

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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February 1, 2024, 7:40pm ET

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

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

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

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1pm ET on February 1. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the February 2 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Note: ISW added a new section on Russian air, missile, and drone campaign to track Russian efforts to target Ukrainian rear and frontline areas, grow its drone and missile arsenals, and adapt its strike packages.

Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi presented an overarching strategy to seize the theater-wide initiative in Ukraine and retain it to facilitate Ukrainian battlefield victories despite Russia’s numerical advantages in manpower and materiel. Zaluzhnyi’s strategy aims to offset Ukraine’s existing challenges and pursue advantages over the Russian military through widespread technological innovation and adaptation. The Ukrainian Armed Forces published an essay on February 1 by Zaluzhnyi titled “On the Modern Design of Military Operations in the Russo-Ukrainian War: In the Fight for the Initiative,” wherein Zaluzhnyi argued that the requirements for any given war are unique and that these requirements dictate a unique strategy for victory.^[1] Zaluzhnyi identified “decisive conditions” for Ukraine to conduct successful operations, which include achieving absolute air superiority to enable effective Ukrainian fires, logistics, and reconnaissance; seizing the initiative by denying Russian forces the ability to conduct offensive or defensive operations; increasing Ukrainian mobility while limiting Russian mobility; securing safe access to unspecified key lines and important terrain; and denying Russian forces any opportunities to recapture lost positions and increase Russian operational efforts. The decisive conditions that Zaluzhnyi highlighted would effectively give Ukrainian forces the theater-wide initiative and set conditions for Ukraine to conduct operationally significant defensive and offensive operations. Zaluzhnyi argued that the rapid development of new technology changes the means by which Ukraine can achieve these “decisive conditions” and that Ukrainian forces cannot use conventional methods to achieve these conditions given Russia’s superior ability to mobilize men. Zaluzhnyi argued that new technological means, such as drones, unmanned systems, systems integration, and other advanced technological systems can allow Ukrainian forces to maximize their combat potential using fewer resources and inflict maximum damage on Russian forces.

Zaluzhnyi argued that Ukrainian limitations and geopolitical challenges are incentivizing Ukraine to pursue the development and institutionalization of these new means. Zaluzhnyi stated that an “unstable political situation around Ukraine” has led to reduced international military support for Ukraine, that Russia will likely try to provoke other conflicts to further draw the West’s attention away from Ukraine, and that Ukraine’s partners have depleted their missile and artillery ammunition stocks without the means to rapidly produce these weapons. Zaluzhnyi argued that ineffective sanctions allow the defense industrial bases (DIBs) of Russia and its partners to support a positional war of attrition that benefits Russia over Ukraine and that Russia has a significant advantage over Ukraine in the mobilization of human resources. Zaluzhnyi further highlighted imperfect Ukrainian regulatory frameworks to expand Ukraine’s DIB, although Ukrainian officials are increasingly prioritizing efforts to remedy this issue.[2] Zaluzhnyi notably concluded that the uncertain nature of the war in Ukraine makes it difficult for Ukraine’s allies to determine specific security assistance priorities for Ukraine.[3] Zaluzhnyi stated that the “main option for gaining an advantage is to master the entire arsenal of relatively cheap, new, and extremely effective and rapidly developing assets.” Zaluzhnyi specifically highlighted unmanned systems as an area where Ukraine can leverage new capabilities since they can provide continuous situational awareness, support round-the-clock fire and strikes in real-time, provide real-time intelligence, and produce accurate targeting information for strikes on the frontline and in rear areas.

Zaluzhnyi called on Ukraine to introduce a new “philosophy” for the preparation and conduct of military operations that would allow Ukrainian forces to cohesively employ these new methods in pursuit of a cohesive objective. Zaluzhnyi stated that new technological means will also expand the types of operations Ukraine can conduct in support of the war, which may include operations to reduce Russia’s economic potential, operations aimed at Russia’s complete isolation and exhaustion, robotic search and strike operations, robotic operations to control a crisis area, psychological operations, and defensive “contactless” operations. Zaluzhnyi also called on Ukrainian forces to systematically advance separate lines of effort to generate “necessary effects” in developing a coherent “digital field”; controlling the radio-electronic (the cyber-electromagnetic domain) situation along the frontline; combining attacks with unmanned and cyber assets; and improving logistics. Zaluzhnyi specifically suggested that retooling operations to integrate unmanned systems may allow Ukrainian forces to conserve personnel, weapons, and equipment while inflicting massive strikes on Russian military assets and infrastructure.

Zaluzhnyi called on Ukraine to overhaul its war effort to create “a completely new state system of technological reequipment” to master new assets and their operation. Zaluzhnyi advocated for Ukraine to retool state systems to support Ukrainian research, development, scientific support, production and maintenance, personnel training and the generalization of combat experience, the employment of forces, flexible financing, and logistics in order to prioritize the development and employment of rapidly developing technology. Zaluzhnyi added that Ukraine could create the system he envisions, with a sufficient volume of production, within five months. Zaluzhnyi concluded that this new system, alongside a new approach to military operations, can enable Ukraine to stop Russia’s current aggression and protect Ukraine in the future.

Ukrainian forces successfully struck and sunk a Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) vessel in the Black Sea near occupied Crimea on the night of January 31 to February 1. The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) published footage on February 1 showing Ukrainian maritime drones striking the *Ivanovets* Tarantul-class corvette (41st Missile Boat Brigade) near Lake Donuzlav in occupied Crimea.[4] The Ukrainian Navy reported that the sinking of the *Ivanovets* is a

significant loss to the BSF since the BSF has only three ships of its project 1241.1 (Tarantul) class and noted that Ukrainian forces previously damaged a project 1239 Bora-class corvette in the 41st Missile Boat Brigade.[5] The Ukrainian Navy stated that the *Ivanovets* is usually staffed with 40 personnel, and the GUR stated that Russian search and rescue operations were unsuccessful.[6] ISW continues to assess that successful Ukrainian strikes on BSF vessels and infrastructure have limited the BSF's ability to operate in the western part of the Black Sea.[7] A prominent Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces launched 12 Western-provided SCALP or Storm Shadow missiles against occupied Crimea on the night of January 31 to February 1.[8] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces downed five missiles near Belbek Air Base in occupied Sevastopol and six missiles over Yana Kapu, Hvardiske, and northwest of Sevastopol and that one missile struck the ground near Belbek Air Base but did not damage it.[9] Neither Ukrainian nor Russian officials confirmed these claims. Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated that the January 31 Ukrainian strikes on Belbek Air Base damaged "several objects" but noted that Ukrainian authorities need more satellite imagery to confirm what objects Ukrainian forces struck.[10]

Russian milbloggers continued to voice frustrations about Russian forces' continued tactical blunders during offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast. Several Russian milbloggers criticized the Russian military command on January 31 and February 1 for failing to account for the "[drone] factor" when planning tactical assaults in response to footage posted on January 30 showing Ukrainian forces striking a column of advancing Russian vehicles and tanks near Novomykhailivka.[11] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger noted that Ukrainian minefields are canalizing Russian routes but argued that the Russian military command still needs to stop attacking in mechanized columns due to consistently taking high equipment losses.[12] The milblogger also criticized the Russian command for failing to account for Ukrainian drone operations and to equip Russian armored vehicles with electronic warfare (EW) systems to counter Ukrainian drones.[13] Another Russian milblogger questioned how Russian commanders can fail to account for Ukrainian drones in attack plans and afford to lose so much equipment and manpower, accusing the Russian commanders of "complete stupidity and incompetence." [14] Other Russian milbloggers seized on the discourse to advocate for continued domestic support for drone and EW production in Russia and to argue that Russian sources should not have to censor themselves if they have constructive criticism for Russian commanders.[15] The Russian military command has actively censored some Russian milbloggers in recent months for criticizing the military likely to encourage and enforce self-censorship among other Russian milbloggers.[16]

Russian milbloggers have previously argued that Russian forces need to improve their planning and coordination at the tactical and operational levels to break out of the current positional warfare in Ukraine.[17] Russian forces in Ukraine have proven capable of successfully learning lessons and adapting while conducting defensive operations and have shown limited offensive adaptation on certain sectors of the front.[18] Russian forces conducted a series of unsuccessful mechanized assaults near Avdiivka in October 2023 after analogous costly mechanized assaults along several different axes over the course of 2022 and 2023, and the recent footage of similar unsuccessful mechanized assaults near Novomykhailivka from January 30, 2024 suggests that Russian forces' success in adapting their tactical planning and execution of assaults varies by unit-to-unit or commander-to-commander, however.[19]

The European Union (EU) unanimously approved a financial support package for Ukraine for 2024 – 2027. European Council President Charles Michel announced on February 1 that all 27 EU member states approved a support package for Ukraine worth 50 billion euros (about \$54 billion), including 33 billion euros (about \$35.8 billion) of loans and 17 billion euros (about \$18.4 billion) in “non-repayable support” that could potentially come from frozen Russian assets.^[20] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that continued EU financial support will strengthen Ukraine’s long-term economic stability.^[21]

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Joseph Borrell stated that the European Union (EU) will not be able to send the promised one million shells to Ukraine by March 2024, but is planning to fulfill this promise by the end of 2024. Borrell stated on February 1 that the EU delivered 330,000 rounds of artillery ammunition to Ukraine between March 2023 and January 2024 and that he expects the EU to deliver a total of 524,000 rounds by March 2024.^[22] Borrell stated that the EU plans to deliver an additional 630,000 shells to Ukraine by the end of 2024. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated that the European defense industrial base (DIB) has increased its production by 40 percent over an unspecified time frame and that the EU member states are working to deliver munitions to Ukraine by drawing from national stockpiles, concluding new orders, or redirecting other orders.^[23] Von der Leyen stated that the European Commission will soon present a new defense and industrial strategy that will create greater coherence and coordination throughout the EU from planning to procurement. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov stated in an interview with *CNN* that ammunition is “one of the most decisive factors” in the war and that the quantity of rounds is more important than quality.^[24]

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov appointed another one of his children to a senior position in the Chechen government as of January 31. Kadyrov appointed his 24-year-old daughter Khadizhat Kadyrova as First Deputy Head of the Chechen Republic Head’s Administration from her prior post leading the Grozny City Department of Preschool Education.^[25] Kadyrov previously appointed his now-26-year-old daughter Aishat Kadyrova and 17-year-old-son Adam Kadyrov to similarly senior positions.^[26]

In accordance with its policy against speculating about future Ukrainian actions, ISW is not covering reported leaks concerning possible changes in the Ukrainian command structure. ISW will continue to report official statements by Ukrainian government officials and organizations as they are made.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi presented an overarching strategy to seize the theater-wide initiative in Ukraine and retain it to facilitate Ukrainian battlefield victories despite Russia's numerical advantages in manpower and materiel. Zaluzhnyi's strategy aims to offset Ukraine's existing challenges and pursue advantages over the Russian military through widespread technological innovation and adaptation.**
- **Ukrainian forces successfully struck and sunk a Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) vessel in the Black Sea near occupied Crimea on the night of January 31 to February 1.**
- **Russian milbloggers continued to voice frustrations about Russian forces' continued tactical blunders during offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast.**
- **The European Union (EU) unanimously approved a financial support package for Ukraine for 2024 – 2027.**
- **EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Joseph Borrell stated that the European Union (EU) will not be able to send the promised one million shells to Ukraine by March 2024, but is planning to fulfill this promise by the end of 2024.**
- **Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov appointed another one of his children to a senior position in the Chechen government as of January 31.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Kupyansk, Avdiivka, and Donetsk City amid continued positional engagements along the entire line of contact on February 1.**
- **Turkish banks have reportedly started closing Russian companies' accounts due to the threat of US secondary sanctions.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin highlighted Russian plans to integrate occupied territories of Ukraine into Russia over the next six years.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of February 1, 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
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- Activities in Russian-Occupied Areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives
- Significant Activity in Belarus

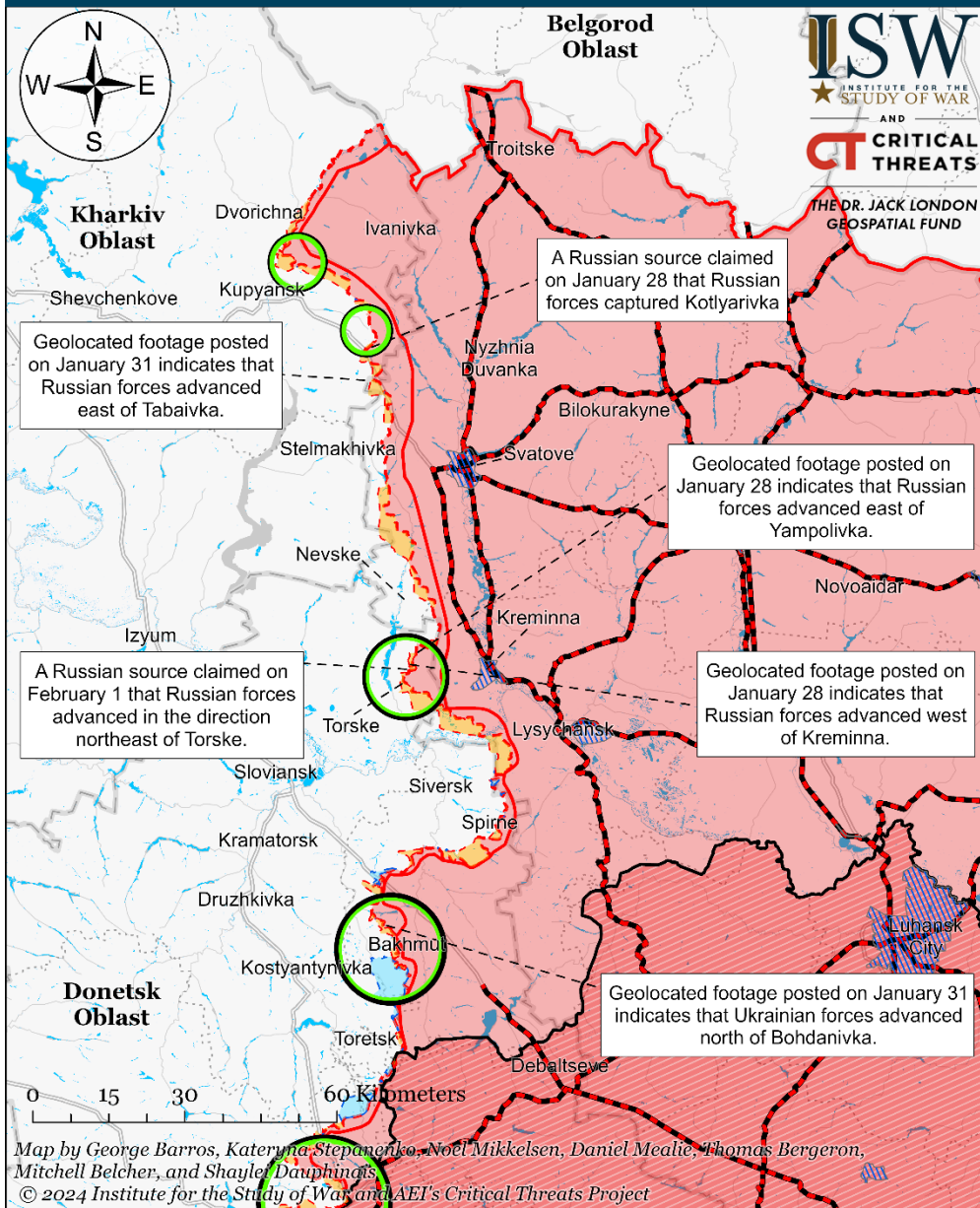
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Kupyansk amid continued positional engagements in the area on February 1. Geolocated footage published on February 1 indicates that Russian forces advanced to a section of the P07 Kupyansk-Svatove highway east of Tabaivka (southeast of Synkivka).[27] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced near Synkivka (northeast of Kupyansk) and west of Tabaivka and that Russian forces entered Ivanivka (southeast of Kupyansk) and are advancing towards Kyslivka.[28] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims, however. Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka and Lake Lyman and southeast of Kupyansk near Ivanivka, Berestove, Krokhmalne, and Tabaivka.[29]

Positional engagements continued near Kreminna on February 1, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional fighting continued west of Kreminna near Terny, Torske, Yampolivka, and Dibrova and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[30] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced near Terny and Yampolivka, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[31] Elements of the Russian 348th Motorized Rifle Regiment (reportedly formed during partial mobilization in fall 2022) are reportedly operating near Kreminna, and elements of the Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz “Aida” detachment reportedly continue to operate near Bilohorivka.[32]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of February 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



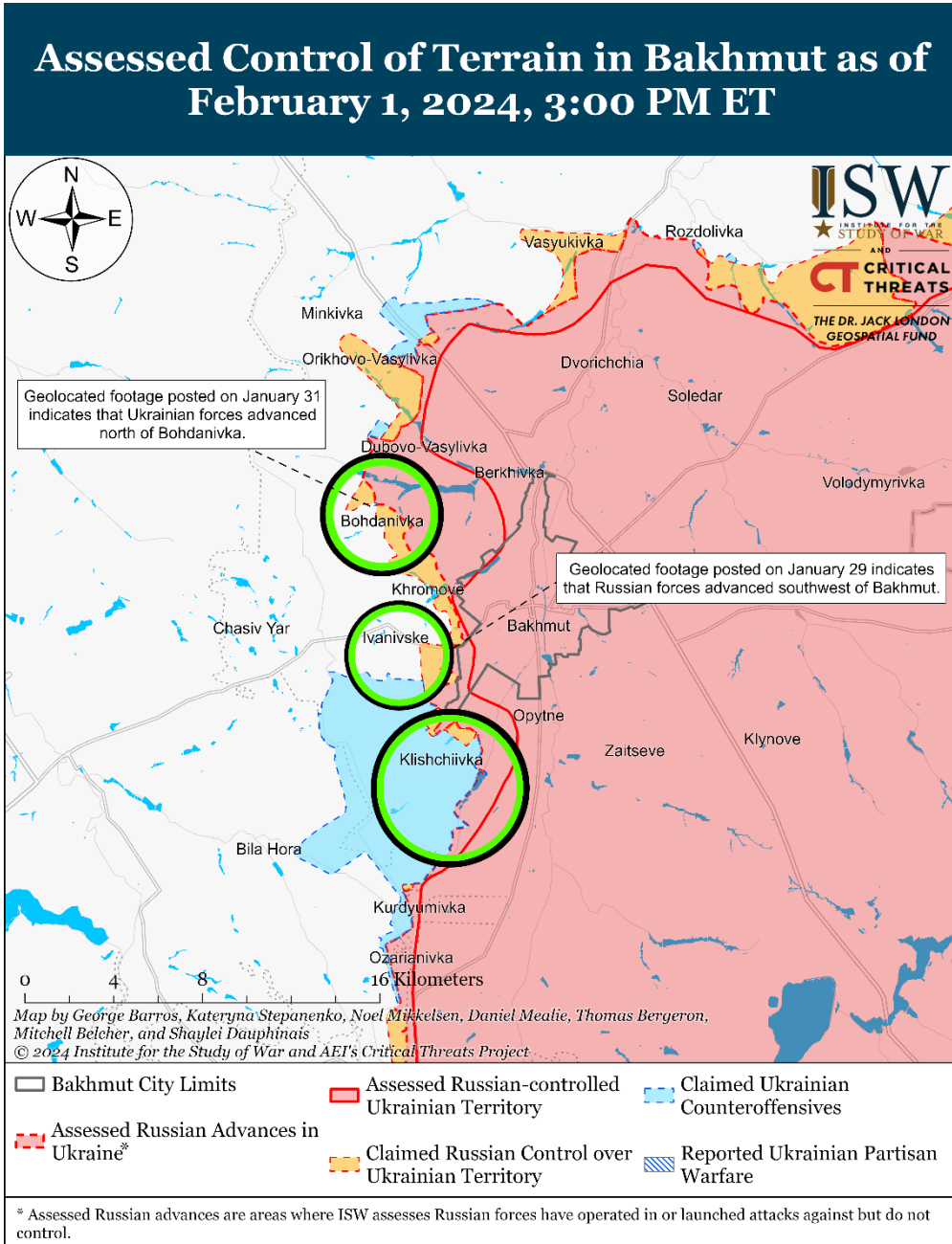
Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Russian Ground Lines of Communication	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed 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 January 29 that Russian forces advanced along a front one and a half kilometers wide and 750 meters deep near Synkivka.

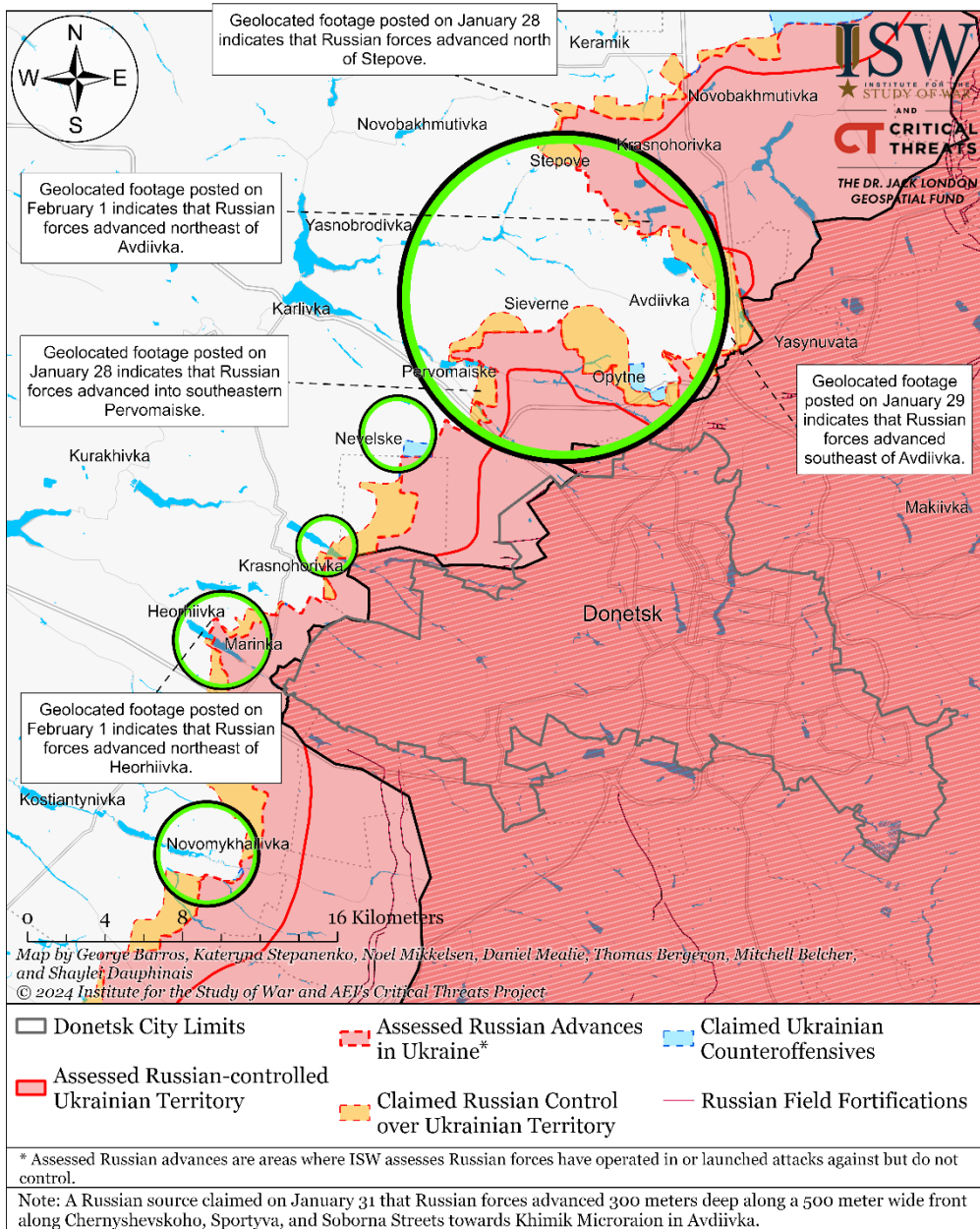
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Positional fighting continued near Bakhmut on February 1, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced west of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka and from Khromove towards Ivanivske, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[33] Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional fighting continued west of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka and Ivanivske and southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[34] Elements of the Russian “Sever-V” Volunteer Brigade (Russian Volunteer Corps) are reportedly operating in the Bohdanivka-Chasiv Yar area, and elements of the “Brodyaga” Spetsnaz group are reportedly operating near Klishchiivka.[35]



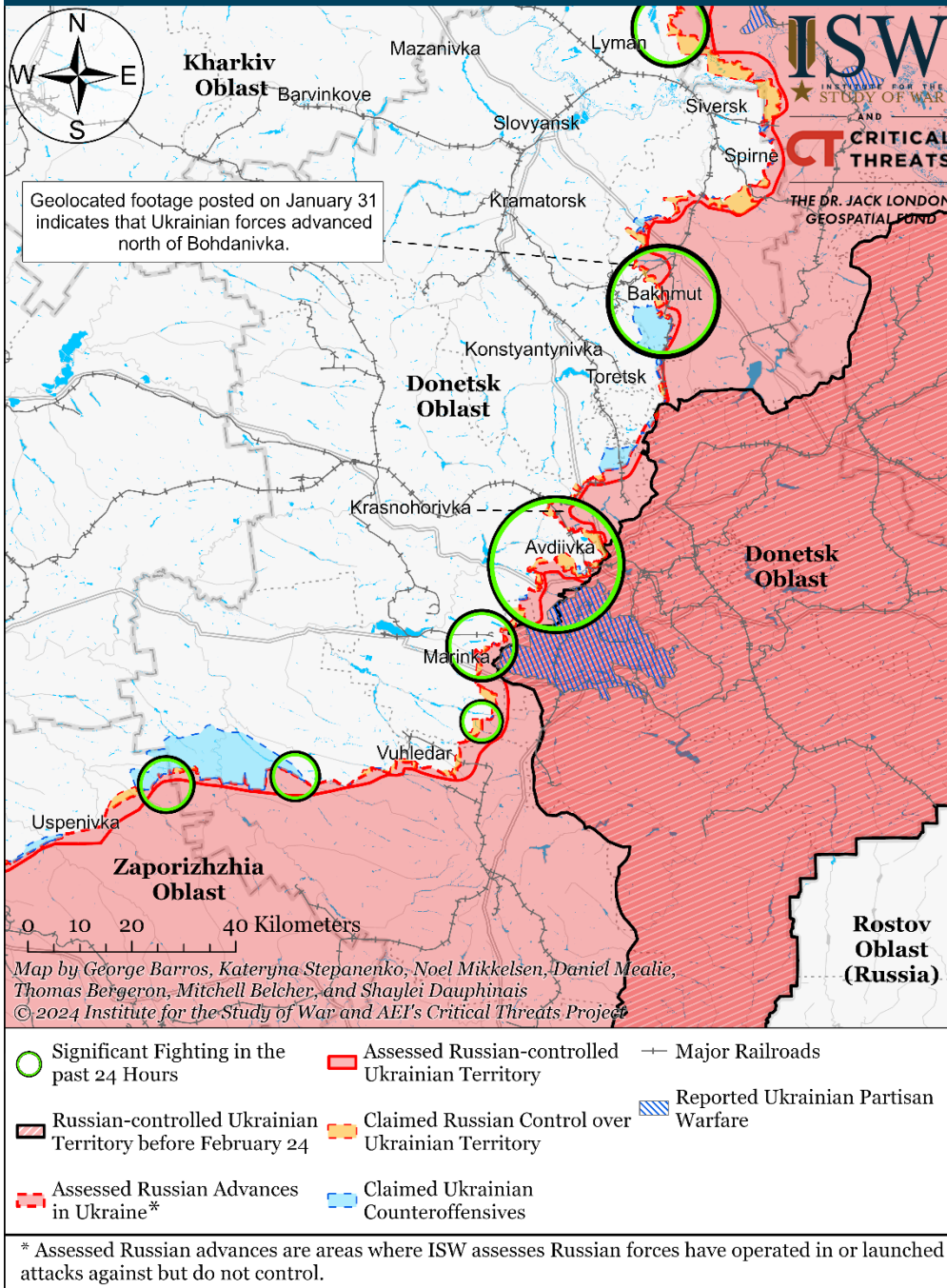
Russian forces recently marginally advanced near Avdiivka amid continued positional fighting in the area on February 1. Geolocated imagery published on February 1 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced in the dacha area on the northern outskirts of Avdiivka.[36] A prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced along Sportyvna, Soborna, and Chernyshevskoho streets in southernmost Avdiivka and on Avdiivka's southern outskirts, although ISW has not observed visual evidence of this claim.[37] Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional engagements continued northwest of Avdiivka near Stepove; near the Avdiivka Coke Plant on Avdiivka's northwestern outskirts; near the "Tsarska Okhota" restaurant area in the southeastern outskirts of Avdiivka; west of Avdiivka near Sieverne; and southwest of Avdiivka near Opytne, Pervomaiske, and Nevelske.[38] The spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Avdiivka direction stated that Russian forces are not changing their tactics in the Avdiivka direction and continue constant infantry assaults in the area.[39] Elements of the Russian 21st Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army, Central Military District) are reportedly operating near Avdiivka.[40]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of February 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently marginally advanced west of Donetsk City amid continued positional engagements west and southwest of Donetsk City on February 1. Geolocated footage published on February 1 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced northeast of Heorhiivka (west of Donetsk City).[41] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are advancing near Heorhiivka and Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk City).[42] Positional fighting continues west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Pobieda and Novomykhailivka.[43]

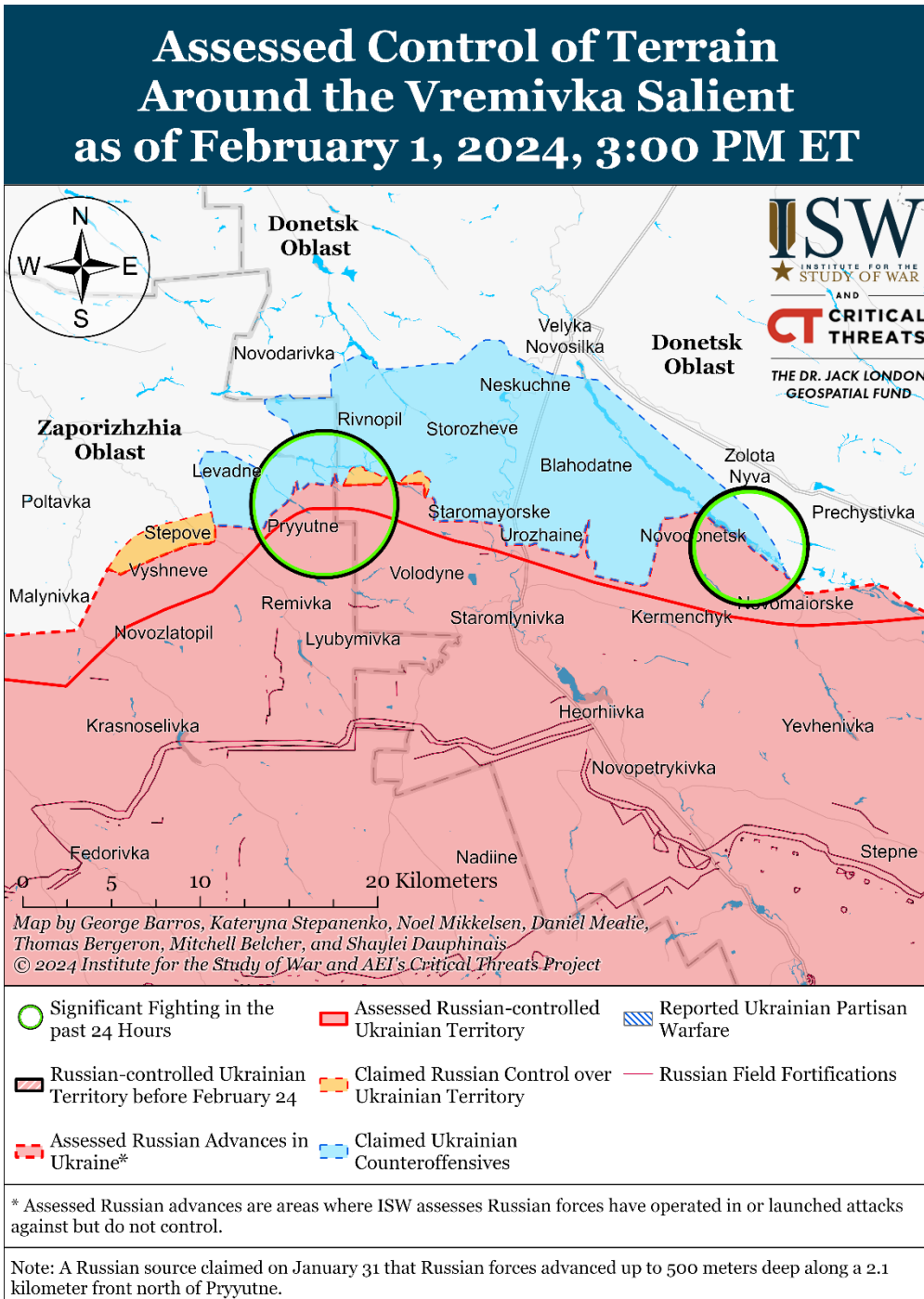
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of February 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

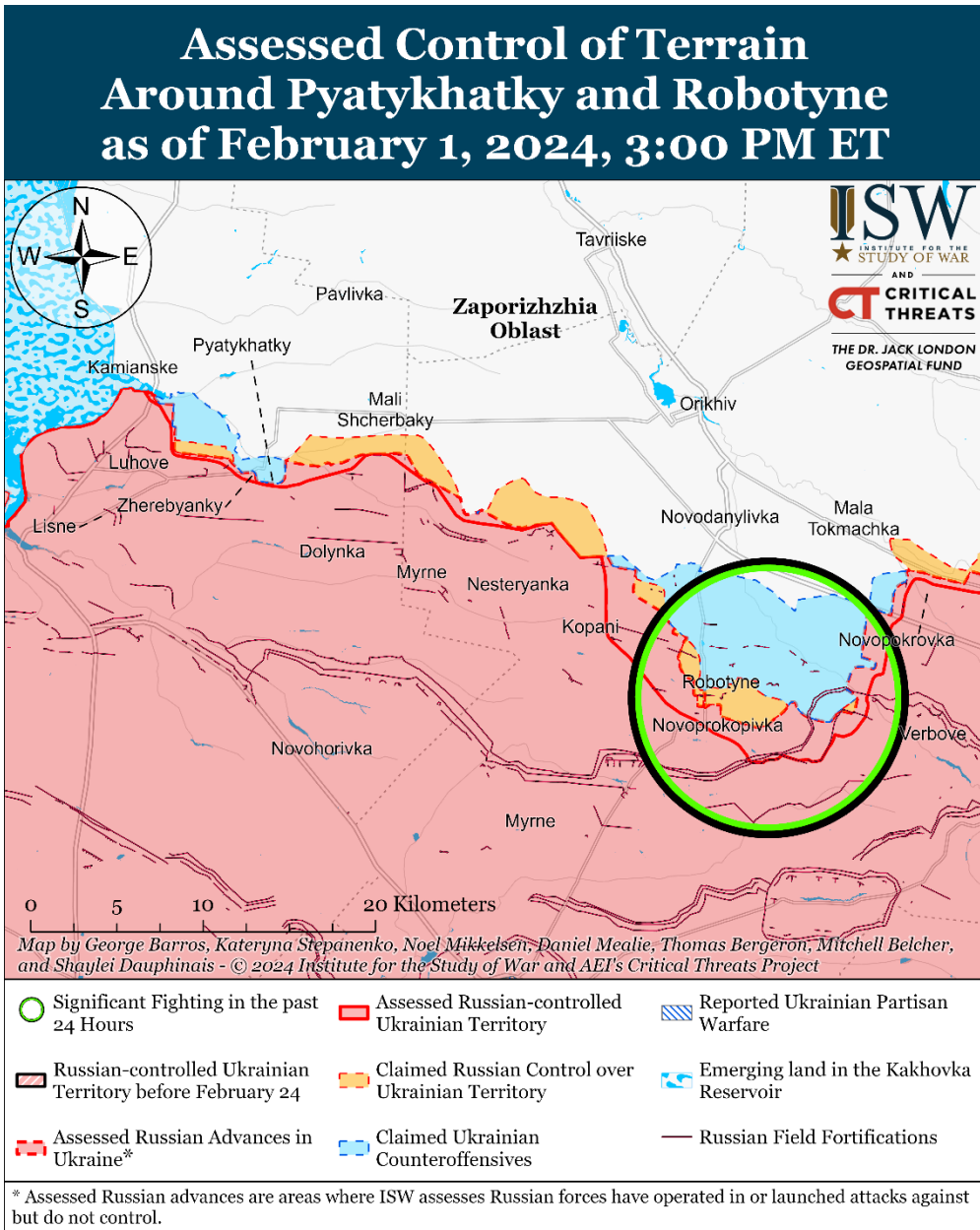
Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area amid continued positional engagements in the area on February 1. Geolocated footage published on February 1 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced southwest of Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka).^[44]

Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional fighting occurred southeast of Velyka Novosilka near Zolota Nyva; south of Velyka Novosilka near Staromayorske and Urozhaine, and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Pryyutne.[45] A Russian milblogger noted that Russian infantry groups are attacking with armored vehicle and tank support north of Pryyutne.[46] Elements of the Russian 60th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) and the 14th Spetsnaz Brigade (Special Forces of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces [GRU]) are reportedly operating near Staromayorske.[47]

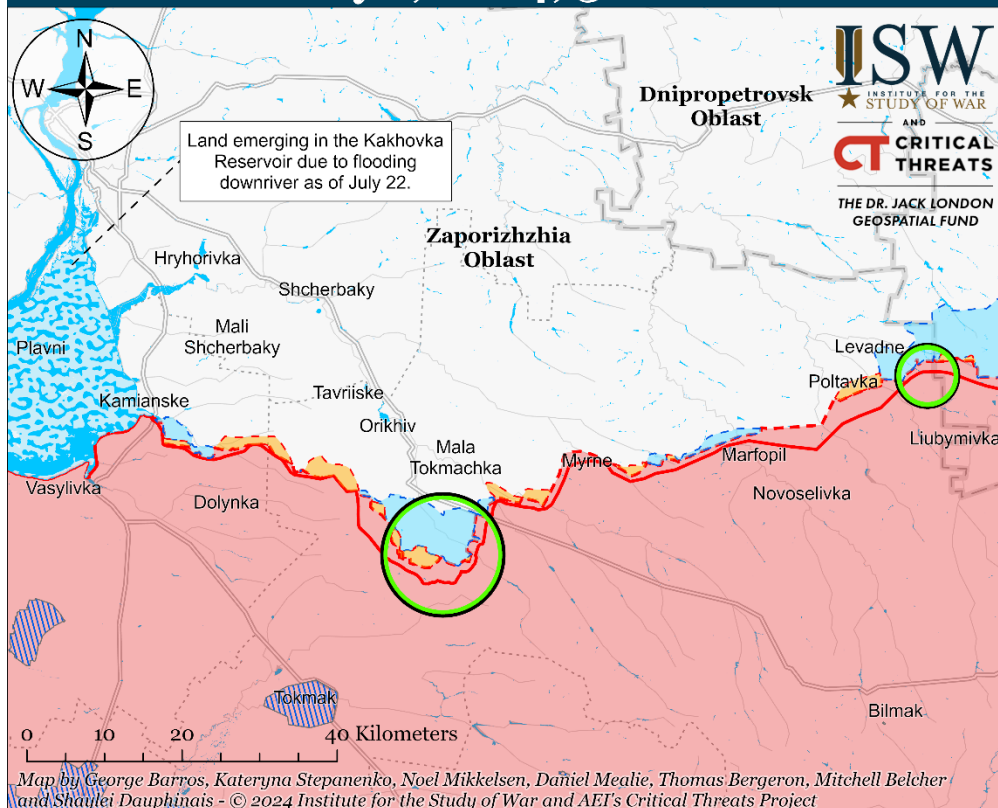


Positional fighting continued in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on February 1, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces captured a

forest area northwest of Verbove (east of Robotyne), although ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[48] Russian and Ukrainian sources stated that positional fighting occurred near Verbove, Robotyne, and Novoprokopivka (south of Robotyne).[49]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of February 1, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



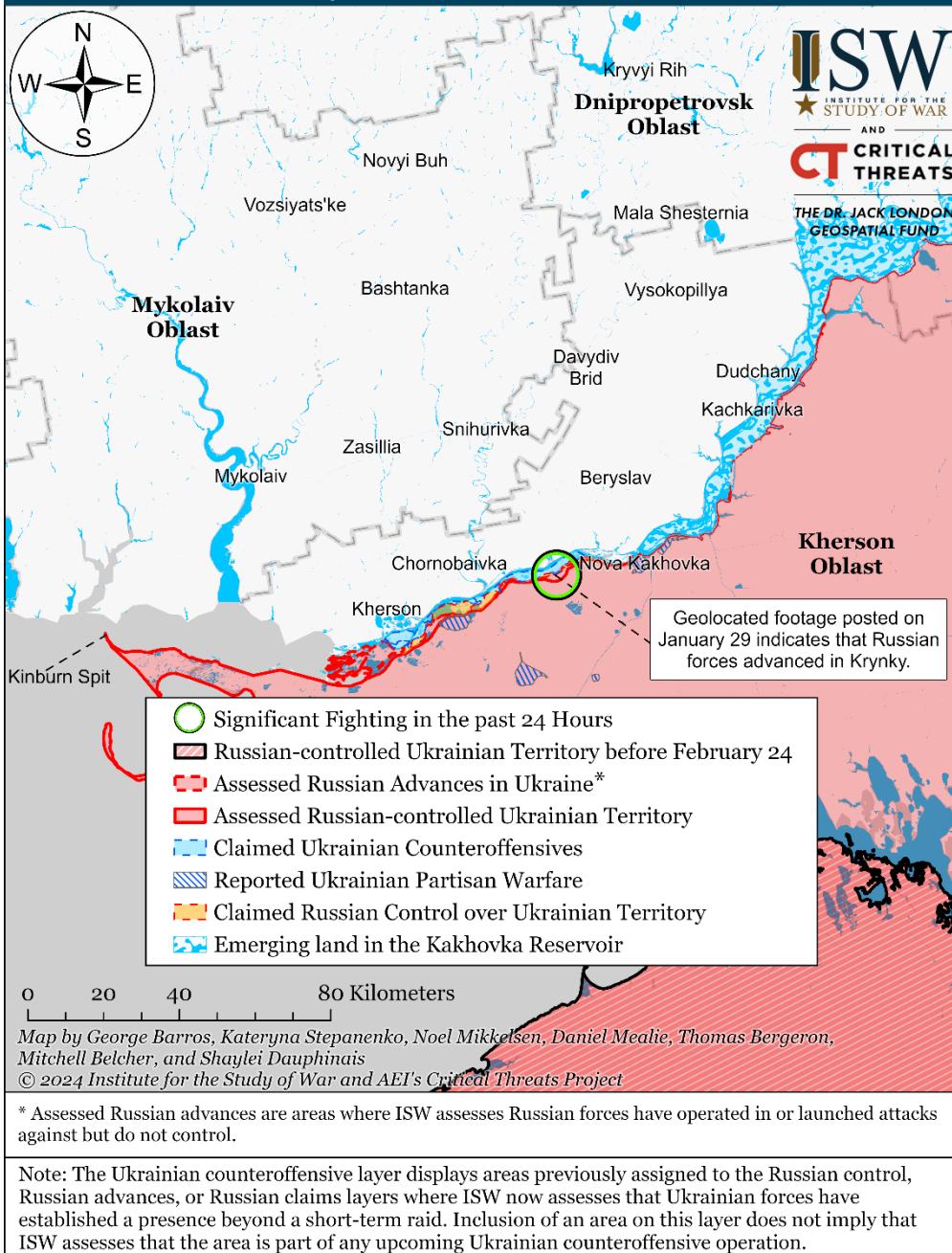
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- 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 January 31 that Russian forces advanced up to 500 meters deep along a 2.1 kilometer front north of Pryyutne.

Positional fighting continued in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast, including near Krynky, on February 1.^[50] A Russian milblogger continued to stress that Ukrainian drone operations pose a significant threat to Russian forces on the east bank of the Dnipro River.^[51]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of February 1, 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)

Russian forces conducted a limited series of strikes against targets in Ukraine on February 1. Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces launched four Shahed-136/131 drones and two missiles at targets in Ukraine.[52] Ukrainian officials reported that Ukrainian air defenses intercepted two of the Shaheds in Kharkiv Oblast and that a Kh-59 missile struck Myrnohrad, Donetsk Oblast.[53] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated that Russian forces routinely change the

number of Shahed drones that they use in strikes to test Ukrainian air defense capabilities.[54]

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

Turkish banks reportedly have started closing Russian companies' accounts due to the threat of US secondary sanctions. Unnamed Russian business owners, financial consultants, and business representatives told Russian outlet *Vedemosti* in a February 1 article that some Turkish banks are closing multiple accounts of Russian companies and have stopped working with Russian companies that became clients after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.[55] *Vedemosti's* sources stated that the Turkish banks began closing Russian businesses' accounts and tightening restrictions after the US authorized secondary sanctions on financial institutions that support Russia's war effort on December 22, 2023.[56] ISW recently observed Russian reports that Turkish banks have "universally" begun to refuse to work with Russian banks.[57] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov claimed that "overt and aggressive US pressure" caused Turkish banks to close Russian companies' accounts.[58]

The *Washington Post* reported that a Russian company has imported over \$20 million in precision machine tool equipment made in Taiwan since January 2023.[59] The *Washington Post* stated that the Russian company imported Taiwanese-made computer numerical control (CNC) machine tools in 63 separate shipments since January 2023 according to trade records and Russian tax documents.[60] Russia uses CNC tools in defense manufacturing, and the *Washington Post* reported that the Russian company explicitly aimed to sell the machine tools to Russian defense enterprises.[61] ISW cannot independently confirm the *Washington Post's* report.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on February 1 that "intelligence confirms that Russia will receive a million shells from North Korea" by an unspecified date.[62] It is unclear whether Zelensky's count of one million shells was referring to entirely new ammunition deliveries from Russia or included previous North Korean ammunition deliveries from Russia. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Deputy Chief Major General Vadym Skibitskyi stated that North Korea delivered one million rounds of artillery ammunition to Russia from September to November 2023.[63]

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

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov-linked firm Tallamkho Design Bureau designed a new automatic optical guidance system for robotic combat platforms. Tallamkho told Kremlin newswire *TASS* that the new guidance system can automatically identify targets, including by detecting the glare from enemy thermal imagers, aim at targets, and open fire.[64] Tallamkho stated that it will work with unspecified Russian turret developers to design the robotic combat platform.[65]

Ukrainian Defense Industrial Efforts (Ukrainian objective: Develop its defense industrial base to become more self-sufficient in cooperation with US, European, and international partners)

Ukraine continues efforts to streamline and strengthen its domestic defense industrial base (DIB). Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal announced on February 1 that the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers approved three resolutions to strengthen Ukraine’s DIB.[66] The first resolution deregulates ammunition production to allow new enterprises to begin production quickly; the second resolution caps drone profit margins to 25 percent to prevent drones from becoming too expensive; and the third resolution establishes a procedure for the competitive procurement of defense items with transparent pricing and protections against information leaks.

Ukraine continues efforts to galvanize its domestic drone production. Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov and Deputy Prime Minister Mykhailo Fedorov met with more than 120 companies involved with the Brave1 defense platform, and Umerov stated that Ukraine codified 67 new drone models and signed state contracts for 58 new drone models and that over 200 Ukrainian companies are currently working to increase domestic drone production.[67]

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)

Russian President Vladimir Putin highlighted Russian plans to integrate occupied Ukrainian territories into Russia over the next six years. Putin stated that Russia plans for occupied areas of Ukraine to be on par with Russia in unspecified “key areas” by 2030, further indicating that Russia is commencing long-term plans and does not foresee any territorial concessions.[68] Putin urged Russian banks to not fear Western sanctions and to increase their work in occupied areas and noted that Russian federal subjects have established patronage networks with occupied Ukrainian regions.

Russian officials continued to implicate themselves in the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia. Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada Human Rights Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets stated that Ukraine has been able to return 388 Ukrainian children whom Russian authorities illegally deported to Russia.[69] Lubinets stated that Russia has been more willing to return deported Ukrainian children following the International Criminal Court’s warrants for the arrest of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kremlin-appointed Children’s Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova. Lvova-Belova continued to admit that Russia deported Ukrainian children to Russia, stating that Russian authorities took Ukrainian children from occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to “rehabilitation centers” near Moscow or placed them in foster families in Russia.[70] The Russian Embassy in the United States claimed that US statements about how Russia is forcibly deporting Ukrainian children are “blasphemous and groundless” and falsely compared Russia’s actions to American families adopting Ukrainian children legally through international adoption programs.[71]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian officials attempted to undermine and intimidate the European Union (EU) likely in an effort to prevent the EU from providing further military assistance to Ukraine and set informational conditions to later oppose EU expansion. Russian Acting Permanent Representative to the EU Kirill Logvinov published an essay with state newswire TASS on February 1 in which Logvinov accused the EU of eroding member states' sovereignty and expanding its security role in a way that is tantamount to it merging with NATO.[72] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov accused the EU of “demonizing” Russia in order to justify raising taxes.[73]

The Kremlin continues efforts to informationally punish Armenia for distancing itself from Russia. Russian Ambassador-at-Large for Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Affairs Viktor Vasilyev claimed on February 1 that the West is attempting to interfere in CSTO affairs and that Armenia's participation is necessary to ensure security throughout CSTO member states.[74]

A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Moldova's decision not to open polling stations for the Russian presidential election in separatist Transnistria disenfranchises Russian citizens and separatist Transnistria.[75] The milblogger and other Kremlin mouthpieces have recently attempted to spread information operations about Moldova in order to internally destabilize the state and set information conditions to justify future operations against Moldova.[76]

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)

Russian Ambassador to Belarus Boris Gryzlov announced on February 1 that Russia and Belarus agreed to create a Russian-Belarusian Commission on History and that Russia and Belarus will use a unified history textbook for schools and universities which will “eliminate discrepancies in the understanding of a number of important historical events.”[77]

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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