

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, April 1, 2024

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April 1, 2024, 6:50pm 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 April 1. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the April 2 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

A joint investigation by *60 Minutes*, the *Insider*, and *Der Spiegel* strongly suggests that the Kremlin has waged a sustained kinetic campaign directly targeting US government personnel both in the United States and internationally for a decade, with the likely objective of physically incapacitating US government personnel. The investigation, which the outlets published on March 31, indicates that the infamous Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (GRU) Unit 29155 (the same unit whose operatives attempted to assassinate Sergei Skripal with the Novichok nerve agent in the United Kingdom in 2018) may be using nonlethal directed energy or acoustic weapons to target a large number of US government personnel, each of whom has reported experiencing an “anomalous health incident” (also called “Havana Syndrome”) of varying severity between 2014 and as recently as 2023.[1] The investigation cites intercepted Russian intelligence documents, travel logs, call metadata, and eyewitness testimony that places GRU Unit 29155 operatives at many of the locations where US officials experienced Havana Syndrome, either shortly before or during each attack. The investigation suggested that GRU operatives conducted a directed energy attack against an FBI agent in Florida a few months after the agent interviewed detained undercover GRU officer Vitaliy Kovalev at some point between June and December 2020.[2] Other US government officials claimed they were attacked by the directed energy weapons while they were in the United States, including in Washington, DC. The joint investigation interviewed US Army Colonel Greg Edgreen, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)'s working group investigating Havana Syndrome, who believes that Russia is behind the Havana Syndrome incidents and that the incidents consistently have a “Russia nexus.”[3] Edgreen stated that the incidents all targeted the top five to ten percent “performing DIA officers” and that the victims were either experts on Russia or had otherwise worked to defend US national security interests against Russia. The investigation noted that many affected personnel were assigned to roles aimed at countering Russia following the 2014 invasion of Ukraine after these personnel had previously worked on other portfolios. The investigation reported that these incidents have affected senior US personnel, including a senior official in the National Security Council who served at some point in 2020-2024 and CIA Director Bill Burns' then-deputy chief of

staff who experienced an anomalous health incident in September 2021 in Delhi. Several of the US officials who experienced Havana Syndrome have severe life-altering and career-ending injuries. Many US officials' spouses and children also experienced Havana Syndrome while deployed overseas.

Retired CIA officer Marc Polymeropolous, who experienced Havana Syndrome while in Moscow in December 2017 and ended his career as Chief of Operation for the CIA's Europe and Eurasia Mission Center, stated that if the investigation's attribution of the attacks to Russia's GRU is true, then the attacks fit a pattern of the Kremlin "seeking retribution for events" for which it believes the United States is responsible.[4] Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh confirmed that a senior unnamed Department of Defense official at the NATO Vilnius summit in July 2023 experienced similar symptoms to other anomalous health incidents.[5] Senior US intelligence officials have previously publicly stated that the intelligence community cannot attribute a foreign adversary to any of the anomalous health incidents, and White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre reiterated in response to the joint investigation on April 1 that the intelligence community "has not concluded" that Russian military intelligence was involved in the incidents.[6] If the Russian GRU is confirmed to be responsible for numerous attacks against US military, diplomatic, and intelligence personnel and their families, however, then this would amount to a significant sustained Russian campaign of kinetic attacks against the United States designed to degrade US intelligence capabilities against Russia to which the United States has not publicly responded.

The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) is intensifying efforts to falsely implicate Ukraine in the March 22 Crocus City Hall terrorist attack while denying any Islamic State (IS) responsibility or involvement in the attack. The SVR baselessly claimed on April 1 that the United States is attempting to cover up Ukraine's alleged responsibility for the Crocus City Hall attack, including by blaming the attack on the Islamic State's Afghan branch IS-Khorasan (IS-K).[7] The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) recently demanded that Ukrainian authorities arrest and extradite people allegedly involved in the Crocus City Hall attack and a wider set of alleged "terrorist" attacks in Russia.[8] ISW continues to assess with high confidence that IS conducted the Crocus City Hall attack and has yet to observe independent reporting or evidence to suggest that an actor other than IS was responsible for or aided the attack.[9] The Kremlin likely intends to capitalize on domestic fear and anger about the attack and hopes that perceptions of Ukrainian and Western involvement in the Crocus City Hall attack and wider alleged "terrorist" attacks in Russia will increase Russian domestic support for the war in Ukraine.[10]

Reuters reported on April 1 that Iran warned Russia about a possible "major terrorist operation" at an unspecified date prior to the Crocus City Hall attack, according to "three sources familiar with the matter." [11] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov and Russian Presidential Representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov denied the report that Iran warned Russia of a terrorist attack.[12] The Russian government will likely continue to deny any reports that the Kremlin received a warning of a potential terrorist attack before the Crocus City Hall attack to deflect blame from Russia's law enforcement and intelligence failure and divert accusations towards Ukraine.

The Russian MFA announced on April 1 that it is working to remove the Taliban's status as a designated terrorist organization in Russia and announced that Russia invited the Taliban to participate in the May 14-19 Russia-Islamic World Forum in Kazan, Tatarstan Republic.[13] The Kremlin's hyper fixation on pinning the blame for the attack on Ukraine, as opposed to addressing

very real and necessary terrorist threats, will likely continue to pose a security threat to Russia in the long term.

Russian authorities are taking measures to further crackdown against migrant communities in Russia following the Crocus City Hall attack. The Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) stated on April 1 that it is preparing a bill that introduces various measures tightening Russia’s migration policy.[14] The proposed bill includes requirements that all foreigners undergo mandatory fingerprinting and photographing upon entering Russia; the creation of a government system containing the digital profiles of foreigners; requirements that all foreigners receive a new identification document confirming their right to live and work in Russia; reductions on the limits on how long foreigners can temporarily stay in Russia from 90 days per every six months to 90 days per year; and authorizations for courts and certain federal executive bodies outside of courts to deport foreigners who “pose a security threat.” The MVD’s proposals to tighten the government’s tracking of and control over migrants in Russia will also likely make it easier for authorities to target and coerce migrants into the Russian military as part of ongoing crypto-mobilization efforts, as such efforts will build out a database of personal information that makes migrant communities more immediately identifiable.[15] Kremlin newswire *TASS* also reported on April 1 that Russian authorities detained the tenth person allegedly complicit in the Crocus City Hall attack and that Russian authorities detained him as part of an ongoing Russian operation, called Operation “Illegal,” which Russian authorities have reportedly regularly conducted in previous years.[16] Russian human rights project First Department reported on March 29 that Russian authorities launched “Operation Anti-Migrant,” a large-scale operation to identify and deport migrants, in St. Petersburg, and Russian authorities are likely increasing their searches on migrants in the wake of the Crocus City Hall attack.[17] It is unclear if Operation “Illegal” and “Operation Anti-Migrant” are related programs.

The Kremlin is reportedly taking steps to directly strengthen its control over government bodies that oversee migration policy. Russian outlet *Vedomosti* reported on April 1 that sources close to the Russian presidential administration and government stated that Russian authorities are considering creating a new department to oversee interethnic and migration policy and that the department will be directly subordinated to the Russian president.[18] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated in response that there are no official decisions about creating a department for interethnic and migration policy yet.[19] Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized during his annual “Direct Line” speech in December 2023 that Russia needs a “special organ, not just the Ministry of Internal Affairs” to address Russia’s migration issues.[20] Putin may scapegoat certain MVD personnel for Russia’s recent migration issues. A Russian insider source claimed on April 1 that Putin is expected to attend the MVD’s extended board meeting on April 2 which will summarize the MVD’s 2023 activities.[21] The insider source claimed that the meeting will include discussions of migration issues and that unspecified actors will “attack” the head of the MVD’s Main Directorate for Migration Affairs, Valentina Kazakova, and her “curator” MVD Deputy Minister Alexander Gorovoy, likely due to their perceived inaction and inefficacy. The insider source claimed that the Kremlin will likely dismiss MVD leaders, including Internal Affairs Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev, after Putin’s inauguration on May 7 and that the Kremlin offered the minister position to the head of the Economic Security Service of the Federal Security Service (FSB), Sergei Alpatov.

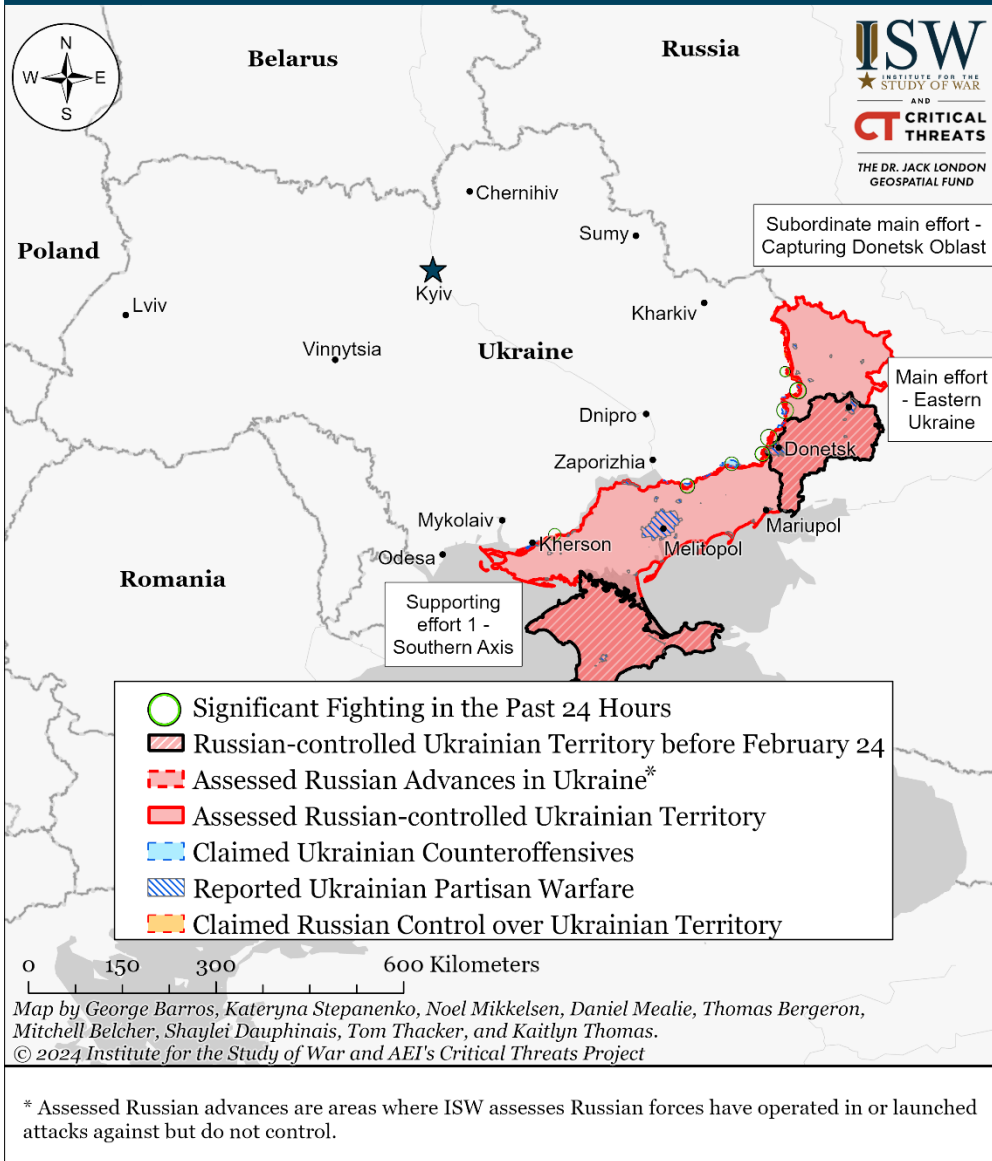
Key Takeaways:

- **A joint investigation by *60 Minutes*, the *Insider*, and *Der Spiegel* strongly suggests that the Kremlin has waged a sustained kinetic campaign directly**

targeting US government personnel both in the United States and internationally for a decade, with the likely objective of physically incapacitating US government personnel.

- **The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) is intensifying efforts to falsely implicate Ukraine in the March 22 Crocus City Hall terrorist attack while denying any Islamic State (IS) responsibility or involvement in the attack.**
- **Russian authorities are taking measures to further crack down against migrant communities in Russia following the Crocus City Hall attack.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Avdiivka and in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast amid continued positional engagements along the entire line of contact on April 1.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) continues to reassure the Russian public that Russian military conscripts will not deploy to most of occupied Ukraine nor participate in combat operations in Ukraine amid the start of the spring semi-annual military conscription call-up that started on April 1.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 1, 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.

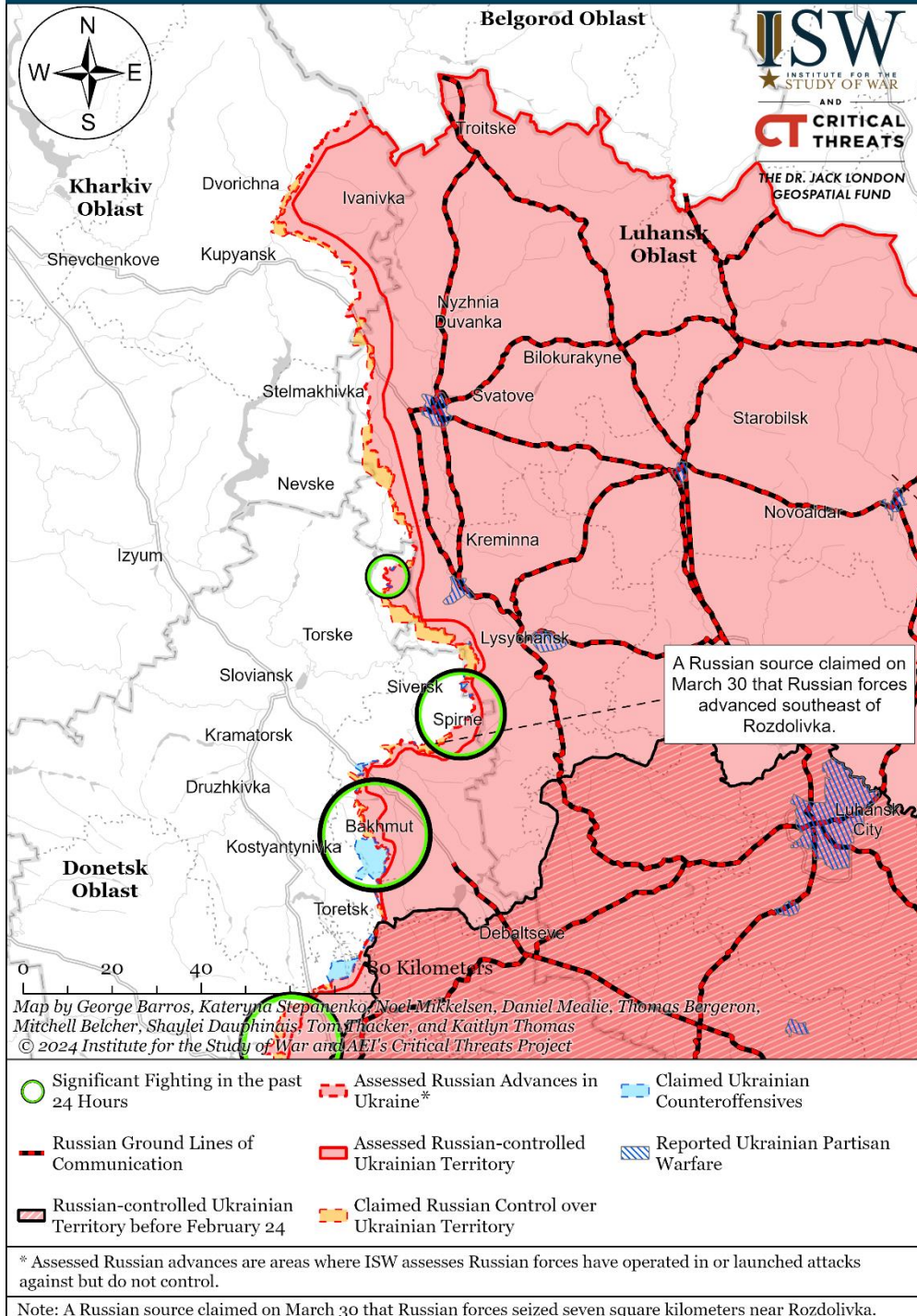
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety 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)

Positional fighting continued near Kreminna on April 1, but there were no confirmed changes on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line. Positional fighting continued west of Kreminna near Terny and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[22] Ukrainian “Steel Border” border detachment Spokesperson Ivan Shevtsov stated that Russian forces have not conducted an attack in the Kupyansk direction since March 29 and are generally conducting fewer assaults in this direction while they rest and reconstitute, whereas Russian forces have conducted up to 16 assaults per day in the Lyman direction in the past week.[23] ISW has previously observed that Russian forces alternate between attacking in the Kupyansk and Kreminna directions in order to maintain constant offensive pressure against defending Ukrainian units along this line.[24] Elements of the Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz “Aida” detachment continue to operate near Bilohorivka.[25]

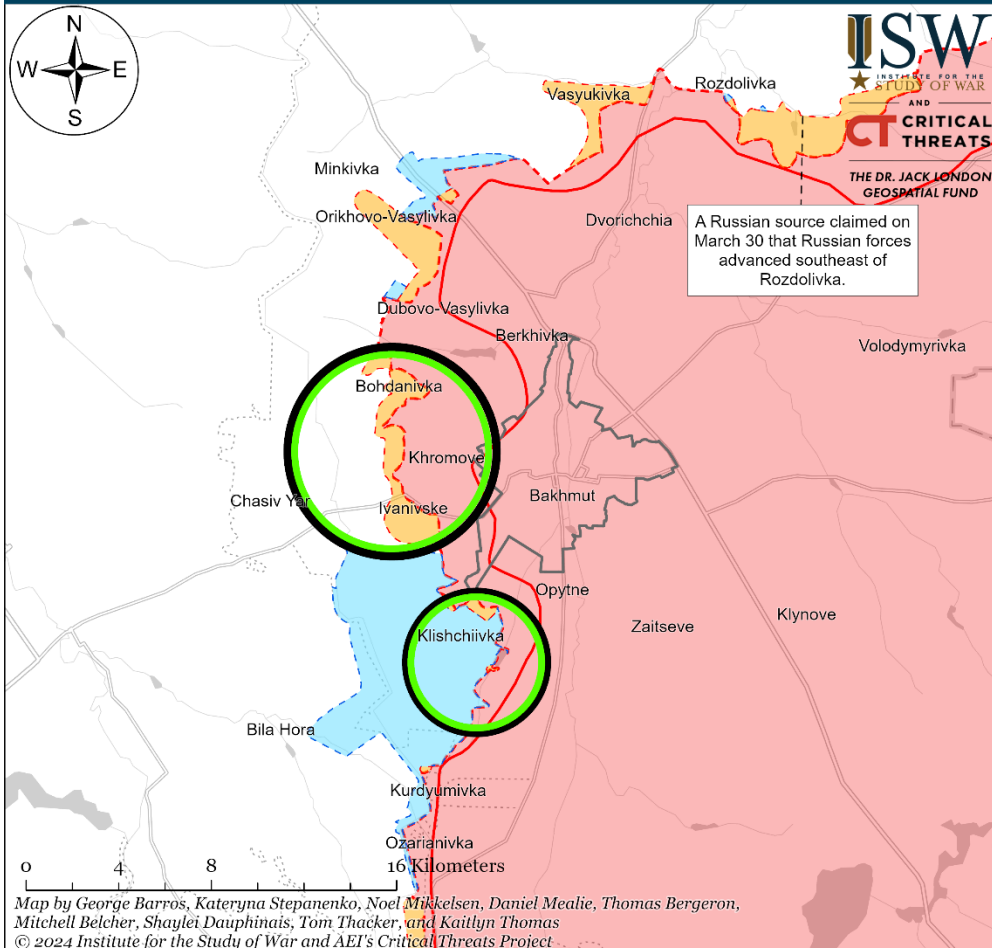
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of April 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Bakhmut, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims. Several Russian sources claimed on April 1 that elements of the 98th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division have advanced towards Chasiv Yar (west of Bakhmut) through forested areas in the Stupky-Holobovskiy-2 nature reserve and are now between 650 meters and one kilometer from the eastern outskirts of Chasiv Yar.[26] ISW has only collected data to confirm that Russian forces are about 1.5 kilometers from the eastern outskirt of Chasiv Yar at the furthest point of their confirmed advance. Geolocated footage posted on April 1 shows the aftermath of an unsuccessful Russian armored vehicle attack on Ivanivske (between Bakhmut and Chasiv Yar), and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have lost five or six armored vehicles in attacks near Ivanivske in recent days.[27] Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that positional fighting continued west of Bakhmut near Ivanivske; northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka; and southwest of Bakhmut near Andriivka and Klishchiivka.[28]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of April 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



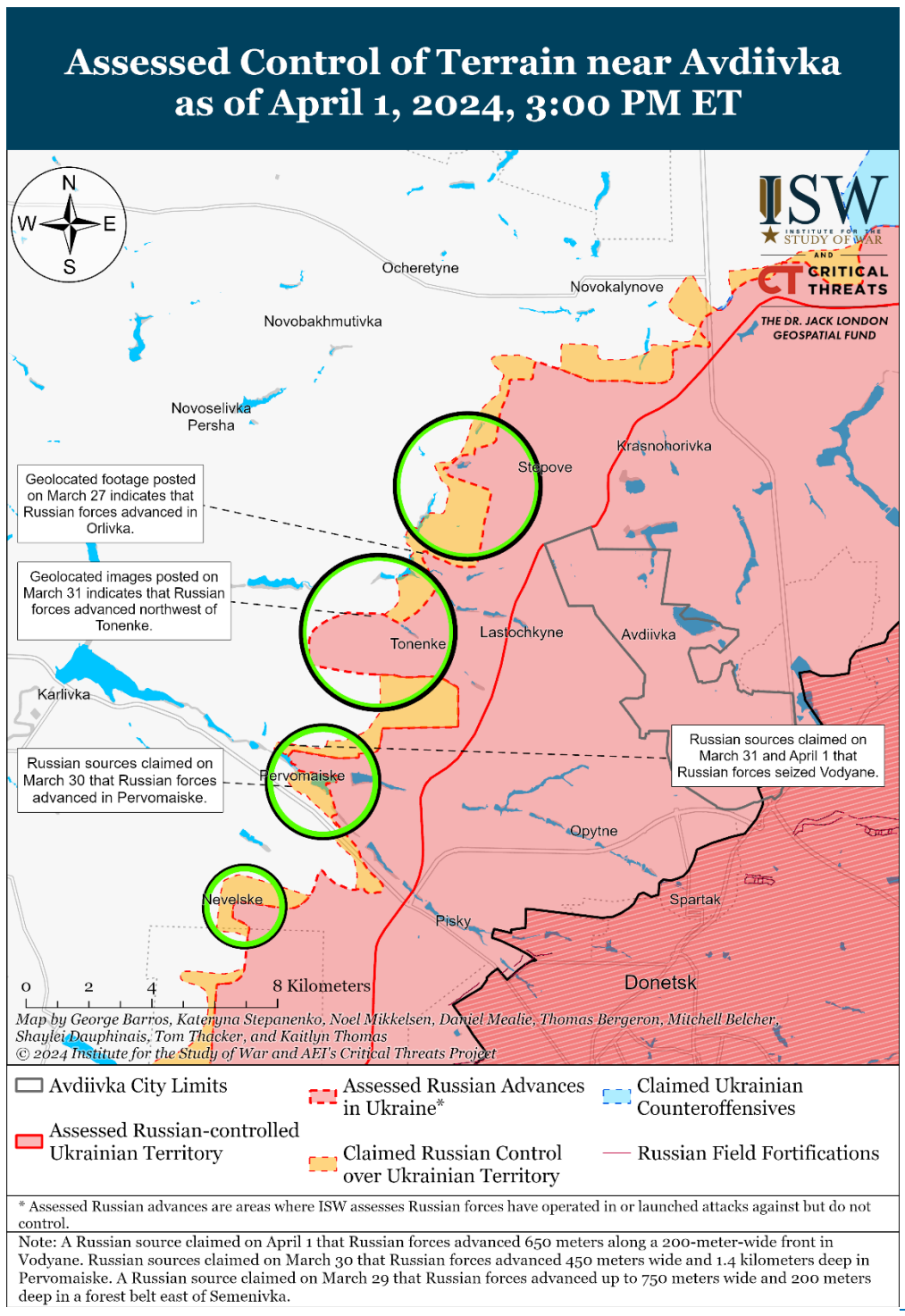
Bakhmut City Limits	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* 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 April 1 that Russian forces advanced 620 meters along a two-kilometer-wide front toward the Stupky-Holubivske-2 Nature Reserve. A Russian source claimed on March 30 that Russian forces seized seven square kilometers near Rozdolivka.

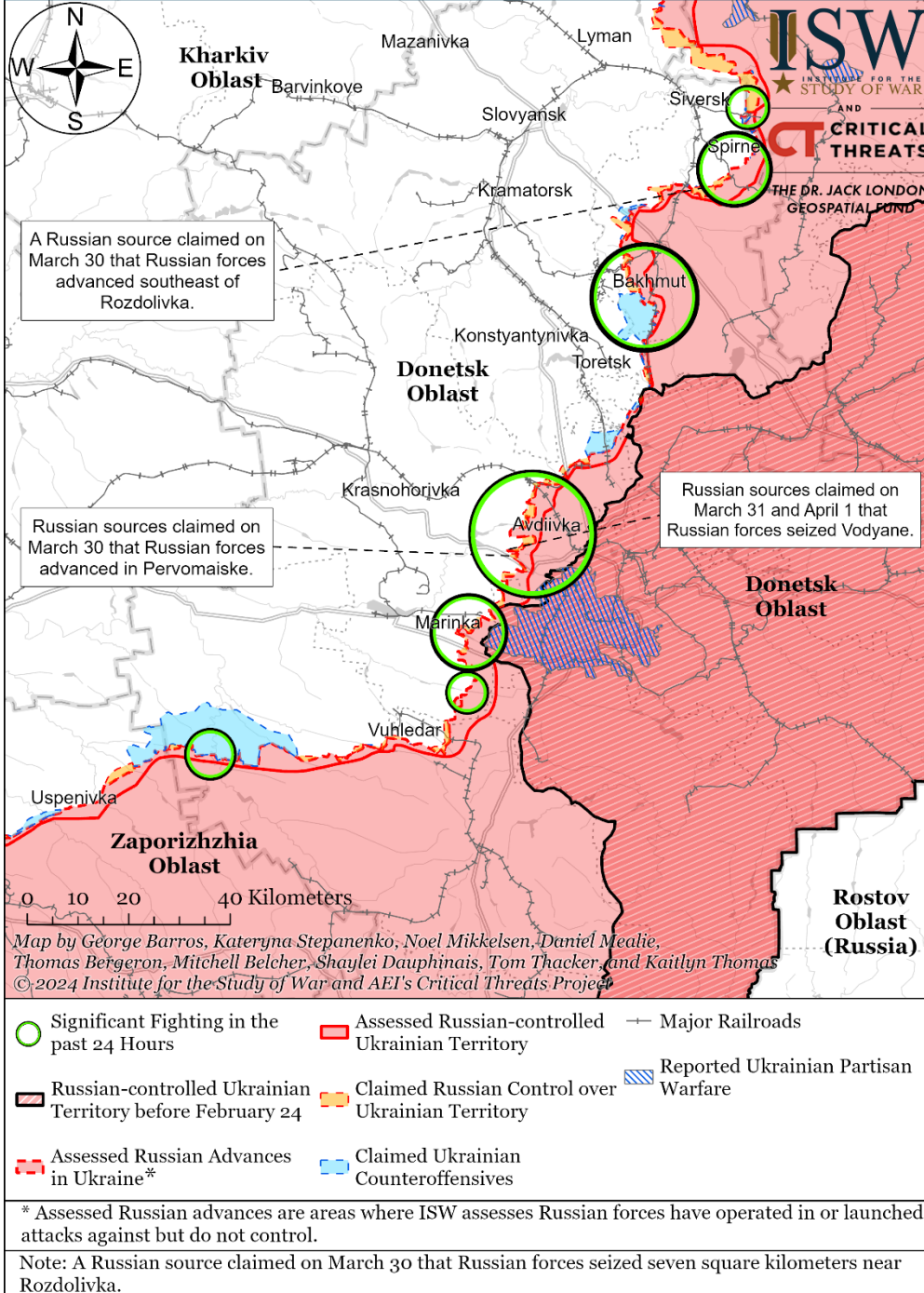
Russian forces recently made confirmed advances southwest and west of Avdiivka. Geolocated footage published on March 31 shows that elements of the 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC]) have advanced along Haharin Street in Vodyane (southwest of Avdiivka) and have reached the western outskirts of the settlement.[29] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces completely control Vodyane, which will allow them to develop new attacks towards Pervomaiske (directly south of Vodyane).[30] Geolocated footage published between March 30 and April 1 confirms that Russian forces attempted additional marginal advances west of Tonenke (west of Avdiivka) during the failed Russian battalion-sized mechanized attack near Tonenke on March 30.[31] *Forbes* characterized the failed Russian attack as a “tank massacre” and reported that

Russian forces lost a total of 12 tanks of the 36 deployed during the attempted assault.[32] Ukrainian and Russian sources reported continued positional fighting northwest of Avdiivka near Berdychi and Semenivka; west of Avdiivka near Umanske; and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske and Pervomaiske.[33] A prominent Russian milblogger complained that Russian advances the Avdiivka area have been hindered by incompetent tactical-level Russian commanders who are more interested in advancing their careers than protecting their men.[34]



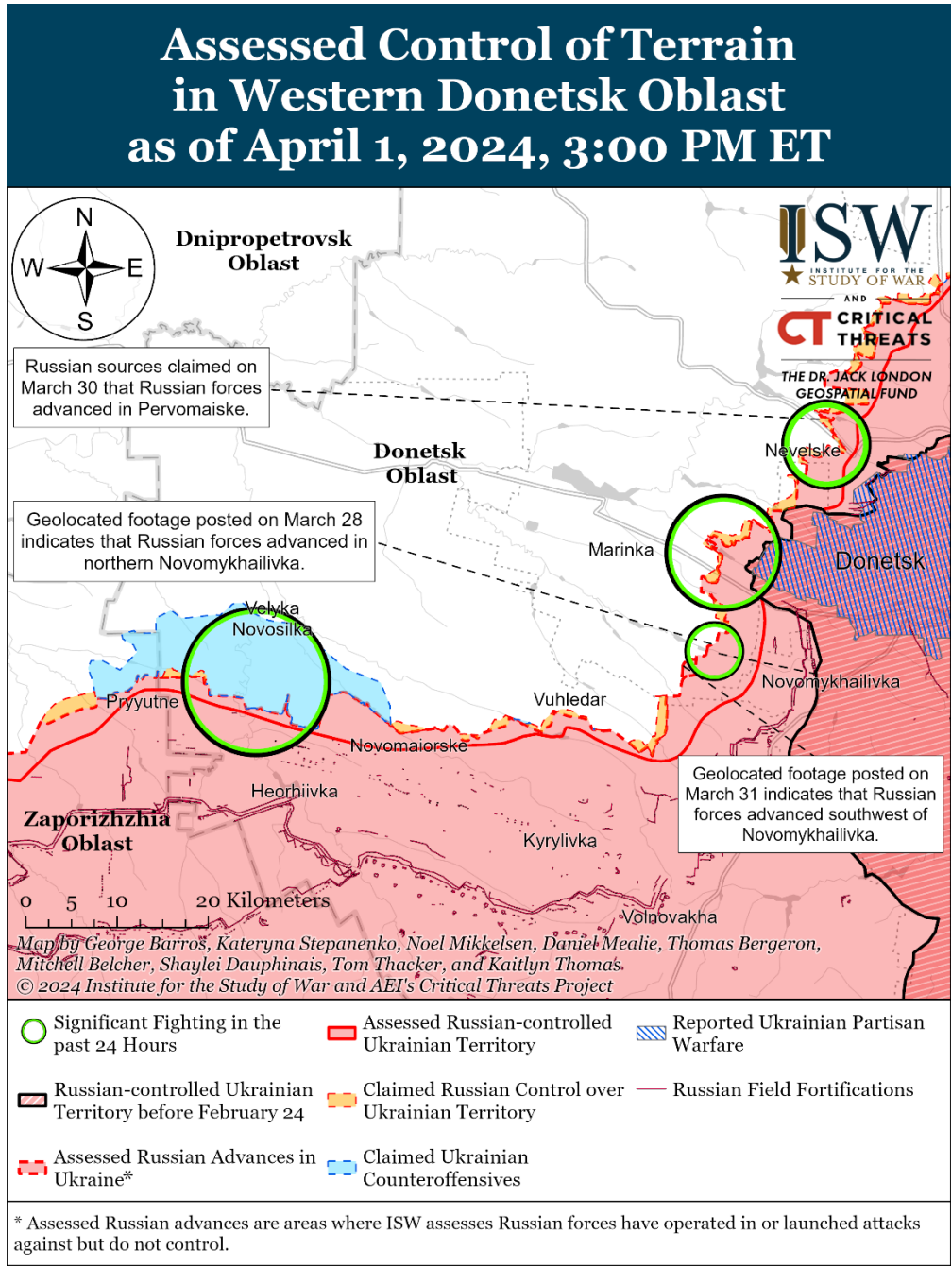
Positional engagements continued west and southwest of Donetsk City on April 1, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are making tactical advances within Novomykhailivka and that heavy fighting is ongoing in and around the settlement.[35] Ukrainian and Russian sources reported continued positional engagements west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Novomykhailivka and Pobieda.[36] Elements of the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR AC), 68th AC (Eastern Military District [EMD]), and 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, EMD) are reportedly operating in this area.[37]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of April 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



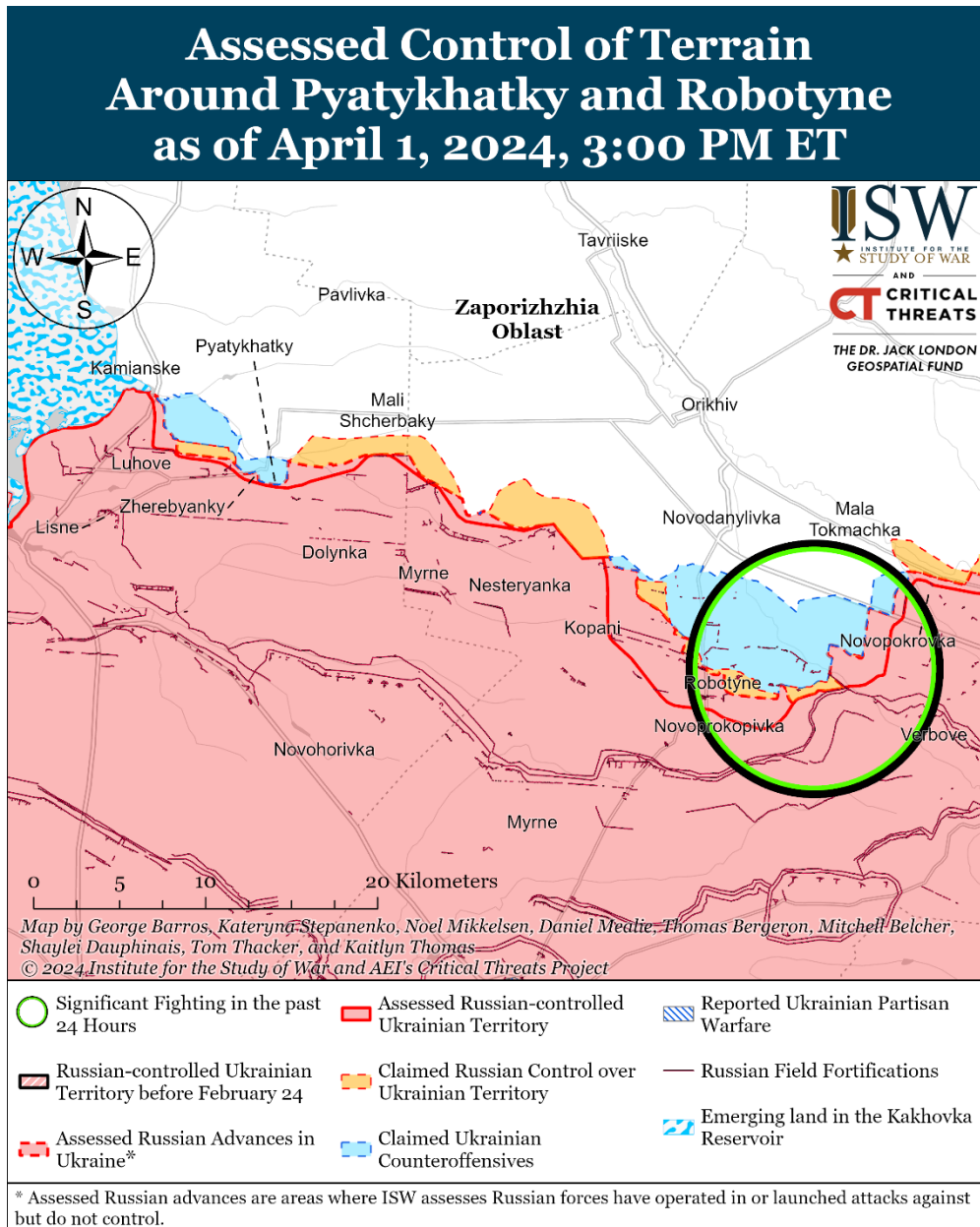
Positional engagements continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on April 1, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported

fighting east of Vodyane (near Vuhledar); near Velyka Novosilka; and near Urozhaine and Staromayorske (both south of Velyka Novosilka).[38] The Russian 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces and EMD) reportedly conducted a guided glide bomb strike on a bridge in Hulyaipole (45km southwest of Velyka Novosilka in eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast).[39] Elements of the 5th Tank Brigade (36th Combined Arms Army, EMD) are reportedly operating near Velyka Novosilka.[40]



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

Russian forces reportedly advanced in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on April 1, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Verbove (east of Robotyne), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[41] Positional engagements continued near Robotyne and northwest of Verbove.[42] Elements of the Russian “Viking” Spetsnaz Detachment are reportedly operating near Robotyne.[43]

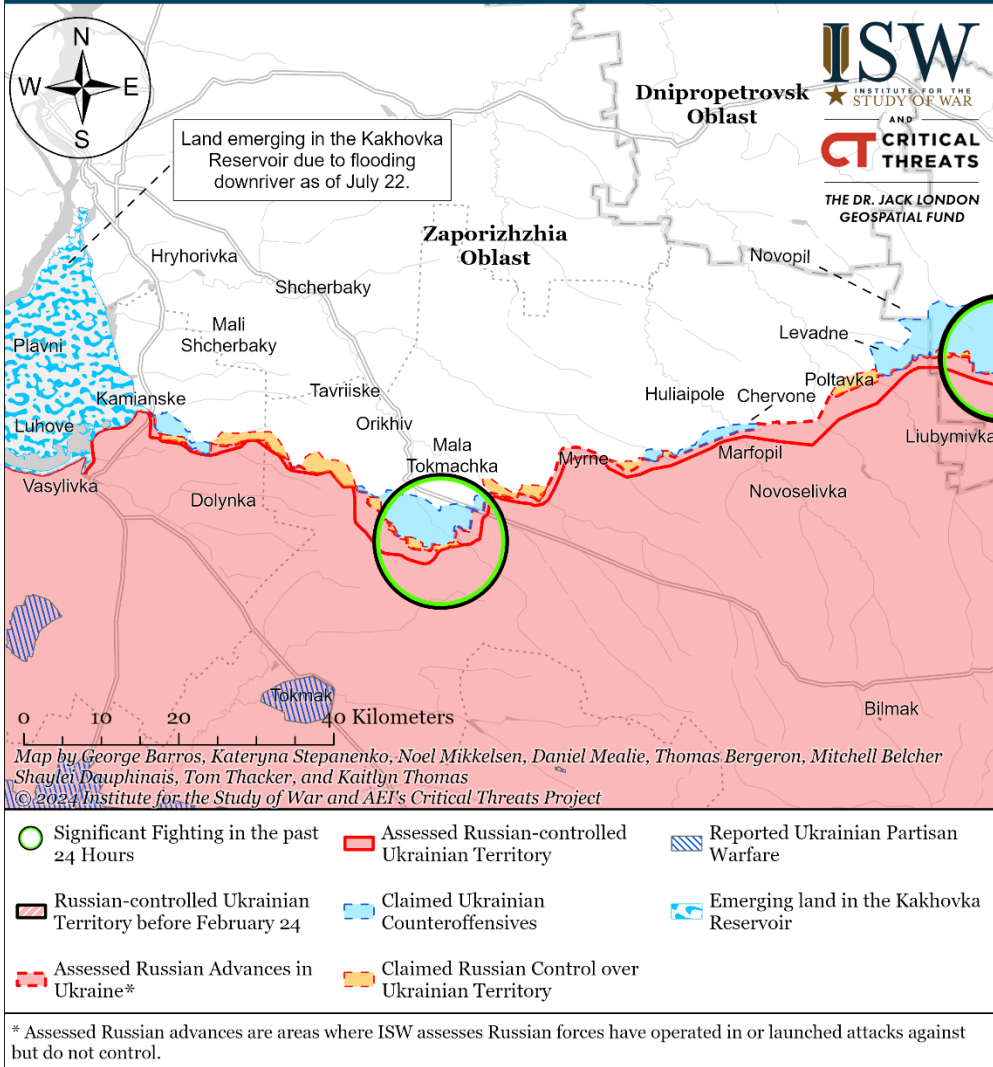


Russian forces recently advanced in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast, amid continued positional engagements near Krynky. Geolocated footage published on March 31 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced north of Kozachi Laheri (3km from the Dnipro River in the east bank of Kherson

Oblast), although not likely within the past day.[44] Russian and Ukrainian forces reported continued fighting in Krynky.[45]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of April 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin appointed Vladislav Isaev as the General Director of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) in occupied Enerhodar, Zaporizhzhia Oblast on April 1.[46] Russian forces have occupied the ZNPP since March 2022, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has repeatedly called for withdrawal of all Russian unauthorized military and other personnel from the ZNPP and the return of the ZNPP to full Ukrainian control.[47]

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

Ukrainian sources reported that Russian forces launched three Shahed 136/131 drones at Ukraine on April 1, two of which Ukrainian forces destroyed.[48] Ukraine's Eastern Air Command additionally reported that Ukrainian forces shot down a Kh-59 missile over Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.[49] The Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office stated that Russian forces launched two D-30 universal joint glide munition (UMPD) guided glide bombs at Kharkiv City overnight from March 31 to April 1.[50] Ukrainian Kharkiv Oblast officials noted that recent continuous Russian strikes on Kharkiv City have destroyed all critical energy infrastructure and severely damaged residential and private infrastructure in the city, causing an energy deficit in Kharkiv Oblast.[51]

Russian opposition outlet *ASTRA* reported on April 1 that Russian planes accidentally dropped two more FAB-500 guided glide bombs on Belgorod Oblast on March 31, making this the sixteenth case of such accidents in the last two weeks alone.[52]

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

The Russian MoD continues to reassure the Russian public that Russian military conscripts will not deploy to most of occupied Ukraine nor participate in combat operations in Ukraine amid the start of the spring semi-annual military conscription call-up that started on April 1. Russian Deputy Chief of the General Staff Vice Admiral Vladimir Tsimlyansky emphasized the upcoming conscription cycle is “in no way connected” with the war in Ukraine and stated that conscripts will not go to military deployment points in occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia oblasts, although notably did not exclude occupied Crimea.[53] Tsimlyansky stated that the majority of conscripts will complete training within five months and then enter military units in accordance with their acquired skills. ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin remains unlikely to deploy conscripts to participate in combat operations in Ukraine due to concerns that conscript casualties may cause societal discontent within Russia, although Russia may expand its crypto-mobilization efforts during the spring 2024 conscription cycle by attempting to recruit conscripts to sign Russian military contracts.[54] The Kremlin will likely continue using conscripts to cover the international border between Ukraine and Russia.[55]

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

Russian forces continue efforts to improve drone operation and production capabilities. The Kremlin ordered the Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade to assist the Russian Dome JSC in producing systems to detect and suppress drones and emphasized the need to increase the number of domestically produced electronic components in each system.[56] Russian Center for Integrated Unmanned Solutions General Director Dmitry Kuzyakin told Kremlin newswire *TASS* on April 1 that Russian specialists designed the “Pik” drone tower, a long-range digital communication system, that will increase the operating range of first-person view (FPV) drones.[57] Kuzyakin stated that Russian forces will install the Pik drone tower on airfield control towers and on ships' masts to increase FPV drone operation ranges.

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

The US is taking steps to increase its domestic production of artillery shells to support Ukraine. *Bloomberg* reported on March 27 that the US and Turkey are discussing American purchases of Turkish explosives to increase US artillery shell production.[58] *Bloomberg* reported that the Pentagon contracted US defense company General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems to build three 155mm artillery shell metal parts production lines in Texas with Turkish subcontracts and that one Texan plant is scheduled to start production in June 2024. US Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology Doug Bush stated on February 5 that the US Army aims to double the US monthly production of 155mm shells from 28,000 shells per month in October 2023 to about 60,000 shells per month in October 2024 should the proposed Congressional supplemental appropriations bill pass, but noted that US shell production in part depends on US domestic production of explosive materials.[59] US imports of Turkish explosives will likely help boost domestic US artillery ammunition production.

Ukraine's European and Asian partners continue providing Ukraine with military and financial aid while ramping up their own defense industrial capacities. Germany announced on March 28 a new aid package for Ukraine, including ammunition for Leopard tanks, 40mm and 155mm artillery ammunition, and reconnaissance drones.[60] Belgian Defense Minister Ludivine Dedonder announced on March 29 that Belgium approved a military aid package for Ukraine that will allocate 100 million euros (about \$107 million) to maintain and support the future Ukrainian fleet of F-16 fighter jets.[61] German arms manufacturer Rheinmetall stated on March 25 that the European Union (EU) allocated over 130 million euros (about \$139 million) to Rheinmetall to increase its production of ammunition as part of the Act of Support in Ammunition Production (ASAP).[62] The Ukrainian Ministry of Finance stated on April 1 that Japan allocated \$118 million to Ukraine as part of World Bank projects aimed at restoring Ukraine's healthcare system and residential infrastructure.[63] The Japanese government also eased its defense equipment transfer regulations on March 26, which will allow the export of fighter jets that Japan is set to jointly develop with the UK and Italy and aims to deploy by 2035.[64] The updated Japanese regulations state that Japan can export the trilaterally developed fighter jets to third countries, but not to countries where there are ongoing hostilities. Japan previously revised its export policy to backfill US stockpiles of Patriot missiles in December 2023, allowing the US to send more Patriot missiles to Ukraine.[65]

European countries continue efforts to provide Ukraine with critical artillery ammunition, including through the Czech-led initiative to source artillery ammunition for Ukraine from outside the EU. Italian outlet *Corriere della Sera* reported on March 28 that unspecified sources stated that the Czech-led initiative concluded contracts worth about 1.8 billion euros (about \$1.93 billion) for one million artillery shells for Ukraine and that Ukraine will begin receiving the shells in April 2024.[66] Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski stated on March 29 that the Czech-led initiative is already organizing the transportation of artillery ammunition to Ukraine.[67] Sikorski also announced that Poland would "double" its contribution to the initiative but did not offer specifics. The head of the German Ministry of Defense's situation center for Ukraine, Major General Christian Freuding, stated on March 27 that Germany will transfer 10,000 artillery shells from German arsenals to Ukraine in the coming days.[68] Freuding stated that Germany will also support the Czech-led artillery ammunition coalition and purchase 180,000 shells, which Ukraine will receive in the second

half of 2024. Freuding stated that Germany agreed to supply Ukraine with another 100,000 shells at the end of 2024 as part of a bilateral agreement with an unspecified third country. Iceland announced on March 25 that it will join the Czech-led initiative to procure artillery ammunition.[69]

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 of Ukraine today.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Pro-Russia channels are circulating a propaganda video about mobilization in Ukraine designed to undermine Ukrainian trust in the Ukrainian government.[70] This propaganda video features high production value and cinematic sophistication, suggesting it is a product of a concerted and well-resourced information operation. Russian opposition outlets *Agencija* and *Mediazona* reported that the actors featured in the video are professional Russian actors who have previously featured in Russian television shows.[71] One actor refused to discuss his participation in the video, claiming he only acts in films, not commercials.[72] The Kremlin has previously used high production value propaganda videos as part of centrally directed information operations before, and this recent video's characteristics suggest that the video supports a broader Kremlin effort to erode Ukrainian trust in government, undermine Ukrainian mobilization efforts, and sow domestic discontent.[73]

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)

Russia and Belarus are reportedly increasing joint production of critical technical equipment, likely as part of Russian sanctions evasion schemes. Russian Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Viktor Evtukhov stated on March 31 that Belarus and Russia are developing joint projects to manufacture microelectronics, radio electronics, and machine tools.[74] Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko met with Russian Governor of Oryol Oblast Andrei Klychkov on April 1 and discussed cooperation in microelectronics production.[75]

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.



[1] <https://theins dot press/en/politics/270425>

- [2] <https://theins dot press/en/politics/270450>
- [3] <https://theins dot press/en/politics/270425>
- [4] <https://theins dot press/en/politics/270425>
- [5] <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/04/01/havana-syndrome-wont-go-away-00149977>;
<https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3726753/deputy-pentagon-press-secretary-sabrina-singh-holds-an-off-camera-on-the-record/>
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- [7] <https://tass dot ru/politika/20409541>
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- [9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-28-2024>
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- [12] https://t.me/tass_agency/241070 ; https://t.me/tass_agency/241027
- [13] <https://tass dot ru/politika/20412217>
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- [14] https://t.me/IrinaVolk_MVD/882
- [15] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar032824> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar011124>
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- [16] <https://tass dot ru/proisshestviya/20411989> ; <https://tass dot ru/proisshestviya/18242995>
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