

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Christina Harward, Riley Bailey, Angelica Evans, Grace Mappes, and Frederick W. Kagan  
April 18, 2024, 5:45pm ET

**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30pm ET on April 18. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the April 19 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov specified that Russian offensive effort that Ukrainian officials have been forecasting will likely begin in June 2024.** Budanov stated in an April 17 article in the *Washington Post* that Russia will launch a “big” offensive in June 2024 with the aim of seizing all of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts.[1] Budanov also stated that Russian forces will try to make battlefield gains throughout 2024 as part of efforts to influence Western decision-making. Budanov had previously forecasted that a future major Russian offensive would begin in late May or early June 2024, and it is notable that Budanov has now narrowed his forecast to June and identified the likely aim of the Russian offensive. Previous major Russian offensive efforts have similarly aimed to seize the remainder of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.[2] Ukrainian officials, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, have recently warned about the threat of a potential future Russian ground offensive operation targeting Kharkiv City.[3] Ukrainian officials have repeatedly warned that US security assistance is vital to Ukraine’s ability to defend against possible future Russian offensive operations in summer 2024.[4] ISW continues to assess that current Ukrainian artillery and air defense shortages resulting from the lack of US security assistance are allowing Russian forces to make marginal tactical advances and that future Russian assaults may be able to achieve more significant gains should the US continue to withhold assistance to Ukraine.[5] Ukrainian forces have, however, previously demonstrated their ability to repel Russian assaults and inflict significant personnel and equipment losses on Russian forces when adequately provisioned.[6]

**Budanov also stated on April 17 that Ukraine plans to counter future Russian offensive operations by continuing strikes against Russian military targets within Russia.** Budanov stated in his interview with the *Washington Post* that the GUR plans to strike Russian defense industrial base (DIB) and critical military targets, such as airfields and command and control posts, in response to Russia’s forecasted summer 2024 offensive.[7] Budanov stated that these strikes are intended to show that Russian President Vladimir Putin cannot “protect the [Russian] population from the war.” ISW continues to assess that Ukrainian strikes against targets within Russia are an appropriate component of Ukraine’s campaign to degrade industries that support the Russian war effort and military capabilities deployed in the Russian rear.[8] Recent Ukrainian strikes that have targeted Russian military infrastructure within Russia, threatened Russian oil refining and exports, and increased pressure on Russia’s air defense umbrella have demonstrated that Ukraine can achieve some asymmetrical impacts through strikes with limited numbers of mostly domestically produced weapons.[9]

**Russian forces reportedly continue to intensify crypto-mobilization efforts ahead of the expected Russian summer 2024 offensive operation but will likely struggle to establish effective operational- and strategic-level reserves rapidly.** *Bloomberg* reported on April 18 that three sources familiar with the Kremlin’s force-generation discussions stated that the Kremlin is intensifying crypto-mobilization efforts in order to avoid conducting another partial mobilization call-up of reservists.[10] Ruslan Pukhov, the head of the Moscow-based Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies and a member of a Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) civilian advisory board, claimed that current Russian crypto-mobilization efforts are generating roughly 30,000 new personnel each month and that the Russian military could recruit 300,000 total personnel in 2024.[11] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Deputy Chief Major General Vadym Skibitskyi reported on January 15 that Russia recruits around 30,000 personnel per month, and Pukhov’s claim about 300,000 total recruits matches Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s April 3 warning that Russia is preparing to “mobilize” an additional 300,000 personnel on June 1.[12] Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* reported on March 22 that high-ranking sources in the Russian MoD, presidential administration, and regional governments similarly stated that Russia may intend to generate an additional 300,000 personnel within an unspecified time frame.[13] *Bloomberg* noted that Russian regional one-time payments for signing a contract have increased by 40 percent to an average of 470,000 rubles (\$4,992), and a Russian insider source claimed that some Russian authorities are offering one million rubles (\$10,622) for people to sign military contracts.[14] Russian officials are reportedly concerned about decreasing recruitment rates and may intend to make economic incentives a cornerstone of crypto-mobilization efforts in spring and summer 2024.[15] The Russian MoD claimed on April 3 that more than 100,000 Russians had signed military service contracts since the start of 2024, but intensified Russian crypto-mobilization efforts are highly unlikely to generate an additional 200,000 personnel ahead of the expected Russian offensive effort in summer 2024.[16]

The Russian military has been generating forces at rates equal to its losses in Ukraine in recent months, and intensified monthly recruitment rates are unlikely to generate a considerable surplus of manpower for Russian operational- and strategic-level reserves.[17] Russian forces have maintained and even intensified offensive operations this spring, and these offensive operations will continue to consume a significant amount of manpower that could otherwise be used to form reserves as long as Russian forces sustain their current offensive tempo.[18] Russian forces are therefore unlikely to

establish extensive reserves ahead of their expected summer 2024 offensive effort. The limited remaining time for Russian forces to prepare for the expected summer offensive effort will likely mean that any additional manpower added to reserves in the coming months will be poorly trained and less combat effective. The Russian insider source bemoaned poor Russian training capacity and claimed that some Russian volunteer formations are abandoning ranks altogether for new personnel due to the lack of proper training.[19] ISW continues to assess that planned Russian operational- and strategic-level reserves are unlikely to be ready to act as a first-echelon penetration force or as a second-echelon exploitation force capable of conducting large-scale assaults in 2024 if Ukrainian forces have the wherewithal to resist them.[20] Russian forces are more likely to use these reserves as they have previously done — as immediately available manpower pools for restaffing and reinforcing committed units conducting grinding, infantry-heavy assaults with occasional limited mechanized assaults.[21]

**Ukrainian officials clarified that the Ukrainian strike on a Russian military airfield in occupied Dzhankoi, Crimea overnight on April 16 to 17 caused significant damage to Russian air defense equipment.** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed on April 17 that Ukrainian forces conducted a successful strike against the Russian airfield in Dzhankoi.[22] Ukraine’s Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on April 18 that the strike destroyed or critically damaged four S-400 air defense launchers, three radar stations, an air defense equipment control point, and a Murom-M airspace surveillance system.[23]

**Russian milbloggers seized on a violent crime committed by a migrant in Moscow on April 18 to reiterate calls for further restrictions in Russian migration policies.** Russian news outlet *Mash* reported on April 18 that an Azeri migrant killed a Russian man in Moscow and fled the scene.[24] Russian milbloggers largely responded to the murder by calling on Russian authorities to further restrict Russia’s migration policies and extend punishments for crimes committed by migrants.[25] Russian milbloggers warned that if the Russian government fails to respond to violence committed by migrants, Russians will be forced to “take matters into their own hands.”[26] Kremlin newswire *TASS* notably avoided framing the crime as an ethnic issue until Russian authorities publicly identified the suspect as a migrant from Azerbaijan.[27] Russian ultranationalists intensified their calls for revised and further restricted migration legislation following the March 22 Crocus City Hall attack, and several Russian officials, including Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev and Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin, have recently contradicted Russian President Vladimir Putin’s apparent efforts to quell anti-migrant sentiments among Putin’s ultranationalist constituency.[28] Putin’s competing efforts of placating ultranationalist anti-migrant demands and maintaining Russia’s war effort and economic viability will likely continue to generate inconsistencies and contradictions within the Kremlin’s migration policy and rhetoric.

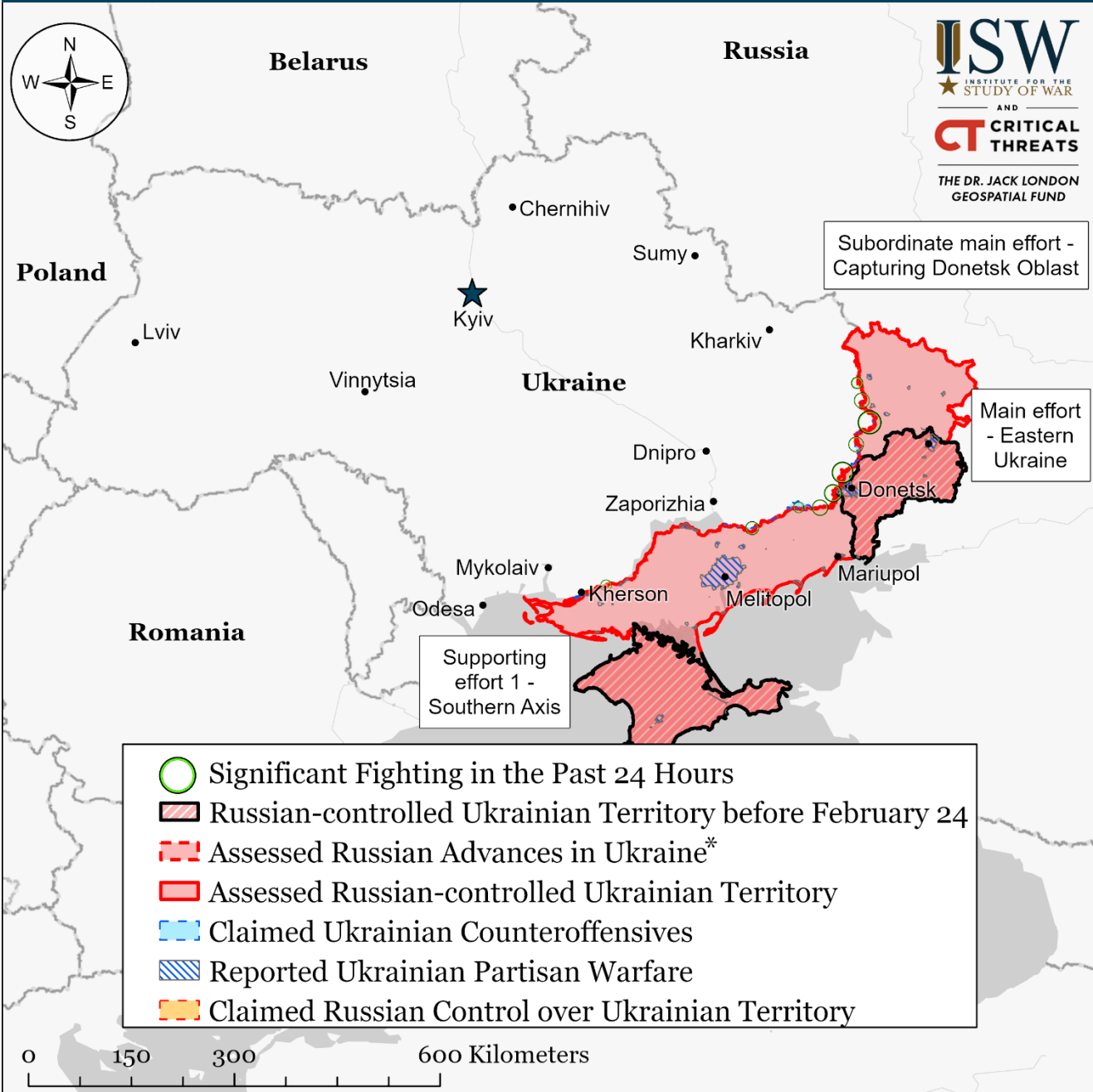
The Russian government may be responding to Russian ultranationalist’ demands for stricter migrant policies in a limited fashion. Russian news outlet *RBK* reported on April 18 that the Russian Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) is considering implementing an oral Russian language exam for migrant workers and increasing the minimum Russian language, history, and law exam score for foreigners interested in a Russian residence permit or Russian citizenship.[29] Rosobrnadzor stated that migrants are currently allowed into Russia without taking an oral language exam. Russian Education and Science Minister Valery Falkov announced that only one Russian state university per federal subject will be allowed to administer Russian language, history, and law exams to migrants as of May 1, 2024 in an effort to “strengthen control over the quality of the exam.”[30] The Kremlin may be willing to introduce these limited measures in hopes of appeasing Russian ultranationalist demands, but ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin is unlikely to implement any anti-migrant measures that could significantly hinder Russia’s ongoing force generation efforts or worsen Russia’s labor shortages.[31]

**German authorities detained two individuals suspected of aiding Russia in its ongoing efforts to sabotage NATO member states’ military infrastructure and logistics.** German outlet *Der Spiegel* reported on April 18 that German authorities arrested two suspects in Bayreuth, Bavaria for allegedly planning sabotage operations in Germany on behalf of Russian security services.[32] German investigators reportedly found that the suspects agreed to conduct arson and plant explosives at German military infrastructure facilities, weapons factories, and industrial sites, with a focus on routes used to transport military goods, in order to undermine German military assistance to Ukraine. The investigation also reportedly found that one of the suspects conducted reconnaissance for Russian intelligence services of US military facilities in Germany, including an area where the US military trains Ukrainian soldiers in Bavaria. *Der Spiegel* reported that one of the suspects previously served in the Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) People’s Militia between 2014 and 2016. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock summoned the Russian ambassador to Germany on April 18 in response to the arrests.[33] The Russian Embassy in Germany denied the allegations, claiming that German authorities presented “no evidence” about the suspects’ connections with Russian security services and that the arrests were an “outright provocation.” The Russian embassy also used the incident to further multiple Kremlin narratives against the West aimed at deterring Western military assistance to Ukraine. ISW has observed reports of Russian efforts to degrade NATO member states’ transport logistics since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, including through cyber-attacks against Czech, Latvia, Lithuanian, Romanian, and Estonian railway companies.[34]

## Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov specified that Russian offensive effort that Ukrainian officials have been forecasting will likely begin in June 2024.**
- **Budanov also stated on April 17 that Ukraine plans to counter future Russian offensive operations by continuing strikes against Russian military targets within Russia.**
- **Russian forces reportedly continue to intensify crypto-mobilization efforts ahead of the expected Russian summer 2024 offensive operation but will likely struggle to establish effective operational- and strategic-level reserves rapidly.**
- **Ukrainian officials clarified that the Ukrainian strike on a Russian military airfield in occupied Dzhankoi, Crimea overnight on April 16 to 17 caused significant damage to Russian air defense equipment.**
- **Russian milbloggers seized on a violent crime committed by a migrant in Moscow on April 18 to reiterate calls for further restrictions in Russian migration policies.**
- **German authorities detained two individuals suspected of aiding Russia in its ongoing efforts to sabotage NATO member states' military infrastructure and logistics.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Avdiivka and Donetsk City.**
- ***Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) "Schemes" investigative project, citing Ukrainian intelligence, reported on April 17 that Russia's defense industry is using US- and Japanese-made components in the navigation and communication systems of Russian Sukhoi fixed wing aircraft.***

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 18, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Shaylei Dauphinais, Tom Thacker, and Kaitlyn Thomas.

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

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

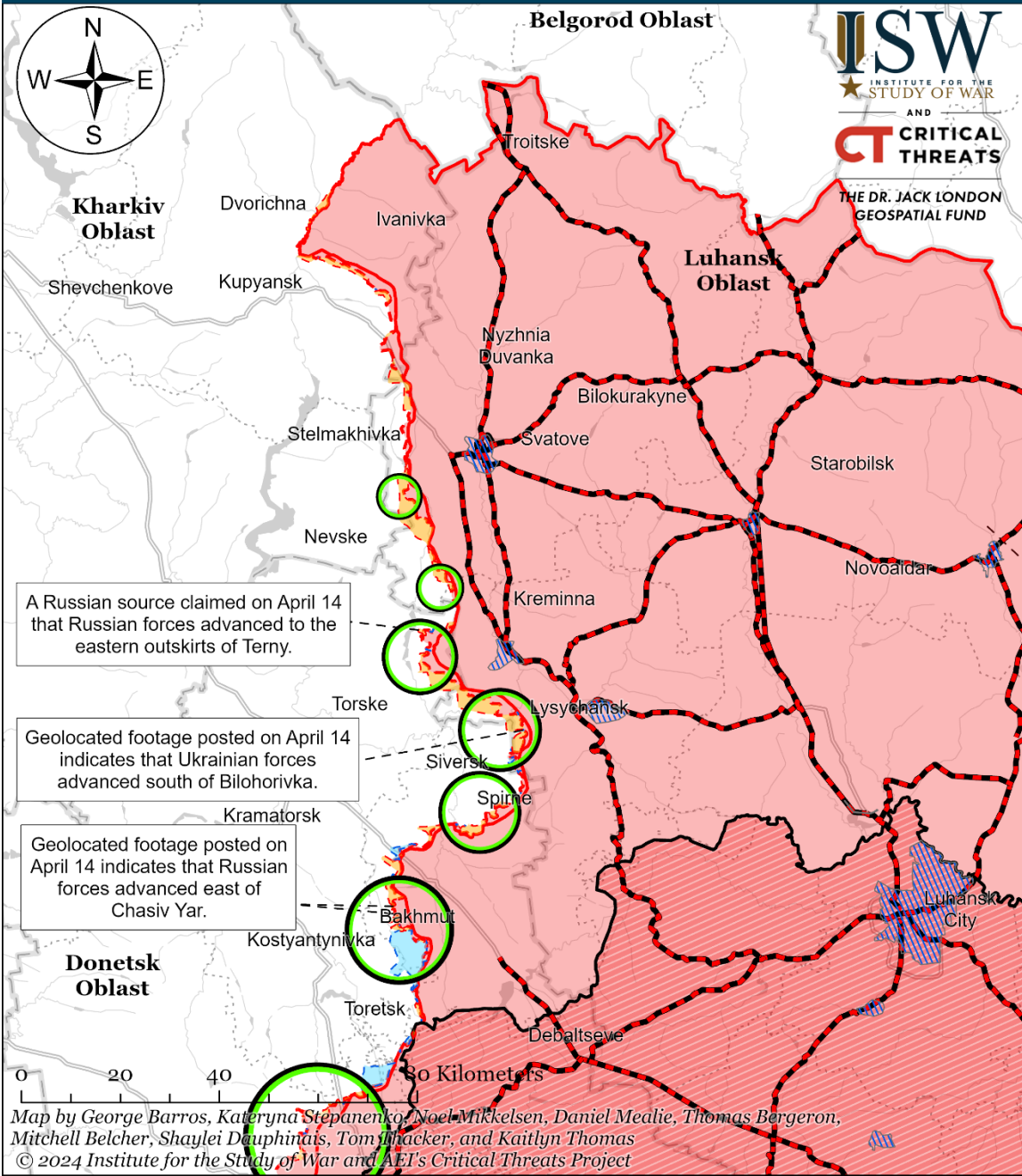
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives
- Significant Activity in Belarus
- 

### **Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

#### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

Positional fighting continued along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on April 18. Positional fighting continued southwest of Svatove near Serhiivka; northwest of Kreminna near Nevske; west of Kreminna near Terny and Yampolivka; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[35] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful squad-sized mechanized assaults near Yampolivka and Terny.[36] Elements of the Russian 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People’s Republic [LNR] Army Corps [AC]) are reportedly operating near Bilohorivka.[37]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of April 18, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



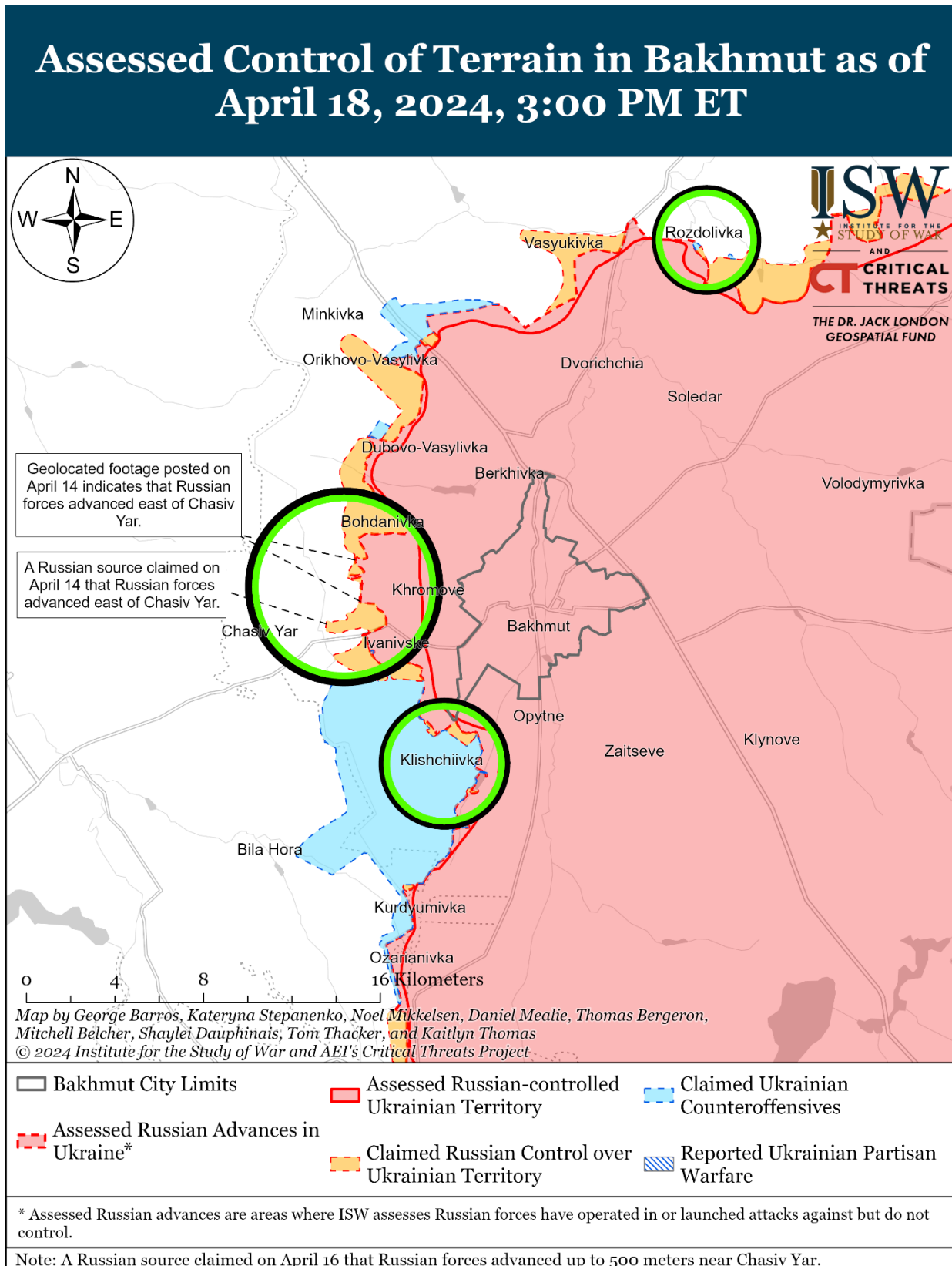
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February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

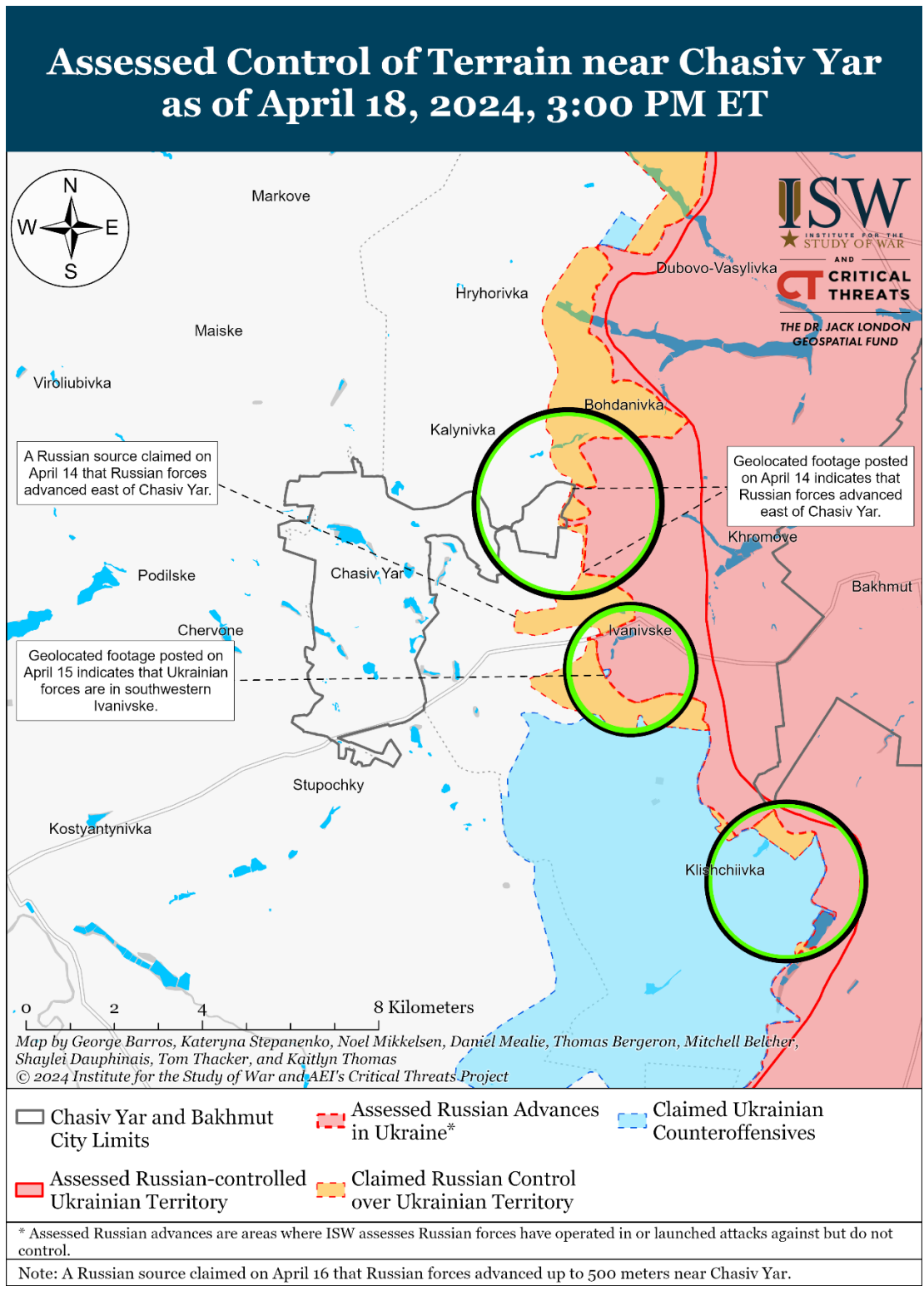
Note: A Russian source claimed on April 16 that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces 800 meters from a fortification north of Terny.

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

Limited positional fighting continued northeast of Bakhmut near Siversk on April 18, but there were no changes to the frontline in this area. Positional fighting continued northeast of Siversk near Verkhynokamyanske; south of Siversk near Rozdolivka; and southeast of Siversk near Vyimka.[38]



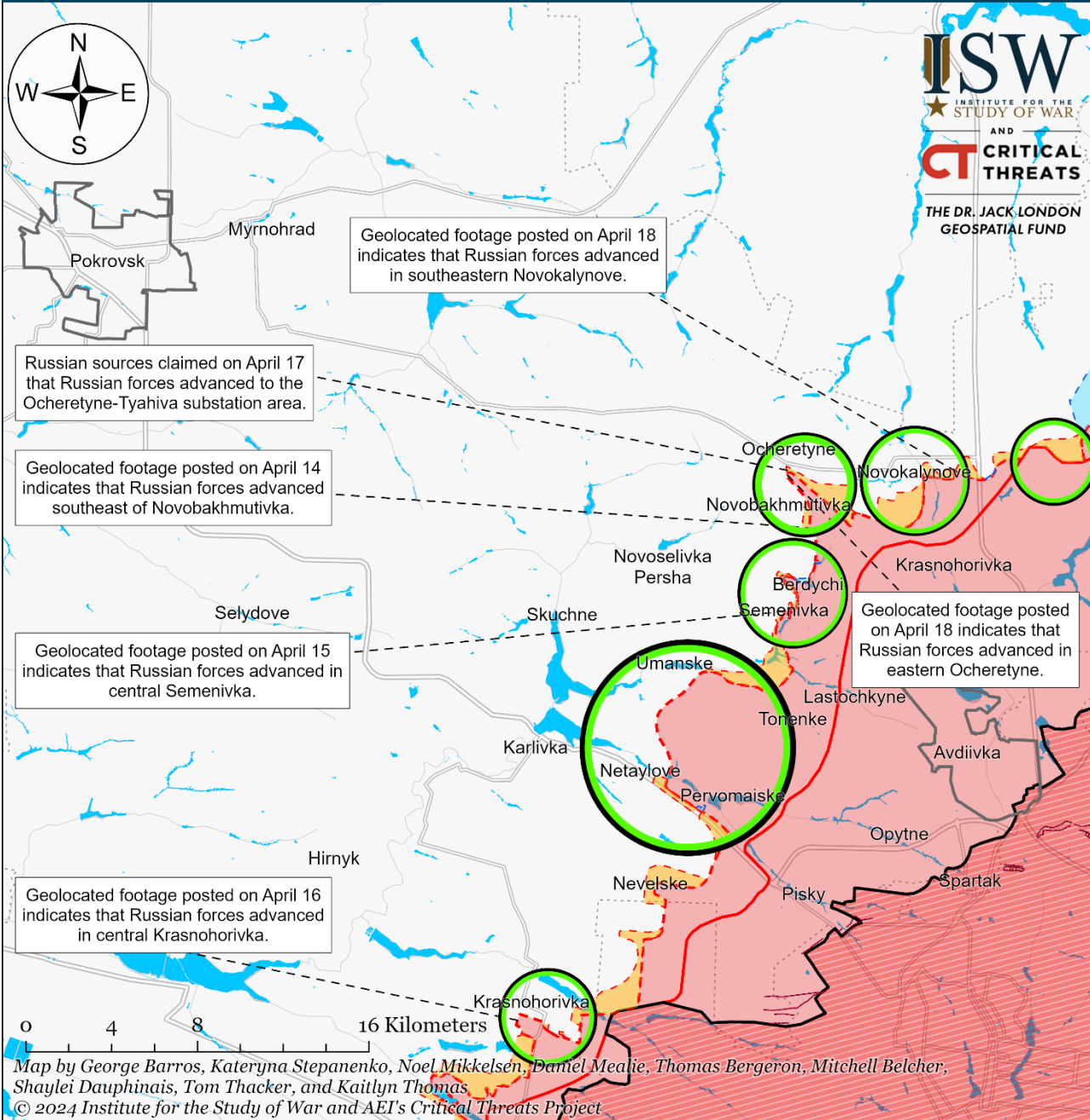
Russian forces reportedly advanced to a section of the eastern bank of the Siverskyi-Donets Donbas Canal east of Chasiv Yar amid continued fighting on April 18. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced up to a small section of the Siverskyi Donets-Donbas Canal southwest of Chasiv Yar on April 17, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[39] ISW has not observed any indications that Russian forces have crossed the canal in this area. Fighting continued northeast of Chasiv Yar near Bohdanivka; east of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske; near the Kanal Microraiion (easternmost Chasiv Yar) and Novyi Microraiion (southeastern most Chasiv Yar); and southeast of Chasiv Yar near Klishchiivka.[40] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are conducting heavy glide bomb strikes against Ukrainian positions and ammunition depots in and around Chasiv Yar, and a milblogger posted footage purporting to show a Russian Su-25 jet conducting strikes in support of elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division fighting near Chasiv Yar.[41]





Russian forces made relatively significant tactical advances northwest of Avdiivka, reaching the outskirts of Ocheretyne and entering Kalynove, and Ukrainian forces recaptured some positions in the area as of April 18. Geolocated footage published on April 18 shows that Russian forces advanced roughly three kilometers along a railway line up to the southeastern outskirts of Ocheretyne, and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces rapidly advanced after pushing Ukrainian forces from positions in the dacha area southeast of Ocheretyne.[42] Additional geolocated footage published on April 18 shows that Russian forces entered southeastern Novokalynove (northwest of Avdiivka and east of Ocheretyne) and that Ukrainian forces recaptured limited positions in western Berdychi (northwest of Avdiivka and southwest of Ocheretyne).[43] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces entered Ocheretyne, made additional advances south and southwest of Novokalynove, and approached closer to Umanske and Netaylove (west of Avdiivka), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[44] A milblogger claimed that Russian forces were able to make these advances because Russian forces had contained Ukrainian forces counterattacking near Berdychi.[45] Positional fighting also continued northwest of Avdiivka near Novobakhmutivka; west of Avdiivka near Semenivka and Yasnobrodivka; and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske and Pervomaiske.[46]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of April 18, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



- Avdiivka and Pokrovsk City Limits
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications

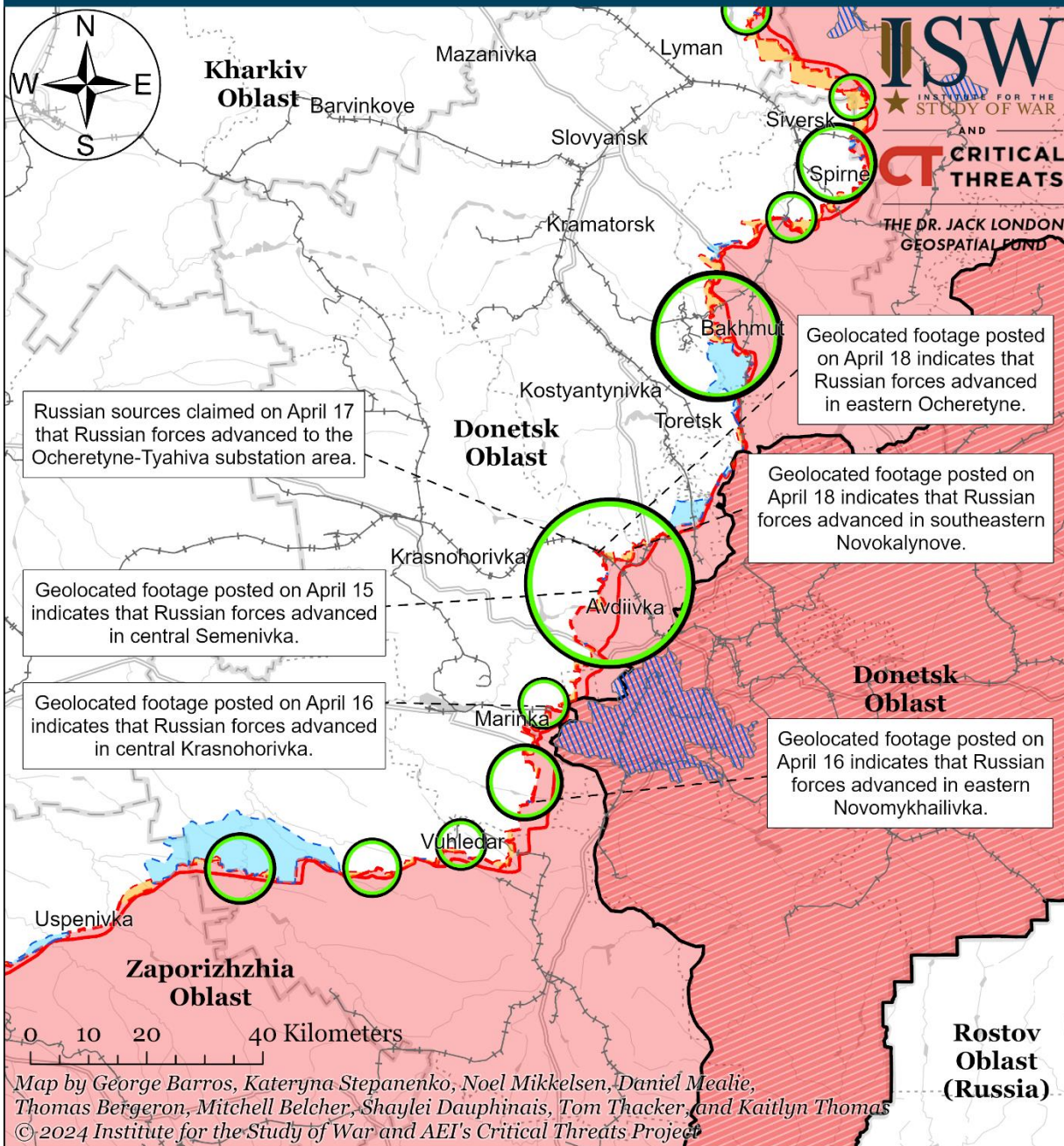
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: Russian sources claimed on April 18 that Russian forces advanced along a two and a half kilometer wide and 1.67 kilometer deep frontline toward Novokalynove. A Russian source claimed on April 17 that Russian forces advanced 320 meters wide and 1.27 kilometers deep in the eastern outskirts of Ocheretyne. A Russian source claimed on April 14 that Russian forces advanced 1.2 kilometers away from Novobakhmutivka.

More aggressive Russian tactics are reportedly facilitating attritional Russian gains towards Chasiv Yar and around Avdiivka amid degraded Ukrainian defensive capabilities.[47] A Russian Storm-Z instructor claimed that Russian forces made gains first in Avdiivka, then towards Chasiv Yar, and now towards Ocheretyne by conducting “risky” operations – attritional, frontal assaults in conjunction with heavy artillery and airstrikes without first advancing on the flanks. The Storm-Z instructor noted that Russian forces conducted containing operations on the flanks of Ocheretyne by pinning Ukrainian forces near Berdychi, Novokalynove, and Keramik to enable a relatively rapid advance towards Ocheretyne but characterized the high Russian casualties in these operations as a “fact” of the battlefield. The Storm-Z instructor’s discussion is consistent with ISW’s observations of Russian tactics. The instructor’s discussion is emblematic of Russian forces’ ability to achieve relatively quick tactical gains more consistently and in more areas of the frontline without improving ground operations due to Ukrainian forces’ degraded defensive abilities from weapons and ammunition shortages.

Russian forces reportedly recently advanced southwest of Donetsk City amid continued positional fighting on April 18. A milblogger claimed on April 17 that Russian forces advanced west of Solodke (southwest of Donetsk City) towards Vuhledar, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[48] Positional fighting continued west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Pobieda, Novomykhailivka, and Vodyane (northeast of Vuhledar) on April 18.[49]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of April 18, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

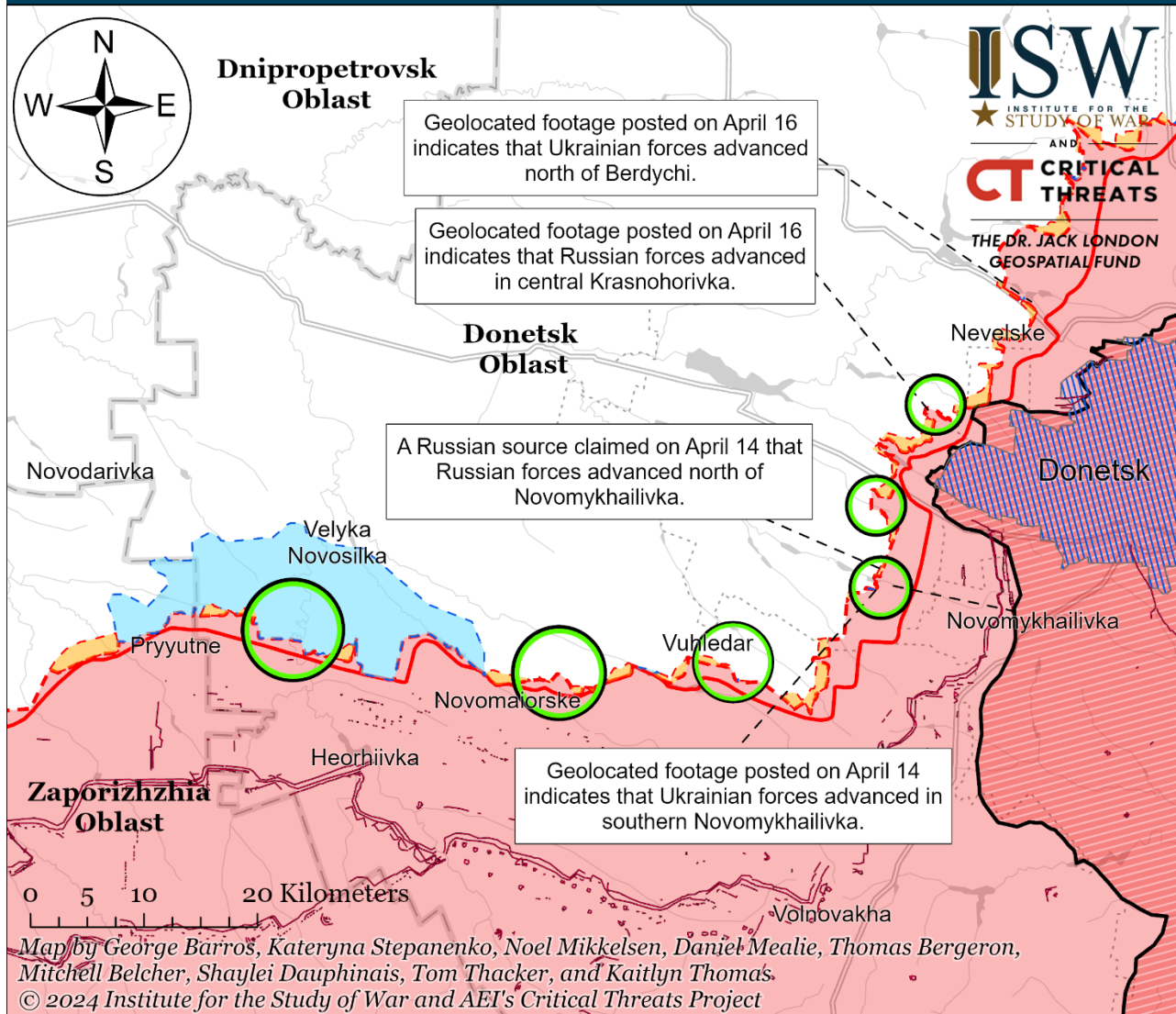


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Major Railroads

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

Positional fighting continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area near Urozhaine and Staromayorske (both south of Velyka Novosilka) on April 18.[50]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Donetsk Oblast as of April 18, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



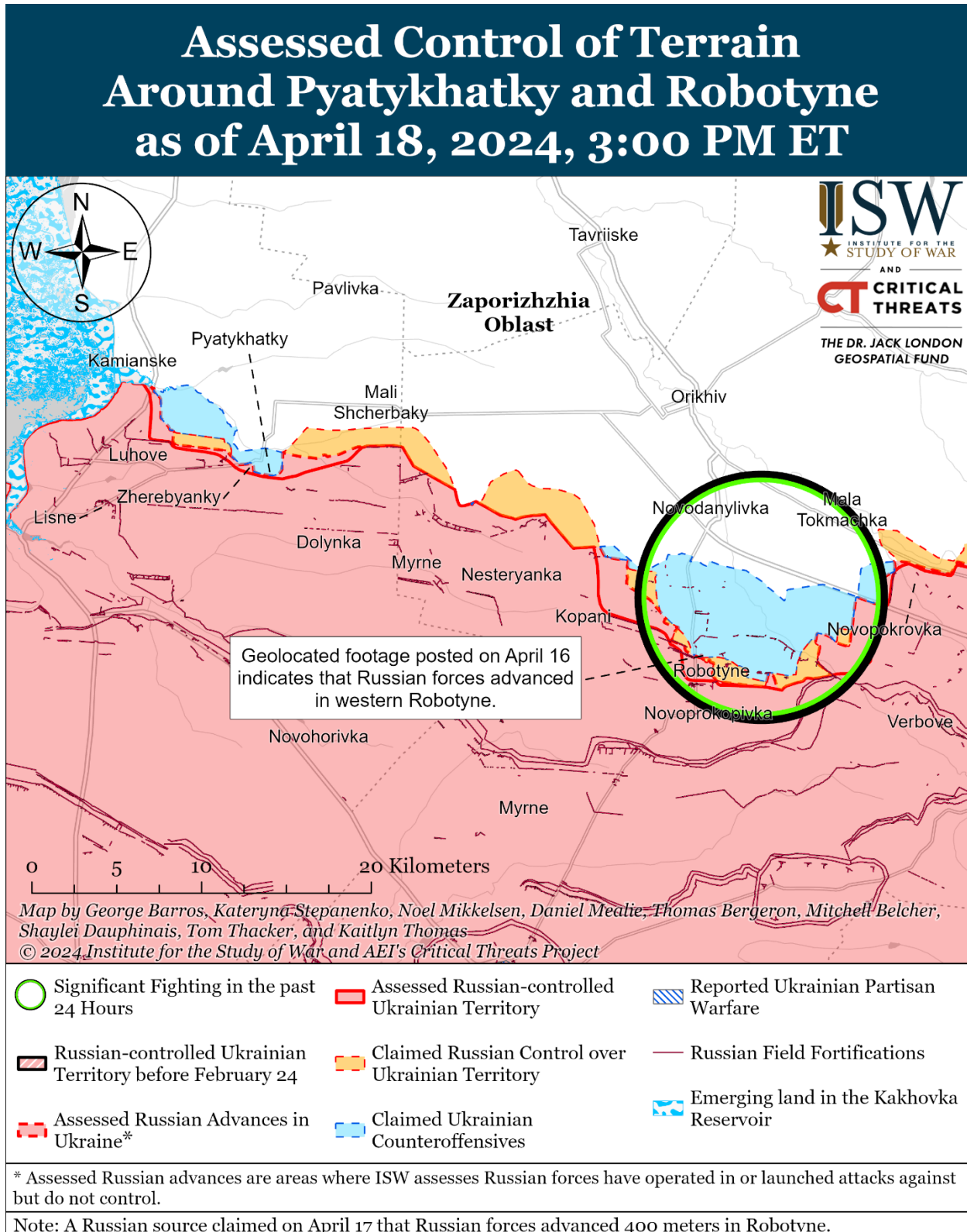
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications
- Assessed Russian Advances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

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

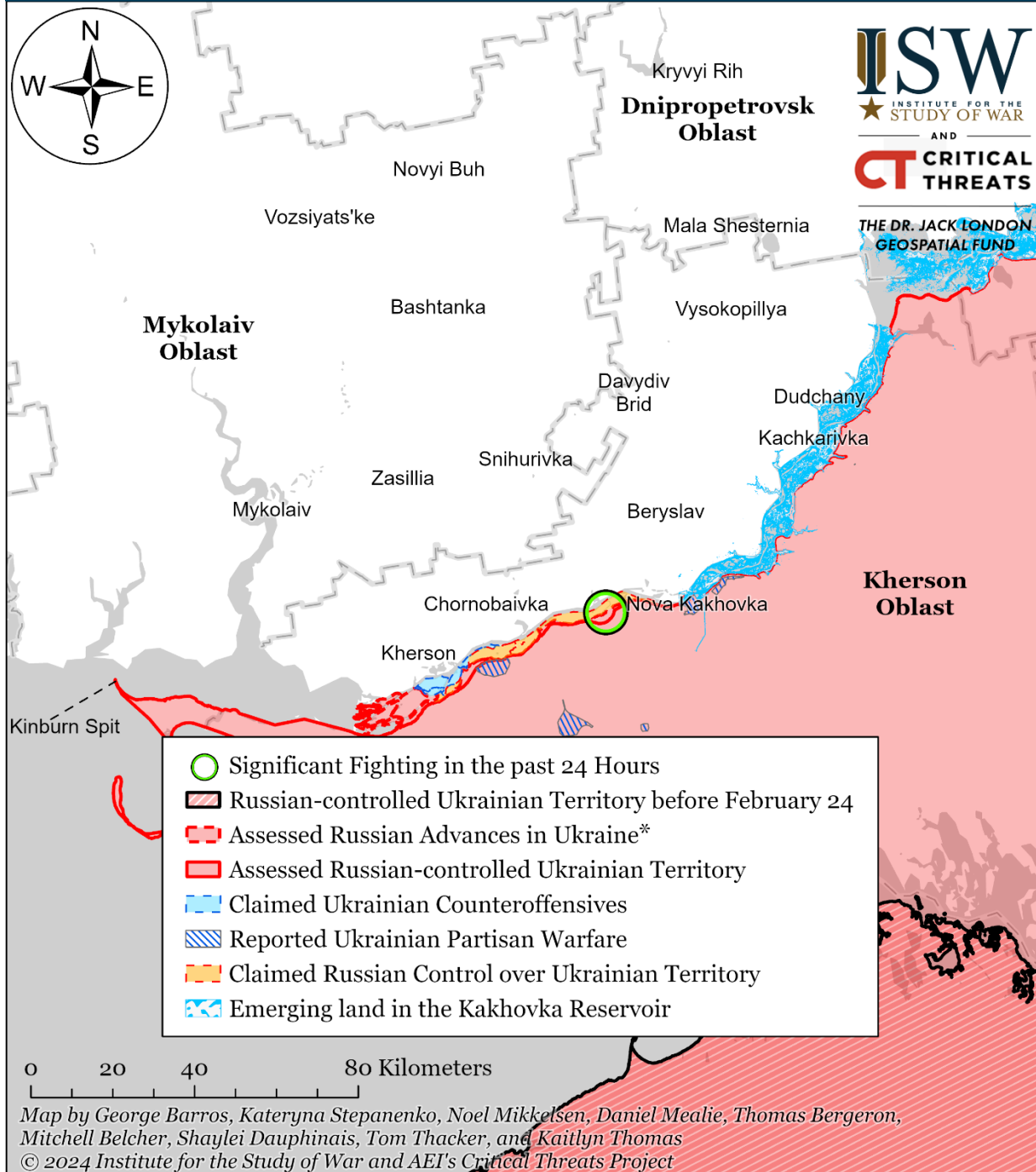
Note: A Russian source claimed on April 17 that Russian forces advanced 1.95 kilometers wide and 850 meters deep near Krasnohorivka.

**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 April 18, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Positional engagements continued near Robotyne, Verbove (east of Robotyne), and Mala Tokmachka (northeast of Robotyne).[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced up to 400 meters in Robotyne, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[52] Elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division, including its 56th VDV Regiment, are reportedly operating near Robotyne and Verbove.[53]



# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of April 18, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

Ukrainian officials indicated that Ukrainian strikes continue to degrade the Russian Black Sea Fleet's (BSF) ability to operate in the Black Sea. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Ukrainian intelligence reports indicate that Russia is moving its Kalibr missile-equipped ships from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea following Ukrainian strikes.[55] Ukrainian Navy Spokesperson Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk stated that the BSF only has three out of six Kalibr-equipped submarines left in service and that submarines cannot operate in the northern Black Sea due to the shallow water.[56]

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

Russian forces launched a limited series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of April 17 to 18 and during the day on April 18. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 13 Shahed-136/131 drones from Primorsko-Akhartsk, Krasnodar Krai and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea and that Ukrainian forces shot down all the drones.[57] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces struck the Pokrovsk Machine Building Plant and a military equipment repair site in Pokrovsk, Donetsk City with unspecified missiles overnight.[58] Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Military Administration Head Serhiy Lysak reported on April 18 that Russian forces struck Dnipropetrovsk Oblast with two unspecified missiles and damaged an infrastructure facility and an unspecified enterprise.[59] Geolocated footage published on April 18 shows Russian strikes near Liubymivka, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.[60] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces struck an S-300 missile system near Liubymivka and two or three MiG-29 aircraft at the Aviatorske airfield south of Dnipro City.[61] The Ukrainian Kharkiv Oblast Prosecutor's Office stated on April 18 that Russian forces likely used an S-300 missile to strike Sorokivka, Kharkiv Oblast in the afternoon.[62]

Ukrainian monitoring group Monitor stated on April 18 that Russian forces have accumulated about 2,530 thermobaric ODAB-500 and high-explosive fragmentation OFAB-500 bombs in frontline storage facilities in Ukraine.[63]

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

*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) "Schemes"* investigative project, citing Ukrainian intelligence, reported on April 17 that Russia's defense industry is using US- and Japanese-made components in the navigation and communication systems of Russian Sukhoi fixed wing aircraft.[64] Ukrainian intelligence provided *Schemes* with a list of more than 2,000 US- and Japanese-made components that Russian companies use to construct and maintain Russia Su-27SM3, Su-30SM, Su-34, Su-35S, and Su-57 aircraft and *Schemes* reported that Russian companies are importing the US- and Japanese-made components via intermediary companies mainly in Hong Kong, Turkey, China, and Hungary. *Bloomberg* reported on April 12 that Russia continues to rely on Chinese companies to supply most foreign-made machine tool components and microelectronics to Russia's defense industry for Russian weapons production.[65]

The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (UK MoD) reported on April 18 that Russian forces have likely improved the infrastructure at the port of Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Krai to accommodate the redeployment of the majority of the Russian Black Sea Fleet's (BSF) naval assets away from its main base in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea.[66] The UK MoD published satellite imagery dated April 11 and reported that Russian forces recently inspected and reloaded an unspecified Russian Grigorovich-class guided missile frigate at the Novorossiysk port, which is significant because the Grigorovich-class frigate has a vertical launch system that Russian forces could previously only reload in Sevastopol. The UK MoD suggested that Russian forces' ability to reload a Grigorovich-class frigate in Novorossiysk indicates that Russia has likely improved the port's infrastructure to support the redeployment of BSF assets indefinitely. ISW continues to assess that the successful Ukrainian strike campaign against BSF infrastructure and assets in occupied Crimea has forced Russia to redeploy the majority of its naval assets away from occupied Crimea to Novorossiysk.[67]

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

Nothing significant to report.

### **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**

Kremlin officials continue to deliver rhetoric aimed at weakening US support for Ukraine and promoting American and Western self-deterrence. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitri Peskov stated on April 18 that US security assistance will not influence the outcome of the situation on the frontline in Ukraine.[68] Peskov is likely attempting to influence internal US debates ahead of the US House of Representatives' vote on a supplemental military assistance package for Ukraine on April 20.[69] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova promoted several longstanding accusations against Ukraine alleging Ukrainian violations of human rights and escalatory actions against Russia in an effort to degrade Western support for Ukraine.[70] Zakharova also accused the West of facilitating Ukraine's alleged escalatory acts against Russia as part of an overarching Kremlin information operation that seeks to prompt the West into self-deterrence by threatening possible escalation between the West and Russia.[71]

## **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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[1] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/04/17/kyrylo-budanov-ukraine-general-russia-war-attacks/>

[2] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar013024> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-11> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/kremlin%E2%80%99s-pyrrhic-victory-bakhmut-retrospective-battle-bakhmut>

[3] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar041024>

[4] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar041524>

[5] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar041324>

[6] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar041324>

[7] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/04/17/kyrylo-budanov-ukraine-general-russia-war-attacks/>

[8] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar040524>

[9] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar032024>

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