



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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May 8, 2024, 7:00pm ET

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

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

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

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:15pm ET on May 8. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 9 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces conducted large-scale missile and drone strikes targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure on the night of May 7 to 8, continuing to exploit Ukraine's degraded air defense umbrella ahead of the arrival of US and Western security assistance at scale.

Ukrainian Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Mykola Oleshchuk reported on May 8 that Russian forces launched 21 Shahed-136/131 drones and 55 missiles, including 45 Kh-101/555 cruise missiles, four Kalibr sea-launched cruise missiles, two Iskander-M ballistic missiles, an Iskander-K ballistic missile, two Kh-59/69 cruise missiles, and a Kh-47 "Kinzhal" aeroballistic missile.[1] Oleshchuk reported that Ukrainian forces intercepted 33 Kh-101/555 cruise missiles, all four Kalibr cruise missiles, both Kh-59/69 cruise missiles, and 20 Shaheds.[2] Ukrainian Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko reported that Russian forces struck electricity generation and transmission facilities in Poltava, Kirovohrad, Zaporizhia, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Vinnytsia oblasts.[3] Ukraine's largest private energy operator DTEK reported that Russian forces attacked three unspecified thermal power plants (TPPs) in Ukraine and seriously damaged unspecified equipment.[4] Ukrainian state electricity transmission operator Ukrenergo spokesperson Maria Tsaturyan stated that regional energy authorities will implement shutdowns evenly across all oblasts in Ukraine due to energy shortages and warned that the Ukrenergo control center will issue a command for emergency shutdowns throughout Ukraine if consumption continues to grow in the evening.[5] Ukrainian state railway operator Ukrzaliznytsia reported that Russian forces also targeted railway infrastructure in Kherson Oblast, forcing railway administrators to reduce train travel along the Kyiv-Kherson and Kyiv-Mykolaiv routes.[6] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that it targeted Ukrainian energy facilities and defense industrial enterprises in order to reduce Ukraine's ability to produce military materiel and transfer Western materiel to the frontline.[7]

This is the fifth large scale Russian missile and drone strike targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure since March 22, 2024, as the Russian military has attempted to exploit degraded Ukrainian air defense capabilities in spring 2024 to collapse Ukraine's energy grid and constrain Ukraine's defense industrial capacity.[8] Russian forces will likely continue to conduct mass strikes to cause long-term damage to Ukrainian energy infrastructure as degraded Ukrainian air defense capabilities persist until the arrival of US-provided air defense missiles and other Western air defense assets at scale.[9] Russian forces have also intensified strikes against Ukrainian transportation infrastructure in recent weeks in an apparent effort to disrupt Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) and constrain the flow of expected US security assistance to the frontline.[10] Russian forces have continued to heavily target Ukrainian energy facilities in limited larger missile and drone strike series, however, suggesting that Russia is either prioritizing the effort to collapse the energy grid over interdiction efforts or must use a larger number of missiles to penetrate Ukrainian air defenses near energy facilities and cause significant damage to these facilities.

Recent satellite imagery of depleted Russian military vehicle and weapon storage facilities further indicates that Russia is currently sustaining its war effort largely by pulling from storage rather than by manufacturing new vehicles and certain weapons at scale. *Newsweek* reported on May 8 that a social media source tracking Russian military depots stated that satellite imagery indicates that Russia's vehicle stores have significantly decreased from pre-war levels by nearly 32 percent from 15,152 in 2021 to 10,389 as of May 2024.[11] The military depot tracker noted that Russia has pulled most from its stores of MT-LB multipurpose armored fighting vehicles (AFVs), which are down from 2,527 prewar to 922 remaining; BMD airborne amphibious tracked infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), which are down from 637 prewar to 244 remaining; and BTR-50 armored personnel carriers (APCs), down from 125 prewar to 52 remaining. The military depot tracker noted that Russia no longer has newer model BTR-60s, 70s, and 80s in storage and that only 2,605 remain – likely referring to vehicles currently fielded – from its prewar stocks of 3,313. The military depot tracker noted that Russia is currently fielding 1,000–2,000 of its remaining MT-LBs in Ukraine. Another open-source account on X (formerly Twitter) cited satellite imagery dated May 27, 2020 and March 26, 2024 and concluded that Russia has pulled roughly 60 percent of its artillery systems at an unspecified towed artillery storage base, reportedly one of Russia's largest.[12] The source reported that about half of the remaining artillery systems at this base are likely unusable due to degradation while in storage and because many of the remaining systems are Second World War era artillery systems incompatible with modern ammunition.[13]

Russia is relying on vast Soviet-era stores of vehicles and other equipment to sustain operations and losses in Ukraine at a level far higher than the current Russian DIB could support, nor will Russia be able to mobilize its DIB to replenish these stores for many years. The British International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) think tank reported on February 12 that Russia is likely able to sustain its current rate of vehicle losses (over 3,000 armored fighting vehicles annually) for at least two or three years by mainly reactivating vehicles from storage.[14] The IISS also estimated that Russia has lost over 3,000 armored fighting vehicles in 2023 and close to 8,000 armored fighting vehicles since February 2022, and that Russia likely reactivated at least 1,180 main battle tanks and about 2,470 infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers pulled from storage in 2023.[15] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported on February 4 that the Russian defense industrial base (DIB) can produce 250–300 new and modernized tanks per year and repair an additional 250–300 tanks per year.[16] Russia will likely struggle to adequately supply

its units with materiel in the long term without transferring the Russian economy to a wartime footing — a move that Russian President Vladimir Putin has sought to avoid thus far.[17]

The Georgian State Security Service (SUS) is employing standard Kremlin information operations against Georgians protesting Georgia's Russian-style "foreign agents" bill following the lead of Georgian Dream party founder and former Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili. The SUS claimed on May 8 that "certain groups of people" funded by foreign countries, party leaders, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are trying to organize provocations at protests against the "foreign agents" law.[18] The SUS claimed that Georgian citizens living abroad, particularly those fighting in Ukraine, are planning to conduct acts of violence against Georgian law enforcement and block and burn government buildings. The SUS further claimed that the alleged provocateurs are attempting to cause riots and chaos to cause "Maidanization" and that these methods have been used to organize "color revolutions." The SUS' references to Ukraine's Euromaidan Revolution in 2014, which drove out Ukraine's Russia-friendly president Viktor Yanukovich, and its reference to color revolutions — attempts at democratization in post-Soviet countries — mirror boilerplate Russian rhetoric attempting to blame the West for inciting and directing perceived anti-Russian protests to frame domestic dissent and calls for democratization as illegitimate.[19] The SUS made similar claims in September 2023 and alleged that former Georgian officials, Ukrainian military intelligence officials of Georgian descent, and Georgians fighting with Ukrainian forces in Ukraine were plotting a violent coup.[20] Ivanishvili recently reiterated a series of standard anti-Western and pseudohistorical Kremlin narratives during his first public speech since announcing his return to Georgian politics.[21] Ivanishvili's and the SUS' intensified use of established Kremlin information operations and increasing rhetorical alignment with Russia against the West indicate that Georgian Dream actors likely intend to purposefully derail long-term Georgian efforts for Euro-Atlantic integration, which plays into continued Russian hybrid operations to divide, destabilize, and weaken Georgia.[22]

Armenia's efforts to distance itself from Russia are increasingly forcing the Kremlin to acknowledge issues in the bilateral relationship. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met in Moscow on May 8 following a meeting of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).[23] Putin claimed that Russian-Armenian bilateral relations are "developing successfully," but noted that there are "questions" regarding security in the South Caucasus that the two will discuss privately. Pashinyan stated that "questions have accumulated that need to be discussed" since the two met in December 2023. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated that there are "problematic issues" in the bilateral relationship in response to a question about how difficult the meeting would be but claimed that both Putin and Pashinyan are willing to discuss these issues.[24] Peskov claimed that Russia is "rather optimistic" about the future of the bilateral relationship. Peskov and Putin have previously publicly attempted to downplay tension in Russian-Armenian relations, although Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has made several frank assessments of the deteriorating relationship and issued public threats against Armenia in recent months.[25] Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Ani Badalyan told *Radar Armenia* on May 7 that Armenia will not contribute to the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization's (CSTO) budget in 2024.[26] An unnamed source within the CSTO told Kremlin newswire *TASS* that the CSTO is aware of Armenia's decision but noted that Armenia remains a member of the CSTO.[27] Armenia's decision

to stop financing CSTO activities is the latest in a series of decisions to pivot away from Russian-led political and security organizations, including continuing to make Armenia's involvement in the CSTO increasingly nominal, over the past eight months.[28]

Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė stated that the Lithuanian government has granted permission for Lithuania to send troops to Ukraine for training missions in the future.[29] Šimonytė stated during an interview with the *Financial Times* (FT) published on May 8 that Ukraine has not requested Lithuanian troops and noted that Russia would likely see the deployment of Lithuanian troops to Ukraine as a provocation. Šimonytė stated that if Europe only considered Russia's response to manpower and materiel assistance to Ukraine, Europe would not send anything and stated that "every second week you hear that somebody will be nuked [by Russia]." French President Emmanuel Macron called on Europe to build a strategic concept of "credible European defense" during a speech on April 25 and has previously urged the West to not "rule out" the possibility of sending Western troops to Ukraine in the future.[30]

Reports indicate that there is an available open-source tool that allows people to search by specific coordinates for Telegram users who have enabled a certain location-sharing setting. Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* reported on May 8 that this tool allows people to input coordinates to discover all Telegram users who have enabled the "find people nearby" setting located within 50–100 meters of the coordinates.[31] *Meduza* noted that the "find people nearby" setting usually only allows users to find other Telegram users within 50–100 meters of their current location. Users can enable or disable this location-sharing setting in the "contacts" settings of the application.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces conducted large-scale missile and drone strikes targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure on the night of May 7 to 8, continuing to exploit Ukraine's degraded air defense umbrella ahead of the arrival of US and Western security assistance at scale.**
- **Recent satellite imagery of depleted Russian military vehicle and weapons storage facilities further indicates that Russia is currently sustaining its war effort largely by pulling from storage rather than by manufacturing new vehicles and certain weapons at scale.**
- **Russia is relying on vast Soviet-era stores of vehicles and other equipment to sustain operations and losses in Ukraine at a level far higher than the current Russian DIB could support, nor will Russia be able to mobilize its DIB to replenish these stores for many years.**
- **The Georgian State Security Service (SUS) is employing standard Kremlin information operations against Georgians protesting Georgia's Russian-style "foreign agents" bill following the lead of Georgian Dream party founder and former Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili.**

- **Armenia's efforts to distance itself from Russia are increasingly forcing the Kremlin to acknowledge issues in the bilateral relationship.**
- **Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė stated that the Lithuanian government has granted permission for Lithuania to send troops to Ukraine for training missions in the future.**
- **Reports indicate that there is an available open-source tool that allows people to search by specific coordinates for Telegram users who have enabled a certain location-sharing setting.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced near Svatove, Kreminna, and Avdiivka and in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area.**
- **Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu continues to highlight Russian formations involved in Russia's invasion of Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 8, 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)

Ukrainian officials reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a 10-person squad-sized Russian sabotage and reconnaissance group on the Kharkiv Oblast-Russia border near Pylna (northeast of Kharkiv City) on May 8.[32]

Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Svatove amid continued ground attacks on the Kupyansk-Svatove line. Geolocated footage published on May 6 shows that Russian forces recently advanced south of Novoselivske (northwest of Svatove).[33] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on May 8 that Russian forces seized Kyslivka (northwest of Svatove) after Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces had seized the settlement on May 7.[34] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces in Kyslivka are preparing for further attacks on Stepova Novoselivka and Ivanivka (both northwest of Svatove and immediately northwest of Kyslivka).[35] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced up to the outskirts of Berestove (northwest of Svatove).[36] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these Russian claims. Russian forces also continued ground attacks northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka and northwest of Svatove near Pishchane and Stelmakhivka.[37] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported that elements of the Russian 26th Tank Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) are attacking near Kyslivka and Kotlyarivka (immediately south of Kyslivka) and that elements of the Russian 1st and 15th motorized rifle regiments (both of the 2nd Motorized Rifle Division, 1st GTA) are fighting near Tabaivka (northwest of Svatove).[38]

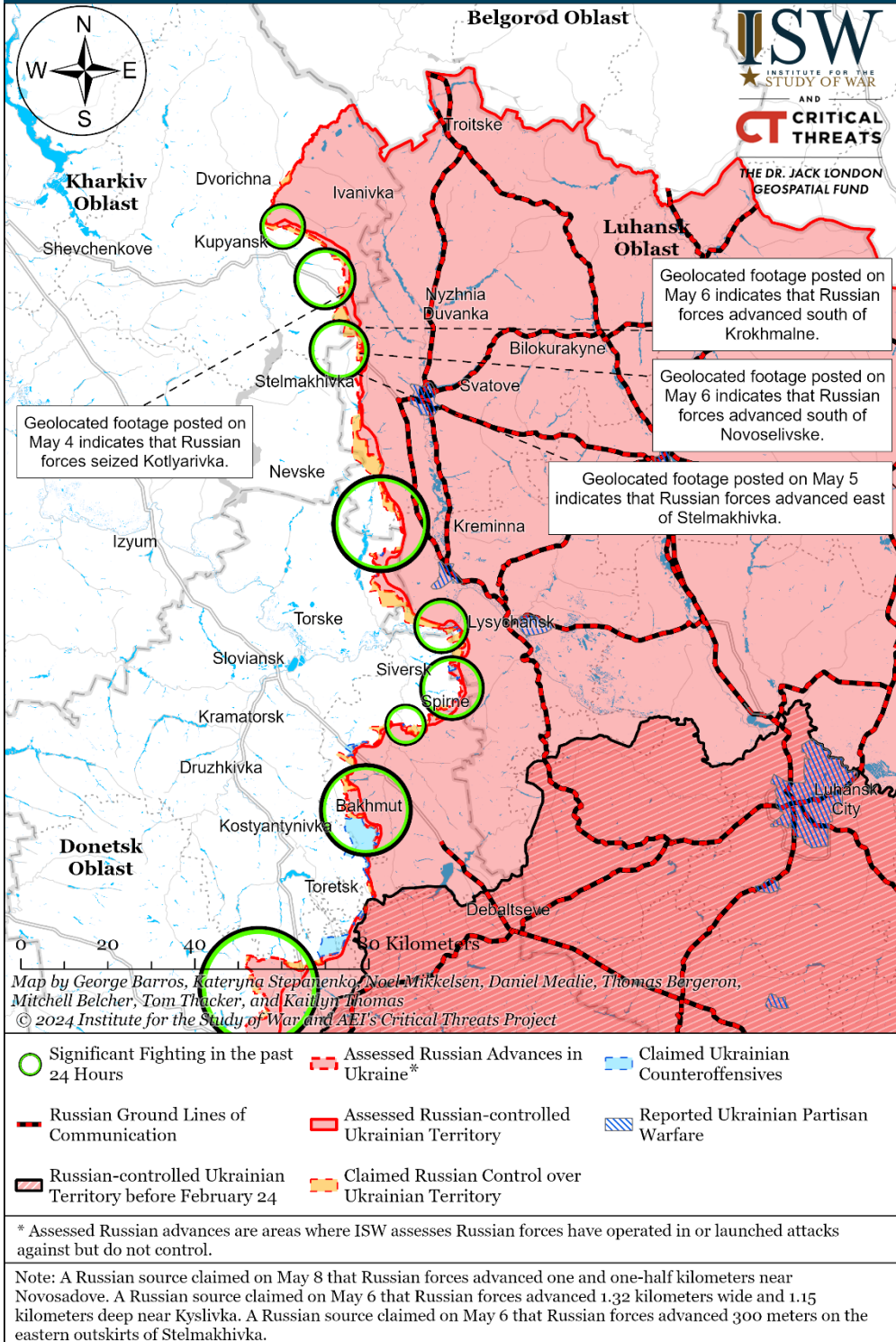
Mashovets reported that elements the 7th Motorized Rifle Regiment (11th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) regrouped near Synkivka, and a Russian milblogger posted footage allegedly

showing an element of the 11th AC providing drone and artillery support to Russian assaults near Kyslivka.[39] Mashovets has previously reported that elements of the 11th AC will deploy to the northern Russia-Ukraine border in Belgorod, Kursk, or Bryansk oblasts to join the Russian Northern Grouping of Forces.[40] The appearance of elements of the 11th AC in the Kupyansk direction is not immediately inconsistent with these reports as other elements may be redeploying to the Northern Grouping of Forces and elements of this regiment may redeploy at a later date.

Russian forces recently marginally advanced near Kreminna. Geolocated footage published on May 7 and 9 shows that Russian forces marginally advanced east of Yampolivka (west of Kreminna) and north of Bilohorivka (south of Kreminna).[41] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers in depth east of Novosadove (northwest of Kreminna), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[42] Russian forces also continued ground attacks northwest of Kreminna near Makiivka, Nevske, and Novolyubivka; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka and the Serebryanske forest area.[43] Mashovets reported that Russian forces have committed most elements of the 144th Motorized Rifle Division (20th Combined Arms Army [CAA], MMD) to combat near Kreminna, including elements of its 59th Tank Regiment and elements of its 254th, 283rd, and 488th motorized rifle regiments.[44]

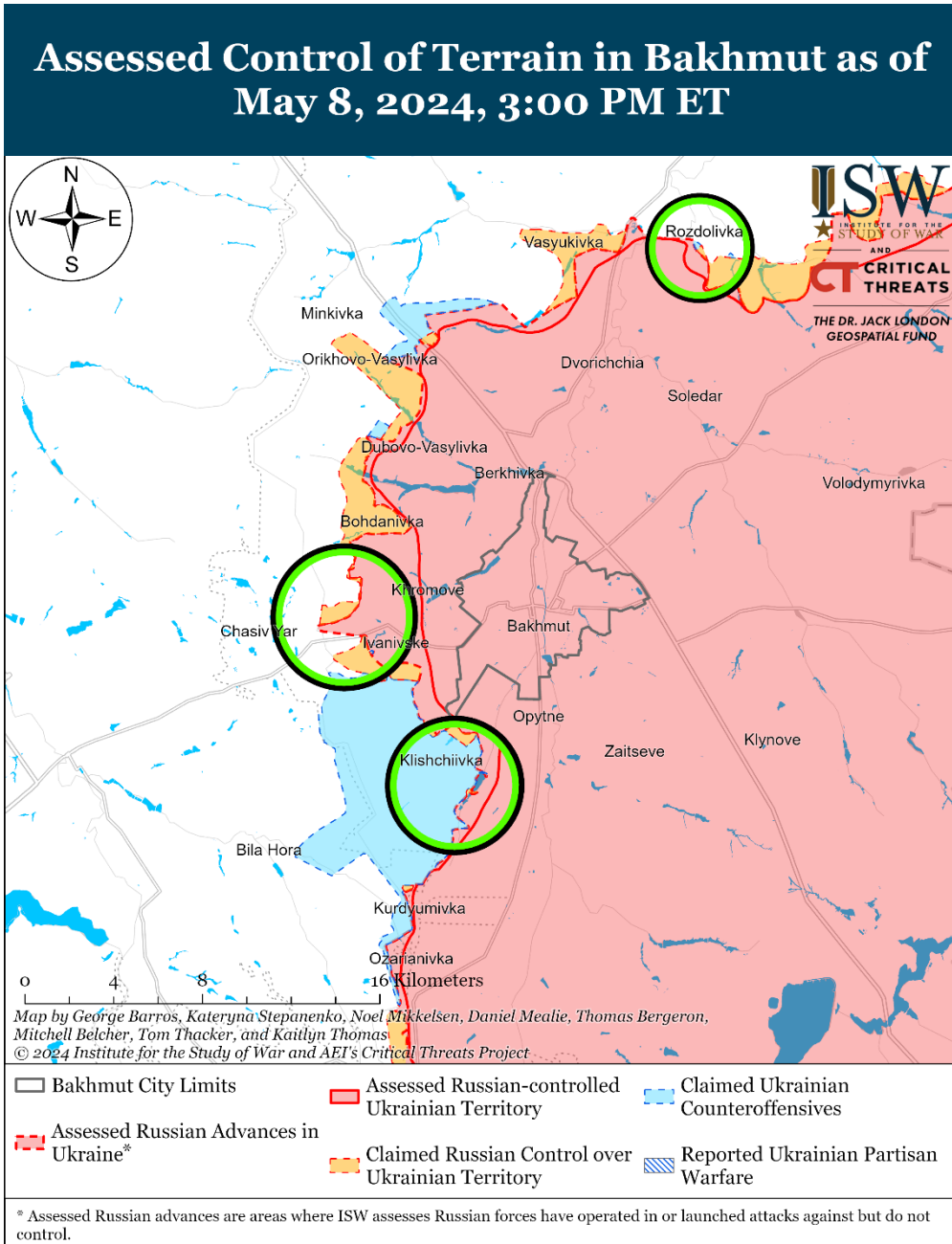
Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces struck an oil depot in occupied Luhansk City with ATACMS missiles overnight on May 7 to 8.[45] Geolocated footage published on May 7 shows a large fire at a fuel depot in the city.[46] A Russian milblogger claimed that the strike damaged several fuel tanks.[47] The Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) claimed that it does not expect the strike to cause severe fuel disruptions due to the LNR's reserve of fuel.[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of May 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



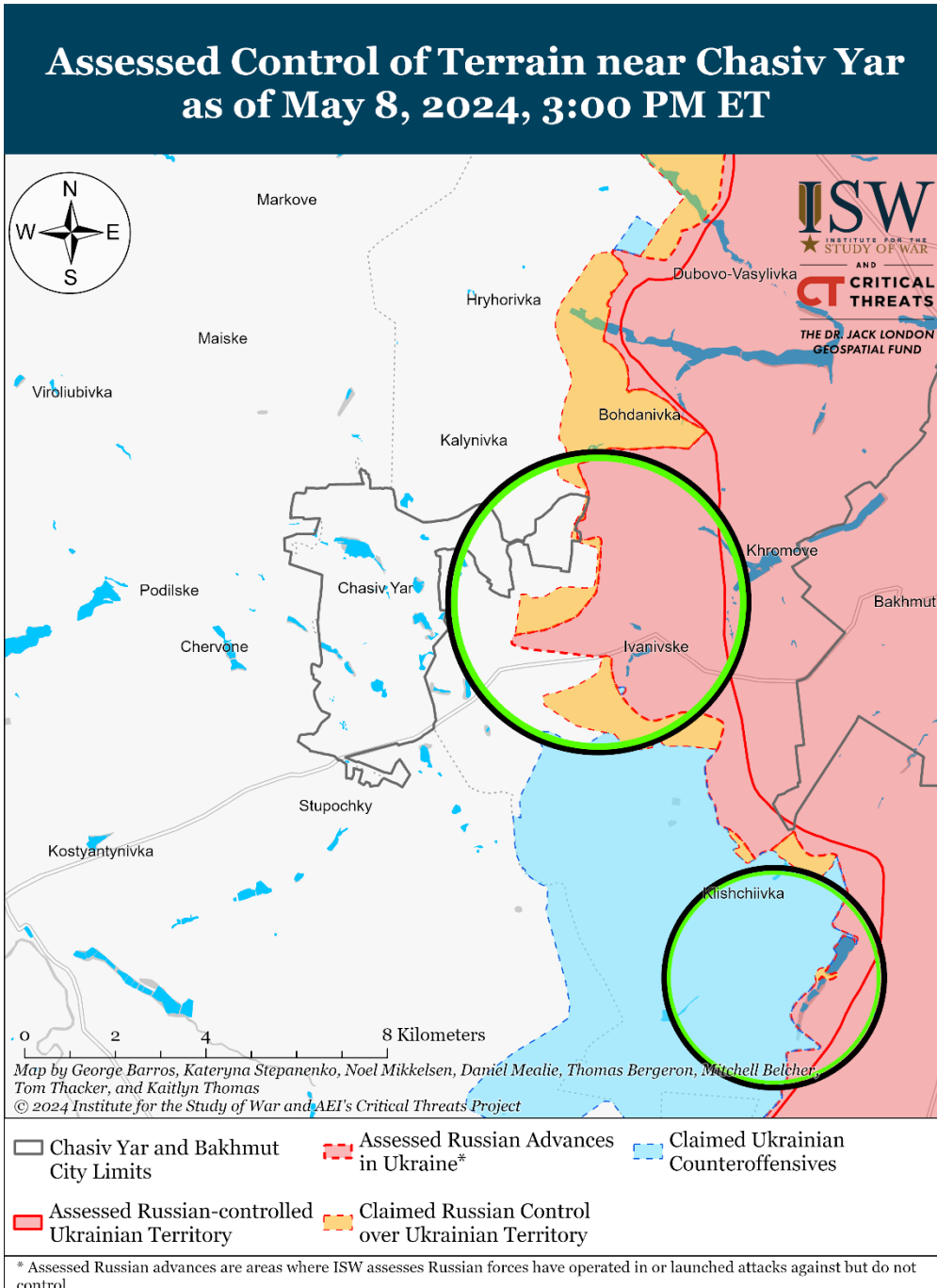
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction (northeast of Bakhmut) on May 8, but there were no changes to the frontline in the area. Russian forces conducted assaults east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske, southeast of Siversk near Vyimka and Spirne, and south of Siversk near Rozdolivka.[49] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of the 106th Airborne (VDV) Division's 51st VDV Regiment are attacking near Rozdolivka and that elements of the 106th VDV Division's 119th and 137th VDV regiments are attempting to advance between Vesele (southeast of Siversk) and Rozdolivka.[50] Mashovets stated that elements of the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) 2nd Army Corps' (AC) 6th, 7th, and 123rd motorized rifle brigades are operating near Verkhokamyanske, Spirne, and Vyimka.[51]



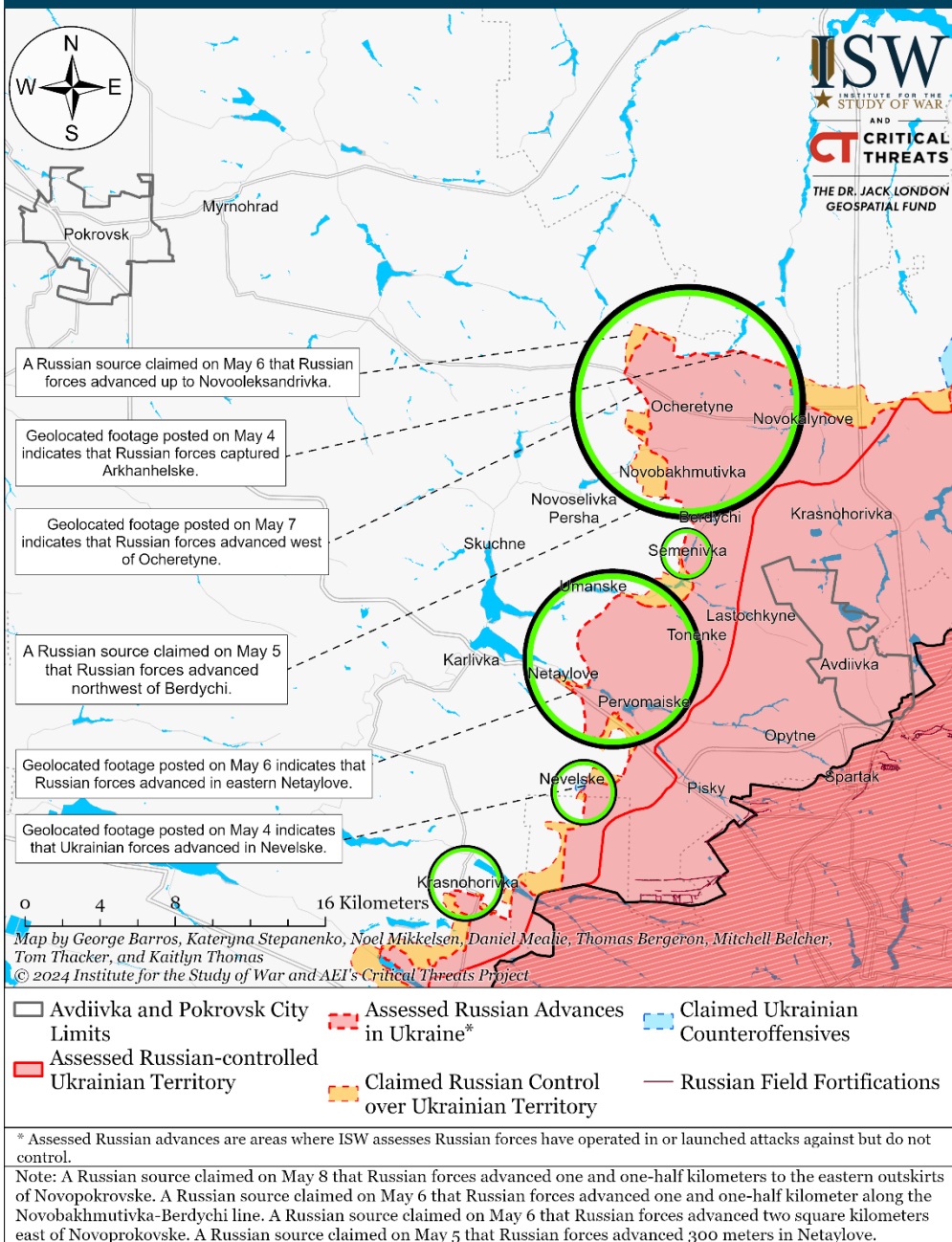
Russian forces continued offensive operations east of Chasiv Yar on May 8, but there were no changes to the frontline in the area. Russian forces continued offensive operations near the Novyi Microraion in eastern Chasiv Yar, east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske, southwest of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka and

Andriivka, and south of Chasiv Yar near Shumy and Niu York.[52] The chief of staff of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Chasiv Yar area stated on May 7 that Russian forces are increasingly fielding tanks and armored vehicles with welded metal plates for additional protection (colloquially referred to as "turtle tanks") and regularly attack at dawn and dusk.[53] The Ukrainian officer also stated that small Russian assault groups periodically approach and attempt to cross the Siverskyi-Donets Donbas Canal near Chasiv Yar but that Ukrainian forces destroy or capture these groups.[54] The commander of another Ukrainian battalion operating near Chasiv Yar stated on May 8 that Russian forces have a 10-to-one manpower advantage in the area.[55] Elements of the Russian 98th VDV Division are reportedly operating near the Kanal Microraion in easternmost Chasiv Yar.[56]



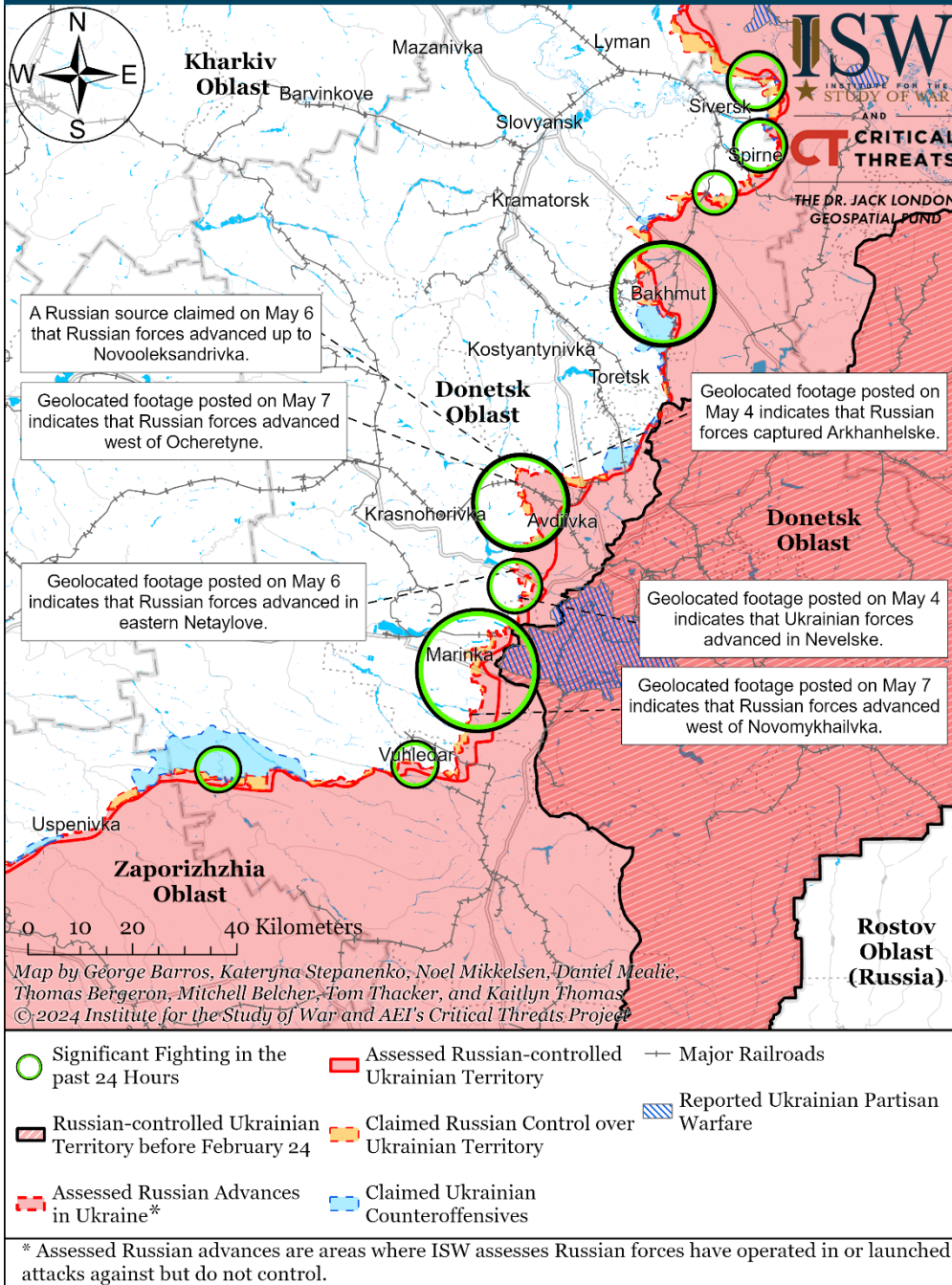
Russian forces recently made significant tactical gains northwest of Avdiivka and recently advanced elsewhere west of Avdiivka. Geolocated footage published on May 8 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced roughly four kilometers north of Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka) towards the eastern outskirts of Novooleksandrivka (northwest of Avdiivka and Ocheretyne) and that Ukrainian forces do not maintain positions on the northwestern outskirts of Ocheretyne.^[57] Additional geolocated footage published on May 8 indicates that Russian forces advanced to a windbreak south of Solovyove (northwest of Avdiivka) and northwest of Tonenke (west of Avdiivka).^[58] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces seized Novokalynove (north of Avdiivka), and ISW assessed that Russian forces likely seized the settlement as of May 4.^[59] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced further west of Ocheretyne towards Prohres and up to 1.5 kilometers in depth towards Novopokrovske, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.^[60] Russian forces also continued offensive operations north of Avdiivka near Oleksandropil; northwest of Avdiivka near Ocheretyne, Arkhanhelske, Yevhenivka, and Sokil; west of Avdiivka near Semenivka, Novoselivka Persha, Umanske, and Netaylove; and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske, Pervomaiske, and Vodyane.^[61] Elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] 1st AC) are reportedly operating near Netaylove.^[62]

Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of May 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



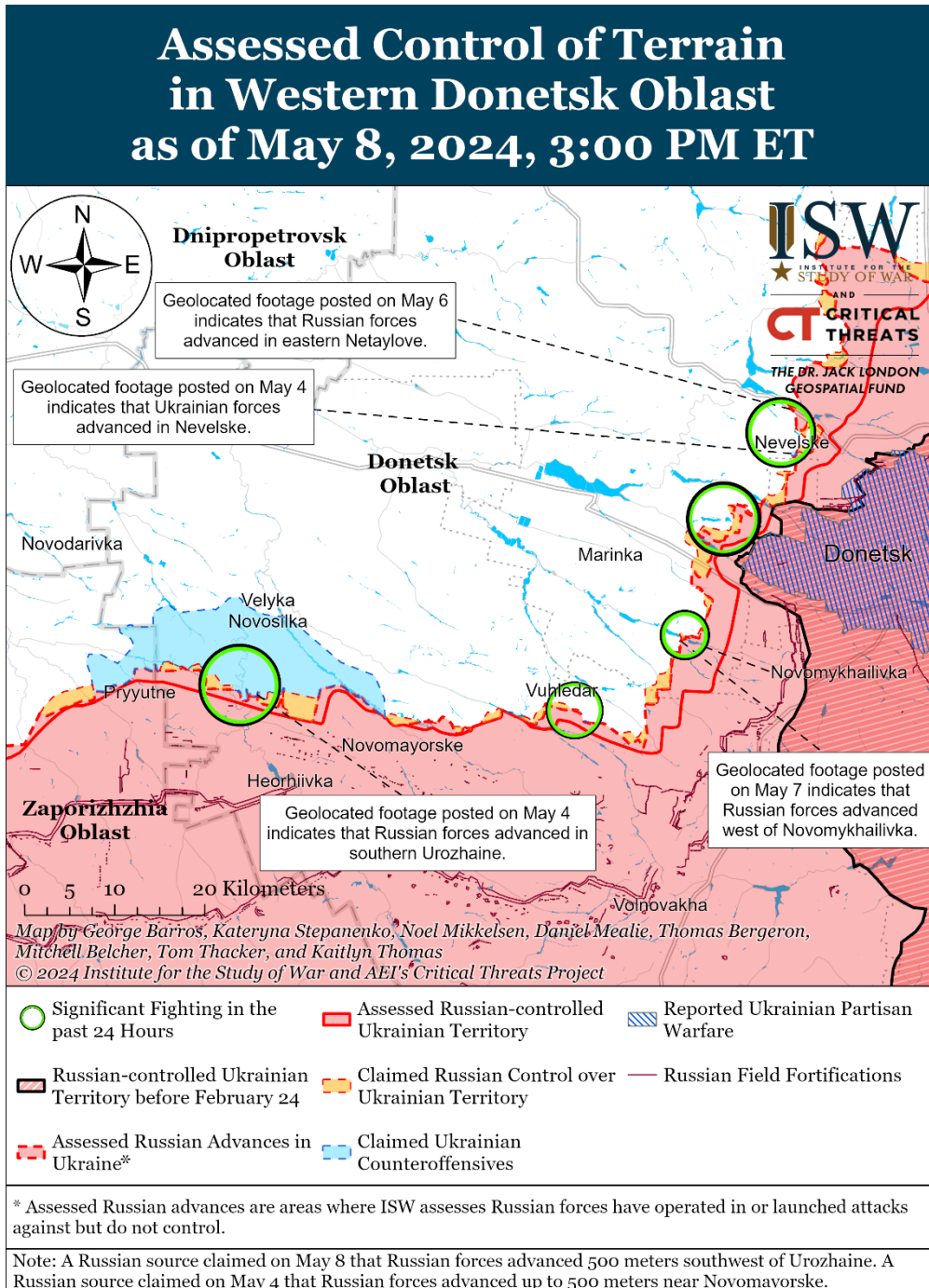
Russian forces reportedly made marginal gains west of Donetsk City on May 8, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline west and southwest of Donetsk City. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces broke through Ukrainian defenses in eastern Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City) and completely seized Pershe Travnia Street, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[63] Russian forces also continued offensive operations west of Donetsk City near Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Kostyantynivka, Novomykhailivka, Pobieda, Paraskoviivka, and Vodyane.[64] Elements of the Russian 238th Artillery Brigade (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Krasnohorivka.[65]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area and reportedly made further gains in the area on May 8. Geolocated footage published on May 8 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced along Tsentralna Street in southern Urozhaine (south of Velyka Novosilka).[66] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, Eastern Military District [EMD]) advanced 500 meters in depth southwest of Urozhaine.[67] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces entered Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka) and seized up to half of the settlement, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[68]

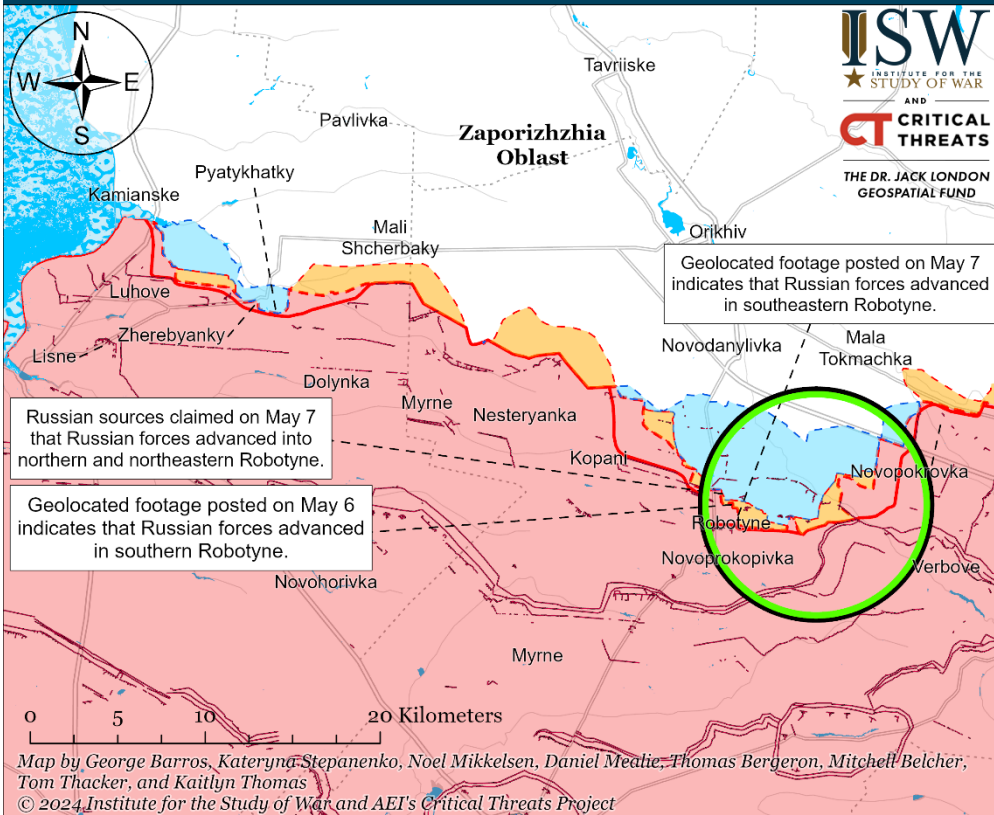
Elements of the Russian 60th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating west of Staromayorske.[69]



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 8, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced 700 meters in depth from southeastern Robotyne, although ISW has not observed visual evidence of this claim.[70] The milblogger may be referring to recent geolocated footage indicating that Russian forces recently advanced along Skidhna Street to new positions in southeastern Robotyne.[71] Positional engagements continued near Robotyne and Verbove (east of Robotyne).[72]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of May 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



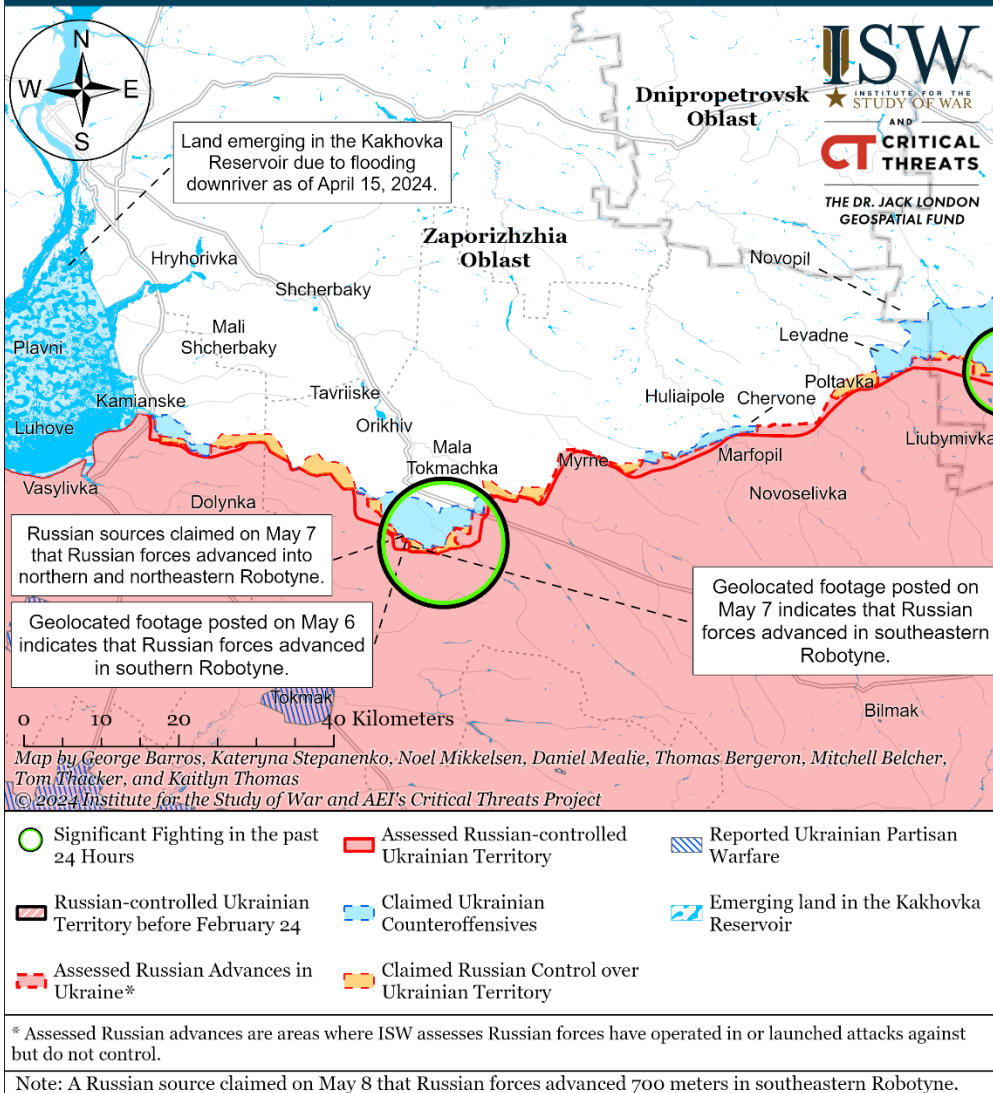
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Medlic, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Tom Thacker, and Kaitlyn Thomas
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Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Russian Field Fortifications
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives	Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir

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

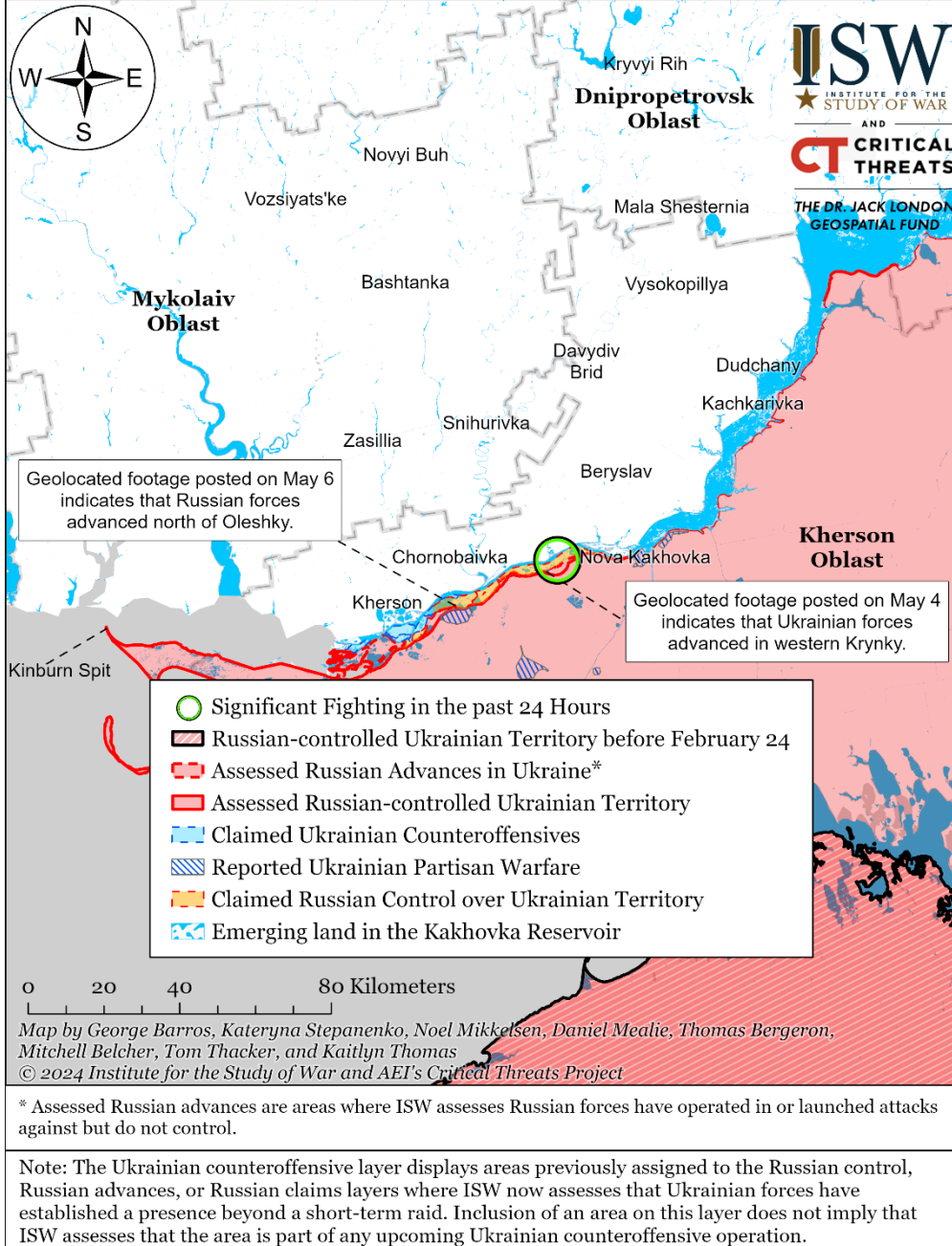
Note: A Russian source claimed on May 8 that Russian forces advanced 700 meters in southeastern Robotyne.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of May 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional engagements continued in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast, including near Krynky, on May 8.^[73] Ukrainian Navy and Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk reported on May 8 that Russian forces attempt to assault Nestryha Island in the Dnipro River Delta daily and used jet skis to try to approach the island on May 7. Kherson Oblast occupation administration head Vladimir Saldo claimed on May 8 that Russian forces established control over unspecified islands in the Dnipro River.^[74]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

See topline text.

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

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu continues to highlight Russian formations involved in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Shoigu thanked the Russian 55th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st Combined Arms

Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) for its involvement in seizing Solovyove (northwest of Avdiivka) and the 272nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army [GTA]) for its involvement in seizing Kotlyarivka (northwest of Svatove).[75]

A Russian milblogger lamented bureaucratic issues with seizing private boats for the Russian military's "Dnepr River Flotilla" on May 8 amid Ukrainian reports that the "flotilla" is not a threat to Ukrainian forces in Kherson Oblast. The milblogger claimed that Russian servicemen are constrained by rules against using civilian means of transport that could risk the life and health of a serviceman and that a Russian unit must submit a detailed list of non-military equipment for approval by the Russian MoD.[76] The milblogger claimed that most Russian commanders are unwilling to deal with the paperwork necessary to approve private boats for military use and that military personnel, in turn, are unwilling to use the seized boats because the Russian military will refuse to provide compensation to their families if they are wounded or killed while using unapproved boats. The milblogger criticized the Russian MoD and the Russian General Staff for failing to address these rules or purchase the necessary boats for Russian forces. Ukraine's Navy and Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk stated on May 7 that Russia's "Dnepr River Flotilla" is currently not a threat due to under-resourcing.[77] ISW continues to assess that the "Dnepr River Flotilla" likely lacks the manpower and equipment necessary to establish an enduring large-scale Russian presence in west (right) bank Kherson Oblast.[78]

Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec announced on May 8 that Rostec-subsiary United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) delivered a new batch of Su-35S aircraft to the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).[79]

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

Ukraine's Army of Drones initiative stated on May 8 that Russia is developing a variant of Ukraine's Baba Yaga drone.[80]

The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense (UK MoD) reported on May 8 that the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) modified Russia's Kh-101 cruise missile by fitting a subset with a secondary warhead.[81] UK MoD assessed that the modification likely reduces the Kh-101 missile's range by half but noted that Russian forces will still be able to strike targets throughout Ukraine with the missile's reduced range. UK MoD reported that Russia designed the secondary warhead for increased fragmentation when a target is struck and stated that this will likely make the Kh-101 missile more effective when striking non-hardened targets.

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

A prominent Kremlin-awarded Russian milblogger continued to seize on innocuous events and allegations to criticize the Kazakh government for alleged anti-Russian actions and perceived weakness against the West. The milblogger continued to seize on alleged Ukrainian government documents outlining Ukraine's interest in cooperation with Central Asia and providing cultural resources to ethnic Ukrainians in Central Asia.[82] ISW cannot assess the veracity of the documents. Ukraine likely wants to maintain relations with Central Asian countries and seeks to provide support for its diaspora community in Central Asia, just as many countries' governments support their diaspora communities living abroad. Another milblogger claimed that the alleged documents show that the West is attempting to use Ukraine to exert soft-power influence in Central Asia.[83] The Kremlin-awarded milblogger also continued to seize on an Almaty-based exhibit showing photos of victims of the January 2022 Kazakh protests and claimed that the organizers of the exhibit had previously worked with organizations that received Western funding, thereby demonstrating the West's influence over Kazakhstan and the weakness of Kazakh authorities.[84]

The same Kremlin-awarded milblogger postured perceived strong Russian-Kyrgyz relations while continuing to frame any efforts to promote titular cultures in post-Soviet states as inherently Western-influenced and anti-Russian. The milblogger praised Kyrgyzstan for "remembering the Soviet Union and what [it] gave to the Kyrgyz people" and claimed that Kyrgyzstan is one of the few countries in Central Asia where Russian language, culture, and media play a "dominant" role in society.[85] The milblogger claimed that Kyrgyzstan has maintained its "pro-Russian" sentiments despite local initiatives to "cultivate national chauvinism" and claimed that the West already succeeded in influencing Armenia, Moldova, and Kazakhstan.[86]

The same milblogger also claimed that Russia is planning on conducting snap nuclear exercises in response to several NATO exercises in Europe.[87] ISW continues to assess that Russia is highly unlikely to use a tactical nuclear weapon on the battlefield in Ukraine or anywhere else and that Russian officials and Kremlin mouthpieces continue to misrepresent ongoing NATO exercises as a threat against Russia despite the exercises' defensive response to real Russian aggression against Ukraine and overt Russian threats against NATO states.[88]

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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