Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 19, 2023

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June 19, 2023, 5:30pm 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 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 cutoff for this product was 2pm ET on June 19. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the June 20 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations in at least three sectors of the frontline and made gains on June 19. A Russian milblogger reported that Ukrainian troops continued attacks northwest, northeast, and southwest of Bakhmut on June 19 claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced near Krasnopolivka (about 12km northeast of Bakhmut).[1] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar additionally announced that over the past week, Ukrainian troops in the Tavrisk (Zaporizhia) direction have advanced up to seven kilometers and liberated 113 square kilometers of territory, including eight settlements in western Donetsk and western Zaporizhia oblasts.[2] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian troops attacked south of Velyka Novosilka in western Donetsk Oblast.[3] Geolocated footage posted on June 19 confirms that Ukrainian troops liberated Pyatykhatky, about 25km southwest of Orikhiv in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[4] Milbloggers also reported fighting south and southwest of Orikhiv over the course of the day on June 19.[5] The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) assessed on June 19 that Russia has likely deployed large portions of the Dnipro Grouping of Forces from the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast to the Zaporizhia and Bakhmut directions to respond to Ukrainian counteroffensive actions over the past 10 days.[6]

Russian forces conducted drone and missile strikes targeting southern Ukraine on June 19. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched four Kalibr cruise missiles and four Shahed-131/136 drones at Ukraine and stated that Ukrainian air defenses destroyed all the drones and missiles.[7] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces launched the Kalibr cruise missiles from a submarine in the Black Sea and the Shahed drones from the eastern coast of the Sea of Azov.[8]

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reported that the Chinese government reiterated that it is not providing, and will not provide, lethal assistance to Russia for use in Ukraine. Blinken reported on June 19 that the United States has not seen evidence contradicting Beijing's claims. [9] Blinken expressed concern that Chinese companies may be providing Russia technology that it can use in the war against Ukraine, however.

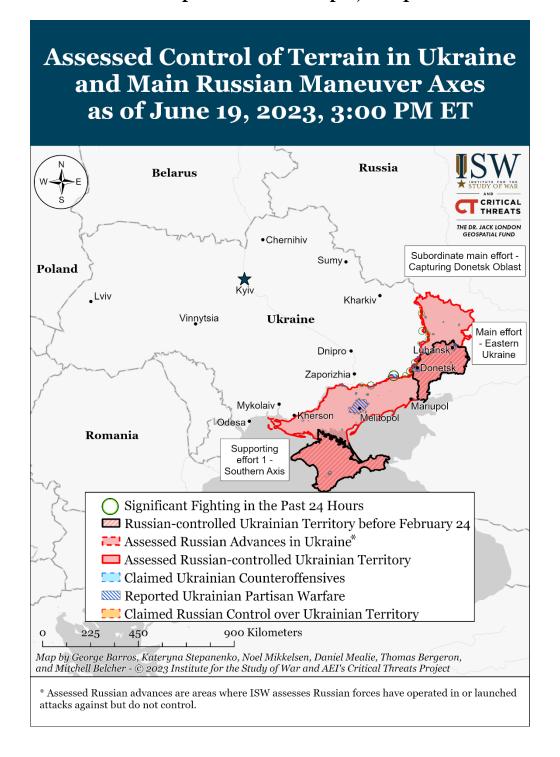
US defense manufacturer Lockheed Martin indicated that it is ready to help Ukraine fly and maintain Lockheed's F-16 fighter jets if NATO states agree to send them to Ukraine.[10]The *Financial Times* quoted Lockheed Martin Chief Operating Officer (COO) Frank St. John as stating that Lockheed is prepared to build new F-16s; modify existing airframes; and provide F-16 training, equipment, and systems support if NATO agrees to supply Ukraine with F-16s. US and other Western officials have recently signaled an increased willingness to provide Ukraine with F-16s, as ISW has previously reported.[11]

Kremlin-affiliated Russian tech giant Yandex claimed that international sanctions against Russia prevented the company from providing the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) with user data in compliance with a Russian security law, resulting in a significant fine. A Moscow court imposed a two million ruble (roughly \$23,795) fine against Yandex on June 18 for failing to provide the FSB with unspecified user data for national security reasons. [12] A Yandex representative claimed that Yandex did not intend to break Russian law but that international sanctions prevent Yandex from purchasing, installing, and configuring the foreign hardware and software necessary to comply with the law. A Moscow court previously imposed a 400,000 ruble (roughly \$4,759) fine against Yandex for the same violation in 2022. [13] While it is unclear how foreign technology products would help Yandex comply with the Russian law, the situation demonstrates that international sanctions have impacted some aspects of the Russian technology sector and national security apparatus.

Key Takeaways

- Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations in at least three sectors of the frontline and made gains on June 19.
- Russian forces conducted drone and missile strikes targeting southern Ukraine on June 19.
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reported that the Chinese government reiterated that it is not providing, and will not provide, lethal assistance to Russia for use in Ukraine.
- US defense manufacturer Lockheed Martin indicated that it is ready to help Ukraine fly and maintain Lockheed's F-16 fighter jets if NATO states agree to send them to Ukraine.
- Kremlin-affiliated Russian tech giant Yandex claimed that international sanctions against Russia prevented the company from providing the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) with user data in compliance with a Russian security law, resulting in a significant fine.
- Russian forces made gains in the Kupyansk area and continued ground attacks along the Svatove-Kreminna line.
- Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations while Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks near Bakhmut.
- Russian and Ukrainian forces conducted limited attacks on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and made marginal gains.
- Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks on along the administrative border between western Donetsk and eastern Zaporizhia oblasts.

- Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast.
- The Wagner Group continues efforts to expand its recruitment pool in the wake of significant losses in Ukraine.
- Russian sources claimed that a car carrying a Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official exploded in Simferopol, occupied Crimea.



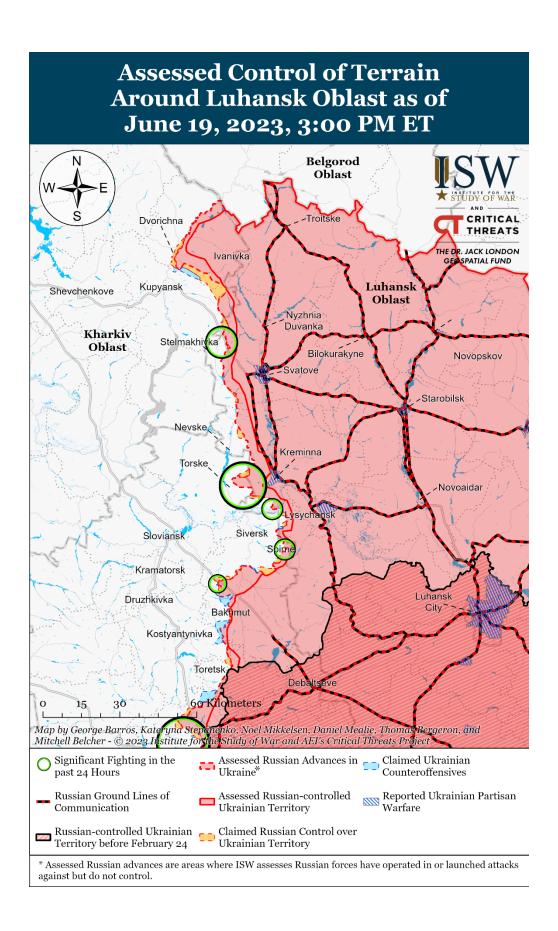
We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military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

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)

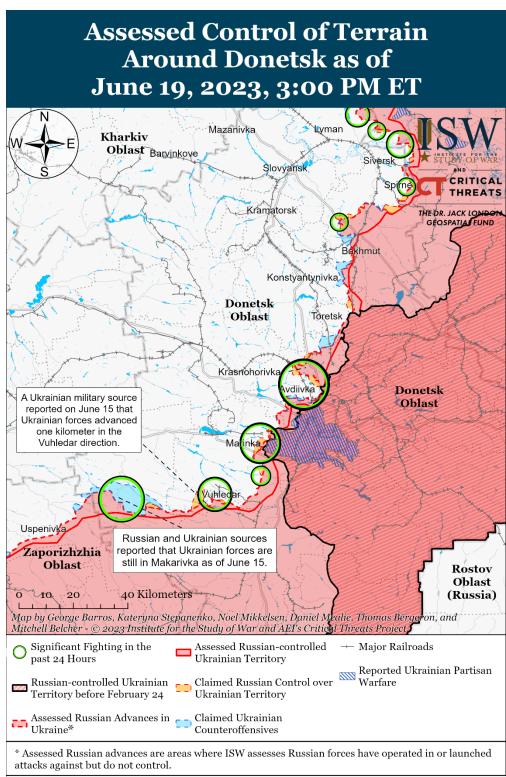
Russian forces made gains in the Kupyansk area and continued ground attacks along the Svatove-Kreminna line on June 19. Geolocated footage posted on June 19 shows that Russian forces advanced into the northern part of Vilshana (about 15km northeast of Kupyansk) on an unspecified date. [14] The Ukrainian General Staff additionally reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Novoselivkse (15km northwest of Svatove), Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna), Torske (14km west of Kreminna), west of Dibrova (5km southwest of Kreminna), Hryhorivka (10km south of Kreminna), and Spirne (25km south of Kreminna). [15] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar noted that Russian forces are conducting active offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Lyman line in an effort to regain the initiative. [16] One Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 76th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division conducted offensive operations near Kreminna. [17] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian troops unsuccessfully attempted to break through Russian defensive lines in the Kreminna area. [18] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Central Grouping of Forces repelled three Ukrainian sabotage groups west of Kreminna. [19]



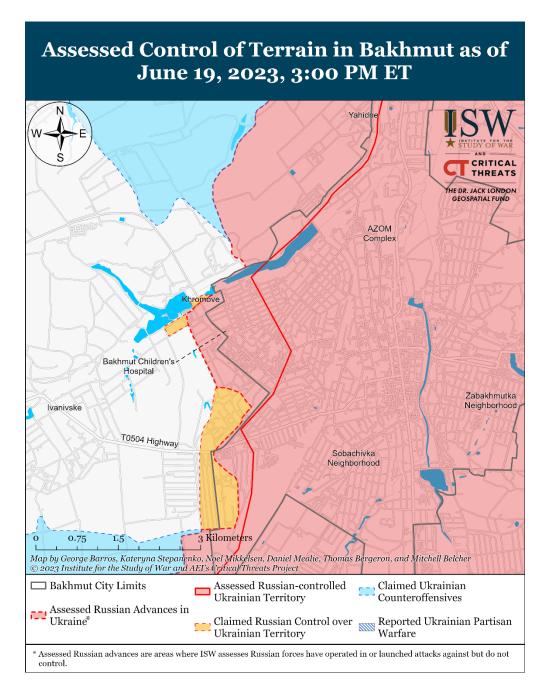
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian Objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas) Click here to read ISW's retrospective analysis on the Battle for Bakhmut.

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations while Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks near Bakhmut on June 19. A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced near Krasnopolivka (12km northeast of Bakhmut) and conducted additional attacks near Berkhivka (6km north of Bakhmut), Yahidne (immediately north of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Kurdyumivka (14km southwest of Bakhmut), and Ozarianivka (13km south of Bakhmut).[20] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated that Ukrainian forces continued to advance on the flanks of Bakhmut in the last week.[21] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled limited Russian offensive operations near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut).[22]

Russian and Ukrainian forces conducted limited attacks on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and made marginal gains as of June 19. Geolocated footage posted on June 18 shows that both Ukrainian and Russian forces have advanced near Pobieda (just southwest of Donetsk City), indicating that Ukrainian forces advanced southeast of Pobieda and Russian forces south of Pobieda.[23] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Avdiivka, Krasnohorivka (8km north of Avdiivka), Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City), Pobieda, and Novomykhailivka (about 30km southwest of Donetsk City).[24] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also attacked near Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka) and Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka), and that Ukrainian forces made marginal advanced near Vesele (3km northeast of Avdiivka).[25] Geolocated footage published on June 18 shows Russian forces using a T-54 or T-55 tank as a vehicle borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) near Pobieda, but Ukrainian forces destroyed the tank before it reached Ukrainian positions.[26] Russian forces have previously used older vehicles as VBIEDs.[27]



Note: Avdiivka City Military Administration Head Vitaliy Barabash reported on June 18 that Ukrainian forces advanced more than a kilometer north of Avdiivka on the Donetsk City frontline over the past two weeks.



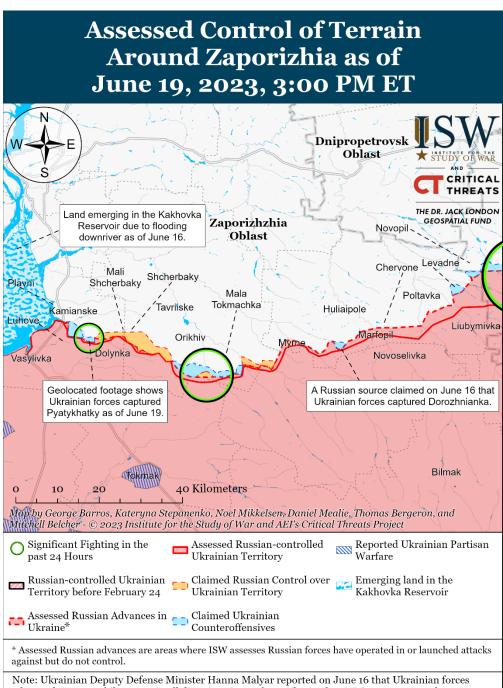
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks on along the administrative border between western Donetsk and eastern Zaporizhia oblasts on June 19. The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) repelled a Ukrainian counterattack near Novodonetske (10km southeast of Velyka Novosilka). [28] Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the 1st Separate Guards Motorized Rifle Battalion (Donetsk People's Republic "Slavic" Brigade) and the 37thMotorized Rifle Brigade (36th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) repelled Ukrainian forces near Urozhaine (10km south of Velyka Novosilka). [29] A milblogger claimed that

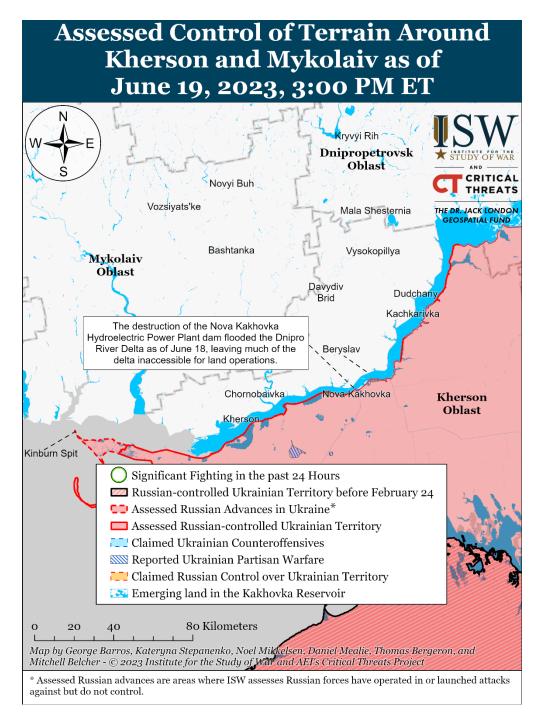
Russian forces repelled an attack near Pryiutne (17km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[30] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks near Vuhledar (30km due east of Velyka Novosilka).[31]

Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on June 19. Geolocated footage published on June 19 shows that Ukrainian forces liberated Pyatykhatky (23km southwest of Orikhiv).[32] Some Russian sources either claimed that Russian forces then recaptured Pyatykhatky or characterized the settlement as a "grey zone."[33] Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting is ongoing near Novodanylivka (6km south of Orikhiv) and Robotyne (15km south of Orikhiv).[34] Russian sources claimed that elements of the volunteer "Sudaplatov" Battalion are operating near Pyatykhatky and that elements of the 3rd Battalion of the 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) are operating near Orikhiv.[35]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a missile strike against a Russian rear area in occupied Donetsk Oblast. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a HIMARS strike on Volnovakha (54km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[36]



advanced up to two kilometers in all directions in southern Ukraine but ISW cannot assess the exact areas of Ukrainian advances at this time.



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

The Wagner Group continues efforts to expand its recruitment pool in the wake of significant losses in Ukraine. Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* reported on June 19 that Wagner recruiters are disseminating messages on social media platforms calling for individuals aged 21 to 35 years old with a "gaming background" to join Wagner as UAV specialists. [37] *Verstka* noted that these recruits are not required to have any military experience. [38] Ukraine's Main Intelligence Directorate (GUR) also

posted an audio intercept on June 18 wherein a Russian soldier and his interlocuter discuss a renewed Wagner recruitment campaign due to extensive battlefield losses in Ukraine.[39] The new Wagner recruitment campaign reportedly advertises training with well-prepared instructors, health and life insurance, modern equipment, and guarantees that all recruits will receive all promised payments.[40]

Russian military authorities continue to rely on cadets from Russian military academies to bolster the security of border regions. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on June 19 that third- and fourth-year cadets from the St. Petersburg Mykhailiv Military Artillery Academy will soon deploy to border areas after training with mortars and other artillery systems. [41] The Resistance Center noted there are shortages in Russian personnel covering border areas and that the deployment of newly graduated cadets is in large part meant to compensate for that. [42]

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

Russian sources claimed that a car carrying a Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official exploded in Simferopol, occupied Crimea on June 18. Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov claimed that the gas tank of the assistant to the Zaporizhia Oblast occupation deputy prime minister, Vladimir Epifanov, exploded, injuring Epifanov and two other passengers. [43] Rogov claimed that the cause of the explosion is unknown but that unspecified actors inspected the gas tank on June 17, implying possible sabotage.

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

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

Russia confirmed that it intends to permanently station tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus. The Russian Foreign Ministry stated on June 19 that Russia's agreement on the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus is not bound by any specific timeframe and that Russia will only return the weapons to Russia on the condition that the US and NATO make several concessions, including the "withdrawal of all American nuclear weapons to US territory" and the dismantling of all nuclear infrastructure in Europe. [44] This statement, along with the unreasonable requirements set for the US and NATO, suggests that Russia intends to keep tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus on a permanent basis. ISW has long assessed that Russia will likely keep tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus in order to consolidate *de facto* control of Belarus but maintains that this deployment is extraordinarily unlikely to have battlefield impacts in Ukraine. [45]

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://t.me/wargonzo/13342
- [2] https://t.me/annamaliar/858
- [3] https://t.me/garmaev_alexander/3800; https://t.me/grey_zone/19203; https://t.me/z_arhiv/22 147; https://t.me/rybar/4867
- [4] https://twitter.com/NOELreports/status/1670681261302480897?s=20; https://twitter.com/Geo Confirmed/status/1670721794355916801?s=20; https://t.me/kiber_boroshno/1959; https://t.me/C inCAFU/514; https://t.me/kiber_boroshno/1976; https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1360336791504988
- [5] https://t.me/vrogov/10395; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/89513; https://t.me/rybar/48690; https://t.me/wargonzo/13342; https://t.me/RVvoenkor/47579
- [6] https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1670666440381267969?s=20
- [7] https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoJLtQQiTDYy1CrQZVCHXVWW5HKmdC1zTUi7kiEjuWrjPpD9tBbC1tbBu4ooK2ivtnl
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- [11] https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-19-2023-0; https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-15-2023; https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-20-2023
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- [15] https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoJLtQQiTDYy1CrQZVCHXVWW5HKmdC1zTUi7kiEjuWrjPpD9tBbC1tbBu4ooK2ivtnl; https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2S2FA1yMz1eq1Znt5f8FM2GGqECLSLoh11AyaPzygK5RTVt7HqgsZ1ZKw1ccfviWcl

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