

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, February 21, 2023

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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.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's February 21 address to the Russian Federal Assembly did not articulate specific goals or intentions for the war in Ukraine, instead reinforcing several long-standing rhetorical lines in an effort to buy Putin more space and time for a protracted war. Putin claimed that Russia began the "special military operation" in Ukraine a year ago in order to protect people in Russia's "historical lands," ensure Russian domestic security, remedy the threat posed by the Ukrainian "neo-Nazi" regime that he claims has been in place since 2014, and protect the people of Donbas.[1] Putin virulently accused the collective West of arming Ukraine and deploying bases and biolabs close to Russian borders, thereby unleashing the war on Russia.[2] Putin falsely analogized the Ukrainian Armed Forces with various Nazi divisions and thanked the Russian Armed Forces for their efforts in fighting the Nazi threat.[3] The emphasis of a significant portion of the speech was on the supposed resilience of the Russian economic, social, and cultural spheres, and Putin made several recommendations for the development of occupied territories of Ukraine.[4] Putin's speech notably re-engaged with several long-standing Russian information operations regarding the justifications of the war and did not present an inflection in Russia's rhetorical positioning on the war. Putin could have used this event to articulate new objectives and means for achieving them, such as announcing another formal wave of partial mobilization, redefining the "special military operation" as an official war, or taking additional steps to mobilize the Russian defense industrial base (DIB) in a more concrete way. Instead, Putin said very little of actual substance, likely in order to set continued information conditions for a protracted war in Ukraine by not articulating specific temporal goals and framing the war as existential to the Russian domestic population.

Putin announcement of Russia's suspension of participation in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) captured more attention than the relatively boilerplate content of the rest of the speech. Towards the end of his speech, Putin claimed that the collective West has used START to try to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia and that Russia is therefore suspending its participation in START, although Putin did emphasize that suspension is not a full withdrawal.[5] Putin called on the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Russian nuclear energy agency Rosatom to ensure readiness for testing nuclear weapons.[6] Putin may have made this announcement in order to re-introduce nuclear rhetoric into the information space, thereby distracting from the overall lack of substance in the rest of his speech. ISW has previously reported on the Russian use of nuclear rhetoric as an information operation to discourage Ukraine and the West and compensate for Russian battlefield failures.[7] ISW continues to assess that Russia will not employ a nuclear weapon in Ukraine or against NATO, however.

US President Joe Biden gave a speech in Warsaw, Poland on February 21 to reaffirm US and NATO support for Ukraine after his trip to Kyiv. Biden emphasized the unity among NATO countries and stated "our support for Ukraine will not waver, NATO will not be divided, and we will not tire." [8] Biden also directly addressed Putin's February 21 speech stating, "the West was not plotting to attack Russia" and "[Putin] could end this war with a word." [9]

Many Russian milbloggers condemned Putin's failure to use his speech to forward new war aims, outline new measures to support the war, or hold Russian authorities accountable for their many military failures. Some milbloggers with prior Kremlin affiliation as well as occupation officials attended the speech in person and expressed positive or neutral support for Putin's framing of the war as a conflict against the West, suspension of Russia's participation in START, and support of the Donbas separatist republics.[10] Other milbloggers criticized Putin's address as boilerplate and without meaningful action. Russian milblogger Igor Girkin notably claimed that Putin did not say anything meaningful for 40 minutes; omitted Russia's military defeats, military failures, and economic downturn; and failed to hold Russian officials accountable.[11] Girkin also expressed frustration at Putin's failure to use the address to formally recognize the war, announce next objectives, or counter Western sanctions. Another milblogger claimed that the suspension of Russia's participation in START is politically symbolic but complained that the suspension will not improve Russia's situation on the battlefield, instead calling on Russia to hinder Western military aid deliveries to Ukraine.[12] A third milblogger compared Putin to a corpse and echoed many of Girkin's complaints about accountability and action.[13] Other milbloggers similarly noted the need for decisive action and called for Russia to foster the growth of and promote military leaders with a demonstrated history of taking decisive action on the battlefield.[14] Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin claimed that he did not watch Putin's speech live because he was too busy working to supply Wagner forces with ammunition necessary to continue effective combat operations in Ukraine.[15]

International journalists reportedly obtained the Kremlin’s classified 2021 strategy document on restoring Russian suzerainty over Belarus through the Union State by 2030. The *Kyiv Independent*, *Yahoo News*, and several of their international media partners published an investigative report on February 20 about a classified 17-page Russian strategy document on how the Kremlin seeks to absorb the Belarusian state using the Kremlin-dominated Union State structure by 2030.[16] The journalists did not publish the strategy document to avoid compromising sources they said. While ISW is unable to confirm the existence or contents of this document, the reporters’ findings about the strategy document and its various lines of effort for Belarus’ phased military, political, economic, and cultural integration with Russia through the Union State are consistent with ISW’s long-term research and assessments about the Kremlin’s campaigns and strategic objective to subsume Belarus via the Union State.[17]

NATO must seriously plan for the likely future reality of a Russian-controlled Belarus. As ISW previously assessed, Putin will very likely secure significant gains in restoring Russian suzerainty over Belarus regardless of the outcome of his invasion of Ukraine.[18] Russia’s likely permanent gains in Belarus present the West with a decision about how to deal with the potential future security landscape on NATO’s eastern flank. If the West allows Putin to maintain his current gains in Ukraine—particularly Crimea and eastern Kherson Oblast—then the Kremlin will be able to use both occupied Belarusian and Ukrainian territory to further threaten Ukraine and NATO’s eastern flank. The West could alternatively set conditions for a future in which a territorially-whole Ukraine becomes a robust military partner in defending NATO’s eastern flank against Russia and Russian-occupied Belarus. This preferable long-term future is predicated on immediate and sustained decisive Western action to empower Ukraine to expel Russian forces from its territory. It is extraordinary unlikely that the West will be able to defeat or respond effectively to the Russian campaign to absorb Belarus without first defeating the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee Central Foreign Affairs Commission Office Director Wang Yi met in Moscow on February 21 to discuss deepening Sino–Russian cooperation.[19] Patrushev stated that developing a strategic partnership with China is an unconditional foreign policy priority for Russia.[20] Patrushev claimed that Western states are acting against both China and Russia and claimed that both states stand for a fair world order. Wang stated that Sino–Russian relations remain strong and can “will withstand the test of the changing international situation.”[21] Wang will meet with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on February 22.[22] US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned on February 18 that China is strongly considering providing lethal support to Russia.[23]

The *Financial Times* (FT) reported that international companies belonging to Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin’s continue to garner hundreds of millions of dollars in profits despite long-standing Western sanctions.[24] *FT* reported that the Prigozhin-controlled company Evro Polis, which received energy concessions from Syria in exchange for recapturing ISIS-controlled oilfields, had net profits of \$90 million in 2020 despite US sanctions on the company in 2018, providing a 180 percent return on investment for shareholders that was repatriated to Russia. *FT* reported that smaller Prigozhin-controlled companies like M Invest, which runs gold mines in Sudan, and Mercury LLC, a Syrian oil company that likely transferred operations to a new business name to evade sanctions, continue to rake in millions in profit. *FT*’s report further demonstrates the extent to which Western sanctions have failed to stop Russian or Russian-backed actors that help Russia fight against Ukraine.

Key Takeaways

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin’s February 21 address to the Russian Federal Assembly did not articulate specific goals or intentions for the war in Ukraine, instead reinforcing several long-standing rhetorical lines in an effort to buy Putin more space and time for a protracted war.**
- **Putin announcement of Russia’s suspension of participation in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) captured more attention than the relatively boilerplate content of the rest of the speech.**
- **US President Joe Biden gave a speech in Warsaw, Poland on February 21 to reaffirm US and NATO support for Ukraine after his trip to Kyiv.**
- **Many Russian milbloggers condemned Putin’s failure to use his speech to forward new war aims, outline new measures to support the war, or hold Russian authorities accountable for their many military failures.**
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- The *Financial Times* (FT) reported that Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin's international companies continue to garner hundreds of millions of dollars in profits despite long-standing Western sanctions.
- Russian forces continued to conduct limited ground attacks northwest of Svatove and near Kreminna. Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a limited counterattack near Kreminna.
- Russian forces continued making incremental tactical gains in and around Bakhmut, and continued ground attacks near Avdiivka.
- Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces continue to reinforce and build fortifications in rear areas in southern Ukraine.
- The Kremlin may be directing patronage programs between Russian regions and occupied Ukrainian territory to promote socio-economic recovery and infrastructure development.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin further expanded unrealistic promises of benefits for Russian soldiers in his address to the Russian Federal Assembly.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of February 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because those 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 population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and 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 Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

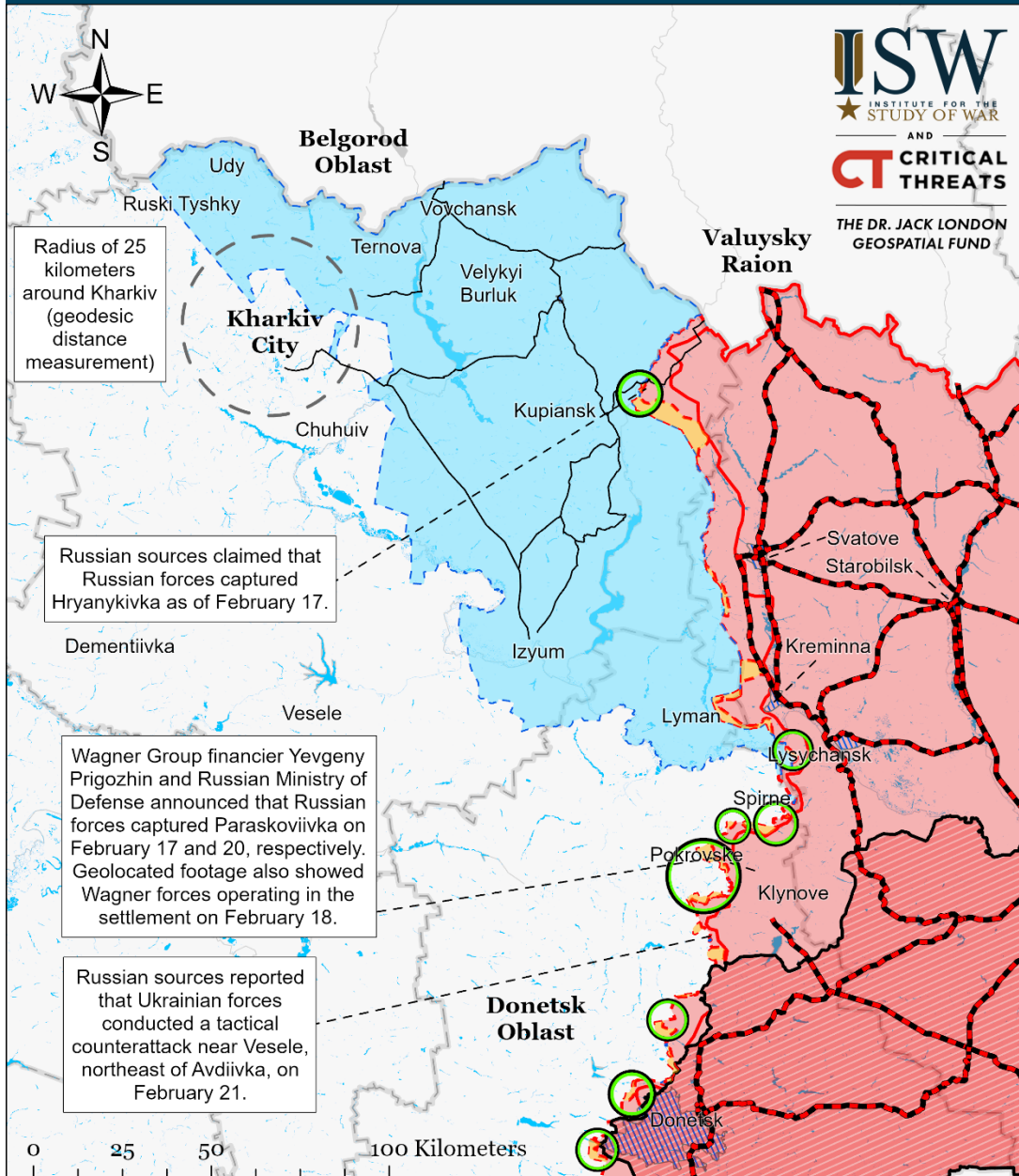
Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1- Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and continue offensive operations into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued to conduct limited ground attacks northwest of Svatove and near Kreminna on February 21. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on February 21 that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian ground attacks near Hryanykivka and Masiutivka (both 54km northwest of Svatove).[25] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted a ground attack from Shyplivka (8km south of Kreminna) and gained positions in the Serebrianska forest area (roughly 11km southwest of Kreminna).[26] The milblogger also claimed that Russian forces attacked Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna), Terny (17km west of Kreminna), and Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna).

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted limited counterattacks northwest of Svatove and near Kreminna on February 21. Some Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian counterattack near Hryanykivka.[27] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a counterattack in the Serebrianska forest area near Shyplivka (9km southeast of Kreminna) and made marginal advances.[28]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of February 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

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

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

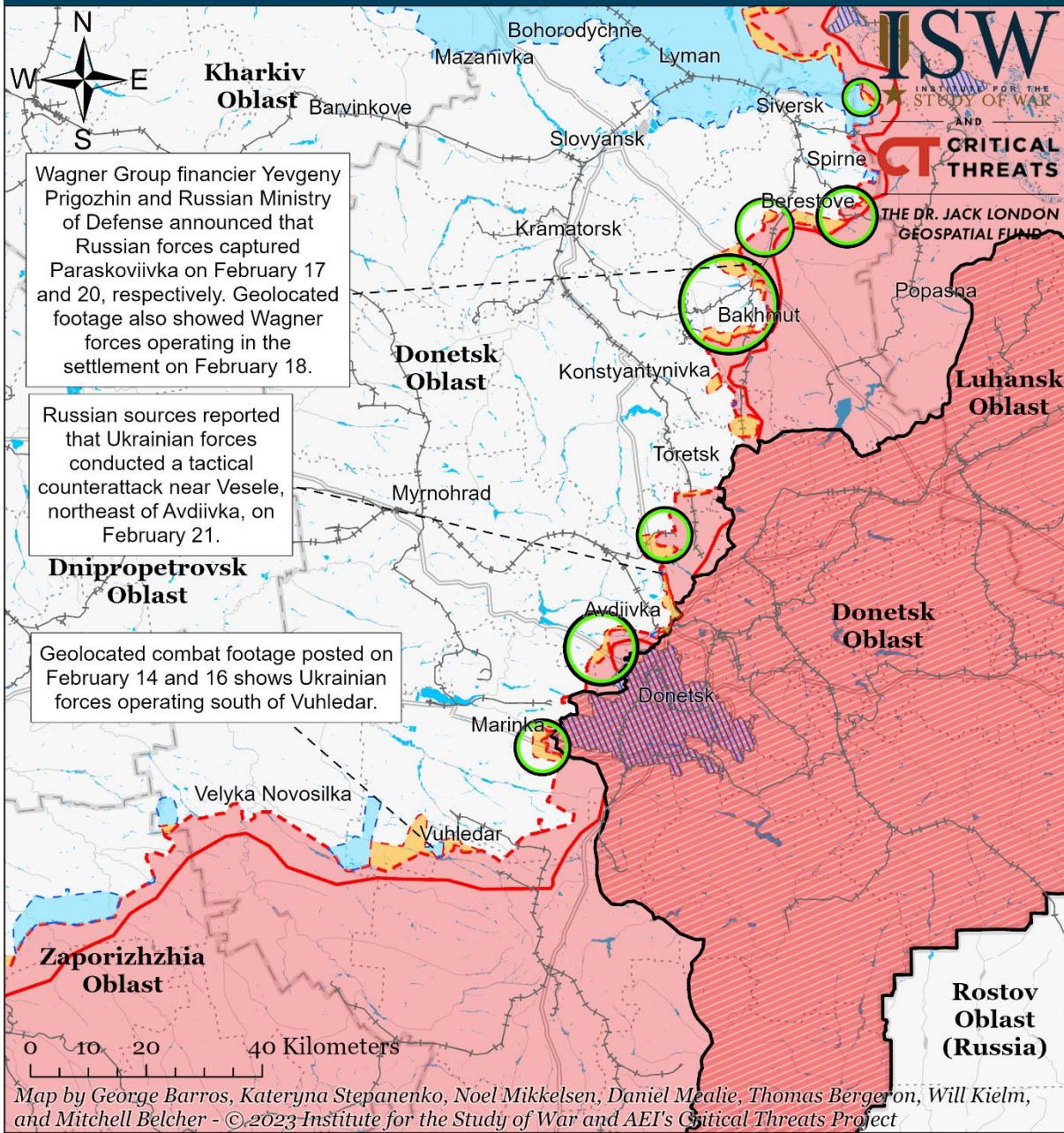
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2—Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued making incremental tactical gains in and around Bakhmut. Geolocated footage taken on February 14 and posted on February 20 shows Ukrainian tanks firing at Russian infantry in the tree line along the E40 Bakhmut-Slovyansk highway, confirming that Russian forces have succeeded in cutting the E40 northwest of Bakhmut.[29] However, the fact that Russian forces interdicted the E40 a week ago and still have not forced Ukrainians to withdraw from Bakhmut suggests that it is not the vital logistics artery into the city that milbloggers often claim it is. Geolocated footage additionally indicates that Russian forces have made small advances northeast of Bakhmut near Berestove (20km northeast of Bakhmut) and in southwestern Bakhmut in the area of the Mariupolske Cemetary.[30] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks on Bakhmut itself; north of Bakhmut near Vasyukivka (11km north) and Berkhivka (4km north); and northeast of Bakhmut around Vasylivka (21km northeast).[31] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces broke through Ukrainian defensive lines near Yahidne (on the northwestern outskirts of Bakhmut) and reached the Stupky railway station on the northern tip of Bakhmut.[32] Several Russian milbloggers noted that the Wagner Group is approaching the AZOM metal processing plant in northern Bakhmut and assessed that fighting in Bakhmut may concentrate on the territory of the plant as Wagner tries to move into the center of the city.[33] Milbloggers compared the AZOM plant to Ukrainian defensive efforts at the Azovstal plant in Mariupol and the Azot steel plant in Severodonetsk in 2022.[34] A Russian milblogger additionally claimed that Russian forces are still fighting near Ivanivske, 5km west of Bakhmut.[35] The concentration of milblogger claims regarding Russian efforts in northern Bakhmut compared to the relative silence regarding operations west of Bakhmut along the T0504 Kostyantynivka-Chasiv Yar-Bakhmut highway may suggest that Russian forces have given up on trying to encircle Bakhmut and are instead focusing on fighting into Bakhmut from the north. This effort is likely to be exceedingly costly and slow, given the dense urban environment and Ukrainian fortification systems within Bakhmut. The Russians may resume efforts to encircle Bakhmut in the coming days or weeks, however.

Russian forces continued ground attacks in the Avdiivka–Donetsk City area on February 21. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops attacked near Novobakhmutivka (10km northeast of Avdiivka), on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City near Vodyane and Nevelske, and on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City near Marinka.[36] Two prominent milbloggers reported that Ukrainian forces conducted a successful counterattack north of Avdiivka and regained lost positions near Vesele (6km northeast of Avdiivka).[37] Russian sources continued to claim that Russian forces are fighting for the center of Marinka.[38] Geolocated footage shows that Russian forces have made marginal advances near Novomykhailivka, just south of Donetsk City.[39]

Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast on February 21. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian naval infantry elements continue assaults on Ukrainian positions in southeastern Vuhledar.[40] Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko claimed that certain Russian forces previously deployed within the Russian rear in Donetsk Oblast have transferred to the Vuhledar front.[41] Geolocated footage shows that elements of the 36th Combined Arms Army (Eastern Military District) made marginal advances near Mykilske, just southwest of Vuhledar.[42]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of February 21, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



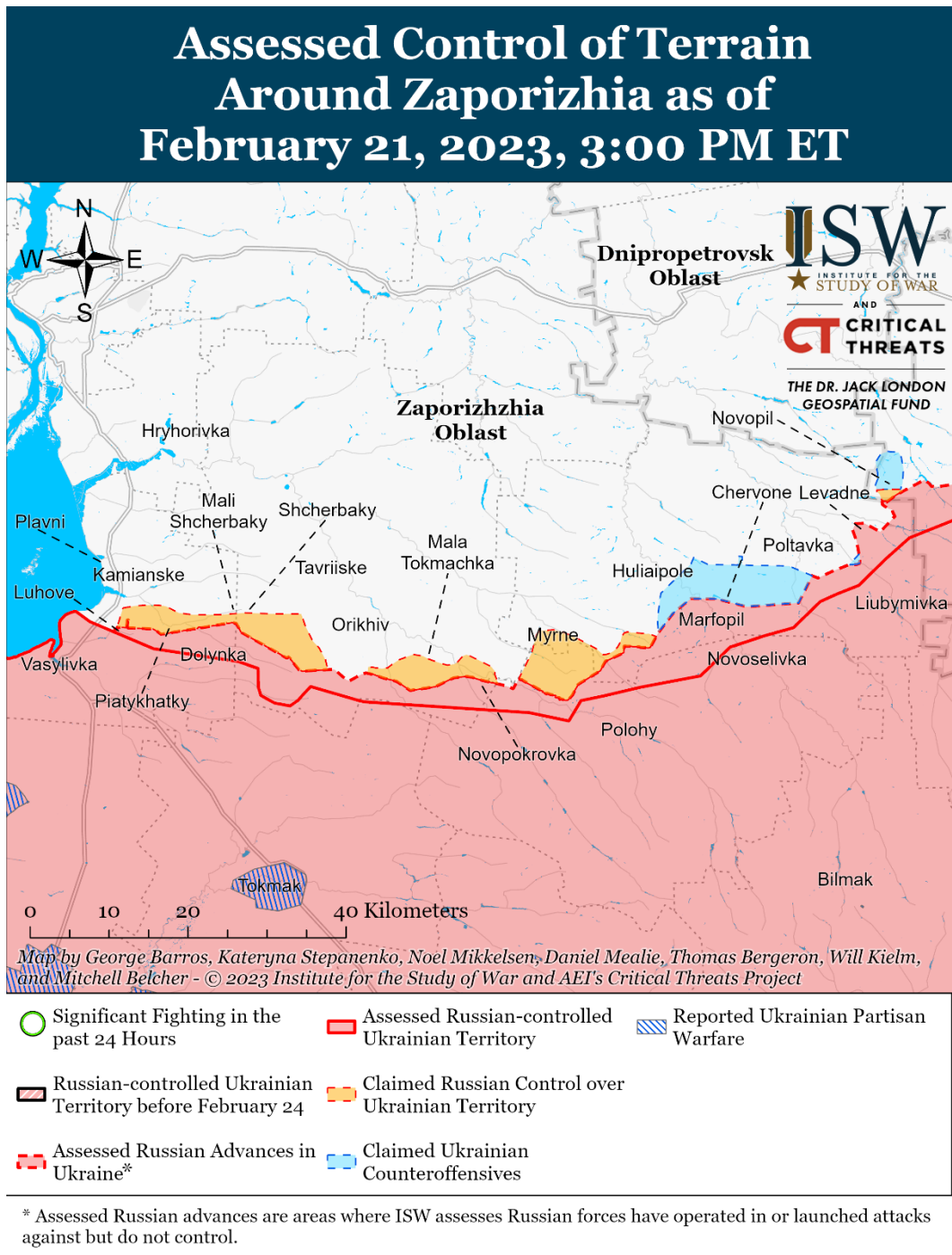
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
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- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads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

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

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

Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces continue to reinforce and build fortifications in rear areas of southern Ukraine. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov reported that Russian forces increased the number of Wagner Group forces, mobilized personnel, and battalions of Ossetian and Dagestani personnel in unspecified areas of Zaporizhia Oblast.[43] ISW has previously reported on the formation of Russian volunteer battalions in Russian federal subjects (regions), including in North Ossetia and Dagestan.[44] Transporting such irregular forces who are likely battle weary, poorly trained, or both to Zaporizhia Oblast suggests that Russian military leadership has de-prioritized making new territorial gains in Zaporizhia Oblast. Geolocated imagery dated on January 21 and February 20 shows that Russian forces continue to dig trenches south of Armiansk in northern Crimea.[45]

Russian forces continued routine fire west of Hulyaipole and in Kherson and Mykolaiv oblasts on February 21.[46]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of February 21, 2023, 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.

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

Russian President Vladimir Putin further expanded unrealistic promises of benefits for Russian soldiers in his February 21 address to the Russian Federal Assembly. Putin announced a policy of regular 14-day leaves for Russian soldiers at least once every 6 months and proposed the creation of a special state fund for targeted, personal assistance to the families of fallen soldiers and veterans of the war in Ukraine.[47] Such unlikely-to-manifest promises are probably losing credibility among the Russian public, as the Russian government has already failed to deliver on a variety of financial promises to soldiers, as ISW has previously reported.[48] Putin also attempted to divert responsibility for providing for military personnel to Russia's federal subjects, calling for all federal departments, municipalities, and beyond to pay close attention to the needs of military personnel and their families.[49]

Russian authorities continue to use the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian educational institutions to support force-generation efforts. A Russian opposition source stated on February 20 that Russian priests discussed the war in Ukraine and encouraged medical college students to apply for early conscription while the students visited the Church of the Nativity in Volzhsky, Volgograd Oblast on a school trip.[50] The Ukrainian Main Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on February 21 that Russian authorities are taking measures to prepare for another wave of mobilization by creating "alert stations" in universities to aid the mobilization of full-time students and have already worked with the management of Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University, Tomsk Polytechnic University, and Tomsk State Pedagogical University.[51] The GUR published an intercepted document dated February 9, 2023, that apparently shows documentation of such an arrangement with the Russian Ministry of Enlightenment and Tomsk State Pedagogical University.[52]

Russian authorities continue to prosecute residents for alleged sabotage efforts and attempts to resist mobilization. A popular Russian news source claimed on February 21 that a court in Belgorod sentenced two residents to three and a half years in prison on charges of sharing unspecified information about the Russian military via a pro-Ukraine website and attempting to derail a train by sabotaging railroad tracks used by the Russian military.[53] Russian human rights activist Pavel Chikov reported on February 20 that the Pechenga Garrison Investigative Committee opened a criminal case against a lieutenant and doctor for refusing to comply with Russian mobilization on January 20, 2023, due to his personal beliefs.[54]

Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of and annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian civilians into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

The Kremlin may be directing patronage programs between Russian regions and occupied Ukrainian territory to promote socio-economic recovery and infrastructure development. Russian President Vladimir Putin said in his speech to the Federal Assembly on February 21 that Russian regions are providing direct support for cities, districts, and villages in occupied areas.[55] Tyumen Oblast-based news outlet *Neft* reported that Tyumen Oblast Governor Alexander Moor visited Sorokyne (Krasnodon) in Luhansk Oblast and claimed that Tyumen specialists are working to restore social facilities in Sorokyne.[56] Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug Governor Natalya Komarova visited occupied Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts, brought military equipment to Makiivka, and met with Russian forces from the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug and humanitarian corps volunteers.[57] ISW has previously reported on instances of Russian regions providing material support to occupied areas of Ukraine in order to consolidate Russian economic and social control in occupied Ukraine.[58] ISW has also previously assessed that the Kremlin aims to shift the financial burden of the war to regional governments.[59] The establishment of economic and development patronage programs between Russian regionals and occupied Ukrainian territories could further shift the financial burden of installing occupation networks away from the Kremlin.

Russian officials continue to use social benefit schemes to expand administrative control of occupied area of Ukraine. Putin proposed the provision of maternity capital to all occupied regions for families with children born since 2007.[60] Kherson Occupation Administration Head Vladimir Saldo claimed that extending the maternity capital program is an important step to ensuring Kherson Oblast residents receive the same benefits as all Russian citizens.[61] ISW has previously assessed that maternity capital programs help to consolidate Russian control over occupied areas by incentivizing families to have more children who will receive Russian citizenship at birth.[62] Maternity capital programs also enforce crypto-Russification as certain occupation authorities require the translation of birth certificates into Russian, thus changing names and locations from Ukrainian to Russian orthography.[63]

Significant activity in Belarus (ISW assesses that a Russian or Belarusian attack into northern Ukraine in early 2023 is extraordinarily unlikely and has thus restructured this section of the update. It will no longer include counter-indicators for such an offensive.

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, but these are not indicators that Russian and Belarusian forces are preparing for an imminent attack on Ukraine from Belarus. ISW will revise this text and its assessment if it observes any unambiguous indicators that Russia or Belarus is preparing to attack northern Ukraine.)

The Belarusian military reportedly deployed military equipment from Minsk toward the Belarusian-Lithuanian border. Independent Belarusian monitoring organization The Hajun Project reported that four columns of equipment including 35 BMPs and other equipment of the 358th Separate Mechanized Battalion of the Minsk-based Belarusian 120th Mechanized Brigade deployed towards the Lithuanian Border on February 21.[64] The Belarusian Hajun Project reported that the columns proceeded along the Minsk beltway and further to the M6 highway and along it to the M7 highway in the direction of the border with Lithuania and the Belarusian city of Ashmyany, Grodno Oblast.[65] The Belarusian Ministry of Defense announced on February 21 that the Belarusian Armed Forces deployed unspecified mechanized elements reinforced with air defense units to an unspecified area on the night of February 20–21 as part of a combat readiness check.[66]

Belarusian maneuver elements continue to conduct exercises in Belarus. Unspecified elements of the Belarusian 11th Separate Mechanized Brigade conducted live fire exercises with T-72 tanks and BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles at the Obuz-Lesnovsky Training Ground in Brest, Belarus, on February 21.[67]

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.

[1] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/70565>

[2] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/70565>

[3] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/70565>

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[5] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/70565>

[6] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/70565>

[7] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar110622>; <https://isw.pub/PutinNuclearThreats>

[8] <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/02/21/remarks-by-president-biden-ahead-of-the-one-year-anniversary-of-russias-brutal-and-unprovoked-invasion-of-ukraine/>

[9] <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/02/21/remarks-by-president-biden-ahead-of-the-one-year-anniversary-of-russias-brutal-and-unprovoked-invasion-of-ukraine/>

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[11] <https://t.me/strelkovii/4026>; <https://t.me/strelkovii/4024>; <https://t.me/strelkovii/4023>; <https://t.me/strelkovii/4022> <https://t.me/strelkovii/4020>

[12] <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/10827>

[13] https://t.me/anatoly_nesmiyan/7841

[14] <https://t.me/voenacher/39955>; <https://t.me/rybar/43820>; <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/10826>; https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2589

[15] https://t.me/concordgroup_official/487

[16] <https://kyivindependent.com/investigations/leaked-document-reveals-alleged-kremlin-plan-to-take-over-belarus-by-2030>; <https://vsquare.org/secret-kremlin-document-russia-plans-take-over-belarus-putin/>; <https://news.yahoo.com/russia-belarus-strategy-document-230035184.html>; <https://dossierdotcenter.com/union-br/>; <https://www.tagesschau.de/investigativ/ndr-wdr/russland-belarus-kreml-papier-101.html>; <https://www.expressen.se/nyheter/lackan-fran-kreml-putins-hemliga-plan--for-att-ta-over-belarus/>; <https://epl.delfi.ee/artikkel/120146238/saladokumendid-naitavad-just-nii-plaanib-putini-venemaa-valgevene-alla-neelata>; <https://vsquare.org/secret-kremlin-document-russia-plans-take-over-belarus-putin/>; <https://frontstory.pl/tajny-plan-kreml-aneksja-bialorus-putin-lukaszenka/>

[17] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-17-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-11>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-28>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/belarus-warning-update-kremlin-prepares-further-integrate-belarus>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russia-review-belarus-update-lukashenko-uses-oil-tariffs-delay-integration-russia>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russia-review-october-20-2021>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/warning-kremlin-deploys-brigade-sized-force-belarus-near-polish-border>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-20>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Putin%27s%20Offset%20The%20Kremlin%27s%20Geopolitical%20Adaptations%20Since%202014.pdf>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russia-review-october-20-2021>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russia-review-russia-opens-permanent-training-center-belarus-and-sets-conditions>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-20>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russia-review-august-18-august-31-2021>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/belarus-warning-update-russia-may-send-little-green-men-belarus-0>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/belarus-warning-update-putin-will-increase-pressure-lukashenko-integrate-belarus-2021>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russia-review-september-1-2021>

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[20] <https://ria.ru/20230221/vstrecha-1853501059.html>

[21] <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/putin-ally-tells-top-chinese-diplomat-wang-yi-that-russia-backs-beijing-against-west>

[22] <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/putin-ally-tells-top-chinese-diplomat-wang-yi-that-russia-backs-beijing-against-west>

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