



## Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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May 13, 2024, 8:45pm ET

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

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

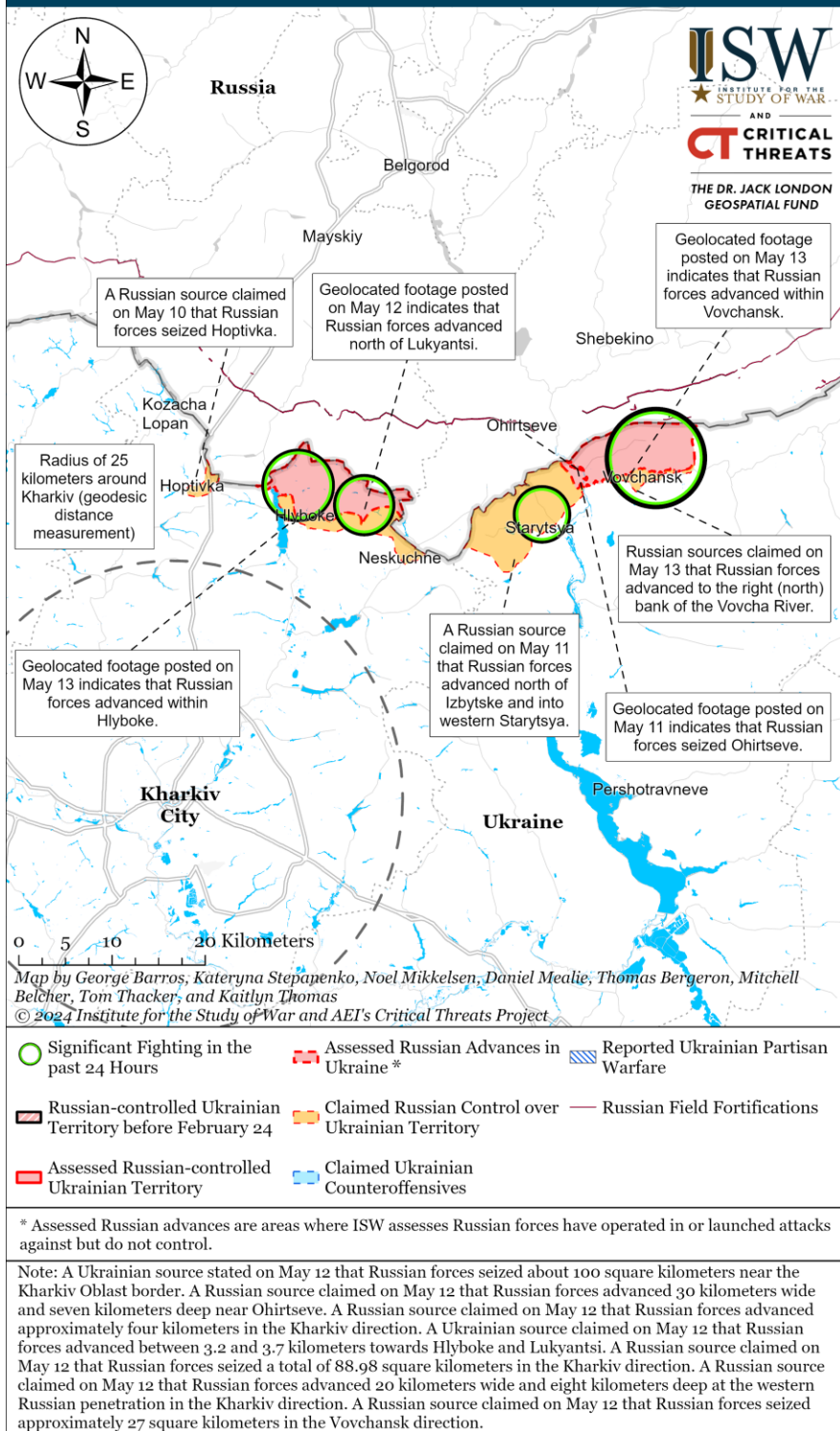
Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 2:45pm ET on May 13. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 14 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Russian forces continued to make tactically significant advances north and northeast of Kharkiv City on May 13 and currently appear to be prioritizing the rapid establishment of a "buffer zone" along the international border over setting conditions for deeper penetrations into northern Kharkiv Oblast.** Geolocated footage published on May 13 shows that Russian forces have advanced into Hlyboke (north of Lyptsi) and raised a flag in the center of the village, but Russian sources claimed that Russian forces have not yet seized the entirety of Hlyboke and advanced west of the settlement along the west (left) bank of the Kharkiv River.[1] Additional geolocated footage shows that Russian forces advanced southwest of Oliinykove (northeast of Lyptsi) and north of Lukyantsi (northeast of Lyptsi and southeast of Oliinykove).[2] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces achieved unspecified tactical success near Lukyantsi.[3] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces entered Lukyantsi, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[4] Russian forces also continued attacking in the Lyptsi direction near Pylna (northeast of Lyptsi and Oliinykove), and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Hlyboke.[5]

Geolocated footage published on May 12 shows that Russian forces seized the Vovchansk Meat Processing Plant in northern Vovchansk, and Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also captured a shoe factory in northern Vovchansk on the morning of May 13 and advanced into central Vovchansk up to the northern (right) bank of the Vovcha River by the evening.[6] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are also clearing Starytsya and Buhruvatka (both west of Vovchansk on the C-210817 road) but that Russian forces do not control the settlements, and also advanced in a forest area further south of Ohirtseve (northwest of Vovchansk).[7] Russian forces also attacked on the Izbytske-Starytsya-Buhruvatka line west of Vovchansk and near Tykhe (east of Vovchansk), where the Russian MoD also reported Ukrainian counterattacks.[8] Russian sources claimed that fighting continued between the Lyptsi and Vovchansk salients near Zelene (on the international border between Lyptsi and Vovchansk) and that Ukrainian forces partially withdrew from Ternova (immediately southeast of Zelene).[9]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of May 13, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



**Russian forces' relatively rapid rate of advances in Vovchansk and their reported destruction of several bridges across key waterways within the settlement suggest that Russian forces are prioritizing the creation of a "buffer zone" over a deeper penetration, as ISW previously assessed they would.**[10] ISW has not yet observed claims or confirmation that Russian forces have crossed to the southern (left) bank of the Vovcha River in Vovchansk or its immediate environs. Russian forces notably conducted strikes against bridges over the Vovcha River immediately west and east of Vovchansk on May 12 and began targeting bridges over the river and logistics lines in Vovchansk itself on May 13, reportedly only leaving Ukrainian forces with two usable bridges over the Vovcha in Vovchansk.[11] It is unclear why Russian forces would largely target bridges they would need to cross and ensure stable logistics across the Vovcha River for offensive operations deeper into northern Kharkiv Oblast, so these strikes suggest that Russian forces may be prioritizing immediate gains in an unfortified area of northern Ukraine. Russian forces are also reportedly fielding armor in this area -- Russian sources reported that Russian forces conducted a mechanized attack with an unspecified number of tanks against Vovchansk on the night of May 12 and continued armored attacks during the day on May 13.[12] The deployment of armored assets in this area suggests that Russian forces are seeking to make rapid gains, but they do not appear to be setting conditions at this time for such gains to be on the southern side of the Vovcha River deeper into northern Kharkiv Oblast. These indicators collectively suggest that Russian forces are likely trying to create the promised "buffer zone" in the border area instead of pursuing deeper gains into Kharkiv Oblast or towards Kharkiv City.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and other Kremlin officials have frequently suggested that Russia establish a "demilitarized buffer zone" in occupied Ukraine to protect Russian territory from Ukrainian strikes, and Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov directly connected this buffer zone with intensified Russian offensive operations south of Belgorod Oblast on May 13.[13] Ukrainian and Western officials have also recently stated that Russian forces intend to establish a 10-kilometer buffer zone in Kharkiv Oblast, and ISW has recently noted that this buffer zone would simultaneously bring Russian forces within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City and remove major Russian logistics hubs from Ukrainian tube artillery range.[14] A Ukrainian battlefield commander recently expressed concern that Ukrainian fortifications in northern Kharkiv Oblast are not along the immediate international border area, enabling Russian forces' quick and relatively shallow advance.[15] More senior Ukrainian commanders have recently stated that Ukrainian forces have established a multi-layered defense-in-depth deeper in the oblast, which is congruent with the other battlefield commanders' reports.[16] The current pace of Russian advances on this axis is not necessarily indicative of the further offensive capabilities of the Russian forces conducting the offensive operations, although Russia reportedly retains considerable reserves available to exploit initial successes on this axis.

**Newly appointed Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu participated in his first Security Council meeting as secretary on May 13, amid continued reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin is focusing on mobilizing the Russian economy and defense industrial base (DIB) to support a protracted war in Ukraine.**[17] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov clarified that Shoigu will also be a "curator" of the Russian Military-Industrial Commission but will not lead it.[18] Russian opposition news outlet *Meduza* reported on May 13, citing its sources in the Russian government and presidential administration, that Shoigu's alleged criticisms of Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec General Director Sergei Chemezov for failing to provide a sufficient number of modern weapons to the Russian military for the past several months contributed to Shoigu's removal from the Russian MoD.[19] This claim further emphasizes that Putin is focused on improving the Russian DIB's capacity and ability to modernize and produce new technologies.[20] Several Russian milbloggers expressed hope that Shoigu's removal as defense minister and Andrei Belousov's appointment will improve the bureaucratic issues within the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Russian DIB's efficiency.[21] Russian milbloggers also largely attempted to alleviate concerns that Belousov's lack of military experience would hinder his ability to effectively serve as defense minister and portrayed him as a competent manager who can root out corruption.[22] Belousov's lack of military experience is not anomalous in the context of Putin's ministerial management, and Shoigu also lacked military experience

before becoming defense minister.[23] Putin has always appointed a civilian defense minister since firing Boris Yeltsin-appointed Defense Minister Marshal Igor Sergeyev in 2001.[24]

**Putin's decision to remove Shoigu from the Russian MoD appears to have also opened the door for the departure of certain Shoigu affiliates from the MoD, likely one of the intended effects of Putin's recent cabinet reshuffles.** Several Russian milbloggers and insider sources claimed on May 13 that two deputy defense ministers—Ruslan Tsalikov and Alexey Krivoruchko—submitted their resignations to Shoigu a week before Putin removed Shoigu as defense minister.[25] Russian milbloggers claimed that Tsalikov was "Shoigu's right-hand man" for many years and oversaw troop support and the Russian MoD's department on information policy and information warfare.[26] Krivoruchko is also reportedly close with Shoigu and oversaw military-technical support, weapons development, special equipment, and the implementation of state defense orders.[27] Russian sources claimed that both Tsalikov and Krivoruchko were embroiled in corruption scandals, and one Wagner Group-affiliated milblogger noted that frontline troops directly suffered as a result of their corrupt practices.[28] Russian insider sources claimed that Russian authorities questioned Tsalikov over possible corruption charges in late April, and suggested at the time that Tsalikov would be forced into retirement.[29] Russian authorities recently removed former Deputy Defense Minister Timur Ivanov, also a reported close Shoigu ally, from his position on corruption charges.[30] Tsalikov and Krivoruchko may have resigned in hope of receiving new positions outside of the MoD in order to avoid criminal prosecution on charges similar to Ivanov's charges. Kremlin-awarded milblogger suggested that Tsalikov will also take a new role in the Russian Security Council following Shoigu.[31] Russian insider sources speculated that Belousov, as new defense minister, will only want to leave a maximum of two to three officials affiliated with Shoigu in the Russian MoD, suggesting that more Shoigu affiliates may still resign or be fired in the coming weeks.[32] One Russian milblogger speculated that Shoigu and his affiliates were part of the alleged "pro-China" party in the Russian MoD and suggested that other MoD officials associated with Russia's China policy will be removed or resign alongside Shoigu, Ivanov, and others, although ISW cannot verify these speculations.[33] Putin likely used the constitutionally mandated ministerial resignations following his inauguration and subsequent nomination of new senior officials as a convenient moment to dismiss ineffective officials. Putin likely assessed that Shoigu's constitutionally mandated resignation, almost a year after deceased Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin's rebellion to remove Shoigu and Russian Chief of the Army General Staff Valery Gerasimov from power, was the appropriate time to remove Shoigu from the Russian MoD without appearing to give in to Prigozhin's demands.

**Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted successful missile strikes against a Russian air defense base in occupied Crimea and successful drone strikes against Russian energy infrastructure in Russia.** Russian opposition news outlet *Astra* reported, citing a source in the Crimean occupation Ministry of Emergency Services, that Ukrainian forces struck a Russian air defense base of the 3rd Radio Engineering Regiment (Russian Aerospace Forces' [VKS] radio engineering troops) on Mount Ai-Petri in occupied Crimea on May 13, likely with several Storm Shadow missiles.[34] *Astra* reported that the strike killed an unspecified number of Russian personnel and likely the commander of the 3rd Radio Engineering Regiment. Ukrainian outlet *Ukrainska Pravda* reported on May 13 that one of its sources in the Ukrainian military confirmed the Mount Ai-Petri strike.[35] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces shot down four Storm Shadow missiles and seven drones over Crimea.[36] Ukrainian outlet *Suspilne* reported on May 13 that its sources in Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) stated that the SBU conducted a drone strike against the Oskolneftesnabzheniye oil depot near Stary Oskol, Belgorod Oblast, and the Yeletskaya electrical substation in Lipetsk Oblast, which supplies traction substations to Russian Railways, the Stanovaya oil pumping station, and transit between Lipetsk, Oryol, and Bryansk oblasts' power systems.[37] Lipetsk Oblast Governor Igor Artamonov claimed that Russian forces suppressed drones in Lipetsk Oblast and stated that a fire occurred at an electrical substation, presumably due to one of the Ukrainian drones.[38]

**Breaking Defense reported on May 13 that Estonia may be considering sending its troops to Ukrainian rear areas in order to free up Ukrainian troops for redeployment to more critical areas of the theater.**[39] National Security Advisor to the Estonian President, Madis Roll, told *Breaking*

*Defense* that the Estonian government is "seriously" considering sending Estonian troops to western Ukraine to take over non-combat roles in the rear from Ukrainian troops, allowing Ukrainian forces to deploy to frontline areas. Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė noted on May 8 that the Lithuanian government has granted permission for Lithuanian troops to serve in similar non-combat rear area training roles in the future.[40]

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Russian forces continued to make tactically significant advances north and northeast of Kharkiv City on May 13 and currently appear to be prioritizing the rapid establishment of a "buffer zone" along the international border over setting conditions for deeper penetrations into northern Kharkiv Oblast.**
- **Russian forces' relatively rapid rate of advances in Vovchansk and their reported destruction of several bridges across key waterways within the settlement suggest that Russian forces are prioritizing the creation of a "buffer zone" over a deeper penetration, as ISW previously assessed they would.**
- **Newly appointed Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu participated in his first Security Council meeting as secretary on May 13, amid continued reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin is focusing on mobilizing the Russian economy and defense industrial base (DIB) to support a protracted war in Ukraine.**
- **Putin's decision to remove Shoigu from the Russian MoD appears to have also opened the door for the departure of certain Shoigu affiliates from the MoD, likely one of the intended effects of Putin's recent cabinet reshuffles.**
- **Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted successful missile strikes against a Russian air defense base in occupied Crimea and successful drone strikes against Russian energy infrastructure in Russia.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Lyptsi and Vovchansk in northern Kharkiv Oblast.**
- **The Russian military may be intensifying efforts to recruit conscripts through the Russian Volunteer Society for Assistance to the Army, Aviation, and Navy of Russia (DOSAAF) as part of ongoing crypto-mobilization efforts.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 13, 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 – Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – 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 – Kharkiv Oblast (Russian objective: Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City)**

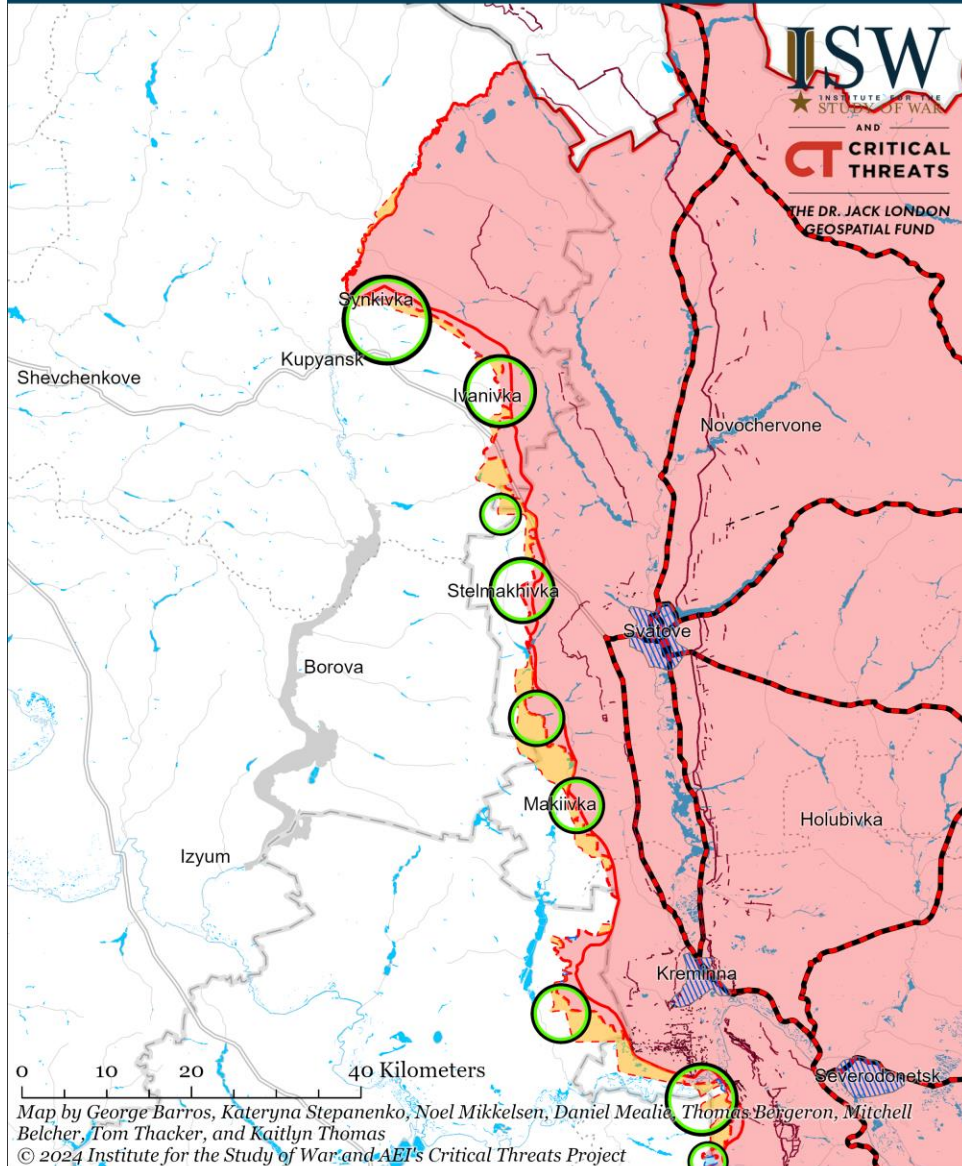
*NOTE: ISW is adding a section to cover Russian offensive operations along the Belgorod-Kharkiv axis as these offensive operations comprise an operational effort separate from Russian offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremynna line. ISW may enlarge the scope of this section should Russian forces expand offensive operations along the Russian-Ukrainian international border in northeastern Ukraine.*

See [topline](#) [text](#).

#### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line on May 13 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported Russian ground attacks northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Ivanivka and Berestove; northwest of Svatove near Stelmakhivka; and southwest of Svatove near Makiivka and Novoyehorivka.[41] Russian milbloggers posted footage of Russian dismounted infantry conducting an assault on trenches near Stelmakhivka under the cover of tank fire.[42]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kupyansk as of May 13, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



- |   |  |                                     |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours                 | Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine *           | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives |
| Russian Ground Lines of Communication                     | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory  | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Russian Field Fortifications        |

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

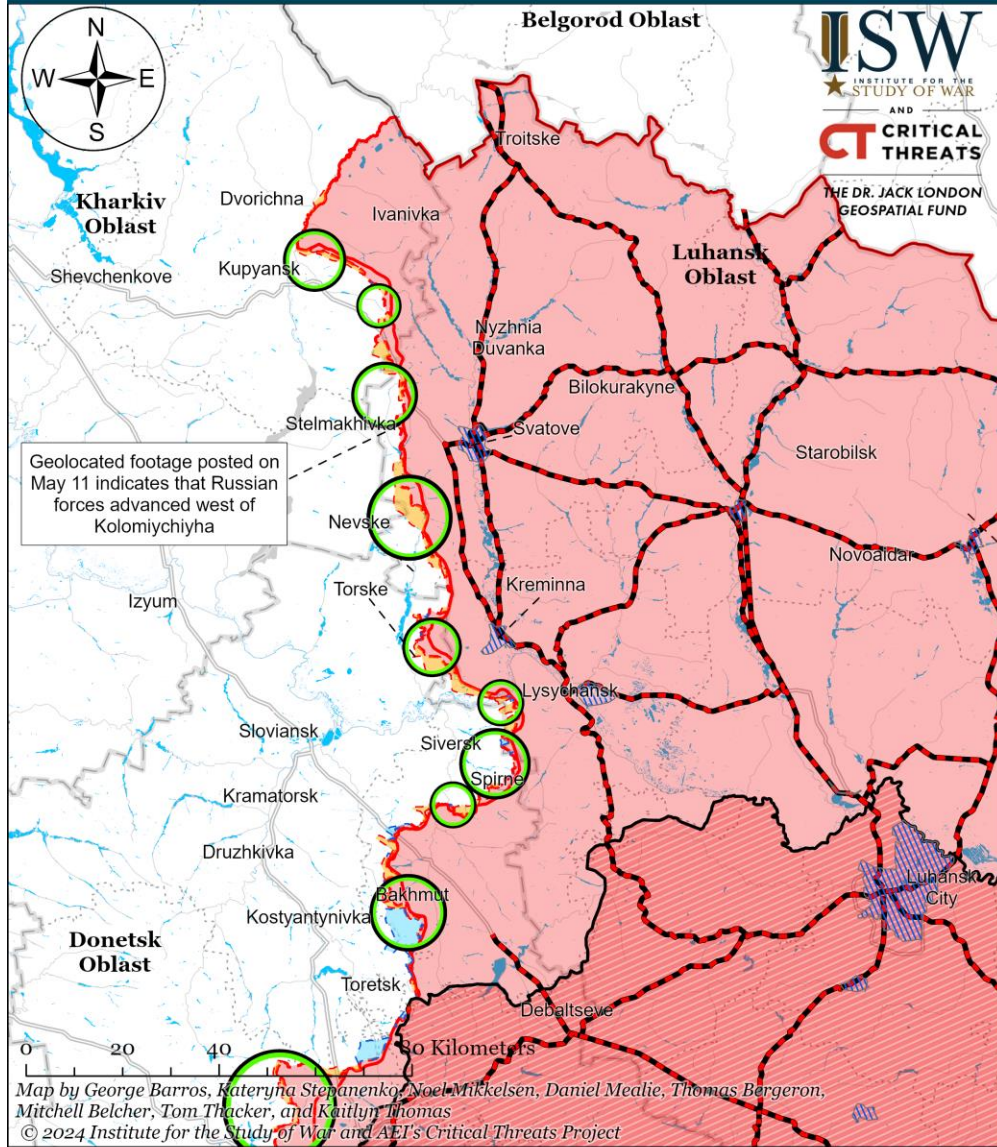
Note: A Russian source claimed on May 11 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer wide and 850 meters deep west of Kolomyichyha. Russian and Ukrainian sources claimed on May 10 that Russian forces advanced up to five kilometers along a ten-kilometers-wide front and seized 30 square kilometers of territory in Harkiv Oblast. A Western media source claimed on May 10 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer near Vovchansk, citing unspecified senior military officials.



Russian forces recently conducted an unsuccessful roughly reinforced platoon-sized mechanized assault west of Kreminna. Ukrainian sources posted footage of Ukrainian forces destroying five tanks (including one T-90) and five BMP infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) between Torske and Terny (both west of Kreminna).[43] A Russian milblogger confirmed that the assault happened near Torske and that Russian forces lost several tanks.[44] The milblogger also claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced in the area north of Torske and south of Yampolivka (also west of Kreminna).[45] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that there were 10 combat engagements in the Lyman direction west of Kreminna throughout the day.[46]

Ukrainian forces struck an ammunition depot in occupied Sorokyne (Krasnodon), Luhansk Oblast on May 13.[47] Kremlin newswire *TASS* and other Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces used at least three ATACMS missiles to strike an industrial zone, while Ukrainian sources noted that the strikes specifically hit an ammunition depot.[48] Sorokyne (Krasnodon) is notably 130 kilometers away from the frontline.

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of May 13, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

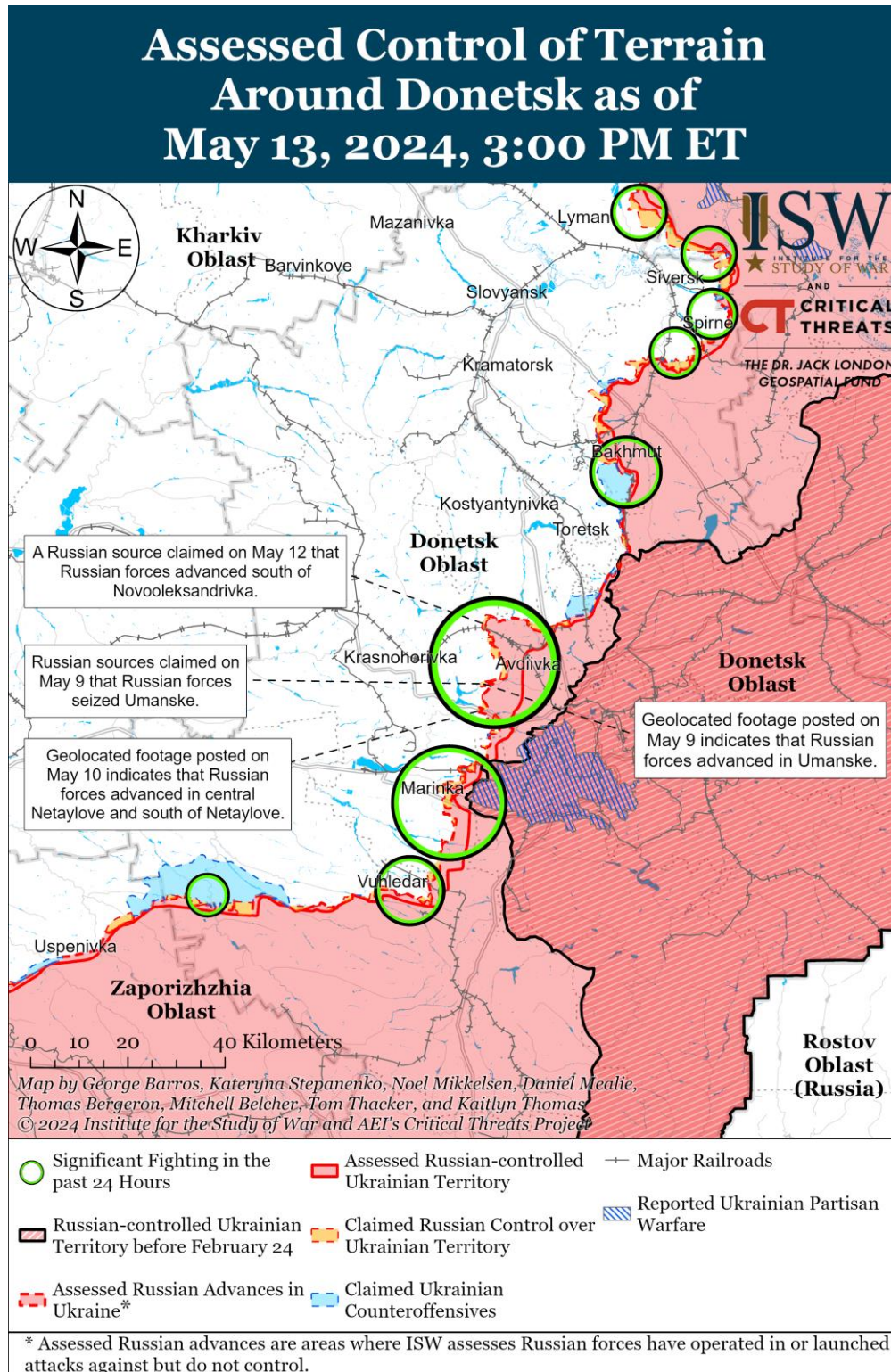


Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Russian Ground Lines of Communication	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	

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

Note: A Russian source claimed on May 11 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer wide and 850 meters deep west of Kolomyichyha. A Russian source claimed on May 10 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer deep toward Pishchane.

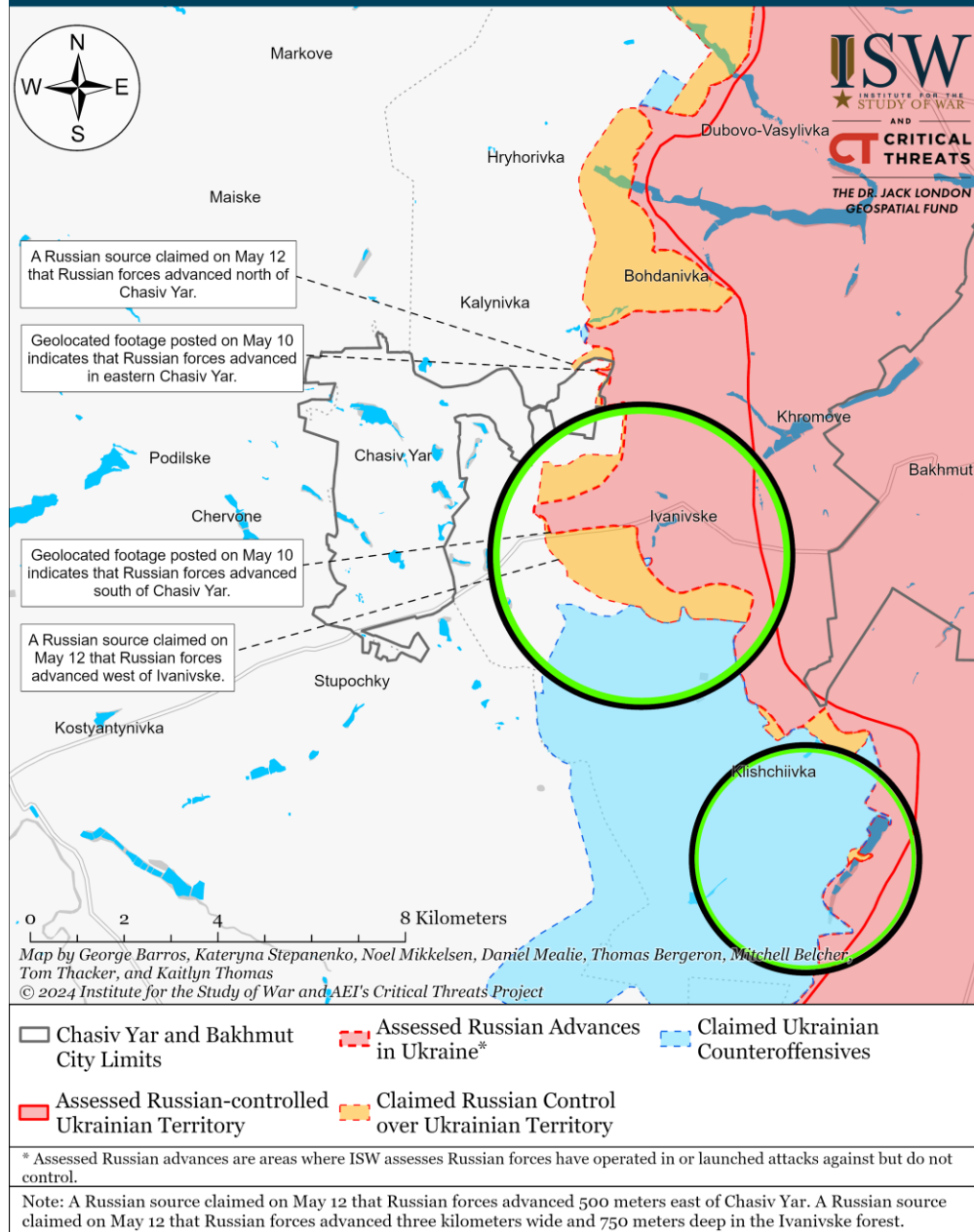
**Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**



Russian forces conducted limited offensive operations in the Siversk direction (northeast of Bakhmut) on May 13 but did not advance. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian ground attacks northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka; east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske; southeast of Siversk near Spirne and Vyimka; and south of Siversk near Rozdolivka.[49] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Spirne and Rozdolivka.[50] Elements of the 2nd Artillery Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps [LNR AC]) reportedly continue operating near Spirne.[51]

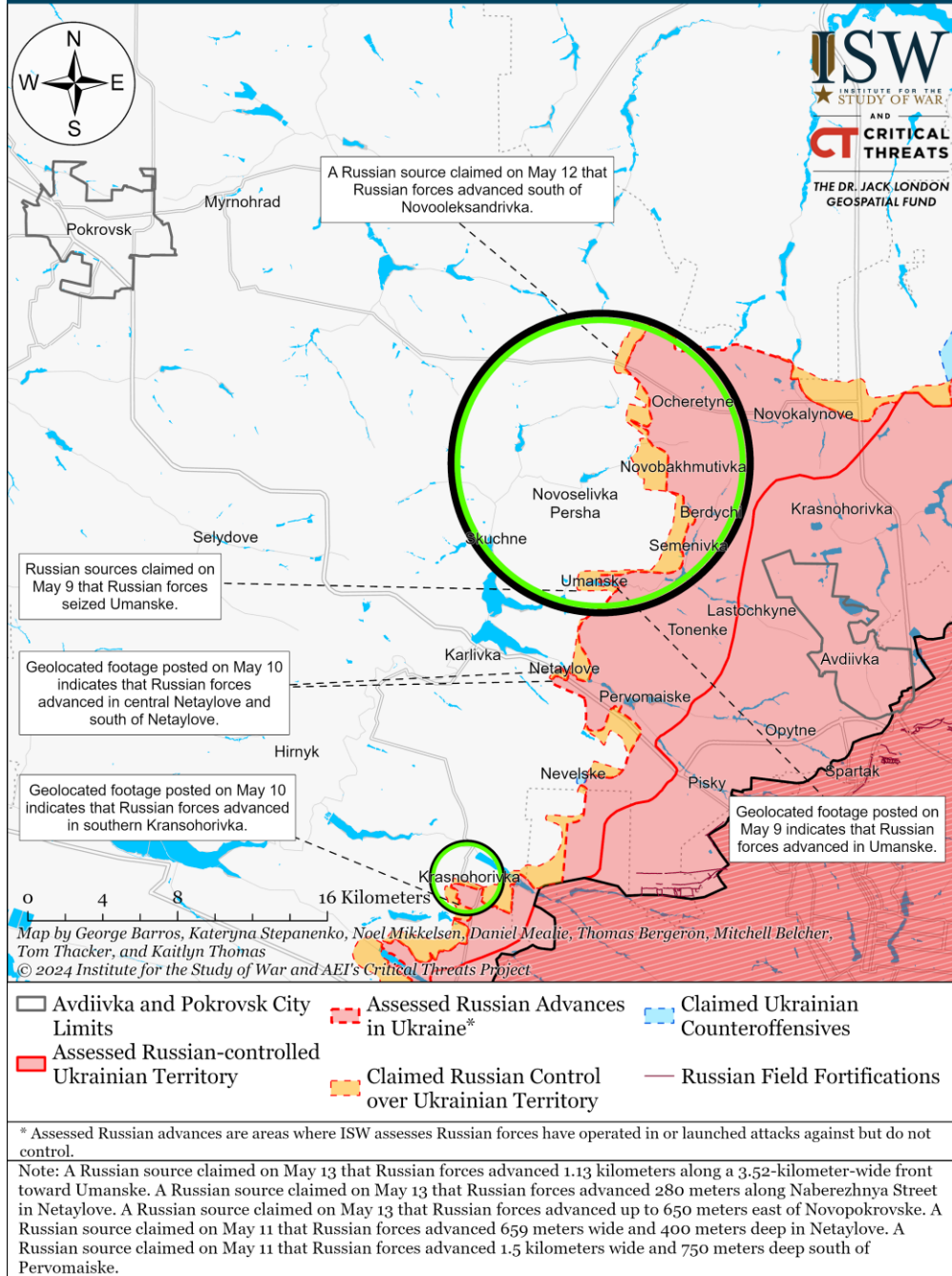
Ukrainian forces recently regained a lost position northeast of Chasiv Yar while heavy fighting continued around Chasiv Yar on May 13. Geolocated footage published on May 12 shows Ukrainian forces seizing and clearing a Russian-held position in the forest area in southwestern Bohdanivka.[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are trying to develop offensive operations from the western outskirts of Bohdanivka towards Kalynivka (north of Chasiv Yar), presumably to set conditions to surround Chasiv Yar via its northern flank.[53] Russian sources also claimed that Russian forces are advancing on the southern flank of Chasiv Yar, particularly west of Ivanivske and in the Stupky- Holubovski 2 nature reserve area.[54] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces broke through Ukrainian defenses and entered Klishchiivka (southeast of Chasiv Yar), but another milblogger refuted this claim and noted that the purported Russian attack on Klishchiivka was unsuccessful and resulted in the loss of "almost the entire assault group." [55] ISW has not yet observed visual evidence of the purported Russian attack on Klishchiivka. The spokesperson for a Ukrainian artillery brigade operating in the Chasiv Yar area reported that there are up to 25,000 Russian personnel committed to the Chasiv Yar effort, including a mix of "elite" (likely airborne [VDV]) and mobilized personnel from the 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps (DNR AC) and 2nd LNR AC.[56] The Ukrainian General Staff reported combat engagements north of Chasiv Yar near Hryhorivka; east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske; and southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[57] Elements of the Russian 98th VDV Division and BARS-13 (Combat Reserve) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar.[58]

## Assessed Control of Terrain near Chasiv Yar as of May 13, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



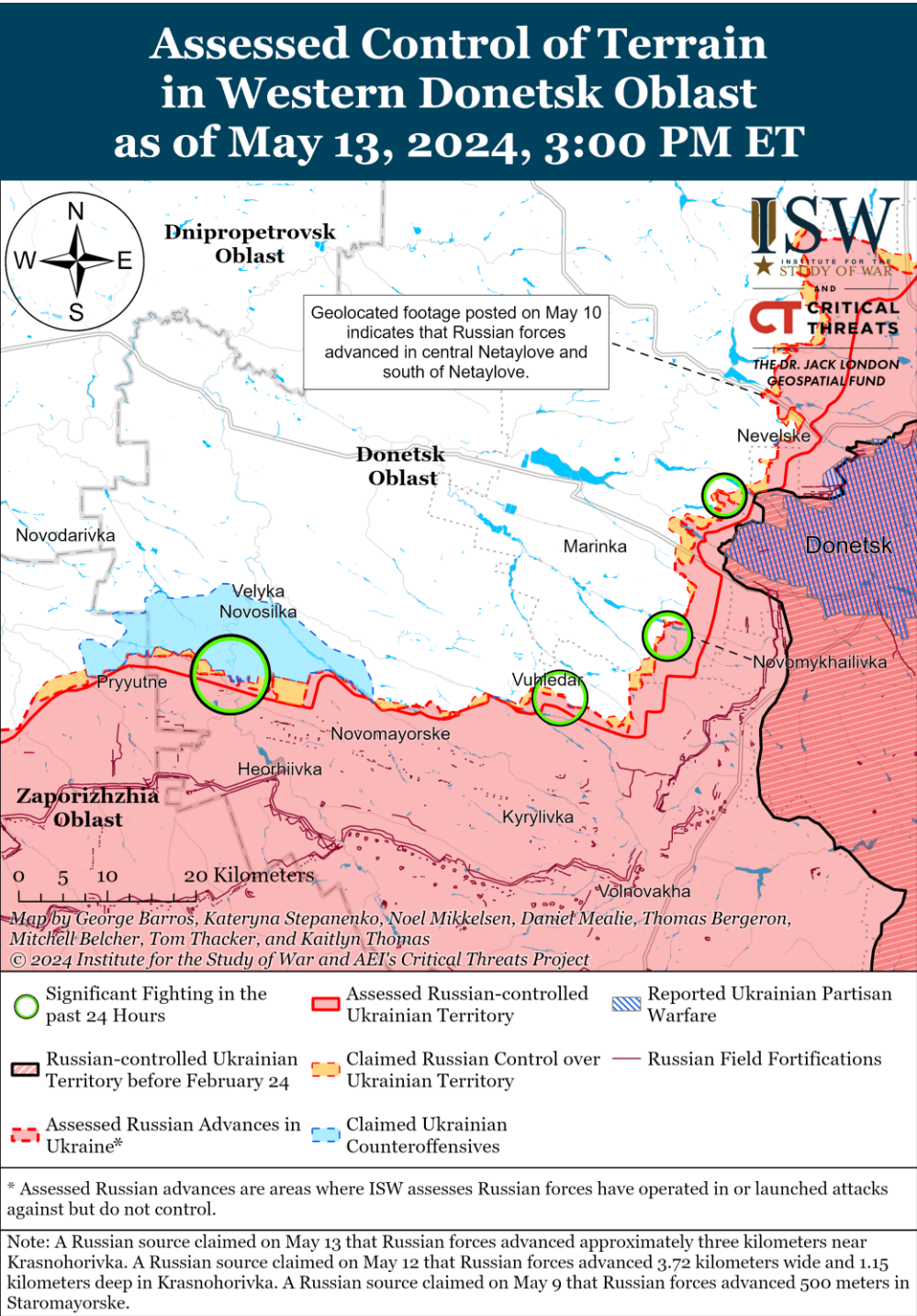
Russian forces reportedly continued to advance west of Avdiivka on May 13. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka) towards Novooleksandrivka.[59] Some milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Semenivka (northwest of Avdiivka) and up to 1.13 kilometers deep along a 3.52-kilometer-wide front towards Umanske (west of Avdiivka).[60] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of these claims, however. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are generally attacking north of Avdiivka on the Arkhanhelske line; northwest of Avdiivka on the Solovyove-Novopokrovske line; west of Avdiivka towards Umanske; and southwest of Avdiivka on the Netaylove-Pervomaiske-Nevelske line.[61]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of May 13, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces reportedly continued to advance west and southwest of Donetsk City on May 13. Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are advancing towards central Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City), with one milblogger claiming that Russian forces advanced up to three kilometers near Krasnohorivka.[62] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are also advancing within and in fields south of Paraskoviivka (southwest of Donetsk City), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of gains in this area.[63] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted 18 ground attacks in the Kurakhove (west of

Donetsk City) direction, including near Krasnohorivka and Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk City).[64] Elements of the Russian 238th Artillery Brigade and 20th Motorized Rifle Division (both of the 8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) and the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR AC) reportedly continue to operate near and in Krasnohorivka.[65]



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

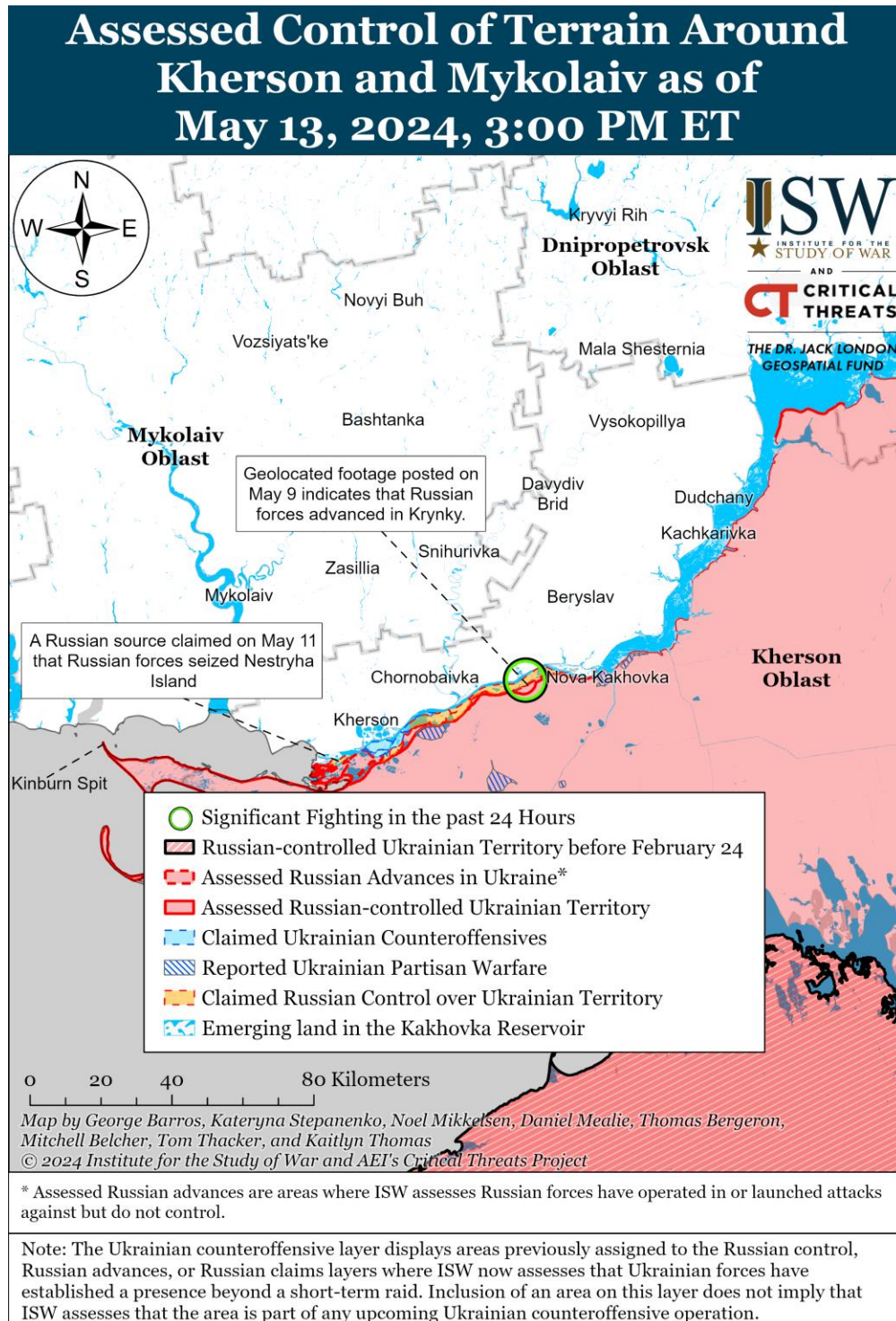
Positional engagements continued in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on May 3, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in the area. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced northward within Robotyne and in fields east of Robotyne, although ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of these claims.[66] Positional engagements also continued near Robotyne and Verbove (east of Robotyne).[67] Elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) reportedly continue operating near Robotyne.[68]



Positional engagements continued in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast, including near Krynky, on May 13.[69] A Russian soldier reportedly operating on an island in the Dnipro River Delta claimed that Russian forces are often



unable to evacuate wounded personnel from these islands due to ongoing problems with Russian boats in Kherson Oblast and extensive Ukrainian drone coverage in the area.[70]



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

The *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) published an investigation on May 13 detailing how Ukrainian shoot-down rates for Russian drones and missiles have dramatically decreased in the past six months due to more frequent Russian strikes, increasingly diverse Russian strike packages, and a shortage of US-provided air defense systems.[71] WSJ found that Ukrainian forces have intercepted 46 percent of Russian missiles over the past six months, compared to the 73 percent interception rate from the previous six-month period, and that the interception rate dipped to 30 percent over the past month. WSJ also reported that Russian forces have fired 45 percent more drones and missiles over the past six months than the previous six months, including double the number of Shahed drones. WSJ found that ballistic missiles and converted S-300/400 surface-to-air missiles are much harder for Ukrainian forces to shoot down, noting that Ukrainian forces have intercepted 10 percent of ballistic missiles and none of the S-300/S-400s. WSJ's findings are consistent with ISW's assessment that Ukrainian forces have had a much lower interception rate, particularly since mid-March 2024, largely due to dwindling stocks of US-provided Patriot air defense systems.[72] ISW has also closely tracked how Russian forces are experimenting and adapting their strike packages to best exploit weaknesses in Ukraine's air defense umbrella, consistent with WSJ's reporting.[73]

Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on May 13 that the Russian 22nd Guards Heavy Bomber Aviation Division, particularly its 121st and 52nd heavy bomber aviation regiments, are responsible for several missile strikes on Ukraine.[74] The GUR stated that the 121st and 52nd regiments operate from Engels Air Base (Saratov Oblast) and Shaykovka Air Base (Kaluga Oblast). The GUR noted that Russian forces operate Tu-95MS and Tu-160 strategic bombers, which fire Kh-101/555/55 cruise missiles, from Engels Air Base and Tu-22M3 long-range bombers, which fire Kh-22/32 cruise missiles, from the Shaykovka Air Base.

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

The Russian military may be intensifying efforts to recruit conscripts through the Russian Volunteer Society for Assistance to the Army, Aviation, and Navy of Russia (DOSAAF) as part of ongoing crypto-mobilization efforts. DOSAAF Chairperson Army General Alexander Dvornikov (former Southern Military District commander and failed Russian theater commander in Ukraine from April-May 2022) announced on May 13 that DOSAAF is lowering its membership age from 18 to 14.[75] DOSAAF trains citizens aged 17 to 30 years preparing for professional military service in military specialties and trains civilians aged 18 to 65 who are part of the general mobilizable reserve ("personnel mobilization resource" or *zapas*). DOSAAF also provides military-patriotic education and teaches military skills to Russian youth and youth in occupied Ukraine.[76] ISW assessed in February 2024 that Dvornikov's selection to head DOSAAF suggests that the Russian military leadership may be setting conditions to reconstitute a conscript recruitment pipeline using DOSAAF's educational and recruitment infrastructure.[77] DOSAAF may have lowered its membership age to increase the number of militarily-trained youth that the Russian military can later conscript and then mobilize, without having to call additional waves of partial mobilization.

Russian military personnel in the recently dissolved Donetsk People's Republic's (DNR) Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) "Kaskad" Operational Combat Tactical Formation appealed to Russian President Vladimir Putin over a lack of monetary and veteran social benefits associated with the ongoing dissolution of the Kaskad formation. Kaskad personnel recorded a video message to Putin and claimed that they had only received 100,000 rubles (about \$1,100) between January and May 2024 despite continuing to operate in Ukraine.[78] The Kaskad personnel claimed that prior to January 2024 they received monthly salaries of about 245,000 rubles (about \$2,675) from the Russian government and the DNR. They also claimed that Kaskad formally ceased to exist on April 30, 2024, and that they do not have enough money to return home. The Kaskad personnel further claimed that Russian military authorities refuse to issue them combat veteran certificates, thereby prohibiting them from receiving veterans' social and health benefits. ISW reported in December 2023 that the Russian military disbanded Kaskad, likely as part of Russia's ongoing force formalization campaign.[79]

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

Russian defense company "PPSh Laboratory" General Director Denis Oslomenko claimed on May 13 that Russian forces have started using robotic drone suppressors based on Triton electronic warfare (EW systems) to cover military personnel in contested "grey zones" while they evacuate wounded and dead personnel from the battlefield in Ukraine.[80] Oslomenko stated that Russia hopes to more widely produce and distribute these systems to the Russian military.

**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 activities in Russian-occupied areas today.*

**Russian Information Operations and Narratives**

See topline text.

**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)**

Belarus and the People's Republic of China (PRC) continue to intensify bilateral cooperation. The Minsk City Executive Committee's Press Service reported on May 13 that a committee delegation visited Beijing and signed an agreement on technology and information cooperation between 2024-2026 with Beijing City officials.[81]

**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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