



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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May 3, 2024, 9:05pm ET

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

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

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

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:15pm ET on May 3. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 4 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian officials continue to highlight that Russia's main goal for 2024 remains the seizure of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts as Russian forces plan for their Summer 2024 offensive operation. Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Lieutenant General Oleksandr Pavlyuk reiterated during an interview with *The Times* published on May 3 that Russia's offensive goals in 2024 are to seize all of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and that Russian forces may attempt to seize the rest of Zaporizhia Oblast in 2024 if they seize Donbas.[1] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Deputy Chief Major General Vadym Skibitskyi stated in an interview with *The Economist* published on May 2 that Russian forces will likely continue pursuing their longtime goal of reaching the administrative borders of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts over the summer as other Ukrainian officials have recently noted.[2] Pavlyuk reiterated that Russian forces have a plan to seize Kharkiv or Sumy cities but noted that it is unclear how serious this plan is or whether Russian forces will be capable of capturing one or both of the cities.[3] ISW continues to assess that Russian forces would struggle to seize Kharkiv City but that a Russian offensive operation in the area would likely draw and fix Ukrainian forces from other areas of the frontline.[4] Pavlyuk stated that Ukrainian forces are doing everything possible to stop Russian efforts to seize Chasiv Yar but noted that Russian forces have an estimated 10-to-1 artillery advantage over Ukrainian forces and "total air superiority," likely referring to Russian forces' ability to indiscriminately conduct glide bomb strikes in the area.[5] Skibitskyi stated on May 2 that Russian forces will not imminently seize Chasiv Yar although it is "probably a matter of time" before the settlement falls, which is consistent with ISW's assessment that Russian forces may take Chasiv Yar but are unlikely to do so immediately.[6]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Ukraine is also paying increased attention to the Pokrovsk (Avdiivka) direction, where Russian forces have recently made tactically significant advances and are "pressing" on Ukrainian positions.[7] Zelensky warned that Russian forces are preparing to

expand their offensive operations in Ukraine, likely referring to the anticipated Summer 2024 Russian offensive operation, and that Ukraine is facing a “new stage” of the war.[8] Pavlyuk expressed hope that US and European military assistance will arrive in frontline areas in the near future and help blunt Russian assaults this summer and contest the theater-wide initiative in the future.[9]

The first deliveries of resumed US military assistance reportedly arrived in Ukraine earlier this week, although it will likely take several additional weeks before Western weapons and ammunition arrive in frontline areas at scale. *The New York Times* reported on May 3 that the first installment of US military assistance comprised of anti-armor rockets, missiles, and 155-mm artillery shells arrived in Ukraine on April 28, four days after US President Joe Biden signed a bill providing roughly \$60 billion in military assistance to Ukraine, and that a second installment of unspecified aid arrived on April 29.[10] *The New York Times*, citing an unnamed Spanish official, reported that Spanish missiles for Patriot air defense systems recently arrived in Poland and will arrive at the frontline in Ukraine “soon.” *The New York Times* reported that Germany’s newly pledged Patriot air defense system is not expected to arrive in Ukraine until late June at the earliest but that the Patriot’s arrival could coincide with the arrival of the first F-16 fighter jets.[11] Unnamed officials told *The New York Times* that it could take several months for a substantial number of Western weapons and equipment to arrive in Ukraine, however.[12] A senior US official, citing a confidential US military assessment, stated that Russia likely will continue to make marginal gains in the east and southeast in the leadup to the May 9 Victory Day holiday but that Russian forces likely do not have enough manpower concentrated in unspecified frontline areas to conduct an immediate large-scale offensive effort. The US military assessment concluded that the Ukrainian frontline will not collapse in the near term despite severe Ukrainian ammunition shortages. The US military assessment is consistent with ISW’s ongoing assessment that Russian forces will likely attempt to build on tactical gains to pursue operationally significant gains in key sectors, such as near Chasiv Yar and Avdiivka, in the weeks before US military assistance arrives to frontline Ukrainian units at scale but that these Russian gains will not portend a collapse of the Ukrainian defense.[13]

Ukrainian officials indicated that Russian forces in Ukraine have not significantly increased in size in recent months but that the Russian military continues to improve its fighting qualities overall despite suffering widespread degradation, especially among elite units since the start of the war. Pavlyuk stated that roughly 510,000 to 515,000 Russian personnel are currently deployed in occupied Ukraine.[14] Ukrainian officials reported in January 2024 that Russian forces had roughly 462,000 personnel deployed in Ukraine and noted that this was the entire land component of the Russian military at the time.[15] Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed in December 2023 that there were 617,000 Russian personnel in the “combat zone,” likely referring to all Russian military personnel in the zone of the “special military operation,” which includes areas within Russia bordering Ukraine.[16] These figures likely encompass combat personnel and other military personnel who perform support functions and do not represent the immediate combat power that Russian forces have and can commit to offensive operations in Ukraine. Putin previously signed a decree in December 2023 claiming that the Russian military has a total of 2.039 million personnel, 1.32 million of whom are combat personnel, suggesting a roughly 60 to 40 ratio between Russian combat and non-combat personnel on average.[17] The specific breakdown between Russian combat and non-combat personnel in Ukraine is unclear. The overall marginal increase in the size of the Russian deployment to occupied Ukraine between January and April 2024 indicates that Russian forces have likely committed the majority of recently generated forces to ongoing offensive operations instead of efforts to establish strategic-level reserves.[18]

Skibitskyi stated that the current Russian military is unrecognizable from the force that launched the full-scale invasion in February 2022.[19] Skibitskyi noted that Russia’s once-elite airborne (VDV) and naval infantry elements have been completely degraded and that Russia will not be able to reconstitute them to their former combat capabilities for at least a decade.[20] Russian forces have heavily degraded relatively elite units by employing them in attritional ground assaults and counterattacks regardless of their designated functions and elite capabilities.[21] Degradation and the Russian military command’s decision to commit all forces along the frontline to more or less similar operations have transformed all Russian units in Ukraine regardless of their formal designations into motorized rifle units – mechanized infantry responsible for conducting combined arms ground assaults. Skibitskyi acknowledged that the Russian military is improving in some respects, however, and stated that the Russian military is now operating as a “single body, with a clear plan, under a single command.”[22] The Russian military has demonstrated an uneven propensity for operational, tactical, and technological innovation and learning, particularly with operational planning.[23] The Russian military is now entirely comprised of less-elite *de facto* motorized rifle units, but these units continue to innovate and adapt to fighting in Ukraine while relying on materiel and manpower advantages to increasingly pressure Ukrainian forces and exploit Ukrainian vulnerabilities.[24]

Ukrainian officials indicated that the Russian military will likely maintain its current personnel replacement rate and will not generate the significant number of available personnel needed to establish strategic-level reserves for larger-scale offensive operations in 2024. Pavlyuk stated on May 2 that Russia intends to “mobilize” about 100,000 more personnel for use in offensive operations this June and July and 300,000 more personnel by the end of 2024.[25] Pavlyuk is likely referring to ongoing crypto-mobilization efforts and efforts to recruit contract service personnel and is likely not referencing another call-up of reservists similar to Russia’s September 2022 partial mobilization. Skibitskyi stated that Russia is also “generating a division of reserves,” likely between 15,000 and 20,000 personnel, in central Russia to use in Russia’s anticipated Summer 2024 offensive. The “division of reserves” that Skibitskyi is referring to is likely included in Pavlyuk’s figure of 100,000 personnel that Russia intends to generate for use in June or July. Pavlyuk stated that Russian forces suffer about 25,000 to 30,000 killed and wounded personnel per month, indicating that Russian forces intend to generally maintain the current number of forces fighting in Ukraine in 2024 and are unlikely to generate significantly more available personnel. ISW has observed recent reports that the Russian military has intensified crypto-mobilization efforts, which are likely intended to maintain replacement rates during intensified offensive operations this spring and expected offensive operations this summer.[26] ISW continues to assess that Russia will struggle to form strategic-level reserves while sustaining the current replacement rate or an increased replacement rate during intensified offensive operations.[27] The Kremlin would likely have to conduct another wave of partial mobilization to generate the manpower required to both sustain the tempo of current Russian offensive operations and successfully form strategic-level reserves in the near term. ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin will rely on crypto-mobilization efforts and remains unlikely to conduct another unpopular wave of partial mobilization.[28]

Pavlyuk stated that neither Russian nor Ukrainian forces will be able to achieve victory in Ukraine solely through attritional warfare – a consistent throughline that Ukrainian officials and military analysts have emphasized in recent months.[29] Pavlyuk stated that the Russian military command does not care about high losses in Ukraine and that Ukraine will only be able to win the war through technological superiority and the international isolation of Russia. Former Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi notably assessed in a November 1

essay that military parity resulted in the onset of a positional front in Ukraine and that neither Russian nor Ukrainian forces would be able to break through this positional front without achieving a technological advantage over the other.[30] The rough parity in forces and means has since degraded with the delay of US military assistance to Ukraine, but Russian forces are still unable to make operational-level gains in the near term. Pavlyuk stated on May 3 that Russian forces have advantages over Ukrainian forces in artillery and aviation but suggested that Ukrainian forces can obtain a technological advantage over Russian forces using drones.[31] Pavlyuk stated that drones have enabled both Russian and Ukrainian forces to conduct aerial reconnaissance up to 30 kilometers behind the front line and that neither force can concentrate forces within 30 kilometers of the front for an offensive effort. Pavlyuk noted that drones have forced both Russian and Ukrainian forces to operate in smaller infantry groups to avoid the enemy's reconnaissance fire complex (RFC) and noted that Ukrainian forces have moved away from moving in battalion- or company-sized groups. Pavlyuk's statements are consistent with ISW's recent observations and forecasts about Russian forces' offensive prospects, and Russian forces seem content to make grinding, attritional gains at the tactical level in the near term despite the disproportionately limited benefit these gains offer to Russia at such a high cost.[32]

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu issued a notably candid assessment of recent Russian advances in Ukraine and refrained from sweeping claims about the success of the Russian war effort, possibly in an attempt to temper domestic expectations about Russia's near future successes in Ukraine ahead of the summer 2024 Russian offensive operation. Shoigu claimed during a conference call with Russian military leadership that Russian forces have seized 547 square kilometers of territory in Ukraine since January 1, 2024.[33] ISW has observed evidence confirming that Russian forces have seized approximately 516 square kilometers in 2024 as of April 29, and Shoigu's claim is notably more realistic than previous claims that surpassed ISW's assessed Russian advances by roughly 100 square kilometers.[34] Shoigu also reiterated the Russian Ministry of Defense's (MoD) previous claims that Russian forces have seized Novobakhmutivka, Semenivka, and Berdychi and ongoing Kremlin information operations aimed at overestimating Ukrainian manpower and equipment losses.[35] Shoigu claimed that Russian forces are continuing to break into Ukrainian strongholds along the entire frontline and are forcing Ukrainian forces to retreat from their positions in unspecified areas. Shoigu previously used a similar conference call in December 2023 to downplay Russian operations in Ukraine as an "active defense," likely in an effort to temper expectations about Russia's forces' months-long operation to seize Avdiivka.[36] Shoigu may hope to similarly temper domestic expectations about Russian forces anticipated Summer 2024 offensive operation, particularly since Russian forces will be facing better-equipped Ukrainian forces than the Russian military command likely previously expected.

A Russian insider source, who has routinely been accurate about past Russian military command changes, claimed on May 2 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has replaced several high-level Russian commanders in recent months. The insider source claimed that the Russian MoD recently replaced Eastern Military District (EMD) Commander Colonel General Sergei Kuzmenko with Lieutenant General Alexander Sanchik and Southern Military District [SMD] Commander Colonel General Sergei Kuzovlev with Colonel General Gennady Anashkin in late March 2024.[37] The insider source claimed that former Western Military District (WMD) Commander Colonel General Yevgeny Nikiforov dropped out of an ongoing competition for the commander of the newly reformed Moscow Military District (MMD) and is now the Chief of Staff of the Russian Ground Forces.[38] The insider source did not offer claims about the command of the newly reformed Leningrad Military District [LMD], which is reportedly under the command of former Russian Ground

Forces Chief of Staff Colonel General Alexander Lapin, or about the “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces, which is under the command of Russian Airborne (VDV) Forces Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky.[39] The insider source claimed that the Russian MoD also appointed Lieutenant General Alexei Podivilov to SMD Chief of Staff and that the role of EMD Chief of Staff is currently vacant.[40] The insider source claimed that the Russian MoD has made no changes to the command of the Central Military District [CMD], which Colonel General Andrey Mordvichev has commanded since January 2023 with Lieutenant General Denis Lyamin as his chief of staff since October 2023.[41] Russia’s military district commanders have all recently commanded a corresponding “grouping of forces” in Ukraine, and it is highly likely that the new commanders also assumed responsibility of their military district’s respective grouping of forces.[42] ISW cannot confirm the insider source’s claims but notes that the source has been highly accurate about past military command changes.[43]

The Russian military has increasingly highlighted Mordvichev in recent months and credited him with the capture of Avdiivka in mid-February 2024.[44] The Kremlin has decided to heavily obscure the status of current military district commanders in recent months, and Mordvichev’s public prominence and the lack of changes within the CMD at a time of reported widespread changes suggests that Mordvichev has the favor of his superiors and/or the Kremlin. The Russian military command has attempted to establish the Central Grouping of Forces (comprised almost entirely of CMD elements) as an operational maneuver force west of Avdiivka, and elements of four CMD brigades are currently attempting to exploit a tactical penetration northwest of Avdiivka.[45] The Russian military command may also believe that command changes may be too disruptive to what it views as an offensive operation in the Avdiivka area that could achieve tactically or even operationally significant gains.

The Kremlin has made previous command changes following the culmination of Ukrainian and Russian operational efforts and in preparation for previous offensive operations, notably publicly confirming the identities of all four military district commanders ahead of its failed Winter-Spring 2023 offensive effort in eastern Ukraine.[46] The Kremlin may have decided to change the leadership of the military districts in preparation for its expected summer offensive effort, which is forecasted to begin in late May or in June.[47] Anashkin’s reported appointment to SMD commander in late March 2024 notably aligns with the intensification of the Southern Grouping of Forces’ effort to seize Chasiv Yar, and Anashkin may have assumed command of the SMD (and likely the Southern Grouping of Forces) to specifically oversee the effort to seize Chasiv Yar and possible subsequent offensive operations in the direction of Kostyantynivka.[48] Russian President Vladimir Putin may currently seek to reduce Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu’s power by balancing him with rivals, and these reported recent command changes may play into factional balancing efforts as previous command changes have.[49] Command changes do not necessarily have immediate battlefield and operational effects, however, and it will likely take some time before new commanders prove their abilities one way or another, should reports of these changes prove accurate.

NATO stated on May 2 that it is “deeply concerned” about intensifying Russian hybrid operations on NATO member territory and that these operations constitute a threat to Allied security. NATO stated that it is concerned about recent malign activities including those resulting in recent investigations and charges in Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and the United Kingdom (UK).[50] NATO reported that these malign activities are part of intensifying Russian hybrid activities including “sabotage, acts of violence, cyber and electronic interference, disinformation campaigns” that Russia conducts directly and through proxies. NATO stated that it will

continue to boost its resilience, counter hybrid threats, and ensure that member states are prepared to deter and defend against such attacks. The Norwegian Police Security Service reported on May 2 that it discovered an unspecified number of Russian intelligence agents operating in Vestland County who may have been preparing to sabotage critical infrastructure.[51] The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) summoned the Russian Charge d’Affaires in Germany on May 3 over reports that Russian hackers under the Russian General Staff’s Main Directorate’s (GRU) control conducted cyberattacks against Germany’s Social Democratic Party as well as German logistics, defense, aerospace, and information technology (IT) companies in 2023.[52] ISW also observed recent reports that the Kremlin is pursuing hybrid operations against NATO member states using GPS jamming and sabotaging military logistics.[53]

UK Foreign Minister David Cameron announced the United Kingdom’s intent to provide long-term support for Ukraine and stated that Ukrainian forces can conduct long-range strikes within Russia with UK-provided weapons. Cameron visited Kyiv on May 2 and 3 and stated that Ukraine has a right to self-defense by striking military targets inside Russia “just as Russia is striking inside Ukraine” and that the UK has no issue if Ukraine chooses to use UK-provided weapons to conduct these strikes.[54] ISW has not yet observed Ukraine conduct strikes against military or industrial targets inside Russia using Western-provided weapons. Cameron announced that the UK intends to provide three billion pounds (about \$3.7 billion) of annual military assistance to Ukraine “for as long as is necessary.”[55] Cameron also met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal about assistance to Ukraine and began negotiations for a new agreement on a century-long UK-Ukraine relationship to build strong security, trade, scientific, technological, educational, and cultural relationships.[56]

Kremlin officials reacted to Cameron’s statement about Ukrainian strikes on May 3 with boilerplate rhetoric accusing the UK of “provocations” against Russia. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated that the Kremlin views Cameron’s statement as a “direct escalation.”[57] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova accused the West of openly encouraging “Ukrainian crimes” of striking Russian territory and threatened a “crushing blow of retaliation” against Western states if Ukraine strikes the Kerch Strait Bridge (which is notably in occupied Crimea, not Russian territory).[58] Russian ultranationalist milbloggers largely parroted the Russian officials’ outrage, with one milblogger calling the statement a *casus belli*. [59] Russia is extraordinarily unlikely to initiate an open war with NATO, which Russia would certainly lose at this time because Ukraine uses Western-provided weapons to strike legitimate targets in Russia. Russian officials have levied this rhetoric for months in an effort to coerce the West into self-deterrence from providing Ukraine with the weapons it needs to defend against the Russian invasion and striking legitimate Russian military targets both in occupied Ukraine and in Russia.[60] Cameron’s May 3 statement permitting the use of UK weapons in long-range strikes against Russian territory as well as the recent US decision to provide long-range ATACMS to Ukraine both directly counter this Russian effort.

Russian President Vladimir Putin attempted to downplay recent tension in Tajik-Russian relations in a May 3 phone call with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon discussing Russian government crackdowns against Central Asian migrants living in and entering Russia following the March 22 Crocus City Hall terrorist attack. The Kremlin stated that Putin and Rahmon “exchanged views” about cooperation to fight terrorist threats and issues regarding migration.[61] The Kremlin reported that both leaders blamed “certain forces, including those from Tajikistan” for attempting to “artificially escalate” the situation regarding labor migrants’

entry into Russia, but expressed confidence that Tajikistan and Russia could jointly suppress these efforts and maintain their “time-tested fraternal relations.” The Tajik readout of the phone conversation notably did not include such accusations.[62] Putin and Rahmon both agreed to improve ministerial and departmental coordination regarding migration and to fight terrorism and extremism.[63] Putin’s call with Rahmon was likely an attempt to downplay and control recent public complaints from senior Tajik officials regarding the treatment of Tajik citizens living in Russia and mass detentions of Tajik citizens entering Russia at airports and border checkpoints.[64]

The Uzbek Foreign Labor Migration Agency’s office in Russia claimed on May 3 that Russian law enforcement did not detain Uzbek citizens at Vnukovo, Sheremetyevo, Domodedovo airports in Moscow or at border crossings in Orenburg, Samara, and Saratov oblasts as some Telegram channels claimed.[65] Human rights and migrant rights activist Valentina Chupik told Russian opposition news outlet *Agentstvo* on May 2 that starting on May 24 Russian airports detained about 4,500 migrants at Russian airports and refused a similar number from entering Russia at land border crossings. Chupik stated that about half of the detainees were Uzbek citizens while Kyrgyz and Tajik citizens each made up a quarter of the detainees.[66] Remittances from Russia to Uzbekistan appear to be declining and consist of a smaller portion of Uzbekistan’s yearly GDP in comparison to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.[67]

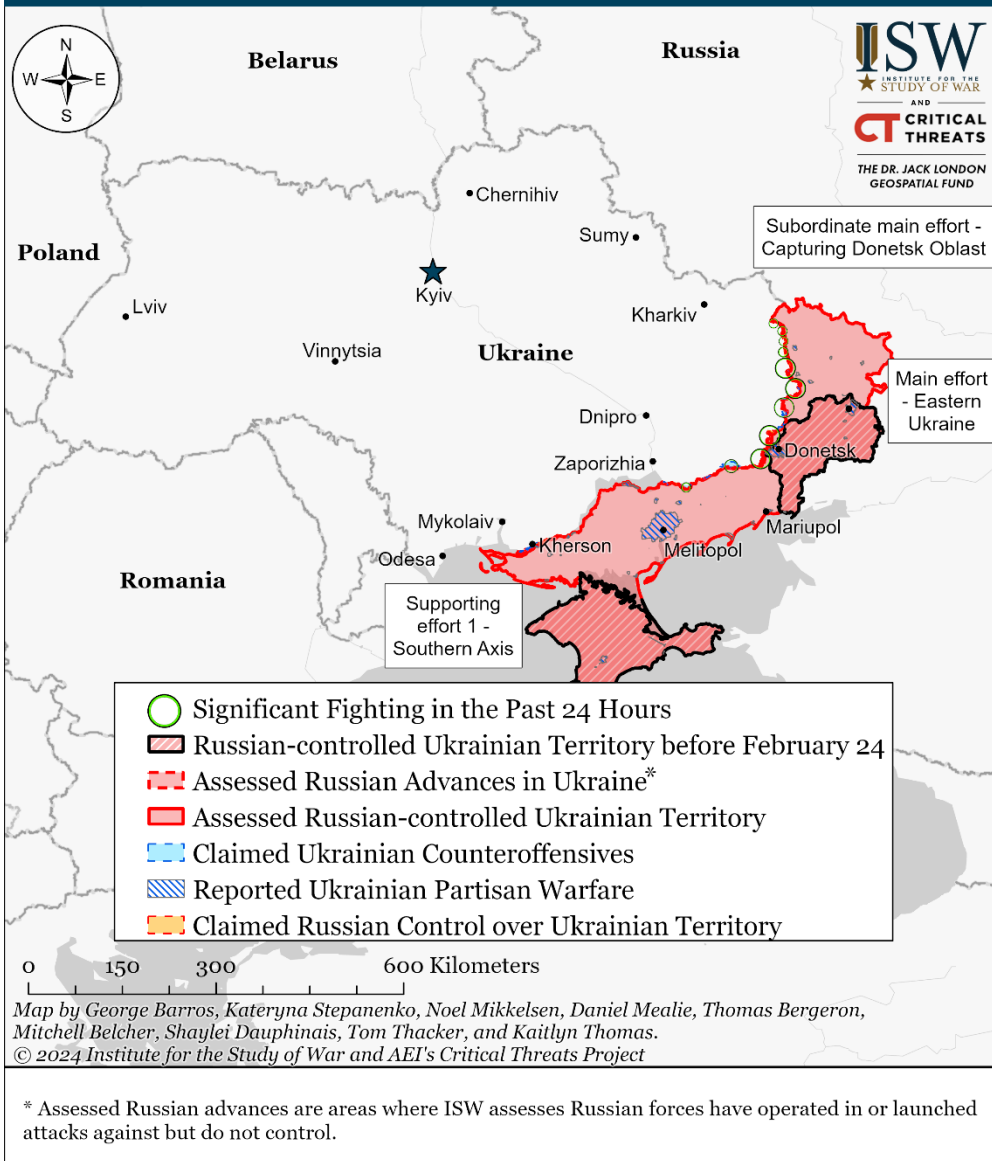
Reuters reported on May 2 that Russian military personnel are operating at a military base currently hosting US forces in Niger.[68] A senior US defense official told *Reuters* that Russian forces are using a separate hangar from US forces at Airbase 101 near the Diori Hamani International Airport in Niamey, Niger. The official told *Reuters* that the situation is “not great” but is manageable in the short term. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin stated during a press conference that Russian forces are in a separate compound and do not have access to US forces or equipment and that he currently does not see a significant issue in terms of US force protection.[69] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitri Peskov did not confirm or deny reports that Russian forces are present at the base but stated that Russia is “developing ties” with various African countries.[70] The American Enterprise Institute’s Critical Threats Project (CTP) reported on April 12 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD)-controlled Africa Corps arrived in Niger and assessed that the Africa Corps’ arrival will challenge US efforts to remain in Niger in the immediate term and create long-term opportunities for the Kremlin to create conventional and irregular threats that strategically pressure Europe.[71]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian officials continue to highlight that Russia’s main goal for 2024 remains the seizure of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts as Russian forces plan for their summer 2024 offensive operation.**
- **The first deliveries of resumed US military assistance reportedly arrived in Ukraine earlier this week, although it will likely take several additional weeks before Western weapons and ammunition arrive to frontline areas at scale.**
- **Ukrainian officials indicated that Russian forces in Ukraine have not significantly increased in size in recent months but that the Russian military continues to improve its fighting qualities overall despite suffering widespread degradation, especially among elite units since the start of the war.**
- **Ukrainian officials indicated that the Russian military will likely maintain its current personnel replacement rate and will not generate the significant number of available personnel needed to establish strategic-level reserves for larger-scale offensive operations in 2024.**

- **Pavlyuk stated that neither Russian nor Ukrainian forces will be able to achieve victory in Ukraine solely through attritional warfare – a consistent throughline that Ukrainian officials and military analysts have emphasized in recent months.**
- **Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu issued a notably candid assessment of recent Russian advances in Ukraine and refrained from sweeping claims about the success of the Russian war effort, possibly in an attempt to temper domestic expectations about Russia’s near future successes in Ukraine ahead of the summer 2024 Russian offensive operation.**
- **A Russian insider source, who has routinely been accurate about past Russian military command changes, claimed on May 2 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has replaced several high-level Russian commanders in recent months.**
- **NATO stated on May 2 that it is “deeply concerned” about intensifying Russian hybrid operations on NATO member territory and that these operations constitute a threat to Allied security.**
- **UK Foreign Minister David Cameron announced the United Kingdom’s intent to provide long-term support for Ukraine and stated that Ukrainian forces can conduct long-range strikes within Russia with UK-provided weapons.**
- **Russian forces recently marginally advanced near Kupyansk, Avdiivka, and Donetsk City.**
- **Rostec General Director Sergei Chemezov announced that Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec is increasing its production of all variants of guided glide bombs during a May 3 meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 3, 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.

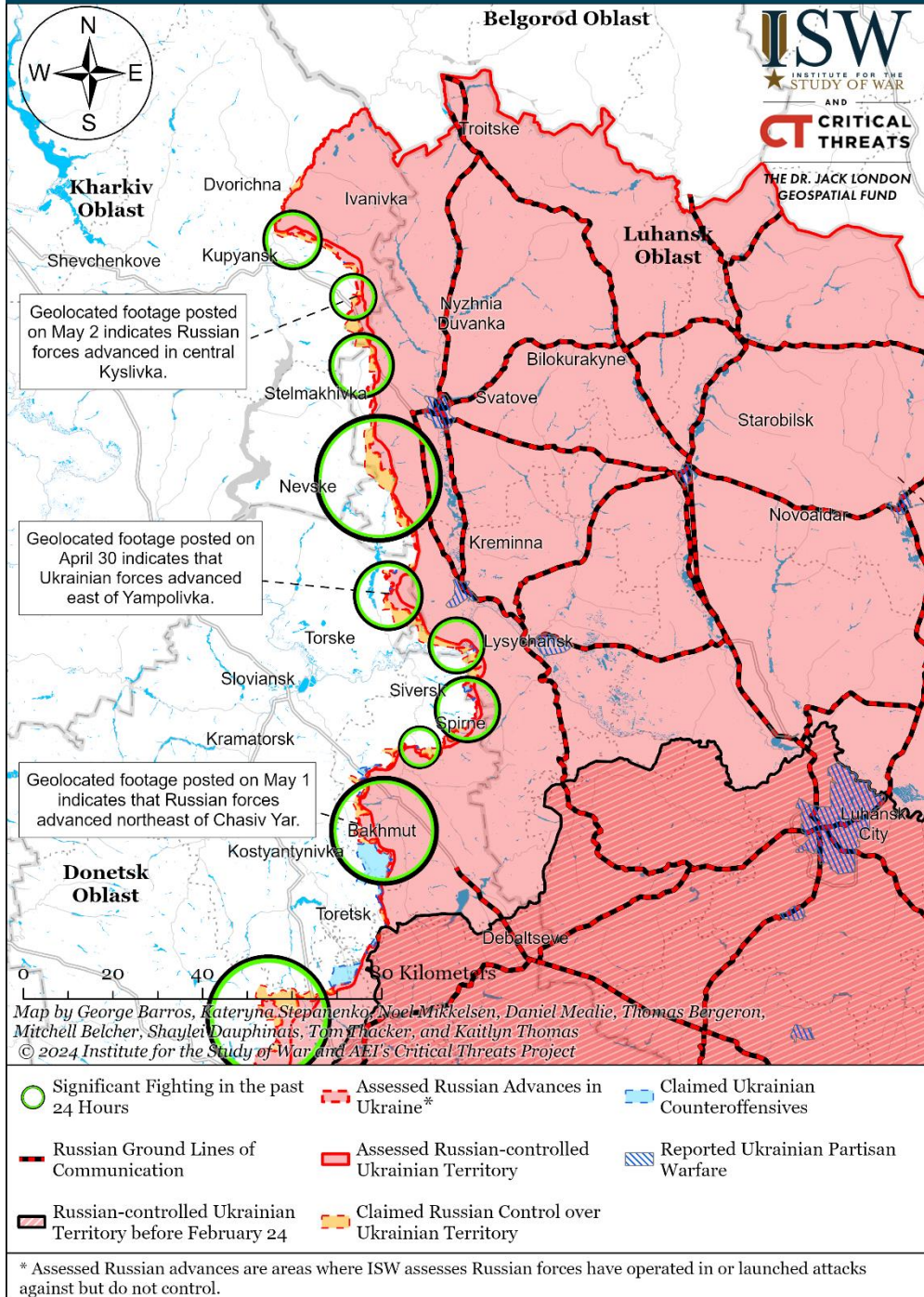
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety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

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

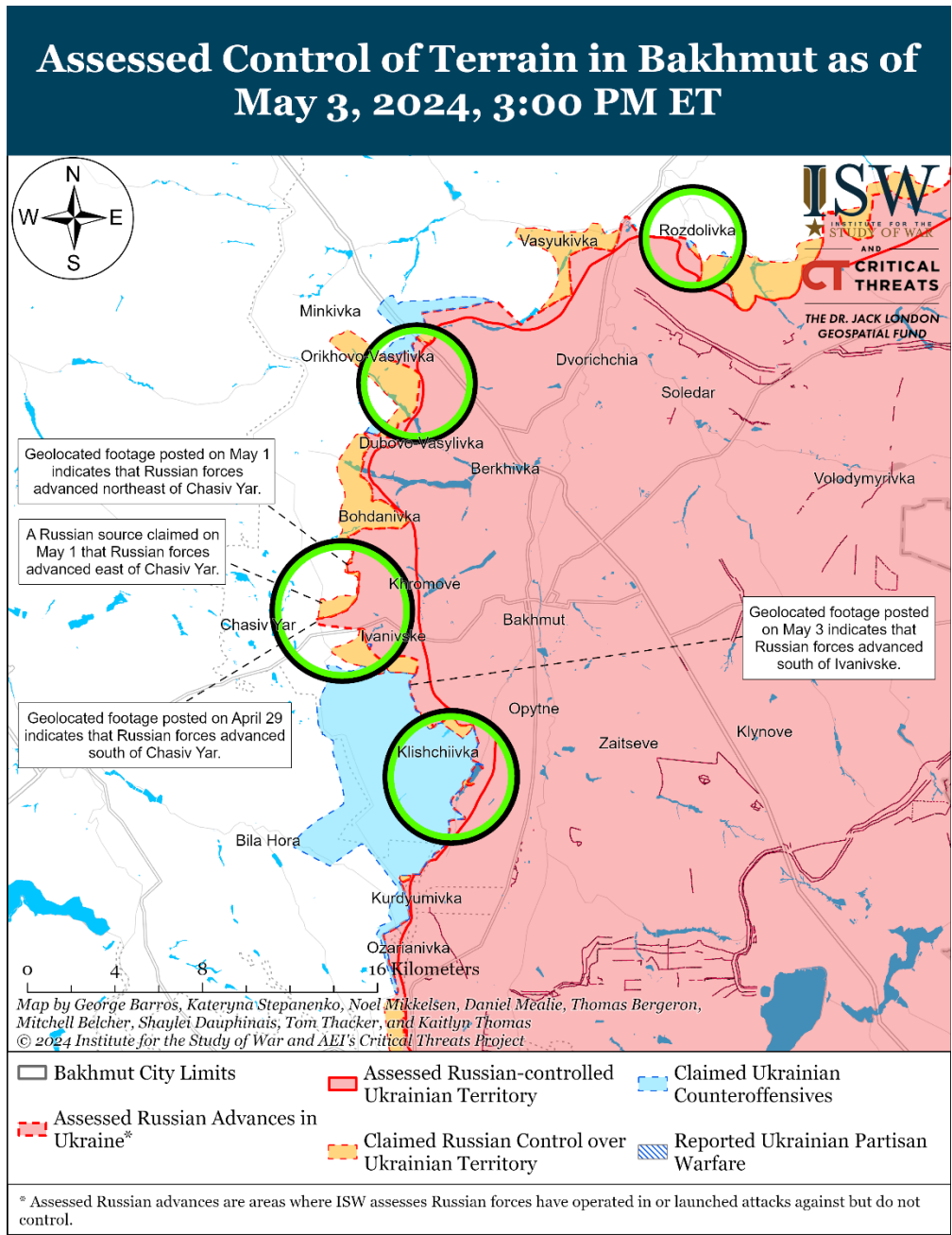
Russian forces recently advanced southeast of Kupyansk amid continued fighting on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on May 3. Geolocated footage published on May 2 shows a Russian armored vehicle, reportedly of the Russian 1st Guards Tank Army (Moscow Military District [MMD]) operating in central Kyslivka (southeast of Kupyansk).[72] Russian milbloggers claimed on May 3 that elements of the Russian 47th Tank Division (1st Guards Tank Army [GTA]) also achieved a tactical breakthrough immediately south of Kyslivka towards Kotlyarivka and advanced 480 meters in depth, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[73] Kharkiv Oblast Head Oleh Synehubov reported that Russian forces in the Kupyansk direction have reconstituted their assault units with more equipment and fresh convict recruits and renewed assault operations.[74] Synehubov stated that Russian forces periodically focus on different directions along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line to find weaknesses in the Ukrainian defense and are currently focusing on the Kyslivka and Tabaiivka (both southeast of Kupyansk) directions. Fighting also continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Stelmakhivka and Berestove; southwest of Svatove near Novoyehorivka, Hrekivka, Makiivka, and Nevske; west of Kreminna near Terny, Yampolivka, and Torske; and south of Kreminna near the Serebryanske forest area and Bilohorivka.[75]

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



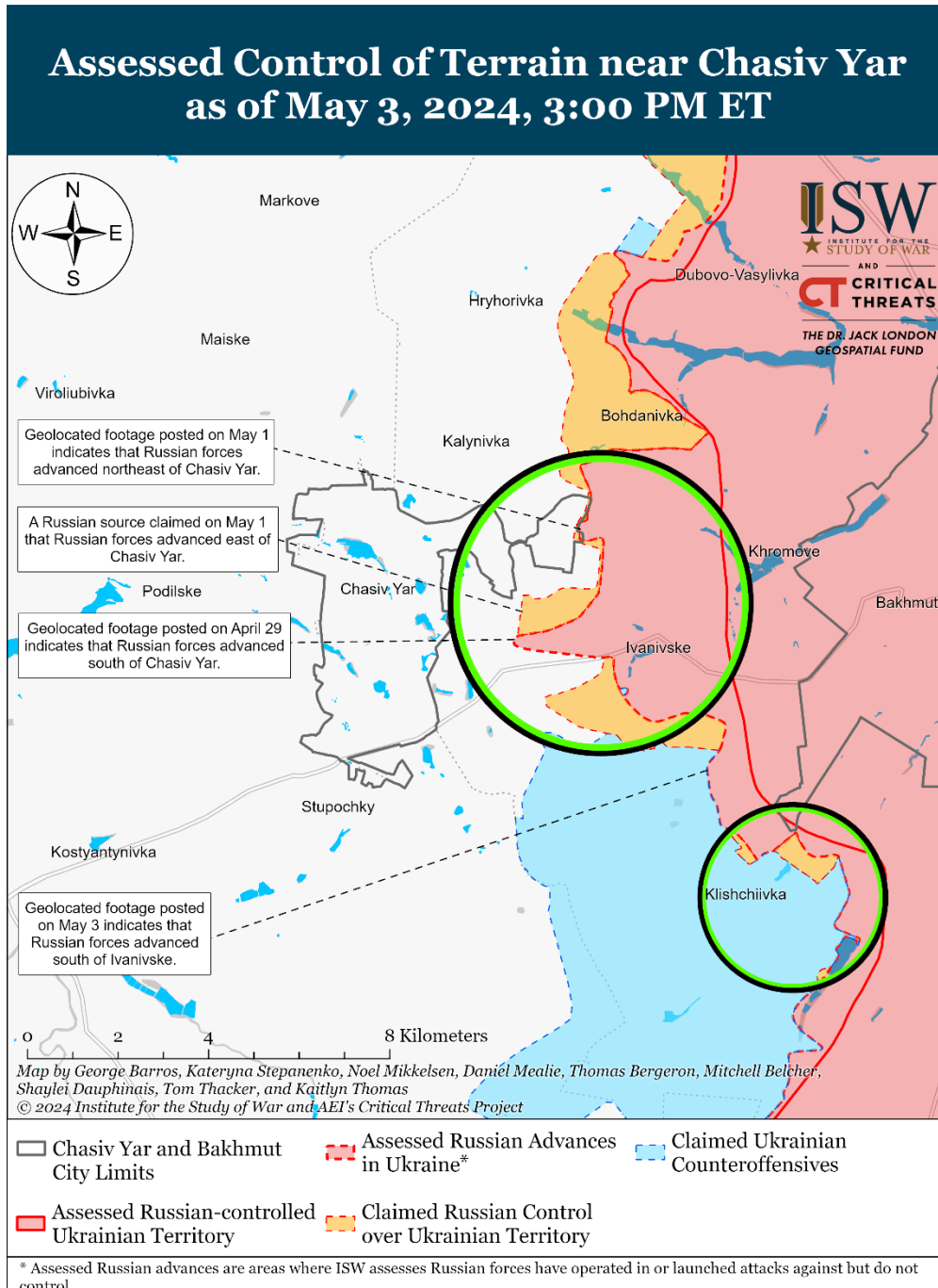
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Positional engagements continued in the Siversk direction (northeast of Bakhmut) on May 3, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks east of Siversk near Verkhnokamyanske, southeast of Siversk near Spirne and Vyimka, and southwest of Siversk near Rozdolivka.[76]



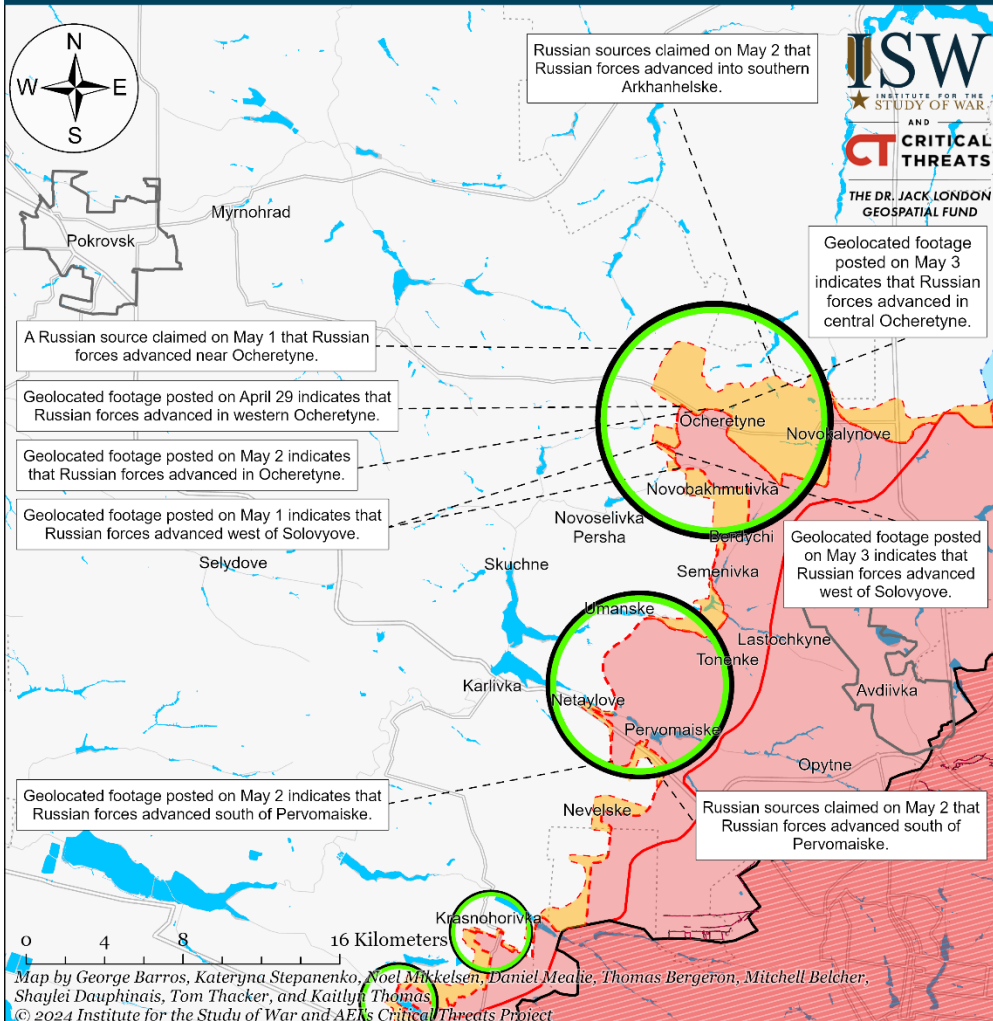
Russian forces continued assaults east of Chasiv Yar on May 3, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are improving their tactical positions near Chasiv Yar through small infantry-led assaults and denied Ukrainian reports that Russian forces

aim to seize Chasiv Yar by May 9, claiming that Russian forces will wait until Ukrainian forces in Chasiv Yar are sufficiently vulnerable to intensify offensive operations.[77] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Nazar Voloshyn stated that Russian forces are taking significant personnel losses during infantry-led “meat assaults” in the Chasiv Yar area.[78] Fighting continued northeast of Chasiv Yar near Bohdanivka, near the Novyi Microraiion in eastern Chasiv Yar, east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske, and southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[79] Elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division, 17th Artillery Brigade (likely a new unit), and 58th Spetsnaz Battalion (1st Donetsk People’s Republic [DNR] Army Corps [AC]) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.[80]



Russian forces recently marginally advanced northwest of Avdiivka amid continued positional fighting in the area on May 3. Geolocated footage published on May 3 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced within central Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka).[81] Additional geolocated footage published on May 3 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced west of Solovyove (south of Ocheretyne and northwest of Avdiivka).[82] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces control part or most of Arkhanhelske (northeast of Ocheretyne and north of Avdiivka) and one milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced 3.85 kilometers wide and two kilometers in depth into central Arkhanhelske.[83] A Ukrainian serviceman expressed concern about recent Russian advances near Arkhanhelske and claimed that these advances could complicate Ukrainian defensive efforts in the area by allowing Russian forces to conduct a wider range of possible offensive operations from Ocheretyne.[84] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced along three windbreaks east of Novooleksandrivka (northwest of Ocheretyne and Avdiivka); northwest of Keramik (northeast of Ocheretyne and north of Avdiivka); towards Novopokrovske and Sokil (both southwest of Ocheretyne and west of Avdiivka) from Solovyove; up to 200 meters in depth west of Semenivka and Berdychi (both just northwest of Avdiivka); and in the direction of Nevelske from Pervomaiske (both southwest of Avdiivka).[85] A Russian milblogger emphasized that Russian forces must advance to Ukraine's next defensive line as quickly as possible and gain a foothold in the area before US military assistance arrives to Ukrainian forces near Avdiivka.[86] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are focusing efforts to consolidate their flanks before making further advances and asserted that this shows that Russian frontline commanders have become more competent.[87] Fighting also continued northwest of Avdiivka near Kalynove and west of Avdiivka near Umanske, Yasnobrodivka, and Netaylove.[88]

Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of May 3, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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A Russian source claimed on May 1 that Russian forces advanced near Ocheretyne.

Geolocated footage posted on April 29 indicates that Russian forces advanced in western Ocheretyne.

Geolocated footage posted on May 2 indicates that Russian forces advanced in Ocheretyne.

Geolocated footage posted on May 1 indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Solovyove.

Geolocated footage posted on May 3 indicates that Russian forces advanced in central Ocheretyne.

Geolocated footage posted on May 3 indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Solovyove.

Geolocated footage posted on May 2 indicates that Russian forces advanced south of Pervomaiske.

Russian sources claimed on May 2 that Russian forces advanced south of Pervomaiske.

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Shaylei Dauphinais, Tom Thacker, and Kaitlyn Thomas.
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- Avdiivka and Pokrovsk City Limits
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Field Fortifications

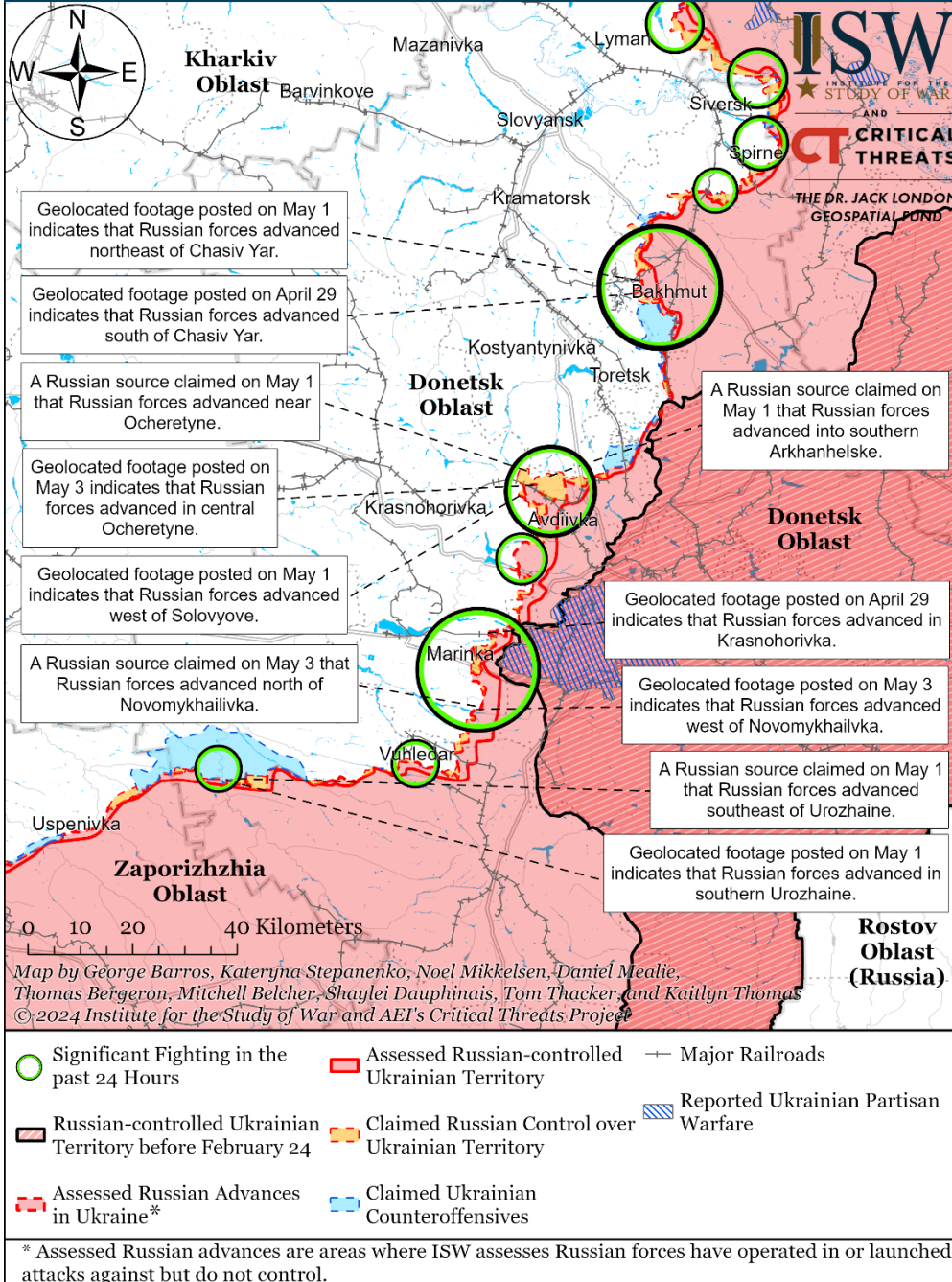
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on May 3 that Russian forces advanced along a 3.85 kilometer wide and two kilometer deep frontline in central Arkhanhelske. A Russian source claimed that Russian forces advanced 200 meters west of Semenivka and Berdychi. A Russian source claimed on May 2 that Russian forces advanced 3.85 kilometers wide and two kilometers deep into central Arkhanhelske. A Russian source claimed on May 1 that Russian forces advanced 5.2 kilometers wide and 1.4 kilometers deep near Novokalynove and Keramik. A Russian source claimed on May 1 that Russian forces advanced 900 meters wide and 630 meters deep east of Novooleksandrivka. A Russian source claimed on May 1 that Russian forces advanced 200 meters towards Sokil. A Russian source claimed on April 30 that Russian forces advanced 1.75 kilometers wide and 1.15 kilometers deep northwest of Ocheretyne as well as 2.75 kilometers wide and 1.52 kilometers deep near Keramik. A Russian source claimed on April 29 that Russian forces advanced two kilometers along a 1.2-kilometer-wide front and seized two-and-one-half square kilometers of territory northwest of Ocheretyne.

Russian forces recently marginally advanced southwest of Donetsk City amid continued fighting west and southwest of Donetsk City on May 3. Geolocated footage published on May 3 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced northwest and west of Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk

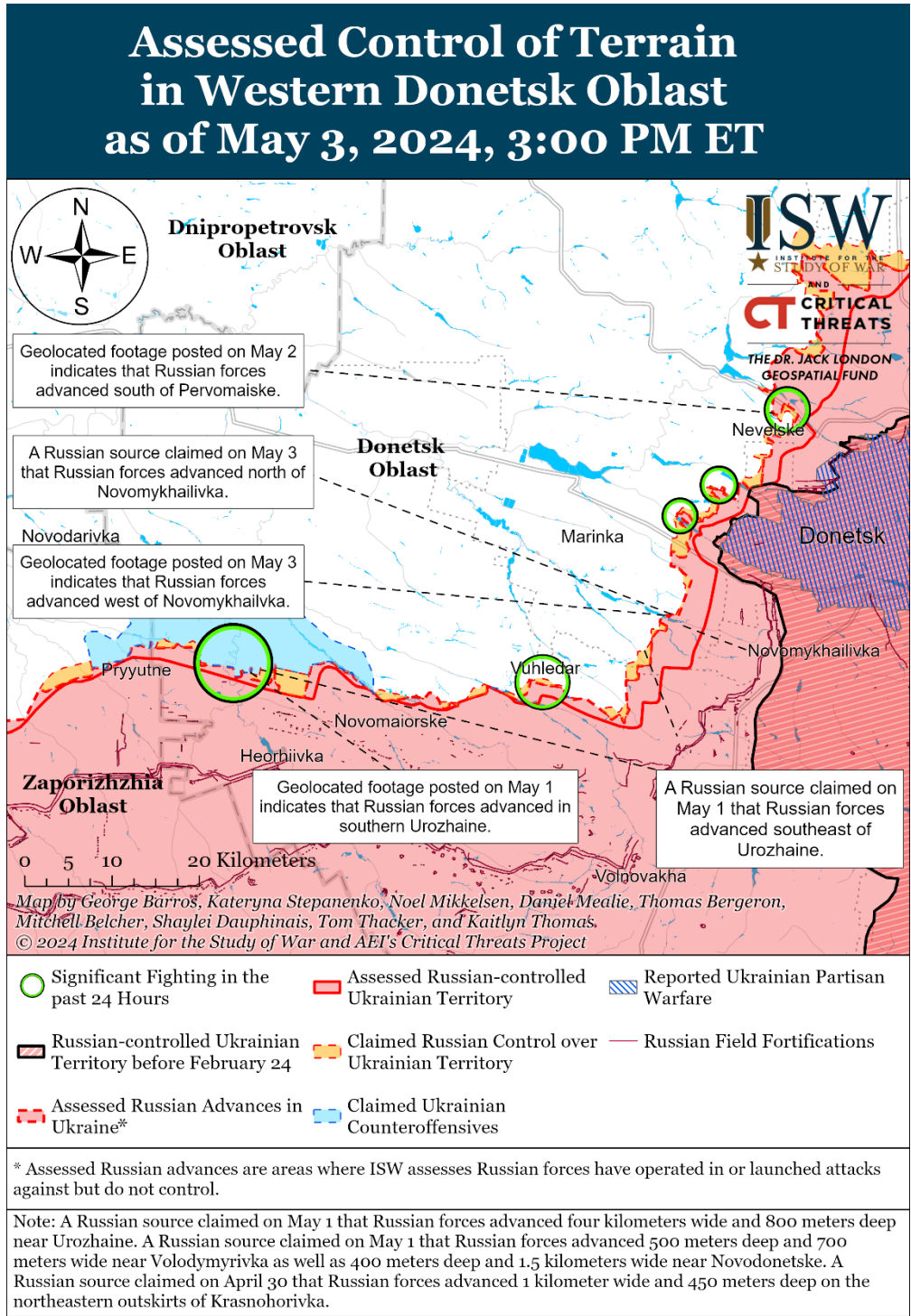
City).[89] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are advancing from Novomykhailivka towards Paraskoviivka (southwest of Donetsk City).[90] Fighting continued west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Kostyantynivka and Vodyane.[91] Elements of the Russian 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) are reportedly operating near Novomykhailivka and elements of the Russian 238th Artillery Brigade (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Krasnohorivka.[92]

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



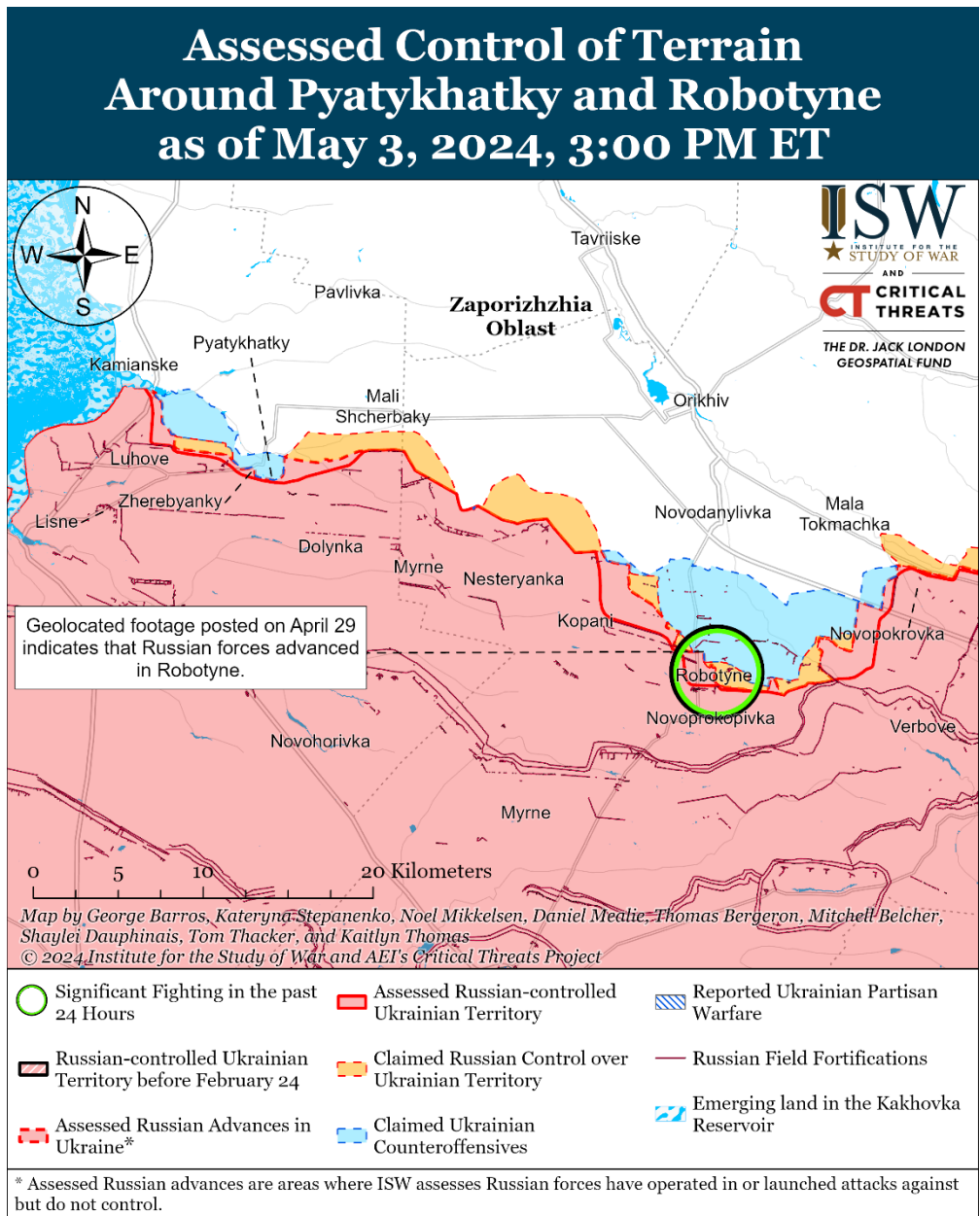
Fighting continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on May 3 but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced on the southern outskirts of Urozhaine (south of Velyka Novosilka), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[93] Positional fighting also continued near Staromayorske (south of Velyka

Novosilka).[94] A Russian milblogger amplified footage of Russian aircraft recently striking a bridge across the Mokri Yaly River connecting Velyka Novosilka with Vremivka.[95] Elements of the Russian 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating near Hulyaipole in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast.[96]

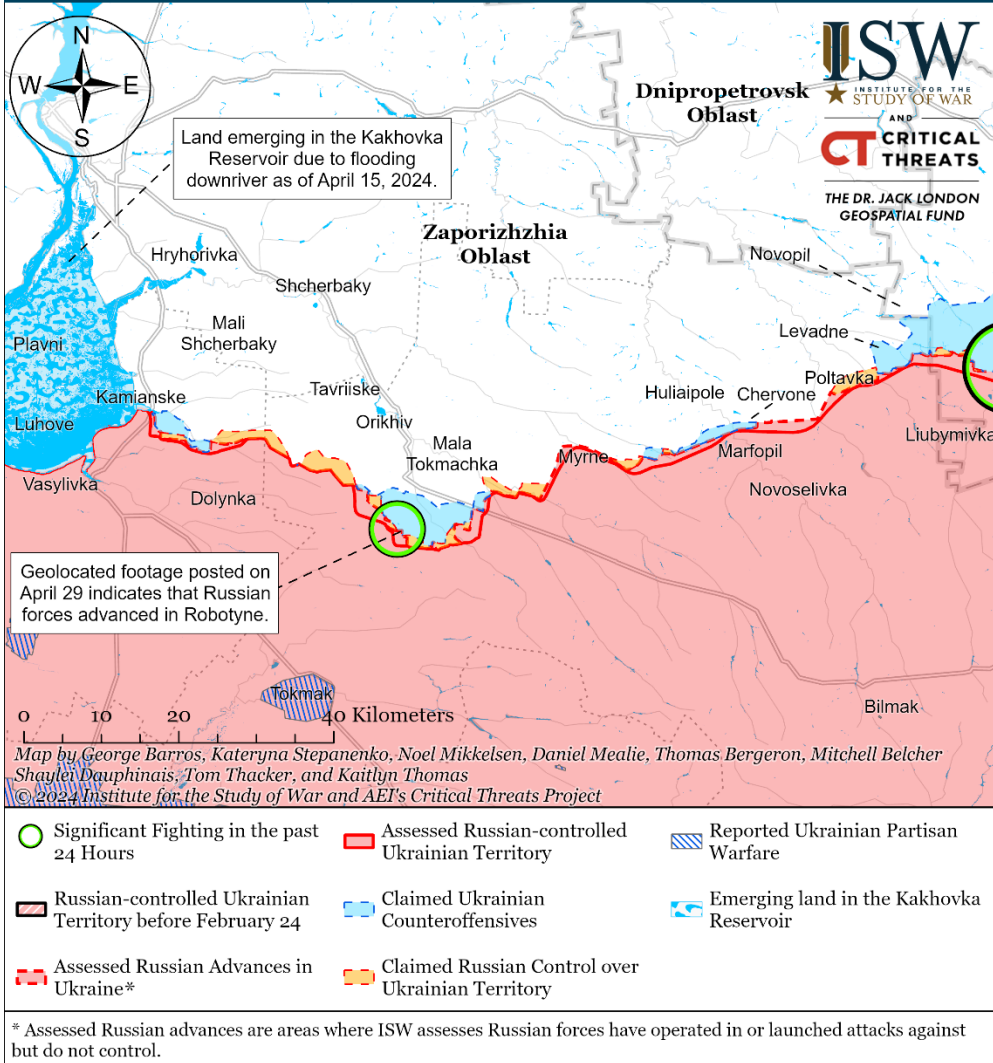


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Positional fighting continued near Robotyne and Verbove (east of Robotyne) in western Zaporizhia Oblast on May 3.[97] Several milbloggers noted that Russian forces have failed to make more significant tactical gains in the Robotyne area despite conducting routine frontal assaults against the settlement for several months.[98] One milblogger claimed that the seizure of Robotyne would only offer Russian forces a small informational victory.[99] Elements of the Russian 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) and the 7th Airborne (VDV) Division are reportedly operating near Robotyne.[100]



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



Positional engagements continued in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast and near islands in the Dnipro River Delta on May 3. Positional fighting continued near Krynky, and Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk stated that small Russian assault groups are unsuccessfully trying to regain lost positions on Netryha Island (southwest of Kherson City).[101] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have recently intensified night-time raids in an unspecified part of the Dnipro River with first-person view (FPV) drone and artillery support.[102] Elements of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet [BSF]) are reportedly operating in the Krynky area.[103] A Russian milblogger, who has an avowed bias against VDV and “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky, continued to claim on May 2 that elements of the 76th VDV Division are preparing to redeploy from the Robotyne area to the Krynky area to relieve elements of the 104th VDV Division.[104] ISW has not yet observed

confirmation that elements of the 76th VDV Division are planning to or have redeployed from the Robotyne area to elsewhere in Ukraine, however.[105]



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

Russian forces conducted limited missile strikes against Ukraine on May 2 and May 3, primarily targeting Kharkiv Oblast. Ukrainian officials reported on May 3 that Russian forces struck Chuhuiv, Kharkiv Oblast with two S-300 missiles and civilian objects in Derhachi and Kholodnohirskiy raions with glide bombs, including a D-30 universal joint glide munition (UMPB).[106] Kharkiv Oblast Prosecutor's General Office reported on May 2 that Russian forces struck a non-functioning enterprise near Ostroverkhivka on May 2 with an unspecified number of Grom E-1 missiles.[107] A Russian milblogger amplified drone footage on May 2 purporting to show Russian forces striking a Ukrainian IRIS-T air defense system near Ostroverkhivka with two unspecified missiles.[108] ISW cannot verify that Russian forces did strike a Ukrainian IRIS-T air defense system near Ostroverkhivka. Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk reported that Russian aircraft struck Snake Island, Odesa Oblast with an unspecified type and number of missiles on May 3.[109]

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

Rostec General Director Sergei Chemezov announced that Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec is increasing its production of all variants of guided glide bombs during a May 3 meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin. Chemezov stated that Rostec and JSC Tactical Missile Corporation continue to work to adapt aerial bombs to unguided and guided glide bombs with unified planning and correction modules (UMPC).[110] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that guided glide bombs with UMPC allow Russian aircraft to conduct strikes a "safe distance" from the frontline.[111] ISW previously assessed that Russian forces used guided and unguided glide bomb strikes to tactical effect in their seizure of Avdiivka in February 2024, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated in late April 2024 that Russian forces had used over 9,000 glide bombs against Ukraine since the start of 2024.[112]

The Kremlin-controlled Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) continues to provide support for Russian military operations in Ukraine. ROC Metropolitan Kirill of Stavropol and Nevinnomysk stated on April 22 that Russian forces operating in Ukraine currently have 309 ROC chaplains but need an additional 1,300 full-time chaplains.[113] Kirill claimed that 60 to 70 percent of the total ROC representatives working in occupied Ukraine are "volunteer clergy." ISW recently reported the ROC is preparing a special training course for clergy deployed to combat zones in Ukraine.[114]

Russian officials are furthering efforts to send confiscated civilian firearms and vehicles to the Russian military for use in Ukraine. Russian State Duma "Special Military Operation" Working Group Chairperson Andrei Turchak, Duma Deputy Vasily Piskarev, and Federation Council Senator Alexander Khinshtein submitted a bill to the State Duma on May 3 that would simplify procedures for the Russian government to transfer confiscated and unclaimed firearms and ammunition to the Russian military for use in Ukraine.[115] Turchak claimed that 70,000 of the 250,000 seized firearms held at Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) regional offices across Russia are functional.[116] Republic of Buryatia Head Alexei Tsydenov instructed the republic's MVD office to create a mechanism for transferring confiscated civilian vehicles to the Russian military for use in Ukraine.[117] Tsydenov claimed that Buryatia confiscated 266 vehicles in 2023. Russian milbloggers previously appealed to the heads of several Russian federal subjects to send boats confiscated from poachers to the Kherson Oblast

frontline, claiming that the Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces operating along the Dnipro River sorely needed the vessels.[118]

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

Nothing significant to report.

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

ISW is not publishing coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts today.

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 occupation authorities continue to forcibly deport Ukrainian civilians from occupied Ukraine to Russia and deeper into Russian-occupied Ukraine. Ukraine's State Security Service (SBU) reported on May 3 that Zaporizhia Oblast occupation migration department head Nikolai Opryshko and his deputy Konstantin Razygrin forcibly deported Ukrainian civilians from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast to Rostov Oblast and then moved them to Russia's border with Latvia.[119] The SBU reported that Russian officials forced the Ukrainian civilians to walk to a Latvian border post as “refugees to the European Union (EU)” in an attempt to facilitate migrant tension. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration reported on May 2 that Russian officials brought 10 minors from occupied Kherson Oblast to the “Ocean” children's camp in Primorsky Krai and encouraged them to apply to vocational schools in Russia.[120] The Kherson Oblast occupation administration stated that they will bring an additional 200 minors from occupied Kherson Oblast to the “Ocean” children's camp in 2024. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on May 1 that Kherson Oblast occupation authorities are forcibly moving Ukrainian civilians from Hola Prystan, Kokhaniv, and Hladkivka to occupied Crimea and deeper into occupied Kherson.[121]

Hospitals in Russian-occupied Luhansk Oblast are reportedly threatening to confiscate newborns from mothers if neither of the newborn's parents can prove that they have Russian citizenship. Luhansk Oblast Military Administration Head Artem Lysohor reported on May 1 that mothers who give birth at hospitals in occupied Luhansk Oblast will be required starting on May 6 to prove that at least one of the newborn's parents has Russian citizenship in order for the hospital to discharge the newborn. If this report is accurate, such actions violate Article II(d) of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which defines genocide as “imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.”[122]

Russian occupation officials continue efforts to militarize and indoctrinate Ukrainian youth in occupied Ukraine. The Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) stated on May 1 that it is developing a new textbook that presents recent history in occupied Luhansk Oblast in accordance with Russian education standards.[123] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov stated on May 2 that 200 children recently participated in Russian military-patriotic youth organizations Movement of the First's and Yunarmiya's military-patriotic games in occupied Berdyansk and Melitopol.[124]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian officials continue to deny Russian war crimes in Ukraine and attempt to deflect from their crimes by accusing Ukrainian forces of war crimes. The Russian Permanent Mission to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons denied on May 3 the US Department of State (DoS) May 2 report that Russian forces are violating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), claiming that Russian forces have destroyed their “entire chemical arsenal.”[125] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova claimed that the US DoS report is speculation and claimed that the US and Ukraine are covering up for Ukraine’s use of chemical weapons.[126] Kremlin officials have repeatedly accused Ukrainian forces of committing war crimes to distract from Russian forces’ war crimes and discredit Ukraine, and the Ukrainian General Prosecutor’s Office reported on May 3 that Russia is intensifying information operations to this effect.[127] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 3 that Russian forces have used chemical weapons on the battlefield 444 times in April 2024, 71 more times than in March 2024.[128] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces primarily conduct chemical attacks using K-51 grenades and have used these grenades at least 1,891 times from February 2023 to April 2024.

The Kremlin continues an information operation aimed at falsely portraying Russia as a religiously tolerant state while deliberately repressing religious freedoms in Ukraine. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom published its annual report on May 1, which continued to place Russia on a list of “particular concern” after the commission gave this designation to Russia in December 2023.[129] Russian Ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov responded to this report, calling it unsubstantiated and claiming that the US is attempting to interfere in Russian internal affairs and undermine “interfaith harmony.”[130] Antonov also claimed that the US is disregarding Ukraine’s attempts to “repress” the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP), which is not an independent church but an extension of the Russian state and an instrument of Russian hybrid warfare. Russian MFA Special Representative for Religious Freedom Gennady Askaldovich accused the US Commission on International Religious Freedom’s report of being biased against Russia.[131] ISW has extensively tracked Russia’s religious persecution efforts in Ukraine aimed at eradicating any independent Ukrainian culture or sense of national identity in occupied territories.[132]

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

Nothing significant to report.

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

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