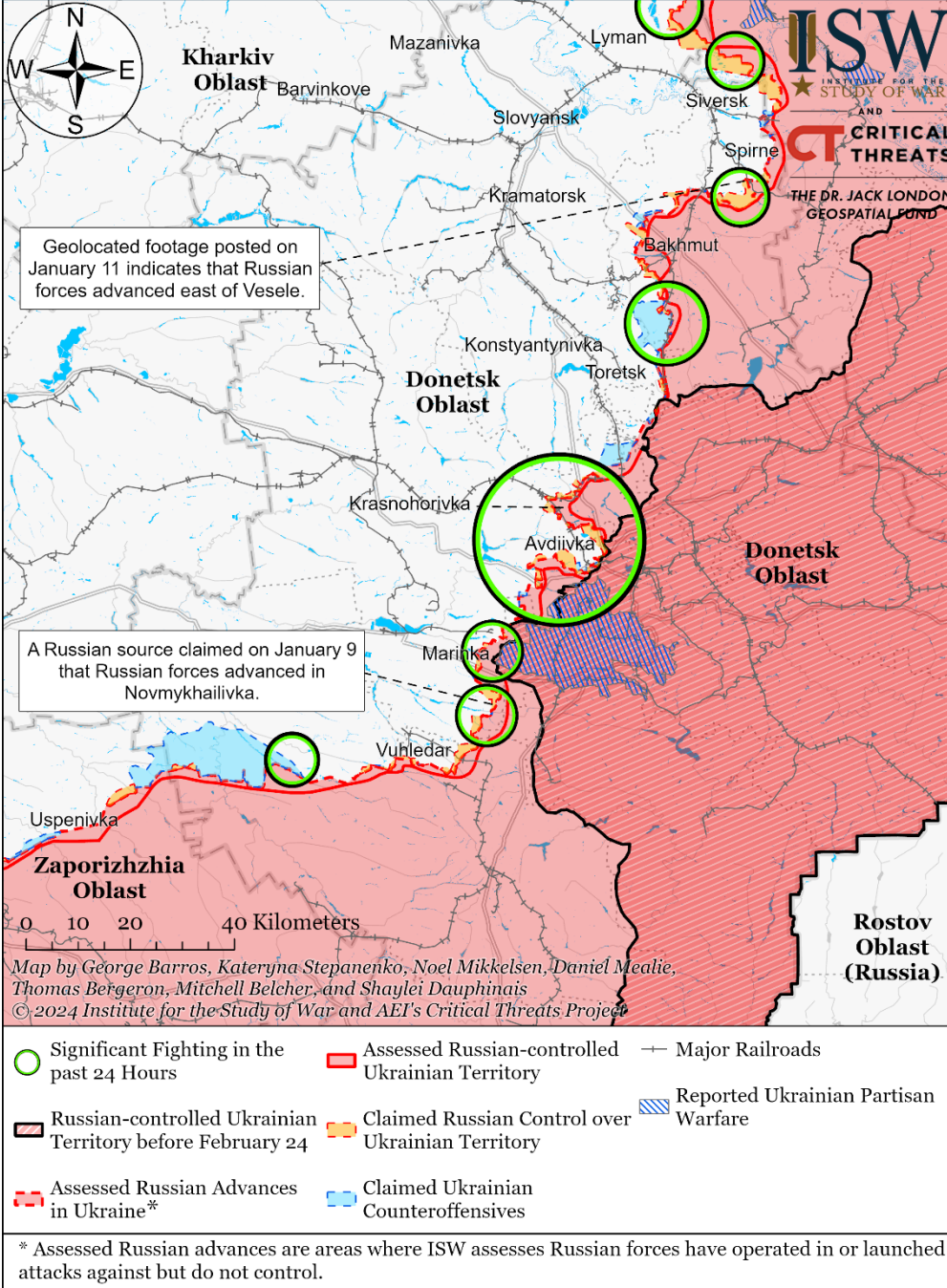
Russian forces recently made a marginal gain northwest of Avdiivka. Geolocated footage published on January 12 shows that Russian forces recently advanced just east of the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northwestern Avdiivka.[49] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced near the water treatment facilities of the Coke Plant area, a claim that is generally consistent with the available geolocated footage.[50] Milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced on the eastern outskirts of Pervomaiske (southwest of Avdiivka) between the Izmaylovsky Pond area and Pershotravneva Street, but ISW has not observed visual evidence of these claims.[51] Russian and Ukrainian forces reported continued fighting northwest of Avdiivka near Novobakhmutivka, Ocheretyne, Stepove, and Ocheretyne; near the Coke Plant area; in southeastern Avdiivka in the industrial zone area; and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske and Pervomaiske.[52] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces

Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy stated that there are high losses among foreigners and migrants fighting in the ranks of Russian forces fighting in the Tavriisk direction (Avdiivka, the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and western Zaporizhia Oblast) due to poor training.[53]



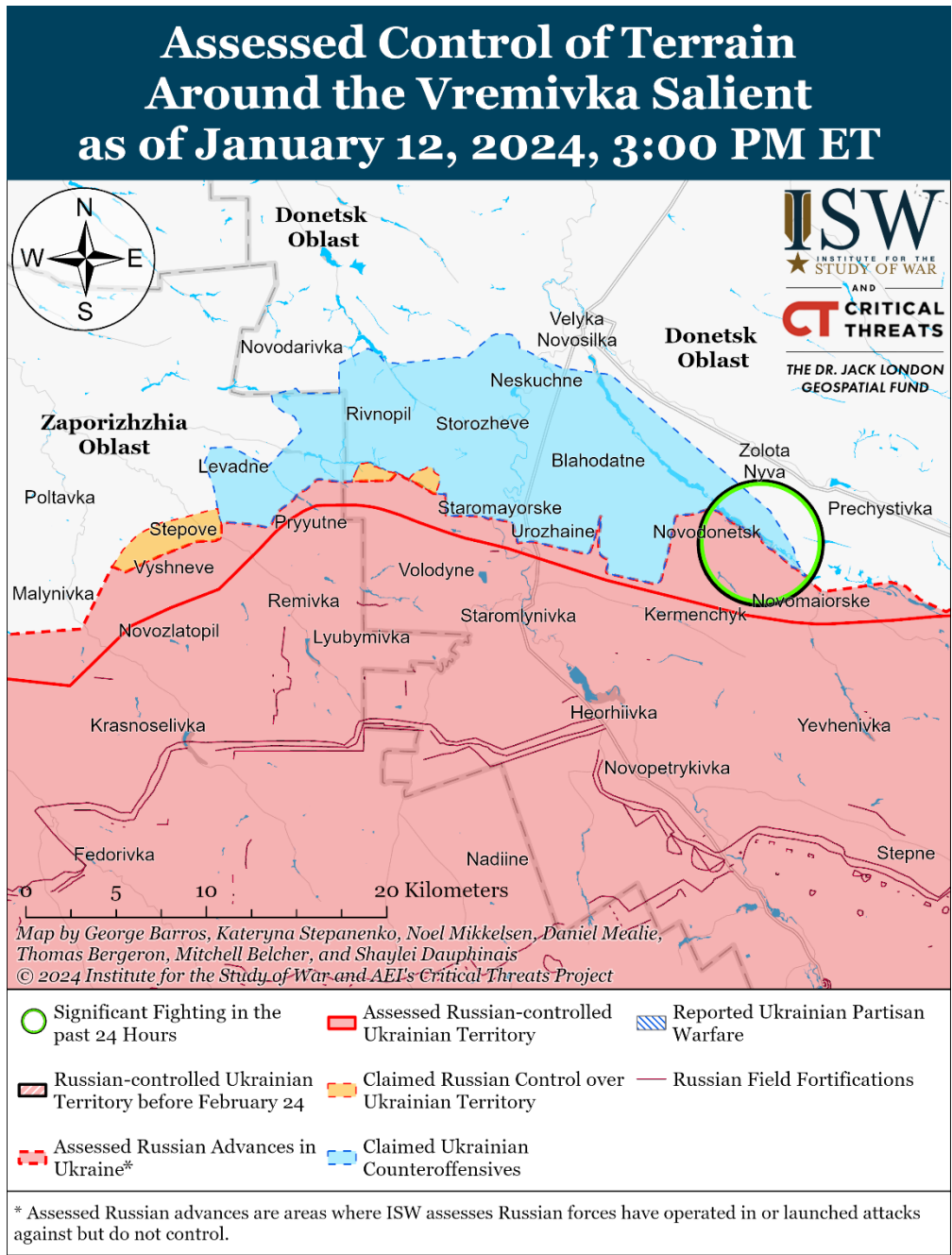
Russian forces recently made confirmed advances southwest of Donetsk City. Geolocated footage published on January 9 shows that Russian forces recently made marginal gains south of Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk City).[54] Positional engagements continued west of Donetsk City near Marinka, Heorhiivka, and Krasnohorivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Pobieda and Novomykhailivka.[55] A milblogger noted that Russian forces are trying to advance west of Marinka towards Kurakhove via Heorhiivka and south of Marinka towards Pobieda and Novomykhailivka.[56] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets noted that Russian forces are attacking Novomykhailivka in order to interdict the O0532 Marinka-Vuhledar road.[57] Elements of the 255th and 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiments (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army [8th CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]); an unspecified battalion of the 155th Naval Infantry Battalion (Pacific Fleet, Eastern Military District [EMD]); and 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th Army Corps, EMD) are all reportedly operating east and south of Novomykhailivka.[58]

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



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

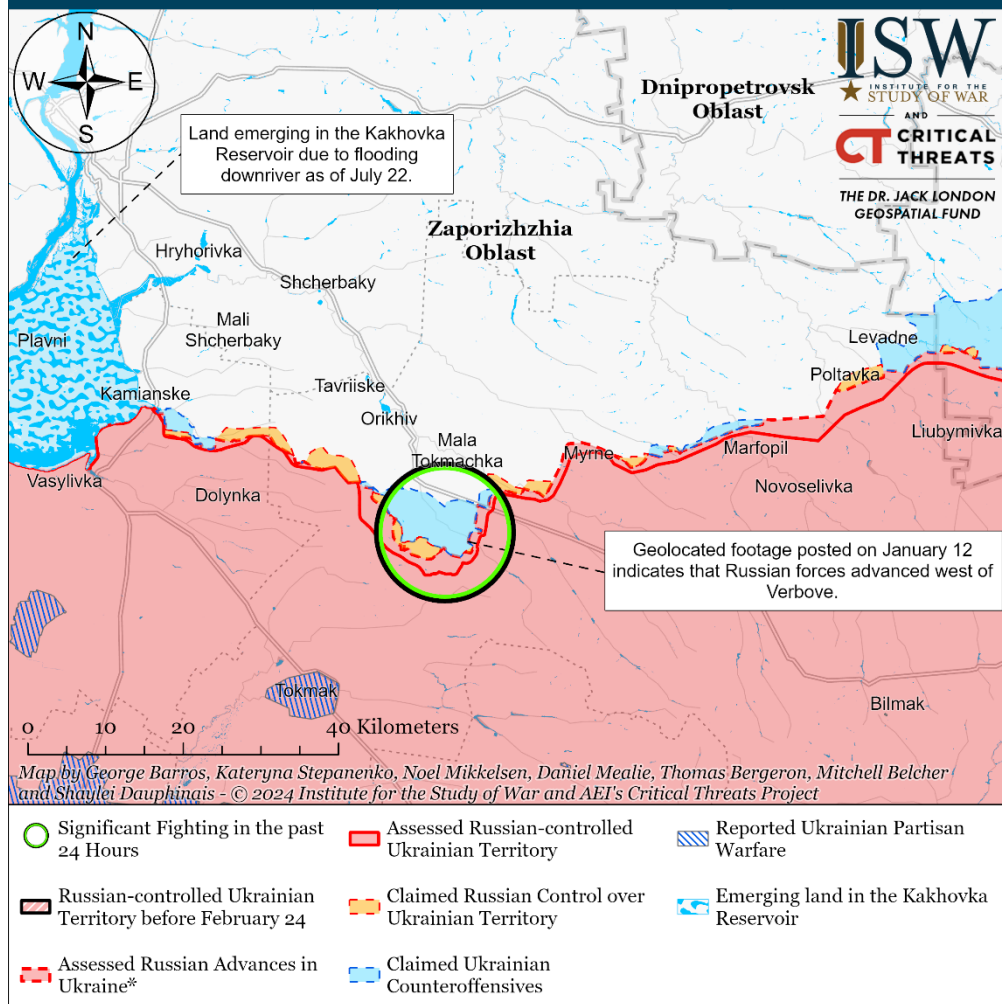
Limited positional fighting continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on January 12, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline.[59] Elements of the Russian 218th Tank Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division [MRD], 5th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) reportedly continue to operate southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Pryyutne, and elements of the 392nd Motorized Rifle Division (127th MRD, 5th CAA, EMD) reportedly continue to operate south of Velyka Novosilka near Staromayorske.[60]



Russian forces recently marginally advanced in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast. Geolocated footage published on January 10 and 12 shows Russian forces capturing Ukrainian trench positions along a road west of Verbove (east of Robotyne).[61] Positional fighting continued near Robotyne, Verbove, and Nesteryanka (northwest of Robotyne).[62]



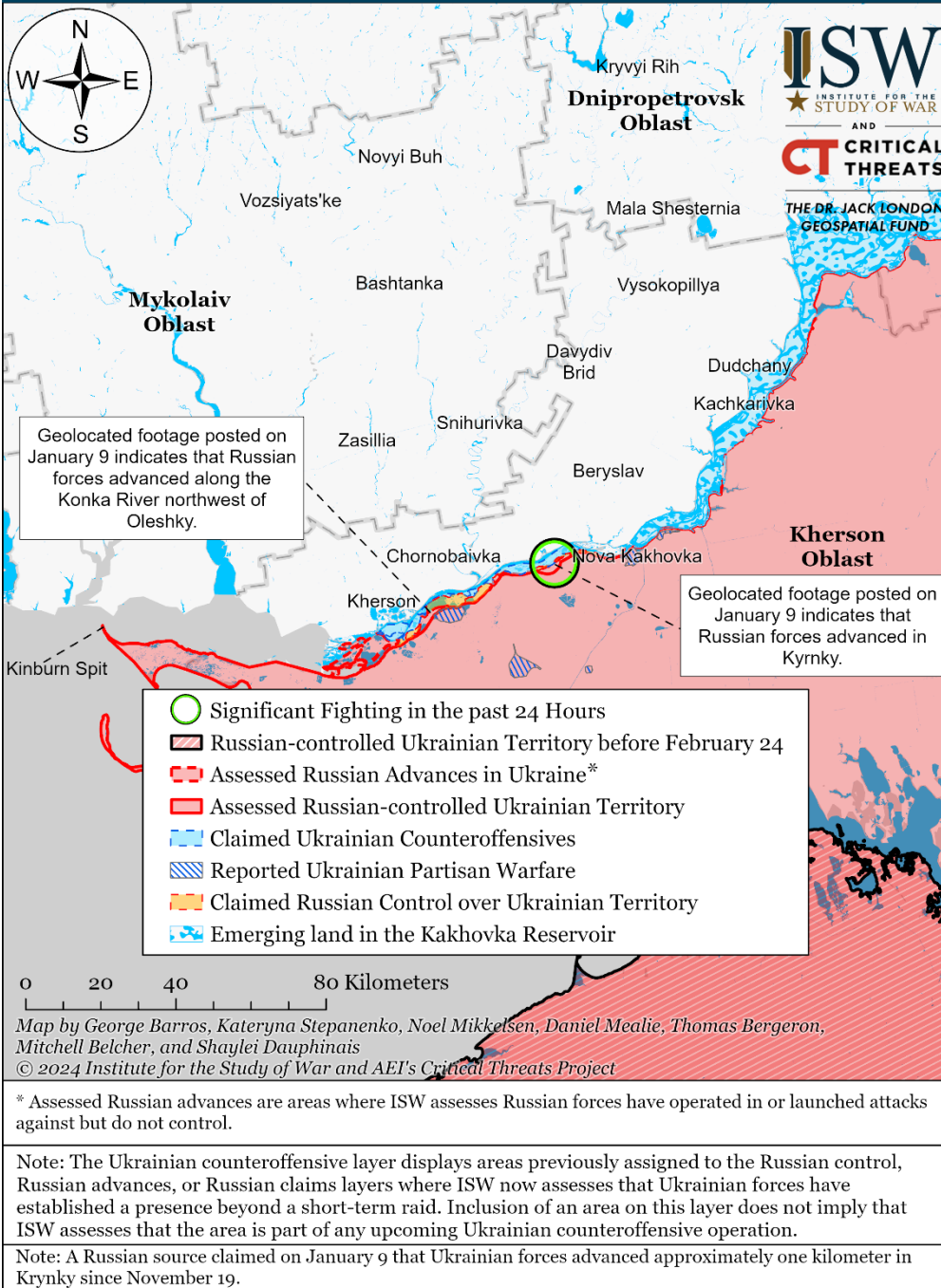
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of January 12, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian forces recently marginally advanced in Krynky on the Dnipro River's east (left) bank in Kherson Oblast. Geolocated footage published on January 12 shows that Russian forces marginally advanced in eastern Krynky.[63] Positional fighting continued on the east bank.[64] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated on January 12 that Russian forces significantly reduced their pace of attacks on the east bank in the past day.[65] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces are conducting drone strikes against west (right) bank Kherson Oblast to compensate for their inability to operate aviation in inclement weather.[66]

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



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

The Russian State Duma will consider a draft law allowing foreigners with a criminal record to serve in the Russian Armed Forces.[67] Kremlin newswire *TASS* reported on January 12 that the Tula Oblast Duma submitted the bill to the Russian State Duma, arguing that foreign citizens with criminal records have the same right to enter into a military service contract as Russian citizens who have criminal records or have committed minor crimes.[68] The Tula Oblast Duma argued that the proposal would expand the Russian military's recruiting capabilities.[69] Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on January 4 strengthening provisions for granting foreign citizens Russian citizenship in exchange for military service in Ukraine.[70] Both Putin's decree and this draft law are likely a part of ongoing efforts to coerce migrants into Russian military service.

Ukrainian intelligence reported that Russian defense industrial base (DIB) production is struggling to produce the quality and quantity of weapons needed by Russian forces amid Russian reports that Russia has improved its production of precision machine tools. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov stated on January 12 that Russia is producing more shells domestically but that Ukrainian officials have noticed a decrease in the quality of the shells.[71] GUR Spokesperson Andriy Yusov stated that Russia is attempting to increase its production of various weapons and equipment but is unable to reconstitute the stockpile Russia had before February 24, 2022, as everything that Russia currently produces is immediately committed to the war effort.[72] Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec subsidiary Kalashnikov Concern claimed on January 12 that Kalashnikov increased its production of precision machine tools by 65 percent in 2023 compared to 2022.[73] Kalashnikov claimed that it produced 126 units of industrial precision machine tools, including 27 high-precision spindles for large Russian enterprises.[74] Kalashnikov noted that Russia previously imported high-precision spindles from Italy.[75] ISW previously assessed that Russia has been increasingly attempting to develop import substitution solutions for Western-made precision machine tools in 2023, likely in preparation for Western sanctions targeting Russia's reliance on Western-made precision machine tools.[76]

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu inspected the production and assembly workshops of the Russian Tactical Missiles Corporation on January 12.[77] Tactical Missile Corporation General Director Boris Obnosov told Shoigu that the company has increased its production of high-precision weapons by a factor of five since the beginning of the full-scale invasion due to an expansion and modernization of production workshops, an increased number of personnel, increased labor productivity, and the transition to a 24/7 work schedule.[78] Shoigu stated during the visit that glide bombs have "proven themselves" during Russia's war in Ukraine.[79] Russian milbloggers amplified photos on January 12 that indicates that the Russian Tactical Missiles Corporation is producing FAB-1500M54 glide bombs with a Universal Gliding and Correction Module (UMPC).[80]

A Russian insider source claimed on January 12 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is punishing Serbian nationals whom Russian officials have recruited to serve in Russian formations in Ukraine for complaining about poor treatment by Russian command.[81] The insider source claimed that the Russian MoD prevented the Serbian nationals from transferring to Chechen "Akhmat" Spetsnaz units and instead sent the Serbians to fight with the Russian 119th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (106th VDV Division) in unspecified areas of heavy fighting (likely around Bakhmut, where the 106th VDV Division is currently deployed). The insider source claimed that the Russian MoD told the Serbians

it was “impossible” to transfer them to Akhmat units after an affiliate of Russian President Vladimir Putin negotiated their transfer to Akhmat units with Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov. The insider sources claimed that the Russian MoD ordered the military prosecutor to investigate the Serbians and charge them with refusing to follow orders. Serbian volunteers serving in the separate “Volk” unit of the Russian 119th VDV Regiment previously claimed that Russian commanders order Serbian fighters to conduct assaults under threat of violence and withhold provisions and ammunition from them.[82] ISW previously assessed that the Russian military may be assigning foreign volunteers to the 106th VDV Division to offset likely heavy personnel losses.[83]

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

See Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts.

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

Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko confirmed that Russian authorities deported over 2,100 Ukrainians, including 500 children, to Russia for medical reasons in 2023.[84] During a visit to occupied Mariupol, Murashko stated that over 2,100 individuals from occupied areas of Ukraine have been taken to Russian federal clinics for “high-tech medical care.” Murashko did not clarify how or if these individuals returned to Ukraine following their treatment in federally controlled health clinics. ISW has previously observed cases of Russian authorities requiring individuals to receive Russian passports before traveling to Russia for medical treatment, and Russian authorities may be using medical care as a coercive device to encourage passportization, as well as to deport Ukrainians to Russia and collect their personal information.[85]

Russia continues efforts to economically integrate occupied areas of Ukraine into the Russian system. Chairperson of the Russian Duma Committee on Economic Policy Maxim Topilin claimed on January 11 that Russian authorities will abolish a mineral extraction tax in occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts as part of a free economic zone (FEZ) in occupied Donbas until 2050.[86] The Russian State Duma approved a law on the creation of the FEZ in occupied Ukraine in June 2023, which was meant to ease tax burdens and insurance rates to generate economic stability in occupied areas, guided by Russian economic standards.[87] The Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Ministry of Industry and Trade noted on January 12 that from March 1, the LNR will require metal producers to require Russian-style licenses, which means that the Russian state will have oversight into the procurement, storage, processing, and sale of scrap metals.[88]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) condemned joint US and UK air and missile strikes against Houthi military targets in Yemen to maintain freedom of navigation in global maritime chokepoints on January 11.[89] The Russian MFA’s condemnation and request to hold an emergency United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting regarding the strikes are an attempt to falsely blame the US and UK for escalating tensions actually caused by Iranian-backed Houthi militants’ attacks on ships in the Red Sea.[90] Russia abstained from a UNSC vote on January 11 calling on the Houthis to stop all attacks on merchant and commercial vessels.[91] Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson

Dmitry Medvedev absurdly claimed that the US and UK conducted the Houthi strikes on January 11 to divert international attention from Ukraine.[92]

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

Nothing significant to report.

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

POWERED BY:



BABELSTREET

[1] <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-sunak-funding-uk-war-putin-b2477461.html>; <https://twitter.com/RishiSunak/status/1745759348654047402>;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-in-kyiv-uk-support-will-not-falter>

[2] <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/ugoda-pro-spivrobotnictvo-u-sferi-bezpeki-mizh-ukrayinoyu-ta-88277>

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-in-kyiv-uk-support-will-not-falter>;
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