

Nicole Wolkov, Angelica Evans, Olivia, Gibson, and George Barros with William Runkel

February 23, 2025, 6:00 pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12pm ET on February 23. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the February 24 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff referred to the early 2022 Istanbul protocols as offering "guideposts" for negotiations between Russia and Ukraine on February 23. An agreement based on those protocols would be a capitulation document.^[1] Russian President Vladimir Putin and other senior Russian officials have repeatedly identified the 2022 peace negotiations in Istanbul as their ideal framework for future peace negotiations to end Putin's war in Ukraine, as such a framework would force the West to concede to all of Russia's long-standing demands.^[2] The *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) and the *New York Times* (NYT) reported in March and June 2024 that both publications obtained several versions of the draft treaties from the March and April 2022 Ukrainian-Russian peace negotiations in Istanbul that indicate that both sides initially agreed that Ukraine would forgo its NATO membership aspirations and be a "permanently neutral state that doesn't participate in military blocs."^[3] The draft treaties also reportedly banned Ukraine from receiving any foreign weapons or hosting any foreign military personnel. The WSJ and NYT reported that Russia pushed for the Ukrainian military to be limited to 85,000 soldiers, 342 tanks, and 519 artillery systems. Russia also reportedly demanded that Ukrainian missiles be limited to a range of 40 kilometers (25 miles), a range that would allow Russian forces to deploy critical systems and materiel close to Ukraine without fear of strikes. The draft treaties reportedly listed the United States, United Kingdom (UK), the People's Republic of China (PRC), France, and Russia as guarantors of the treaty, and Russia reportedly wanted to include Belarus as a guarantor. The guarantor states were supposed to "terminate international treaties and agreements incompatible with the permanent neutrality [of Ukraine]," including military aid agreements. The draft treaties did not specify if other non-guarantor states would have to terminate their agreements with Ukraine as well, although this is likely considering that the treaty would ban Ukraine from having any foreign-supplied weapons. Russia insisted on these terms in the first and second months of the war when Russian troops were advancing on Kyiv City and throughout northeastern, eastern, and southern Ukraine and before Ukrainian forces conducted successful counteroffensives that liberated significant swaths of territory in Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts.

Ukraine is unlikely to accept any peace agreement based on the Istanbul negotiations as such terms are effectively a full Ukrainian surrender to Russia's long-term war goals. The Istanbul negotiations effectively conceded to Russia's long-standing demands to "denazify" — overthrow and replace the democratically elected Ukrainian government and install a pro-Russian puppet state — and "demilitarize" — constrain and shrink the Ukrainian military beyond the point of being able to defend itself against future Russian aggression — Ukraine.^[4] The Istanbul negotiations

also conceded to Russia's demands that Ukraine abandon its aspirations to join NATO or any other security blocs in the future. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky walked away from the Istanbul negotiations with the backing of Europe and the United States in 2022 and will almost certainly reject such terms in 2025.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky continues to demonstrate his commitment to preserving Ukraine's democracy and a just resolution to the war. Zelensky responded to a hypothetical question during the "Ukraine. Year 2025" Forum on February 23 about stepping down as president and stated that he is ready to step down in the event of or to facilitate peace or immediate NATO membership for Ukraine.^[5] Zelensky noted that he remains committed to holding elections after the war ends and has no interest in being in power "for a decade" and reiterated that Ukraine cannot hold elections until after Russia stops attacking Ukraine and after Ukraine lifts martial law.^[6] The Ukrainian Constitution bars the government from holding elections or amending the Ukrainian constitution in times of martial law, and the Ukrainian government legally cannot abolish martial law while Russia continues to attack Ukraine.^[7] Zelensky has repeatedly noted Ukraine's commitment to holding fair and democratic elections in the future.^[8]

Zelensky stated during the press conference that several European officials will visit Kyiv for the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2025 and reiterated that European countries should be involved in future peace negotiations about the war in Ukraine.^[9] Zelensky noted that NATO membership is one of the best security guarantees that Ukraine could receive and that Ukraine would also consider membership in the European Union (EU), Western financing for an 800,000-person-strong Ukrainian military, and the presence of a Western peacekeeping contingent in Ukraine as acceptable security guarantees in the event of a ceasefire with Russia.^[10]

Ukrainian officials continue to highlight Ukraine's domestic defense industry and domestically produced strike capabilities. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated during the "Ukraine. Year 2025" forum on February 23 that Ukraine produced 2.2 million first person view (FPV) drones and over 100,000 long-range drones in 2025 and intends to increase its drone production rate in 2025.^[11] Zelensky stated that Ukraine produced 154 artillery systems in 2024 and intends to increase production of artillery systems in 2025 and noted that Ukraine is working to develop an analogue to the US-produced Patriot air defense system.^[12] Zelensky noted that Ukraine funded 40 percent, European countries funded 30 percent, and the United States funded another 30 percent of Ukraine's domestic defense production in 2024. Zelensky stated that Ukraine intends to fund 50 percent of its domestic defense production in 2025.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov stated at the forum that Ukraine has become the largest producer of tactical and long-range drones in the world and that 96 percent of the Ukrainian military's drones are purchased or produced in Ukraine.^[13] Ukrainian Digital Transformation Minister Mykhailo Fedorov announced that Ukraine intends to operationalize technology that will allow a single drone operator to control multiple drones in a "swarm" in 2025.^[14] Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General

Oleksander Syrskyi stated that Ukrainian Unmanned Systems Forces conducted 130 long-range operations and struck 377 objects in Russia in 2024.[15] Syrskyi noted that Ukraine has deployed over 1.3 million drones to the frontline and is working to increase its production of fiber-optic drones. Syrskyi stated that Ukrainian long-range drones can strike targets up to 1,700 kilometers deep in Russian territory.

Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) CEO Kirill Dmitriev as Special Presidential Representative for Investment and Economic Cooperation with Foreign Countries on February 23.[16] Dmitriev was part of the Russian delegation that met with US officials in Saudi Arabia on February 17, and a source close to the Kremlin told Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* in an article published on February 19 that Dmitriev's appointment to the delegation appeared largely as a response to US demands that Russia appoint someone that would "understand" the United States, likely given his experiences living and studying in the US at Stanford University and Harvard University and working for US companies.[17]

Russian forces launched a record number of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of February 22 to 23, ahead of the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24. The Ukrainian Air Force reported on February 23 that Russian forces launched three Iskander-M/North Korean-provided KN-23 ballistic missiles from occupied Crimea and 267 Shahed and other drones from the directions of Oryol, Bryansk, and Kursk cities; Shatalovo, Smolensk Oblast; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea.[18] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 138 Shahed and decoy drones over Kharkiv, Poltava, Sumy, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Zhytomyr, Khmelnytskyi, Rivne, Mykolaiv, Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts; that 119 drones were "lost," likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference; and that three drones flew toward Belarusian airspace. Ukrainian officials reported that drones damaged infrastructure in Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, Poltava, Kyiv, and Zaporizhia oblasts and that a missile damaged civilian infrastructure in Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.[19] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on February 23 that Russia launched the largest number of Shahed drones against Ukraine on the night of February 22 to 23.[20]

Russia appears to be relying more on Iran and North Korea to support its war in Ukraine. Iran has largely enabled Russia to launch near nightly series of large drone strikes as it has provided Russia with Iranian designed and produced Shahed drones and helped Russia establish its own Shahed drone production facility in Tatarstan Republic.[21] Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov stated on February 23 during the "Ukraine. Year 2025" Forum on February 23 that half of Russia's ammunition comes from North Korea and that North Korea has started large-scale deliveries of 170mm self-propelled artillery system and 240mm multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS).[22] Budanov added that North Korea plans to provide Russia with 148 ballistic missiles, presumably in 2025.[23]

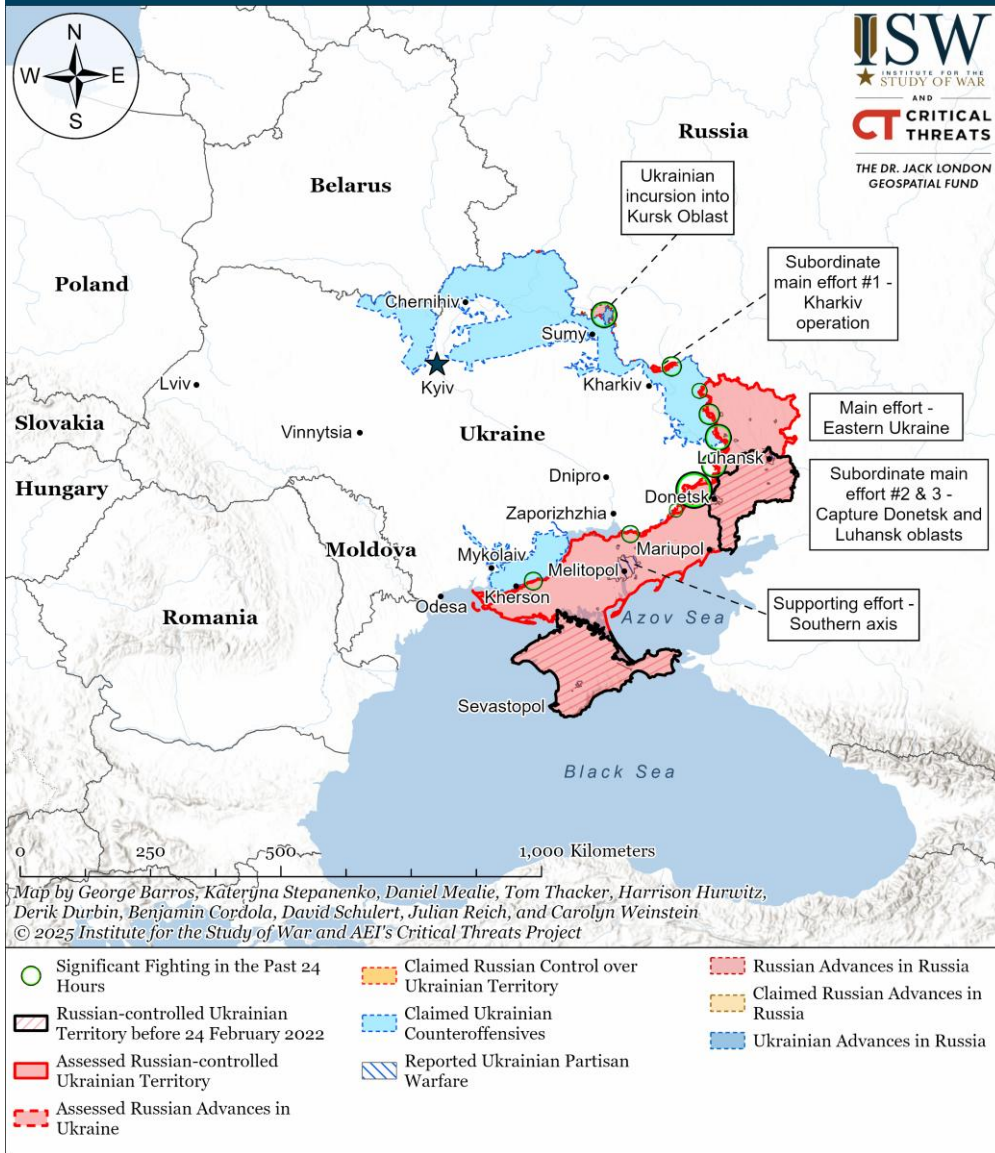
Russian forces continue to execute Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in clear violation of international law. Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets reported on February 23 that footage circulating on social media shows a Russian servicemember executing a Ukrainian POW in an unspecified area of Kursk Oblast.[24] ISW has observed and reported on numerous instances of Russian servicemembers executing Ukrainian POWs along the frontline in Ukraine and Kursk Oblast and continues to assess that this is a systemic trend in the Russian military and that Russian commanders are either complicit in or directly enabling their subordinates to conduct such atrocities.[25]

Key Takeaways:

- **US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff referred to the early 2022 Istanbul protocols as offering "guideposts" for negotiations between Russia and Ukraine on February 23. An agreement based on those protocols would be a capitulation document.**
- **Ukraine is unlikely to accept any peace agreement based on the Istanbul negotiations as such terms are effectively a full Ukrainian surrender to Russia's long-term war goals.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky continues to demonstrate his commitment to preserving Ukraine's democracy and a just resolution to the war.**
- **Ukrainian officials continue to highlight Ukraine's domestic defense industry and domestically produced strike capabilities.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) CEO Kirill Dmitriev as Special Presidential Representative for Investment and Economic Cooperation with Foreign Countries on February 23.**
- **Russian forces launched a record number of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of February 22 to 23, ahead of the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24.**
- **Russia appears to be relying more on Iran and North Korea to support its war in Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces continue to execute Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in clear violation of international law.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Toretsk and Russian forces recently advanced near Siversk, Pokrovsk, and Velyka Novosilka.**
- **The Russian government continues efforts to increase its defense industrial output.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

February 23, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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.

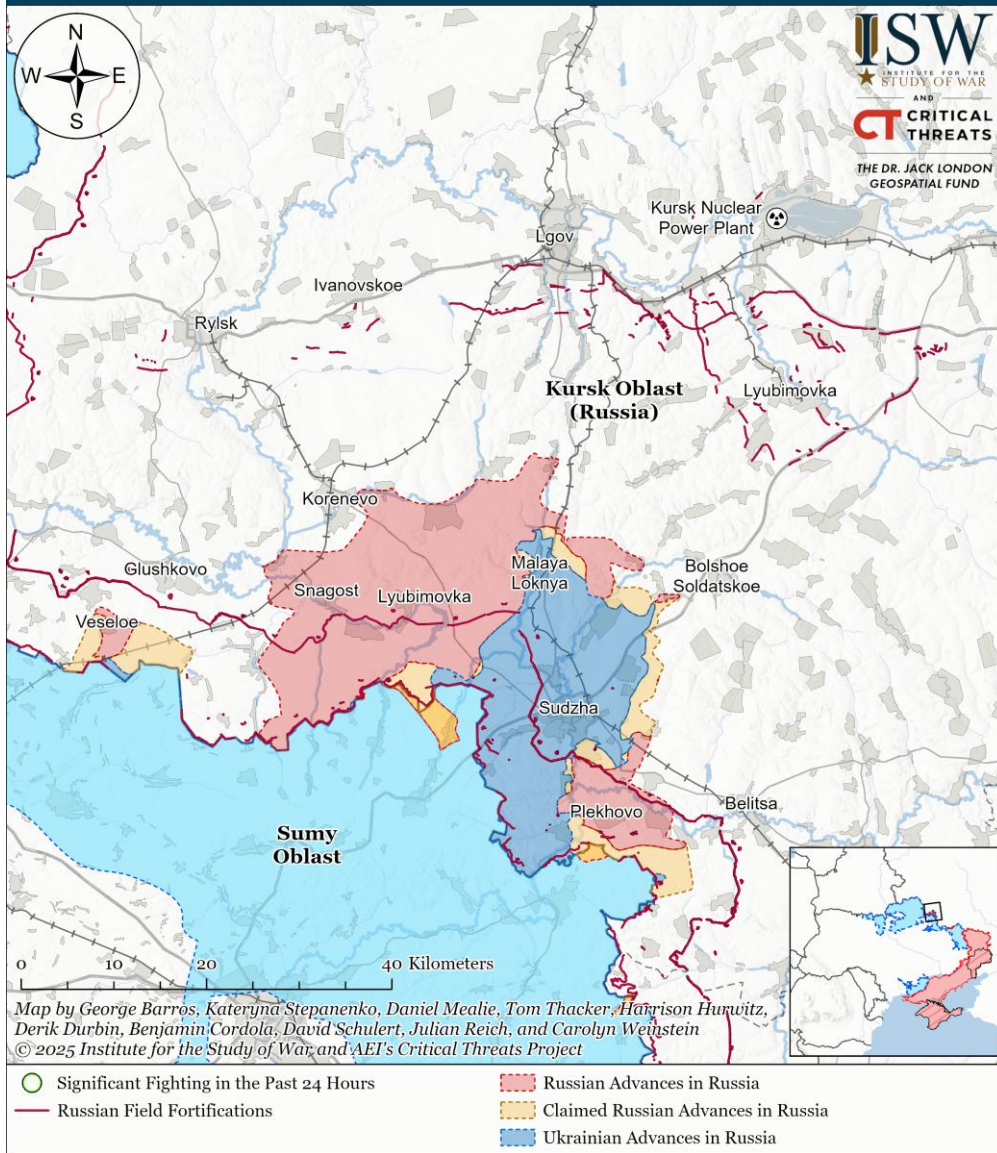
- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of three subordinate main efforts)

- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Significant Activity in Belarus

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Russian forces continued offensive operations in Kursk Oblast on February 23 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian forces continued ground attacks northwest of Sudzha near Lebedevka and Pogrebki, northeast of Sudzha near Kositsa, and southeast of Sudzha near Guyevo.[26]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction February 23, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Unconfirmed Russian-claimed advances: Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 34th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) seized Maryevka and are advancing in Pogrebki (both northwest of Sudzha).^[27]

Order of Battle: Elements of the 1st Battalion of the 9th Motorized Rifle Regiment (18th Motorized Rifle Division, 11th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly operating in Pogrebki.^[28] Elements of the 137th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (106th VDV Division) and 30th Motorized Rifle Regiment (72nd Motorized Rifle Division, 44th AC, LMD) reportedly continue to operate in Kursk direction.^[29] Elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) are

reportedly operating near Guyevo.[30] Elements of the 51st VDV Regiment (106th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Lebedevka. Elements of the 1427th Motorized Rifle Regiment (formed during 2022 partial reserve call up) are reportedly operating near Kositsa. Elements of the 11th VDV Brigade are reportedly operating near Cherkasskaya Konopelka (southeast of Sudzha).

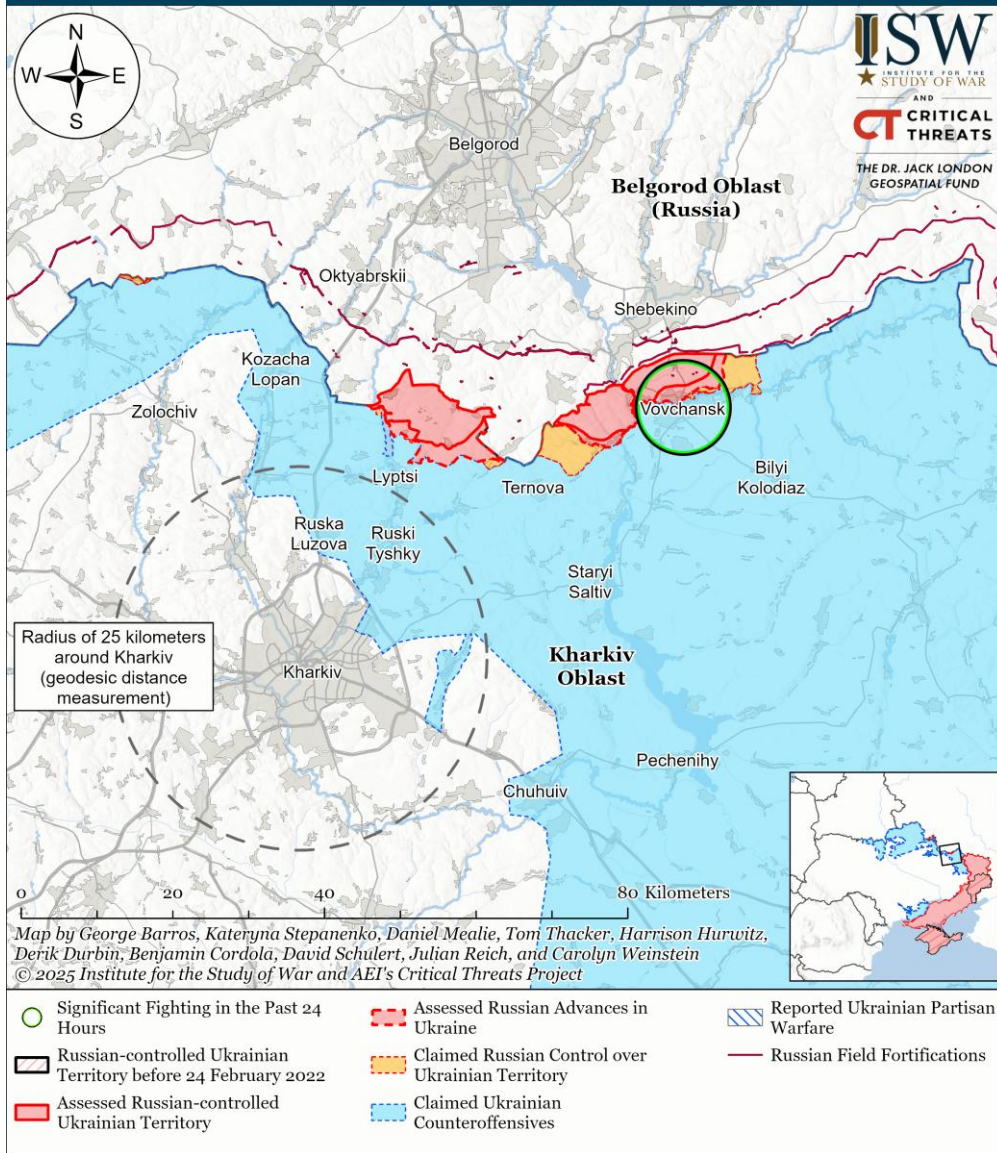
A Ukrainian source posted footage on February 21 showing Ukrainian forces striking a Russian Strela-10 air defense system in an unspecified area of Kursk Oblast.[31]

Russian	Main	Effort	–	Eastern	Ukraine
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Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Kharkiv Oblast (Russian objective: Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City)

Russian forces continued ground attacks in the Kharkiv direction on February 23 but did not advance. Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on February 22 and 23.[32]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kharkiv Direction
February 23, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



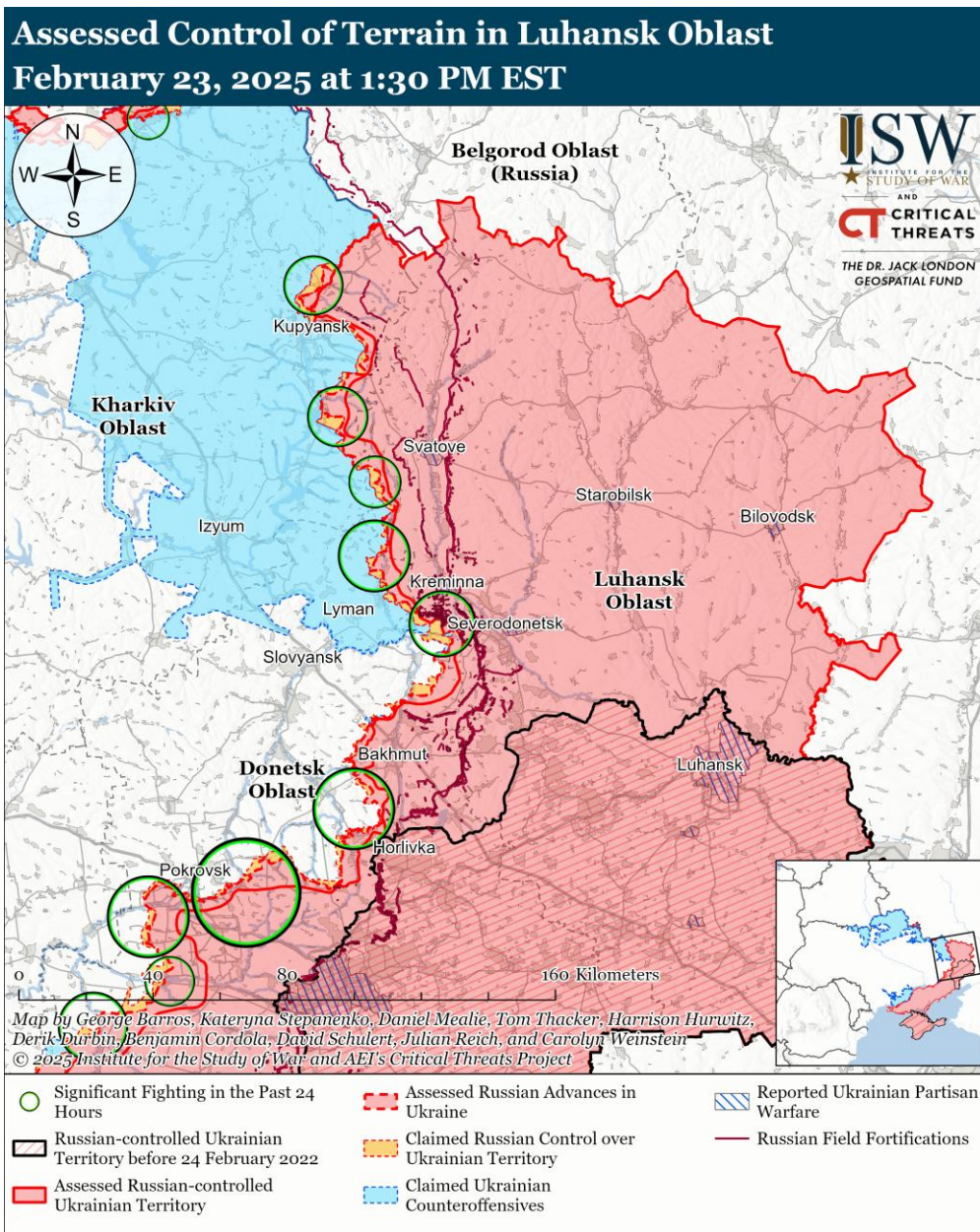
Unconfirmed Russian-claimed advances: Russian milbloggers claimed on February 23 that Russian forces marginally advanced in Vovchansk.[33]

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

Kupyansk

Russian forces continued ground attacks in the Kupyansk direction on February 23 but did not make confirmed advances. Russian forces attacked north of Kupyansk near Dvorichna and Zapadne, northeast of Kupyansk near Fyholivka, and east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka on February 22 and 23.[34] A Russian milblogger claimed on February 23 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked near Dvorichna.[35]

Unconfirmed Russian-claimed advances: Russian milbloggers claimed on February 23 that Russian forces captured Topoli (north of Kupyansk near the international border) and Holubivka (north of Kupyansk) and advanced near Kutkivka (north of Kupyansk) and Petropavlivka (east of Kupyansk).[36]



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on February 23 but did not advance. Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Zahryzove and southeast of Borova near Cherneshchyna and Novoyehorivka on February 22 and 23.[37]

Unconfirmed Russian-claimed advances: A Russian milblogger claimed on February 23 that Russian forces advanced 450 meters near Hrekivka and advanced near Makiivka (both southeast of Borova).[38]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on February 23 but did not make confirmed advances. Russian forces attacked northeast of Lyman near Yampolivka, Novolyubivka, Ivanivka, and Kolodyazi and east of Lyman near Kuzmyne and the Serebryanske forest area on February 22 and 23.[39]

Unconfirmed Russian-claimed advances: Russian milbloggers claimed on February 23 that Russian forces advanced near Novolyubivka, Ivanivka, Balka Zhuravka (formerly Nevske) (northeast of Lyman), Kolodyazi, and Yampolivka.[40]

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

Russian forces recently advanced in the Siversk direction. Russian forces attacked northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka on February 22 and 23.[41]

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on February 23 indicates that Russian forces recently seized Bilohorivka and the quarry south of the settlement.[42] Russian milblogger credited elements of the Russian 7th Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd Combined Arms Army [CAA], formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] Army Corps [AC], Southern Military District [SMD]) with seizing the settlement.[43]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 12th Territorial Defense Battalion are reportedly advancing near Bilohorivka.[44]

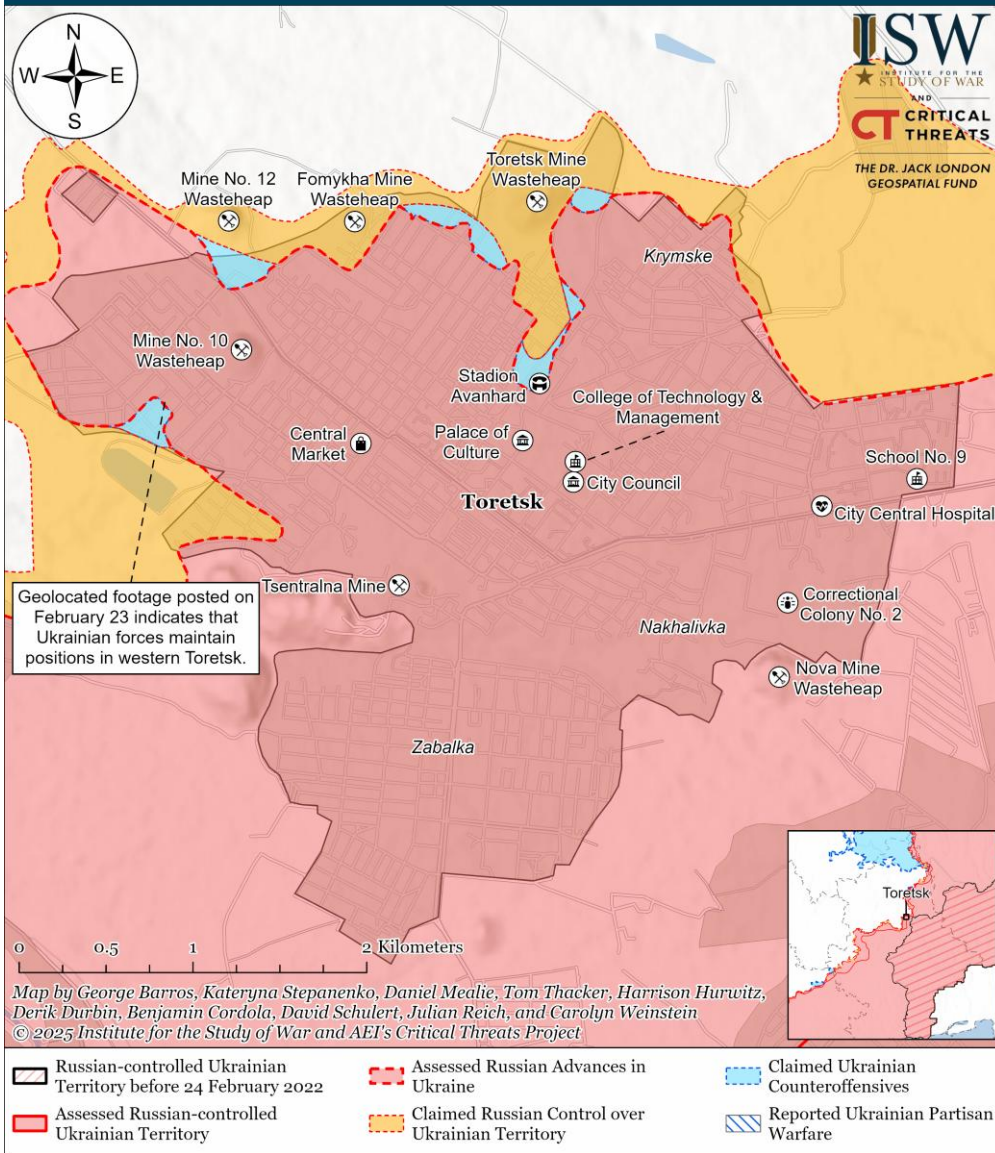
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on February 23 but did not advance. Russian forces attacked near Chasiv Yar itself, northeast of Chasiv Yar near Vasyukivka, and south of Chasiv Yar near Stupochky and Bila Hora on February 22 and 23.[45]

Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated on February 23 that frozen ground conditions and the freezing of water features near Chasiv Yar has enabled Russian forces to more easily advance in the Chasiv Yar direction and that Russian forces are regrouping north of Chasiv Yar.[46] Trehubov added that Russian forces continue to deploy small infantry groups with limited drone and armored vehicle support and that Russian forces are marginally advancing north of Chasiv Yar but have not seized Chasiv Yar completely.

Order of Battle: Elements of the 72nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd AC) are reportedly operating near Bila Hora.[47]

Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Toretsk direction. Russian forces attacked Toretsk itself and north of Toretsk near Krymske and in the direction of Dyliivka on February 22 and 23.[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Toretsk February 23, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

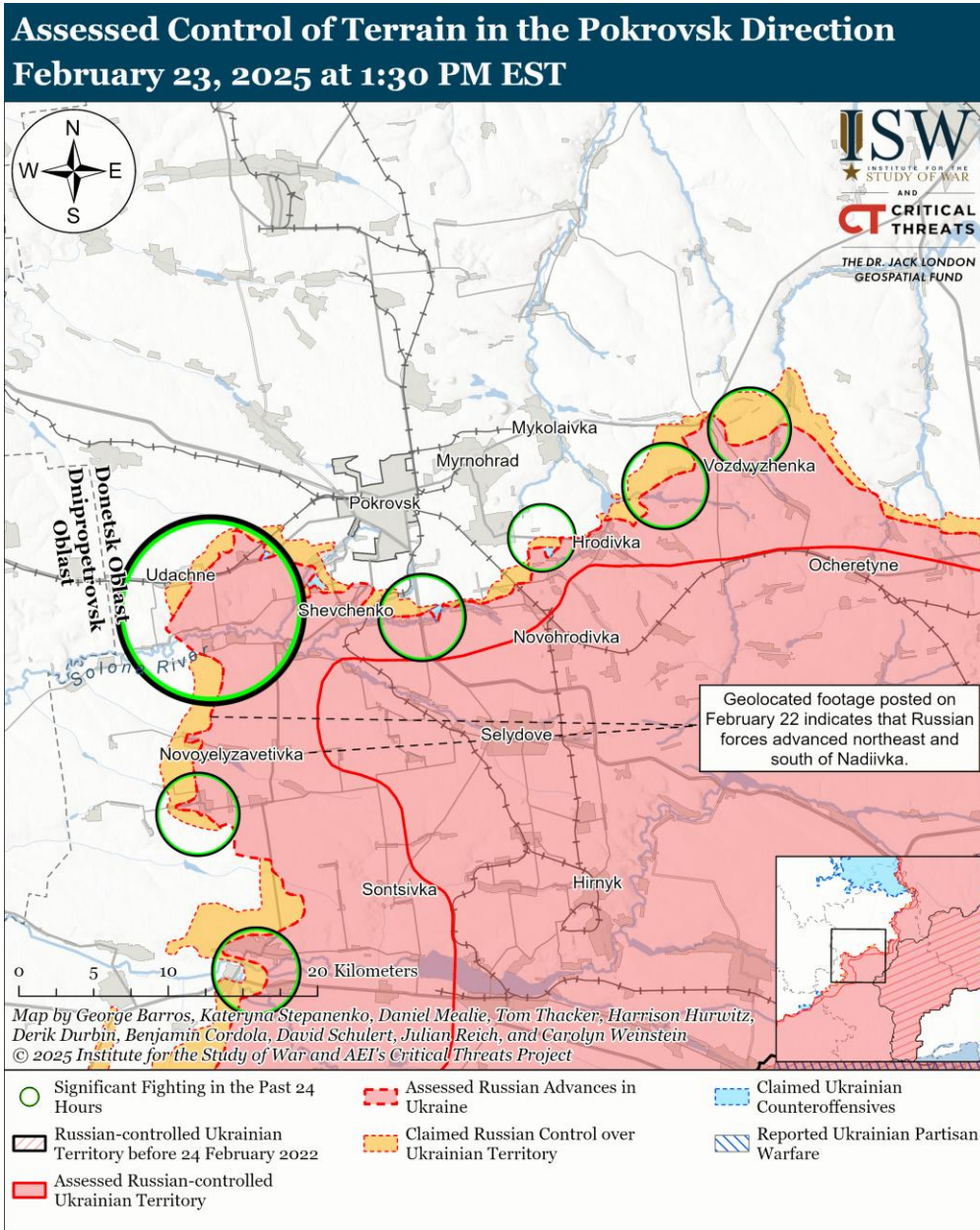


Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on February 23 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently marginally advanced in western Toretsk.[49]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 132nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] AC, SMD) reportedly continue to operate near Toretsk.[50]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction. Russian forces attacked northeast of Pokrovsk near Vodyane Druhe; east of Pokrovsk near Prolin, Novotoretske, and

Yelyzavetivka; southeast of Pokrovsk near Dachenske; southwest of Pokrovsk near Kotlyne, Novooleksandrivka, Bohdanivka, and Udachne on February 22 and 23.[51] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on February 23 that Russian forces seized Novoandriivka, although ISW assessed that Russian forces likely seized the settlement as of February 4.[52]



Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on February 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced northeast and south of Nadiivka (southwest of Pokrovsk).[53]

The deputy commander of a Ukrainian battalion operation in the Pokrovsk direction stated on February 23 that Russian forces have intensified drones strikes and reconnaissance, including with fiber-optic

drones, in the area.[54] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces operating near Pokrovsk are now operating the same number of drones as Ukrainian forces, but that Ukrainian drones are better quality.[55]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 506th and 433rd motorized rifle regiments (both of the 27th Motorized Rifle Division, 2nd CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are operating along the Udachne-Uspenivka line (southwest of Pokrovsk).[56]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on February 23 but did not advance. Russian forces attacked northwest of Kurakhove near Andriivka; west of Kurakhove near Kostyantynopil, Oleksiivka, and Ulakly; and southwest of Kurakhove near Rozlyv on February 22 and 23.[57] The Russian MoD claimed on February 23 that elements of the Russian 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, Eastern Military District [EMD]) and 1472nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (68th AC, EMD) seized Ulakly, but ISW observed that Russian forces seized the settlement as of February 21.[58]

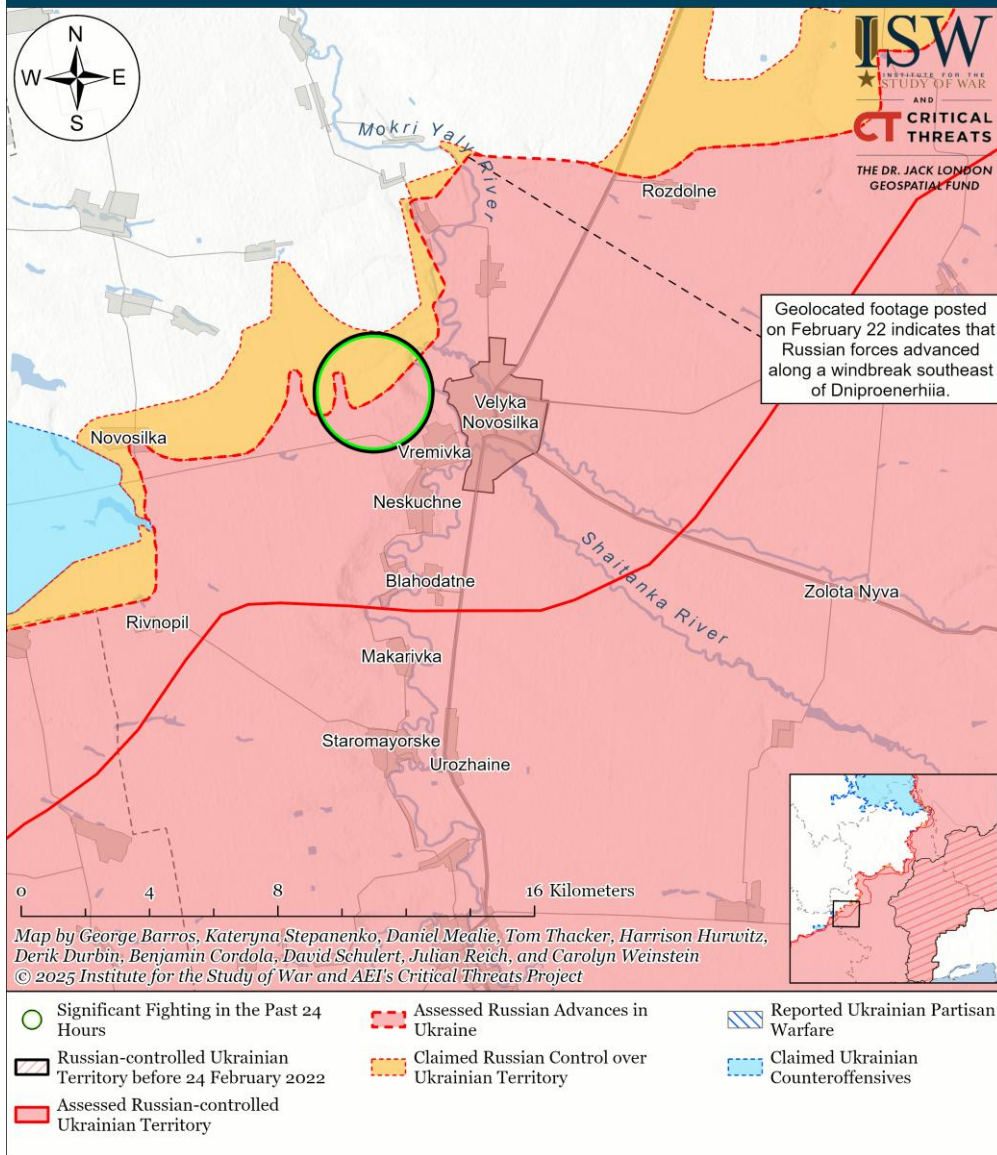
Unconfirmed Russian-claimed advances: Russian milbloggers claimed on February 23 that Russian forces advanced southwestward in the fields east of Oleksiivka (west of Kurakhove) and are advancing in Kostyantynopil.[59]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian attacks on Kostyantynopil and Rozlyv as well as along the Vovcha River near Ulakly have been intensifying since February 16 as Russian forces seek to interdict Ukrainian logistics in the area.[60]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 36th Motorized Rifle Brigade (29th CAA, EMD) and 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) are reportedly operating near Kostyantynopil.[61]

Russian forces recently advanced north of Velkya Novosilka. Russian forces continued attacks north of Velyka Novosilka near Skudne and Dniproenerhiia, northwest of Velyka Novosilka near Burlatske, and west of Velkya Novosilka near Novosilka on February 22 and 23.[62]

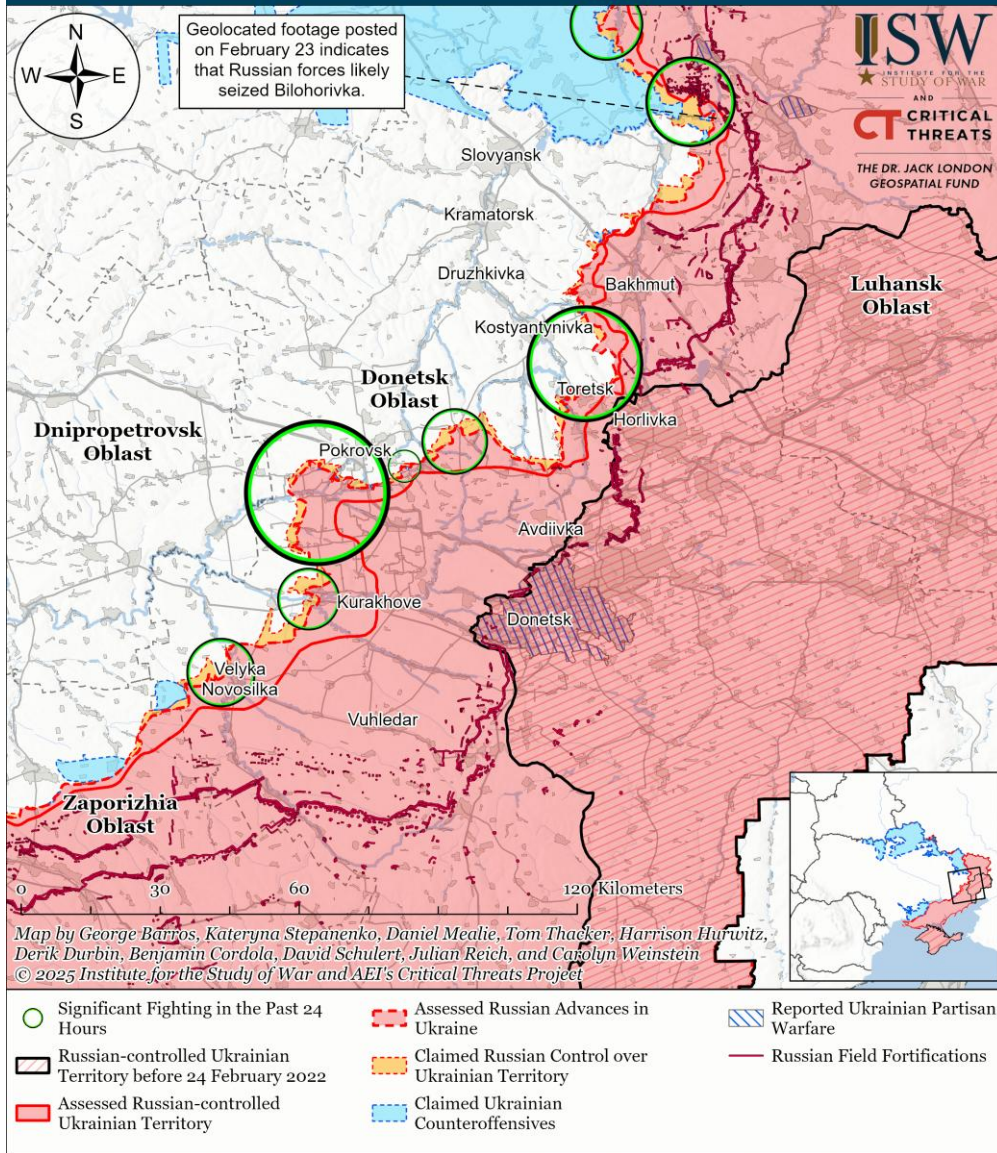
Assessed Control of Terrain in the Velyka Novosilka Direction February 23, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on February 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in the fields southeast of Dniproenerhiia during a company-sized mechanized assault.^[63] The Ukrainian brigade that repelled the assault reported that Russian forces attacked in two columns with a total of 10 armored vehicles and that the brigade destroyed nine vehicles.^[64]

Unconfirmed Russian-claimed advances: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced further in the fields southeast of Skudne than ISW has observed.^[65]

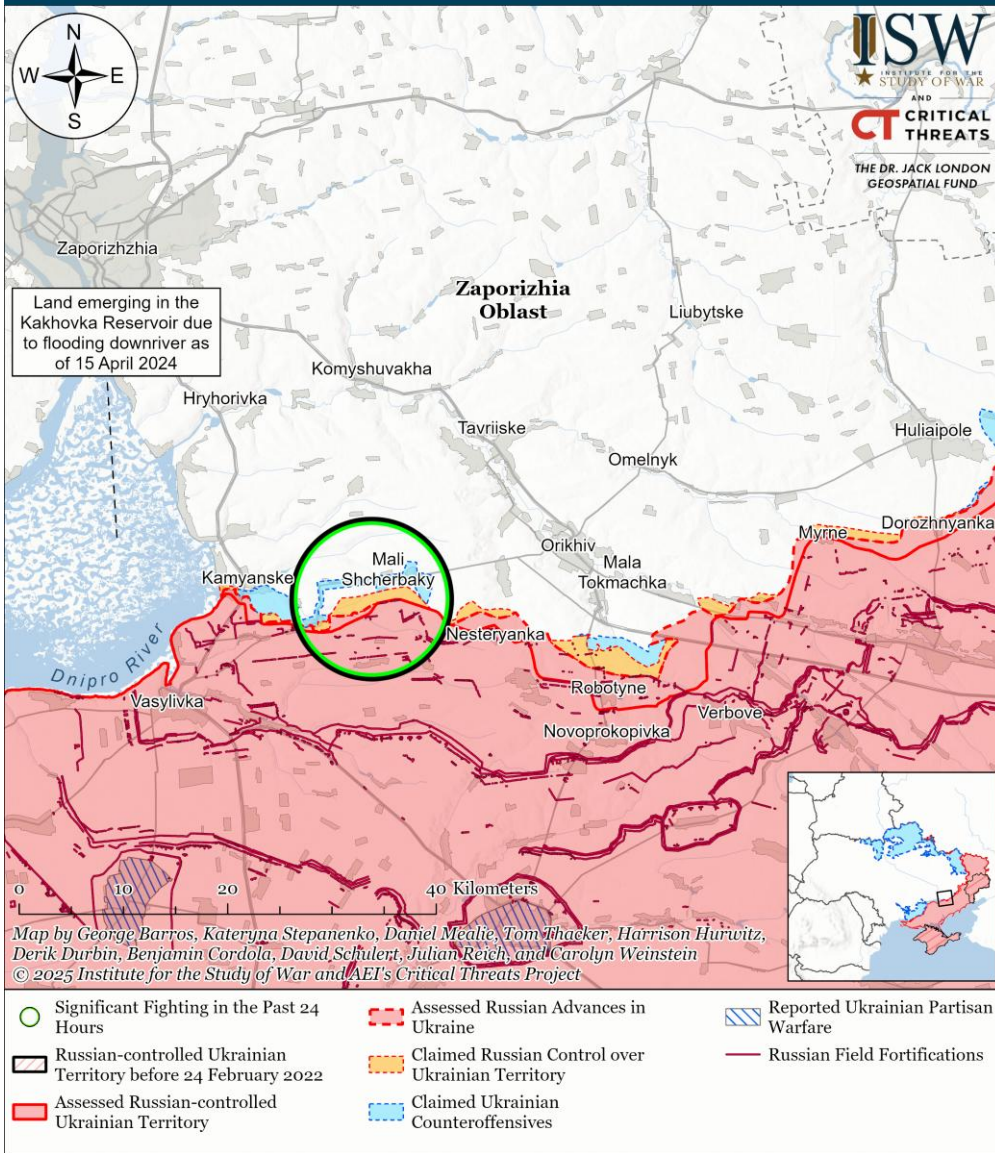
Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast February 23, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Zaporizhia direction on February 23 but did not advance. Russian forces attacked northwest of Robotyne near Shcherbaky, Stepove, Kamyanske, and Pyatykhatky on February 22 and 23.^[66] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Kamyanske and Orikhiv (north of Robotyne) on February 23.^[67]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction February 23, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

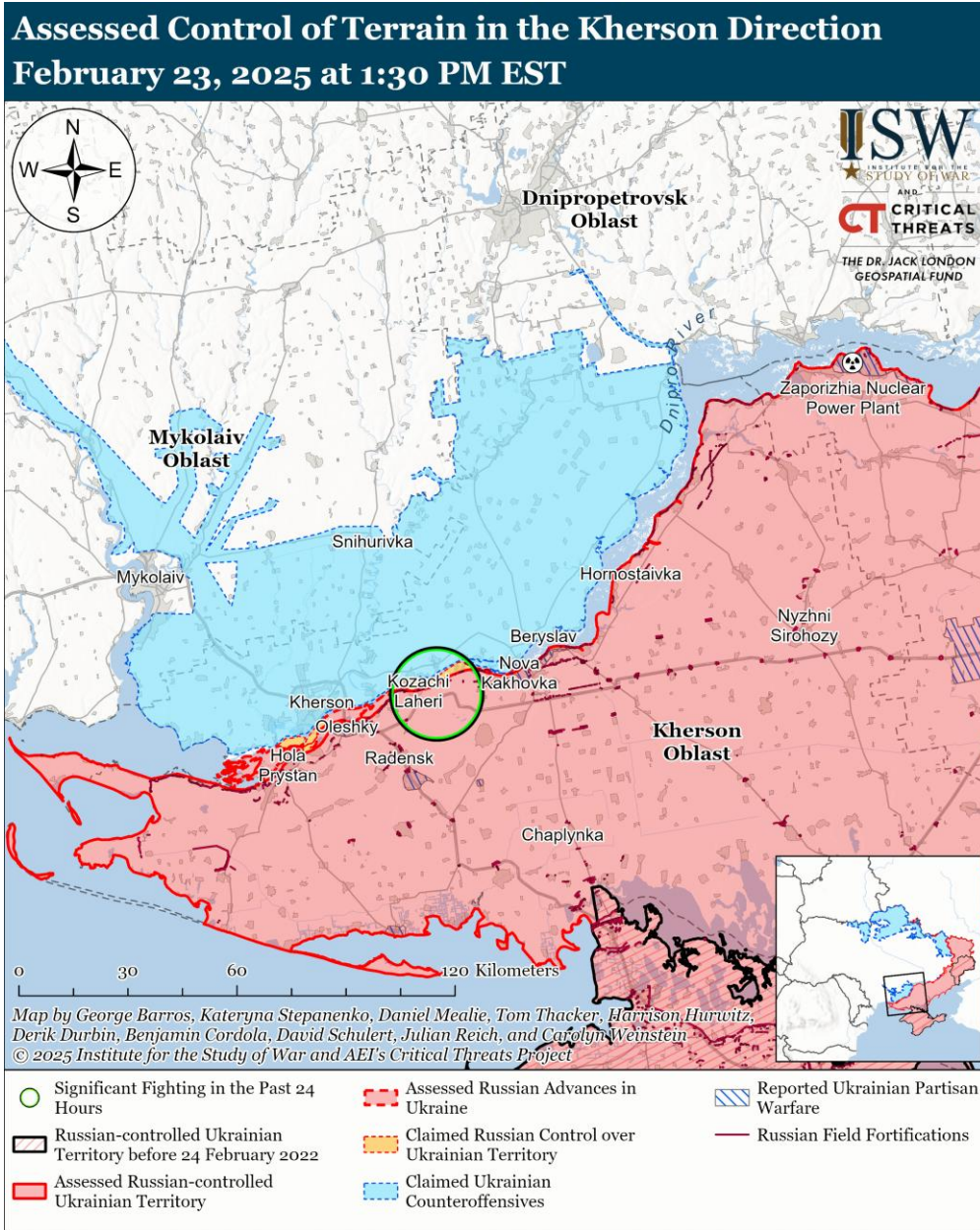


Unconfirmed Russian-claimed advances: A Russian milblogger claimed on February 23 that Russian forces with drone support advanced into Pyatykhatky and seized a significant portion of the settlement.[68]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 1455th Motorized Rifle Regiment (reportedly of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) are reportedly operating near Orikhiv.[69]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kherson direction on February 23 but did not advance. Russian forces attacked in unspecified areas of the Kherson direction on February 22 and 23.[70]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian "Lotus" drone unit of the "Smuglyanka" Detachment are reportedly operating in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast near Kherson City.[71]



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

See topline text.

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

The Russian government continues efforts to increase its defense industrial output. Ukraine's Foreign Intelligence Service (SZRU) Head Lieutenant General Oleh Ivashchenko stated during the "Ukraine. Year 2025" forum on February 23 that Russia plans to produce 3,000 long-range missiles and more than seven million rounds of ammunition in 2025.[72] Ivashchenko added that the seven million rounds amount to more ammunition than all the countries in the European Union (EU) collectively produce (presumably on an annual basis).

A Russian milblogger and former Storm-Z instructor claimed that Russian forces continue to struggle with improving drone operations.[73] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces fail to collect reliable statistics on successful drone strikes which impedes drone operation innovation. The milblogger asserted that poorly manufactured Russian drones and inflated successful strike statistics likely cause the disconnect between Russia's supposed superior number of drones and Russian forces' often unsuccessful drone operations.

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

Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov stated during the "Ukraine. Year 2025" Forum on February 23 that Russian forces have attempted to integrate first person-view (FPV) drone launch systems onto helicopters to counter Ukrainian naval drones.[74] Budanov stated that Russian forces recently damaged two helicopters while trying to launch FPV drones from the helicopters, presumably over the Black Sea, and that Russian forces no longer are attempting to launch FPV drones from helicopters.

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.

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks)

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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BABEL STREET

[1] <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/23/politics/video/steve-witkoff-russia-ukraine-war-provoked-sotu-digvid>

[2] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/75909> ; <https://www.interfax dot ru/russia/1000390> ; <https://tass dot ru/politika/23045449> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-1-2024> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-19-2024>

[3] <https://www.wsj.com/world/russia-ukraine-peace-deal-2022-document-6e12e093> ; <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/06/15/world/europe/ukraine-russia-ceasefire-deal.html>

[4] <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/23/world/europe/putin-announces-a-military-operation-in-ukraine-as-the-un-security-council-pleads-with-him-to-pull-back.html> ; <http://en.kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/67843> ; <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/67843>

[5] <https://suspilne dot media/955309-a-gotovij-piti-z-posadi-prezidenta-zaradi-miru-v-ukraini-zelenskij/> ; <https://www.rbc dot ua/rus/news/zelenskiy-zayaviv-gotovnist-zalishiti-posadu-1740322595.html> ; <https://www.kyivpost dot com/uk/post/47671> ; <https://hromadske dot ua/viyana/240224-zelenskiy-ia-hotovyy-obminiaty-post-prezydenta-na-bezpekovi-harantiyi-dlia-ukrayiny>

[6] <https://kyivindependent.com/do-international-observers-want-to-be-placed-in-pokrovsk-zelensky-criticizes-calls-for-elections-following-trumps-comments/> ; <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-politics/3963508-zelensky-holding-elections-in-wartime-impossible-for-multiple-reasons.html>

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