



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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April 28, 2024, 7:20pm 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.

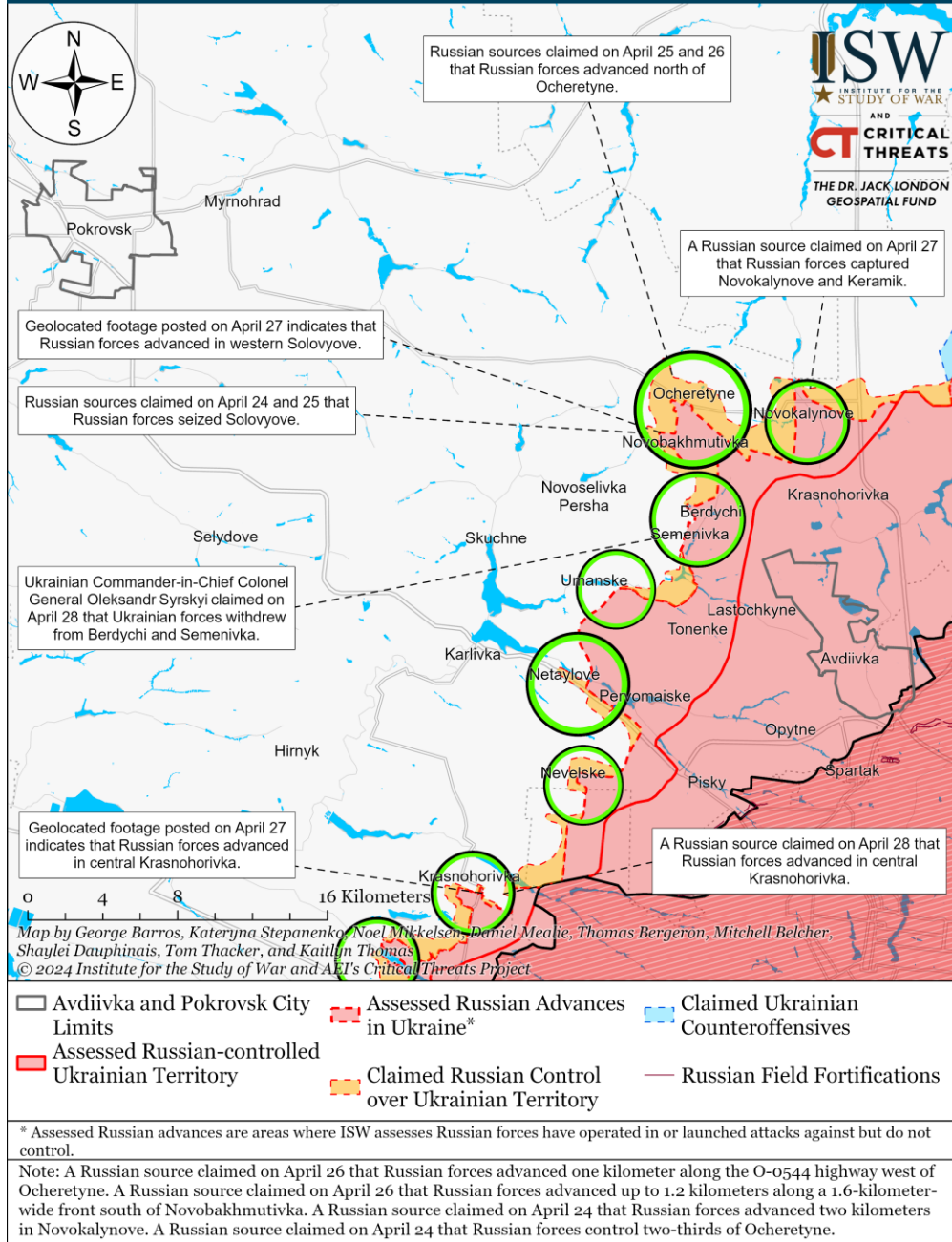
Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1pm ET on April 28. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the April 29 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Recent Russian gains northwest of Avdiivka have prompted Ukrainian forces to withdraw from other limited tactical positions along the frontline west of Avdiivka, although these withdrawals have yet to facilitate rapid Russian tactical gains. Russian forces remain unlikely to achieve a deeper operationally significant penetration in the area in the near term. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi reported on April 28 that Ukrainian forces withdrew from Berdychi (northwest of Avdiivka) and Semenivka (west of Avdiivka) to positions further west in order to preserve Ukrainian personnel.[1] Syrskyi acknowledged that Russian forces are making tactical advances northwest of Avdiivka, and Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces have deployed up to four brigades to their tactical penetration in the Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka) area.[2] Russian forces have committed roughly a reinforced division's worth of combat power (comprised mainly of four Central Military District [CMD] brigades) to the frontline northwest of Avdiivka to stabilize a small salient in the area and pursue a wider penetration of the Ukrainian defense along the frontline west of Avdiivka.[3] Russian forces have not made relatively rapid tactical gains west of Ocheretyne, Solovyove (northwest of Avdiivka), Berdychi, and Semenivka following Ukrainian withdrawals from limited tactical positions in the area, however, suggesting that Ukrainian forces maintain positions and capabilities in the area that are slowing further westward Russian advances for the moment. Russian forces will likely continue to make tactical gains in the Avdiivka direction in the coming weeks, and Ukrainian commanders may decide to conduct additional withdrawals if Russian forces threaten other Ukrainian tactical positions in the area.[4] The next line of defensible settlements in the area is some distance from the Ukrainian defensive line that Russian forces have been attacking since the seizure of Avdiivka in mid-February 2024, although Ukrainian forces may be able to use defensible windbreaks in fields immediately west of the current frontline to slow future Russian attacks.[5] The complete Ukrainian withdrawal to reportedly fortified positions further west of Avdiivka would likely allow Russian forces to make relatively rapid advances through these fields, although the advances would likely be rapid only if Ukrainian forces do not try to hold positions in the fields.

Syrskyi added that Ukrainian forces are committing elements of brigades that have undergone rest and reconstitution to stabilize the situation in the Avdiivka direction.[6] The arrival of reconstituted Ukrainian reinforcements will likely allow Ukrainian forces to slow Russian tactical gains and possibly stabilize the front. Ukrainian forces have struggled with under-resourcing and are facing a reported one-to-three manpower disadvantage northwest of Avdiivka, but have nonetheless prevented more than a division's worth of Russian combat power from making the types of advances that these force and materiel disparities should in principle have allowed Russian forces to achieve.[7] The arrival of Ukrainian reinforcements and additional materiel will force the Russian command to either accept that a near-term wider or deeper penetration is unlikely or commit additional reserves to the area to continue pursuing tactical gains. Russian forces currently have opportunities to achieve operationally significant gains near Chasiv Yar and are preparing reserves to support a large-scale offensive effort expected this summer.[8] The immediate commitment of additional Russian reserves to an opportunistic tactical penetration in the Avdiivka area, where Russian forces are far away from operationally significant objectives, may consume manpower that otherwise could support operationally significant gains in the Chasiv Yar area or that were intended for use in summer 2024.[9] Russian forces will likely have to replenish and reinforce attacking units and decrease the tempo of offensive operations west of Avdiivka if they do not commit additional reserves, which would likely constrain Russia's ability to make additional rapid tactical advances in the area.[10]

Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of April 28, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



The continued Russian stabilization of their salient northwest of Avdiivka presents the Russian command with a choice of continuing to push west towards its reported operational objective in Pokrovsk or trying to drive northwards to conduct possible complementary offensive operations with the Russian effort around Chasiv Yar. Ukrainian officials have previously identified Pokrovsk as the Russian operational objective in the Avdiivka direction, and Syrskyi reiterated this assessment on April 28.[11] Russian forces could alternatively decide to advance north from their tactical penetration in the Ocheretyne area along the H-20 (Donetsk City-Kostyantynivka) highway to pressure Ukrainian forces defending

in the Toretsk area and possibly the operational rear of the Ukrainian defense in and west of Chasiv Yar. Russian forces have long aimed to seize four major cities that form a fortress belt in Donetsk Oblast (Slovyansk, Kramatorsk, Druzhkivka, and Kostyantynivka), and Chasiv Yar is operationally significant because it would provide Russian forces with a staging ground to launch offensive operations against Druzhkivka and Kostyantynivka.[12] The Russian military command could decide that advances north along the H-20 highway would allow Russian forces to conduct subsequent complementary offensive operations from the east and south against the southern edge of the Ukrainian fortress belt in Donetsk Oblast. The Russian tactical penetration northwest of Avdiivka is roughly 20km southwest of Toretsk, roughly 18km south of Oleksandro-Kalynove (the next major settlement south of Kostyantynivka), and roughly 28km south of Kostyantynivka. This distance is notably not greater than the distance to Pokrovsk, which is roughly 30km west of the Russian salient northwest of Avdiivka. A drive up along the H-20 would be a serious undertaking and would not be rapid. The Russian command may decide to continue pushing west towards Pokrovsk because there may be greater opportunities for tactical gains in the area west of Avdiivka than towards the north, however, and because of the Russian preoccupation with reaching the western borders of Donetsk Oblast.

Syrskiy also noted that the threat of a possible future Russian offensive operation against Kharkiv City is causing Ukraine to allocate additional forces and equipment to defending the city, although ISW continues to assess that the Russian military lacks the forces necessary to seize the city. Syrskiy stated that Ukrainian forces are monitoring the increased number of Russian forces regrouping in the Kharkiv direction, likely referring to Belgorod Oblast, and that Ukrainian forces have reinforced defensive positions in the "most threatened" areas with additional artillery and tank units.[13] Syrskiy's statement provides no indication about the imminence of the possible Russian offensive operation against Kharkiv City about which Ukrainian officials have recently warned.[14] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets recently stated that Russian forces are regrouping elements of the 11th Army Corps (AC) and 6th Combined Arms Army (CAA) (both Leningrad Military District [LMD]) from the Kupyansk direction into Russia's newly-formed Northern Grouping of Forces and that the Northern Grouping's best-equipped elements are concentrated in the Belgorod Oblast direction.[15] Elements of the 6th CAA have previously had exclusive responsibility for offensive operations northeast of Kupyansk, particularly near Synkivka.[16] Syrskiy noted that Ukrainian forces have recently improved their positions near Synkivka (northeast of Kupyansk) and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces retreated a short distance from Synkivka due to manpower shortages in the area, suggesting that Russian forces have likely pulled at least some elements of the 6th CAA from the area.[17]

ISW has not observed reports of elements of the 6th CAA operating in the Kupyansk direction since late March, and Russian forces are not conducting active offensive operations in the areas where elements of the 6th CAA were previously attacking.[18] Elements of the Russian 6th CAA were previously involved in offensive operations near Synkivka that began in October 2023 and continued throughout the winter and early spring 2024.[19] Likely elements of the 6th CAA's 25th and 128th motorized rifle brigades conducted several company-sized mechanized assaults near Synkivka in December 2023, which resulted in significant armored vehicle losses and no tactically significant advances.[20] The brigades' inability to seize Synkivka despite repeated mass infantry and mechanized assaults over a months-long offensive effort calls into question their combat effectiveness and the combat effectiveness of the 6th CAA and Northern Grouping of Forces more broadly. ISW continues to assess that a potential future Russian offensive to seize Kharkiv City would be an extremely ambitious undertaking that would pose significant challenges to Russian forces, particularly since Russian forces will be facing better-equipped Ukrainian forces following the arrival of US military assistance.[21] Russian forces would not have to seize Kharkiv City to reap the benefits of drawing Ukrainian manpower and equipment away from other critical areas of the frontline, however. The Russian military appears to be learning from past operational planning mistakes and may intend for the threat of a Russian offensive on Kharkiv City to stretch Ukrainian forces across a wider frontline in eastern Ukraine ahead of the start of the Russian summer offensive effort.[22]

The Ukrainian 47th Mechanized Brigade denied a recent report that Ukrainian forces had pulled US-provided M1A1 Abrams tanks from the frontline. The *Associated Press (AP)* reported on April 26, citing two unspecified US military officials, that Ukraine has removed Abrams tanks from the frontline partly because Russia’s widespread drone usage has made it too difficult for Ukrainian forces to operate Abrams without Russian forces detecting and striking Abrams with drones.[23] The Ukrainian 47th Mechanized Brigade denied the report, stating that Abrams perform well on the battlefield and that the 47th Mechanized Brigade would not “hide [a tank] from the enemy that makes the enemy hide themselves” or leave Ukrainian infantry without fire support.[24] ISW does not report on the specific Ukrainian tactical deployment or use of its own or Western-provided weapons systems apart from what US or Ukrainian officials say.

Recent Russian efforts to increase control over migrants in and entering Russia following the March 22 Crocus City Hall terrorist attack appear to be straining relations between Russia and Tajikistan. The Tajik Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) warned Tajik citizens on April 27 to temporarily refrain from traveling to Russia on all modes of transportation “unless absolutely necessary.”[25] Tajik news outlet *Asia-Plus* reported on April 25 that Russian authorities had stopped almost 200 cars with Tajik license plates from entering Russia at a checkpoint on the Russian-Kazakh border as of April 22.[26] Russian authorities reportedly questioned Tajik citizens and looked through the contents of their phones but allowed children under 14 and people over 60 to enter Russia without questioning. The Tajik MFA reported on April 28 that Russian authorities detained almost 1,000 Tajik citizens at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow and dozens of Tajik citizens in Zhukovskiy, Domodedovo, and Sheremetyevo airports in Moscow and held them in poor sanitary conditions.[27] The Tajik MFA stated that Russian authorities allowed 322 Tajik citizens to enter Russia and added 306 others to an “expulsion list.” Russian MFA Spokesperson Maria Zakharova claimed on April 27 that Russian authorities are taking measures to resolve issues at border checkpoints but defended temporary “thorough checks” of foreign citizens as “intensified measures to prevent terrorism.”[28] Tajikistan’s Deputy Minister of Labor, Migration, and Employment Shakhnoza Nodiri stated on March 30 that Tajikistan observed an outflow of Tajik migrants from Russia following the Crocus attack and that many Tajik migrants are calling the Tajik government stating that they want to leave Russia out of fear and panic.[29] Russian authorities increased crackdowns against Central Asian migrants entering and living in Russia, particularly Tajiks, after the Crocus City Hall attack since the majority of people arrested in connection with the attack were Tajik citizens.[30]

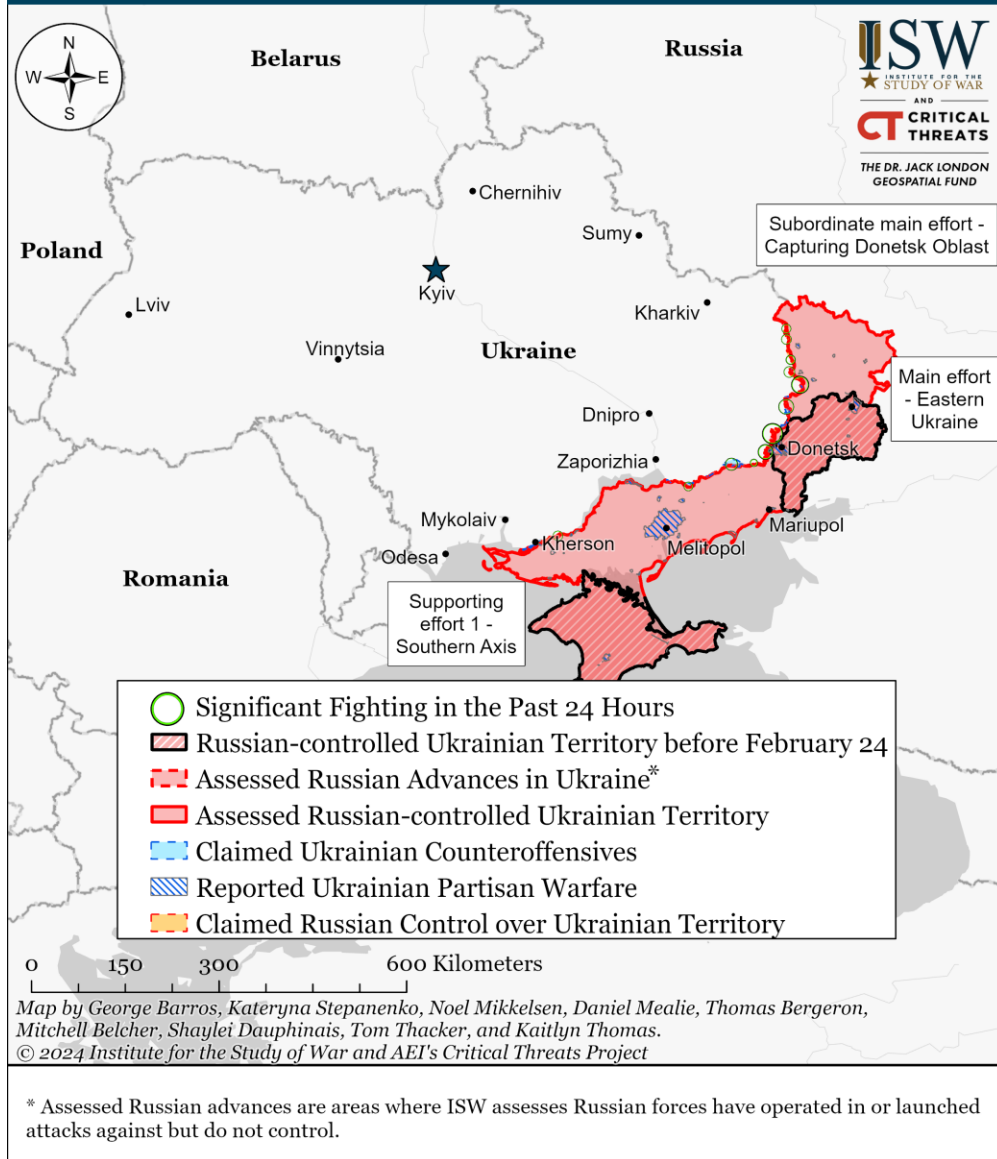
Russian authorities arrested several Russian journalists working for Western publications in Russia within the past several days, likely as part of an ongoing effort to limit Western and independent Russian media’s ability to reliably report on Russia. Western and Russian opposition media widely reported that Russian authorities recently arrested Sergei Karelin, who previously worked with the *Associated Press (AP)* and *Deutsche Welle*, and Konstantin Gabov, who previously worked with *Reuters*, on charges of working with an “extremist organization” for their previous work with the Anti-Corruption Fund founded by deceased Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny.[31] A Russian court also recently placed *Forbes Russia* journalist Sergei Mingazov under house arrest for spreading false information about the Russian military by reposting news articles about the Russian military’s massacres in Bucha on his Telegram channel.[32] Russian opposition outlet *Mediazona* reported on April 26 that Russian courts have charged more people with “participating” in “undesirable” Russian opposition and foreign media organizations so far in 2024 than were charged with such crimes in 2022 or 2023.[33] ISW has recently reported on the Kremlin’s effort to increasingly use the vague “extremism” legal definition to increasingly prosecute anti-war sentiment, and the arrests of Karelin and Gabov in particular demonstrate one such application of this expansion.[34]

Key Takeaways:

- **Recent Russian gains northwest of Avdiivka have prompted Ukrainian forces to withdraw from other limited tactical positions along the frontline west of Avdiivka, although these withdrawals have yet to facilitate rapid Russian tactical gains. Russian forces remain unlikely to achieve a deeper operationally significant penetration in the area in the near term.**

- **The continued Russian stabilization of their salient northwest of Avdiivka presents the Russian command with a choice of continuing to push west towards its reported operational objective in Pokrovsk or trying to drive northwards to conduct possible complementary offensive operations with the Russian effort around Chasiv Yar.**
- **Syrskiy also noted that the threat of a possible future Russian offensive operation against Kharkiv City is causing Ukraine to allocate additional forces and equipment to defending the city, although ISW continues to assess that the Russian military lacks the forces necessary to seize the city.**
- **The Ukrainian 47th Mechanized Brigade denied a recent report that Ukrainian forces had pulled US-provided M1A1 Abrams tanks from the frontline.**
- **Recent Russian efforts to increase control over migrants in and entering Russia following the March 22 Crocus City Hall terrorist attack appear to be straining relations between Russia and Tajikistan.**
- **Russian authorities arrested several Russian journalists working for Western publications in Russia within the past several days, likely as part of an ongoing effort to limit Western and independent Russian media's ability to reliably report on Russia.**
- **Russian forces recently marginally advanced near Svatove.**
- **The United Kingdom's (UK) Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Leo Docherty, stated on April 27 that the UK assesses that Russian forces have suffered 450,000 killed and wounded personnel since the start of the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 28, 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

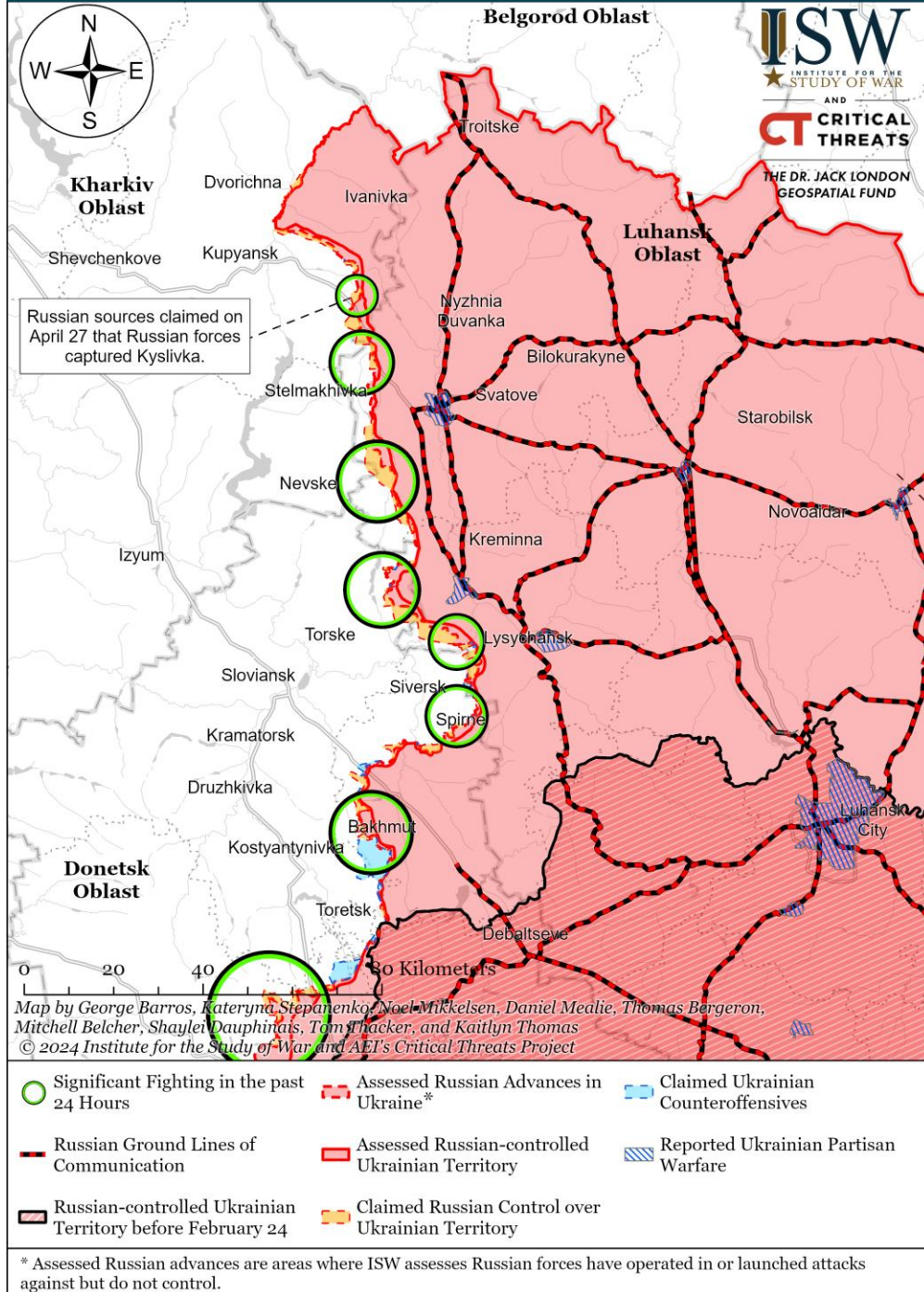
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 made confirmed advances northwest of Svatove amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on April 28. Geolocated footage published on April 28 indicates that Russian forces, reportedly elements of the 272nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]), advanced within Kyslivka (northwest of Svatove).[35] Geolocated footage published on April 28 indicates that Russian forces advanced south of Novoselivske (northwest of Svatove).[36] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Krokhmalne (northwest of Svatove), although ISW has not observed visual evidence of this claim.[37] Russian milbloggers continued to claim that Russian forces seized Kyslivka.[38] Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi reported on April 28 that Russian forces have concentrated their main effort in the Kupyansk direction northwest of Svatove near Berestove and Stelmakhivka and that Russian forces have made limited gains in these areas.[39] Syrskyi stated that Russian forces are trying to exploit airpower, missile, and artillery advantages to reach the administrative borders of Luhansk Oblast. Fighting continued northwest of Svatove near Kyslivka, Kotlyarivka, Novoselivske, Berestove, and Stelmakhivka; west of Svatove near Kopanky; and southwest of Svatove near Novoyehorivka and Novoserhiivka.[40]

Fighting continued near Kreminna on April 28, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks northwest of Kreminna near Makiivka; west of Kreminna near Nevske and Terny; and south of Kreminna near the Serebryanske forest area.[41] Syrskyi reported that Russian forces are continuing offensive operations near Terny in an attempt to push Ukrainian forces beyond the Zhrebets River.[42] Elements of the Chechen Akhmat “Aida” Spetsnaz Detachment reportedly continue operating in the Serebryanske forest area.[43]

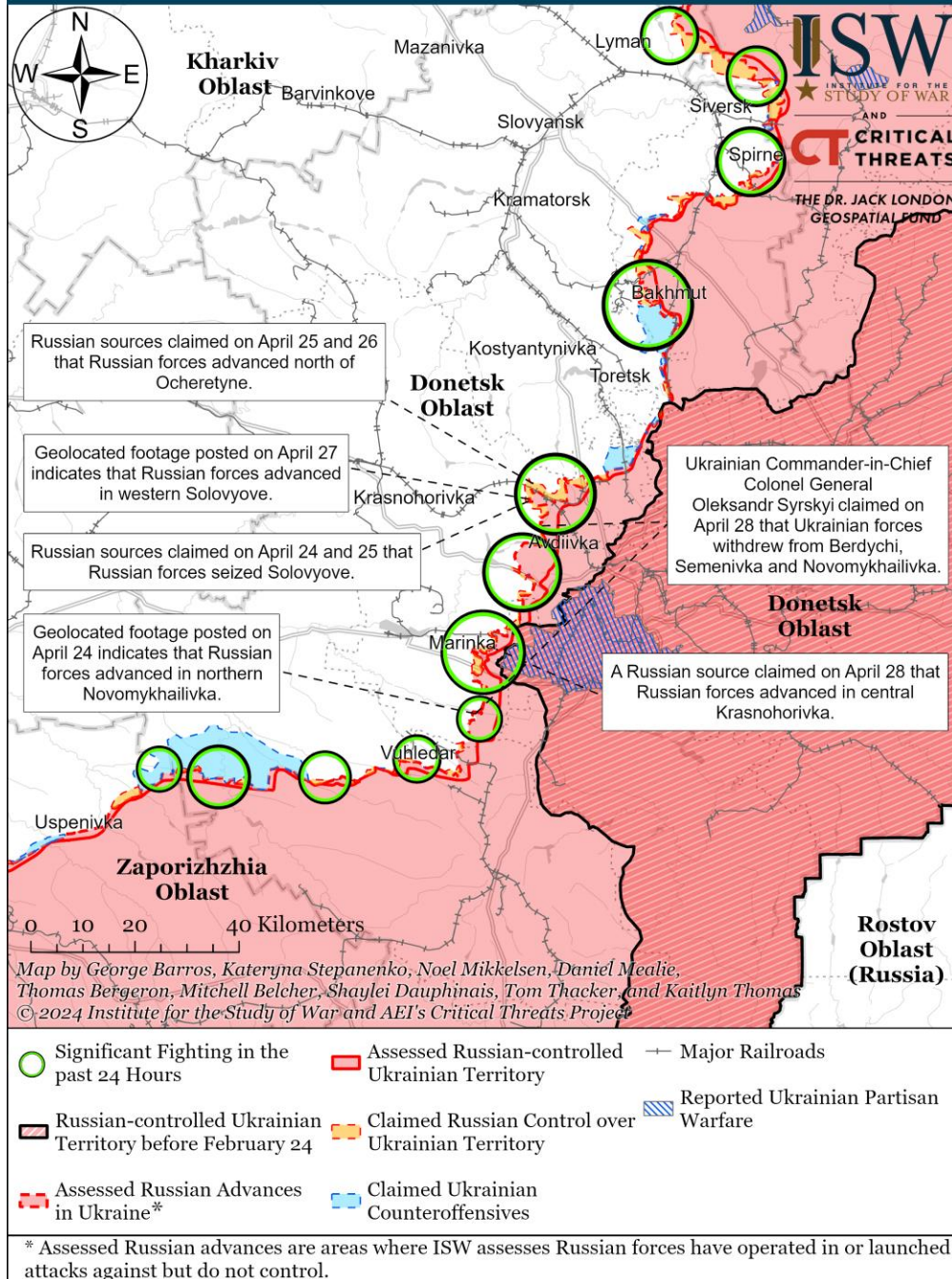
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of April 28, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

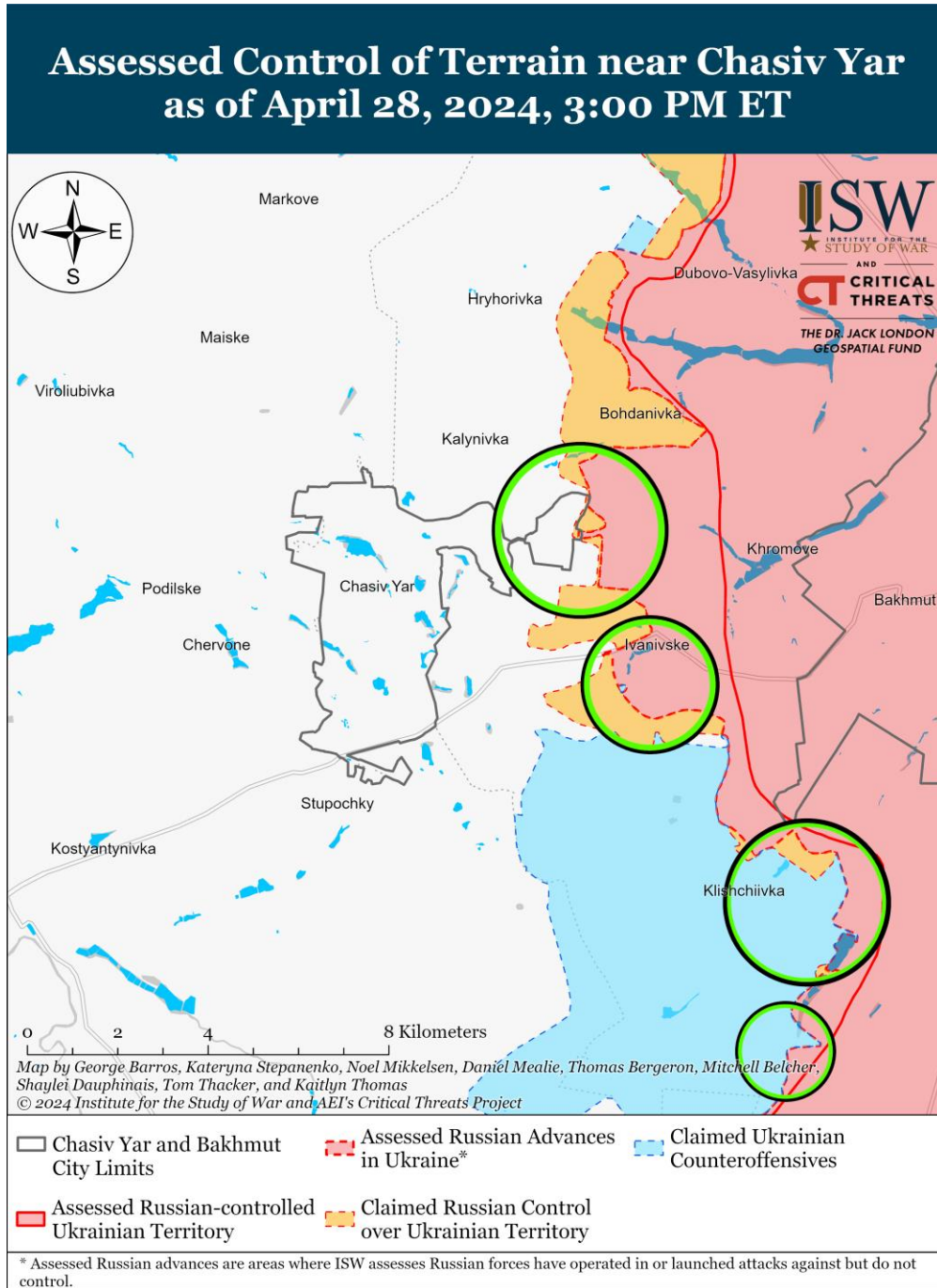
Positional fighting continued in the Siversk direction (northeast of Bakhmut) on April 28. Positional fighting continued east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske, southeast of Siversk near Vyimka, and south of Siversk near Rozdolivka.[44] Elements of the Russian 6th Motorized Rifle Brigade and the “GORB” detachment (both of the 2nd Luhansk People’s Republic [LNR] Army Corps [AC]) are reportedly operating near Spirne (southeast of Siversk).[45]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of April 28, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

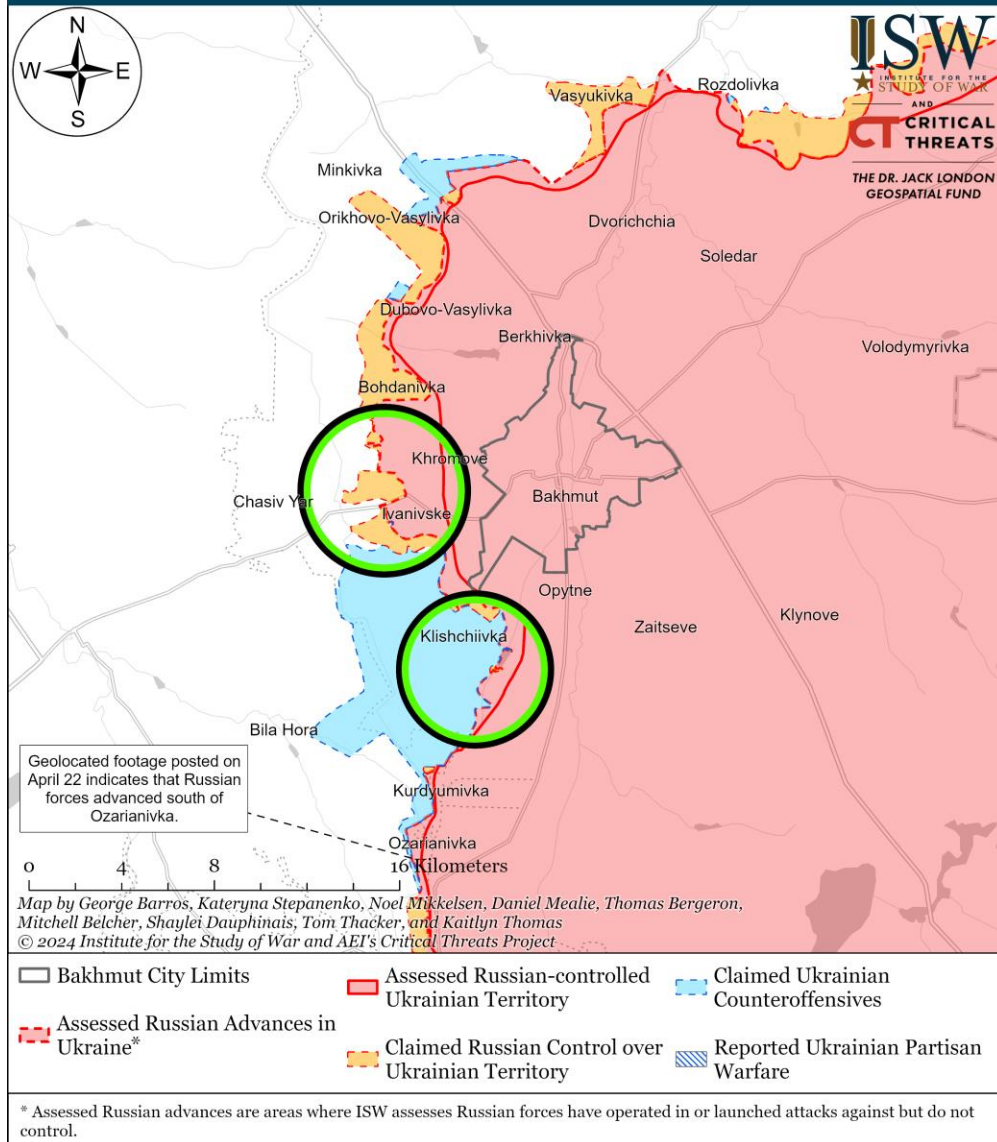


Positional fighting continued near Chasiv Yar on April 28, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Fighting continued near the Novyi Microraiion (eastern Chasiv Yar); north of Chasiv Yar near Hryhorivka; east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske; and southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka, Andriivka, and Niu York.[46] A

Russian milblogger posted footage of Russian Su-25 aircraft conducting airstrikes near Chasiv Yar to support dismounted Russian infantry.[47]



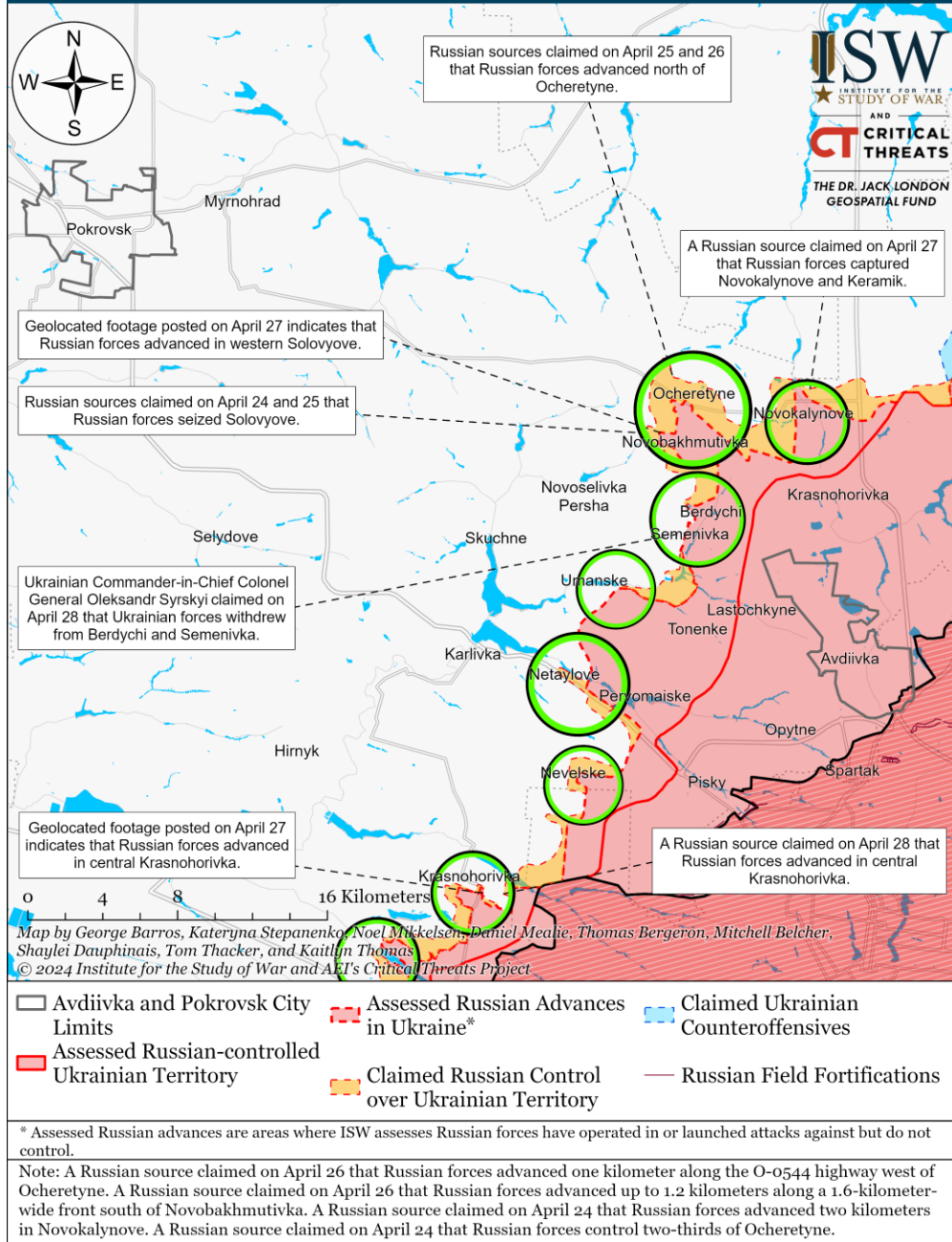
Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of April 28, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces have withdrawn from two settlements northwest of Avdiivka amid continued fighting in the area on April 28. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated on April 28 that Ukrainian forces have withdrawn from Berdychi (northwest of Avdiivka) and Semenivka (west of Avdiivka) to unspecified lines to the west.[48] A prominent Russian milblogger reported that Ukrainian forces withdrew from Berdychi on the evening of April 27 after Russian forces reportedly seized Semenivka on April 26 and broke through a Ukrainian fortified area near Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka), threatening to encircle Ukrainian forces in Berdychi.[49] Russian milbloggers reported that the Russian “Mag Dogs” detachment of the 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) then seized Berdychi and raised a Russian flag on its western outskirts before midnight on April 27.[50] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces seized Novokalynove (northwest of Avdiivka) on April 27 and advanced to the eastern outskirts of Keramik (immediately north of Novokalynove); advanced west of Berdychi, north of Semenivka, and

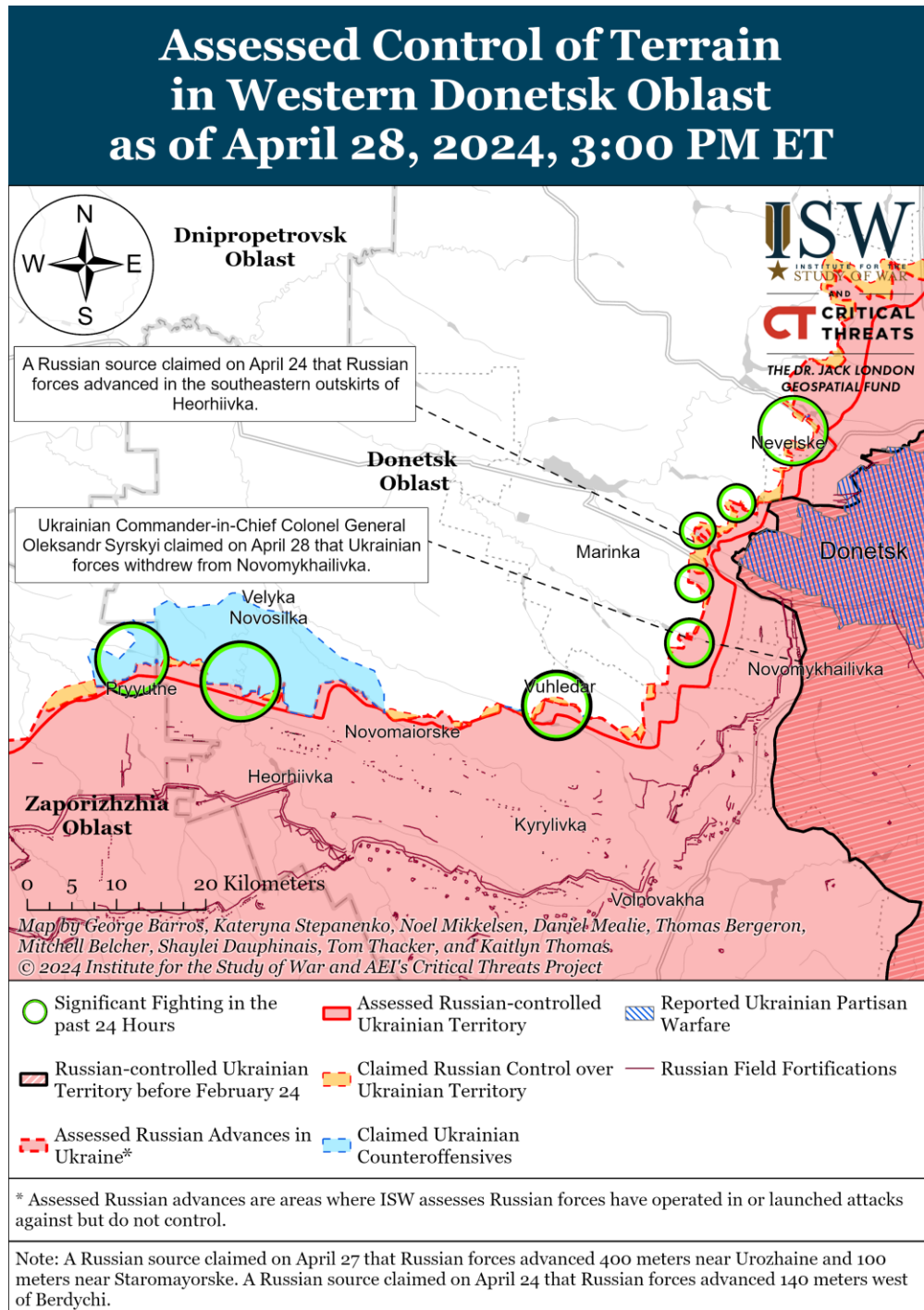
into western Netaylove (southwest of Avdiivka) on April 28; and seized Keramik on April 28.[51] ISW has not observed confirmation of these Russian claims beyond the seizures of Berdychi and Semenivka, however. Fighting also continued northwest of Avdiivka near Umanske, Sokil (west of Ocheretyne), Arkhanhelske, Kalynove, Solovyove, Novopokrovske (immediately southwest of Solovyove), and Novoselivka Persha (immediately southwest of Novopokrovske).[52] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on April 28 that Russian forces seized Novobakmutivka (northwest of Avdiivka) after Russian forces likely seized the settlement overnight on April 24 to 25.[53] Elements of the Russian “Vega” Spetsnaz detachment (24th Guards Spetsnaz Brigade, Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff [GRU]) reportedly continue operating in the Avdiivka direction.[54]

Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of April 28, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Syrskyi stated on April 28 that Ukrainian forces also withdrew from Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk City) amid continued fighting in the area.[55] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced further west within Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City) but that Russian forces have not yet captured the brick factory in central Krasnohorivka.[56] Fighting also continued west of Donetsk City near Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Vodyane.[57] Elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] AC) supported by elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly fighting in Krasnohorivka.[58]

Positional fighting continued south of Velyka Novosilka near Staromayorske in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on April 28.[59]



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

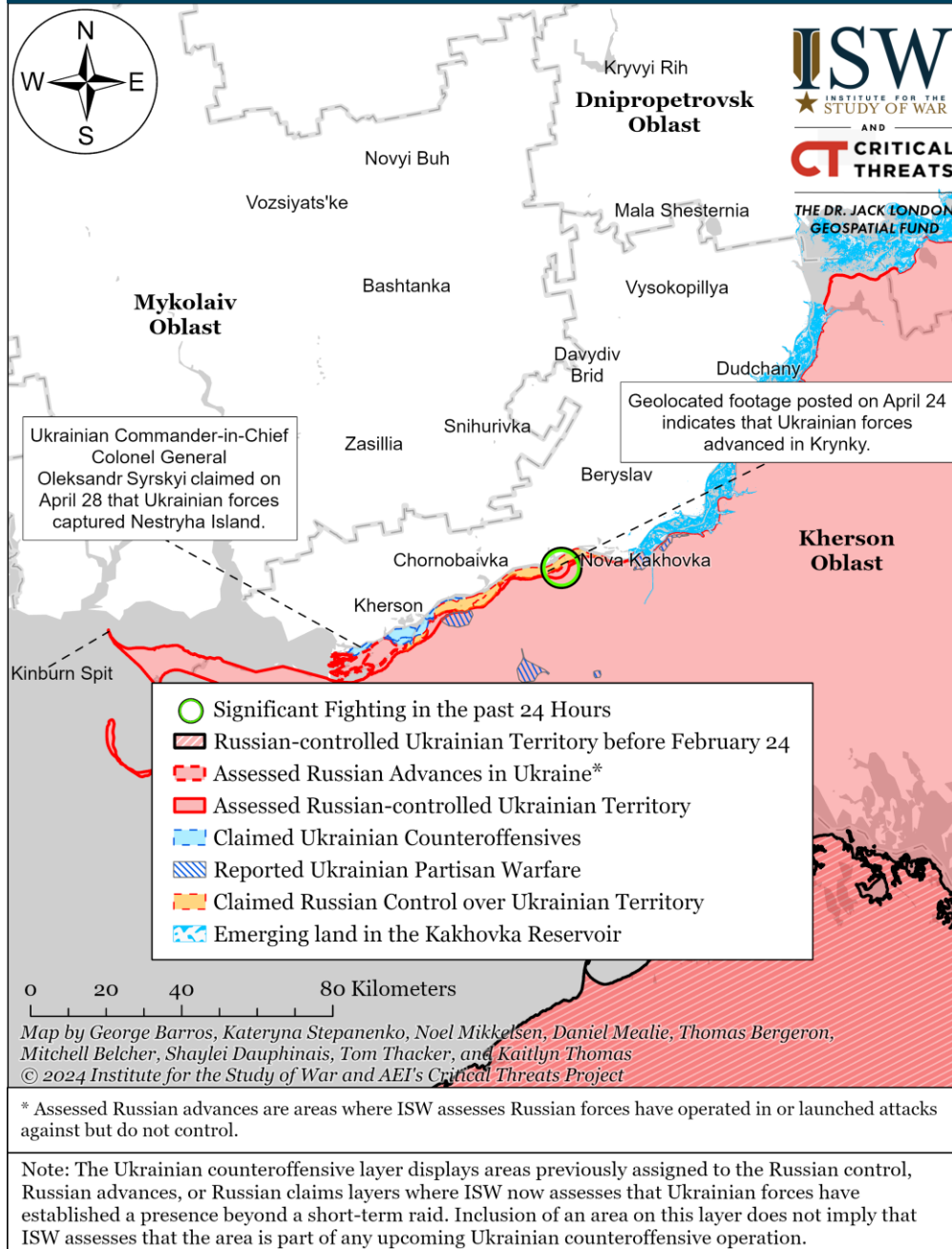
Positional engagements continued in western Zaporizhia Oblast on April 28, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Positional engagements continued near Robotyne and Verbove (east of Robotyne).[60] Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed on April 28 that Russian forces recently

advanced near Robotyne.[61] A Russian milblogger reiterated claims that Ukrainian forces recently intensified shelling in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast.[62]



Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi reported on April 28 that Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Veletenske (southwest of Kherson City) and established control over Nestryha Island in the Dnipro River Delta southwest of Kherson City.[63] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled several Russian assaults near Krynky in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast.[64]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of April 28, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian milbloggers claimed on April 28 that Ukrainian forces conducted an unsuccessful ATACMS strike targeting Russian air defense units near occupied Cape Tarkhankut, Crimea on the night of April 27 to 28.[65] One Russian milblogger claimed that there were also explosions near occupied Dzhankoi, Crimea.[66] Ukrainian and Russian officials have yet to comment on the claimed strike.

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

Russian forces conducted a limited series of drone and missile strikes against Ukraine on the night of April 27 to 28. Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces launched four Shahed-136/131 drones from occupied Crimea, an S-300 air defense missile from Belgorod Oblast, and five drones of an unknown type from occupied Kherson Oblast.[67] Ukrainian forces reportedly destroyed the four Shahed drones over Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi, and Kirovohrad oblasts and a drone of an unknown type over Mykolaiv Oblast. Ukraine's State Emergency Service reported that Russian drones damaged a hotel in Mykolaiv City.[68] Ukrainian Kherson Oblast Military Administration Head Oleksandr Prokudin stated that a Russian missile struck Kherson City at noon on April 27 and that Russian anti-aircraft missiles struck Beryslav and Kherson raions at dawn on April 28, damaging residential areas, critical infrastructure, and an agricultural enterprise.[69] Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Russian forces struck an ammunition and aircraft equipment warehouse in Chernihiv Oblast, the Starokostyantyniv airfield in Khmelnytskyi Oblast, and the Kamyanka airfield in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.[70]

Dmytro Sakharuk, the executive director of Ukraine's largest private energy operator DTEK, stated on April 28 that Russian forces have targeted Ukrainian thermal power plants almost 180 times since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.[71] Sakharuk stated that the April 27 strike series was the fourth-largest Russian strike against Ukrainian thermal power plants in 2024.

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

The United Kingdom's (UK) Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Leo Docherty, stated on April 27 that the UK assesses that Russian forces have suffered 450,000 killed and wounded personnel since the start of the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022.[72] Docherty stated that Russian forces have lost over 10,000 armored vehicles, including 3,000 tanks, as well as 109 fixed-wing aircraft, 135 rotary-wing aircraft, and 23 naval vessels.[73] US intelligence assessed in December 2023 that Russian forces had suffered 315,000 casualties in Ukraine since February 2022.[74] Russian opposition media outlets *Meduza* and *Mediazona* estimated in February 2024 that upwards of 75,000 Russian personnel died in Ukraine between the start of the full-scale invasion and December 2023.[75] Russian forces continue offensive operations in Ukraine despite heavy manpower losses by relying on crypto-mobilization efforts.[76] The Russian military is facing constraints on the amount of modern and effective equipment that it can and will be able to deploy in Ukraine, and the overall combat effectiveness of Russian formations and units continues to decline as they degrade in Ukraine.[77] Russian forces have weathered heavy losses in Ukraine, however, and will continue to rely on quantitative advantages in manpower and materiel to pressure Ukrainian forces.

The Russian government published a resolution on April 28 announcing that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) will begin to issue electronic summonses through the Unified Military Registry for the fall 2024 conscription cycle starting on November 1.[78] The resolution states that Russian officials will consider an electronic summons served seven days after it is posted on the Russia State Services portal and that if a conscript does not appear within 20 days of the summonses being served, then Russian authorities will block the conscript's ability to obtain a passport or register as an individual entrepreneur.[79] The resolution also states that Russian officials will collect information on the real estate and vehicles owned by those eligible for military service and information about foreign travel for the Unified Military Registry.[80] Russian officials have delivered limited electronic summonses alongside hard copy summonses during the ongoing spring 2024 conscription cycle.[81] The Russian State Duma adopted the bill creating the Unified Military Registry in April 2023, and the Kremlin likely intends to use the registry to crack down on Russian draft dodgers.[82]

Russian authorities have reportedly formalized a procedure for recruiting those accused of criminal offenses for military service in Ukraine. Russian outlet *Kommersant* reported on April 27 that Russian criminal investigators, prosecutors, and military commanders are coordinating efforts to recruit those accused of crimes

for military service in exchange for dropping their criminal punishment.[83] Russian legal sources told *Kommersant* that investigators from the Russian Investigative Committee provide those accused of crimes with an "explanation" document upon the completion of the investigation (presumably when Russian authorities arrest and inform the accused of the crime they allegedly committed).[84] The document reportedly informs the accused whether it is possible for them to obtain an exemption from criminal liability in exchange for military service during partial mobilization or by signing a military contract.[85] The investigator in charge of the case reportedly suspends and terminates criminal prosecution after the accused signs a contract for military service with the approval of the supervising prosecutor and the commander of the military unit in which the accused will be serving.[86] *Kommersant* noted that Russian authorities will not completely void a criminal case until the Russian military dismisses the accused from military service.[87] Russian authorities are reportedly offering exemption from criminal liability in exchange for military service through Article 398 of the Russian Criminal Code, a previously scarcely-used provision that allows deferment of sentences in "exceptional cases" that Russian courts have been using more frequently since the start of the full-scale invasion.[88] This procedure notably does not require that Russian authorities formally prosecute the accused, and Russian authorities may use these measures to coerce people into military service through accusations with increasingly suspect evidence. *Kommersant* reported that Russian authorities are already implementing this procedure in occupied Ukraine and Russian federal subjects bordering Ukraine and that Russian authorities are gradually extending it to all of Russia.[89]

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

Russian loitering munitions manufacturer and Kalashnikov Concern subsidiary Zala Aero announced on April 26 that Russian forces are increasingly using Izdeliye-51/52 loitering munitions in Ukraine.[90] Zala Aero stated that Zala Aero observed Russian forces using at least 500 Ozdeliye-51/52 loitering munitions in Ukraine in the past three months through open-source footage.[91] Zala Aero claimed that Russian forces previously published 1,000 instances of using loitering munitions in Ukraine during an unspecified period of 18 months.[92] Zala Aero claimed that Russian forces primarily use the loitering munitions to target Ukrainian artillery systems, tanks, and light armored vehicles.[93]

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)

ISW is not publishing coverage of Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine today.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on April 28 that Russian occupation authorities are intensifying information operations to diminish trust in Ukrainian authorities and the military in occupied Ukraine. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian information operations aim to discredit Ukrainian military and political leadership, foment panic among Ukrainians, and compromise the activity of Ukrainian forces.[94] The Ukrainian Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security warned that Russian Telegram channels are specifically spreading false information about alleged divisions between senior Ukrainian political and military leadership to diminish trust in Ukrainian officials and degrade Ukrainian morale.[95]

Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov baselessly claimed on April 28 that panic is growing among Ukrainian forces on the frontline, in an attempt to sow panic in Ukraine.[96] Peskov's statement is also likely intended to artificially inflate the success of recent Russian tactical advances along select sectors of the frontline to Russian domestic audiences.

Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova reiterated boilerplate Russian information operations about Russian-backed Moldovan breakaway republic of Transnistria on April 28. Zakharova continued to falsely portray Russia as a legitimate guarantor and mediator in the 5+2 negotiating format for the Transnistrian conflict, which includes Russia, Ukraine, Transnistria, Moldova, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as mediators and the European Union (EU) and US as observers.[97] Russia is not an impartial, outside party in the conflict between Moldova and Transnistria and thus is not a legitimate mediator. Russia has historically and continues to use pro-Russian actors in Transnistria to set conditions for Russian hybrid operations against Moldova.[98]

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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