Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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February 7, 2024, 8:10pm ET

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

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:30pm ET on February 7. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the February 8 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces conducted the second largest combined drone and missile strike of 2024 on the morning of February 7. Ukrainian military sources stated that Russian forces launched 64 drones and missiles at Ukraine: 20 Shahed 136/131 drones; 29 Kh-101/555/55 cruise missiles; four Kh-22 cruise missiles; three Kalibr cruise missiles; three Iskander-M ballistic missiles; and five S-300 surface-to-air missiles.[1] Ukrainian air defenses destroyed 44 of 64 targets: 26 Kh-101/555/55 cruise missiles; three Kalibr cruise missiles; and 15 Shahed-131/131 drones.[2] The Kyiv City Administration reported that Russian forces launched at least two dozen of the Kh-101/555/55 cruise missiles at Kyiv City and damaged residential infrastructure in several neighborhoods.[3] Ukrainian sources additionally stated that Russian forces hit Kharkiv City with S-300 surface-to-air missiles and Kh-22 cruise missiles and confirmed that two missiles that struck Kharkiv City were North Korean-provided Kn-23 (Hwasong-11 Ga) missiles.[4] Ukrainian outlet *Suspilne* reported that its sources in Ukrainian law enforcement suggested that Russian forces may have additionally launched 3M22 Zircon shiplaunched hypersonic cruise missiles at Kyiv City but that they are still working to confirm this information.[5]

The February 7 strike package is emblematic of the constant air domain offense-defense innovation-adaptation race in which Russia and Ukraine are engaged. Ukrainian air defense managed to shoot down the majority of the Kh-101/555/55 cruise missiles and Shahed drones, which may suggest that Russian forces fired the Kh-101 series missiles and Shaheds in order to distract Ukrainian air defense. Ukrainian forces did not shoot down any of the Kh-22 cruise missiles, Iskander-M ballistic missiles, or S-300 surface-to-air missiles, by contrast. Russian forces may have specifically designed this strike package to distract Ukrainian air defense with the Kh-101s and Shahed combination with the intention of helping the other missiles make it through to their intended targets. The unconfirmed reports of 3M22 Zircon strikes are also noteworthy as Zircons are typically fired from naval vessels at other vessels or coastal targets, so Russian forces may have had to adapt the Zircon launchers to strike targets so far inland.[6] Russian forces additionally appear to have integrated North Korean missiles into their strike packages, which may have been harder for Ukrainian forces to detect

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and shoot down. ISW has previously assessed that Russia is experimenting with the strike packages it can launch at Ukraine to achieve the maximum desired effect, and that Ukraine in return continues efforts to adapt and respond to new Russian strike packages.[7]

Russia targeted Kyiv City during the February 7 strike for the third time thus far in 2024, notably coinciding with EU High Commissioner Josep Borrell's visit to Kyiv.[8] Borrell arrived in Kyiv on February 6 to discuss EU military aid and continued support to Ukraine.[9] Russia has previously targeted Kyiv City during high-level foreign visits, such as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's visit in April 2022.[10] The US is also, of course, currently engaged in critical discussions over continued military aid to Ukraine, and Russia has frequently timed such massive missile strikes with international aid discussions to deter continued Western support for Ukraine.[11] Russia likely therefore purposefully conducted this strike series and targeted Kyiv City to achieve informational effects in the EU and the collective West apart from any objectives it was intended to achieve in Ukraine.

Deputy Chairperson of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev continued his nuclear saber-rattling rhetoric likely aimed in part at deterring Western aid to Ukraine. Medvedev claimed on February 7 that Russia has repeatedly "underscored" that it's "plans" do not include any conflict "with NATO and EU member states."[12] Kremlin officials, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, however, have recently and consistently rhetorically threatened NATO member states, and Kremlin-affiliated actors appear to be attempting to sow instability and set information conditions for possible future Russian aggressive actions against various European states.[13] Medvedev stated that NATO's military budget and population are significantly larger than Russia's, so that if a war were to break out between Russia and NATO, Russia would have to respond "asymmetrically" by using "ballistic and cruise missiles carrying special warheads" - referring to nuclear warheads - resulting in an "apocalypse." Medvedev posted these claims on his English language X (formerly Twitter) channel and Russian language Telegram channel, suggesting that his statements are meant for both an international and domestic audience. Kremlin officials and pundits have consistently threatened to use nuclear weapons against NATO members, and ISW continues to assess that this nuclear rhetoric is aimed at deterring Western aid to Ukraine.[14] Medvedev's statements about NATO's larger size and military budget relative to Russia are likely aimed at domestically promoting Kremlin narratives that NATO – and the West generally – poses an existential threat to Russia - a claim the Kremlin has used to try to justify its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[15]

The Russian Federation Council approved a bill on February 7 that allows the Russian
government to confiscate property from individuals convicted of spreading "fake"
information about the Russian military, likely as part of ongoing censorship efforts to
limit criticisms of Russia's war effort ahead of the March 2024 Russian presidential
election.[16] The bill also allows Russian authorities to confiscate property from individuals found
guilty of calling for terrorist or extremist activities and advocating for sanctions against Russia.[17] ISW
previously observed increasing complaints from the relatives of mobilized Russian servicemen
concerning the Russian military's mistreatment of mobilized personnel, and continues to assess that
the Kremlin likely wants to silence concerned relatives to maintain appearances of wide support for the
war

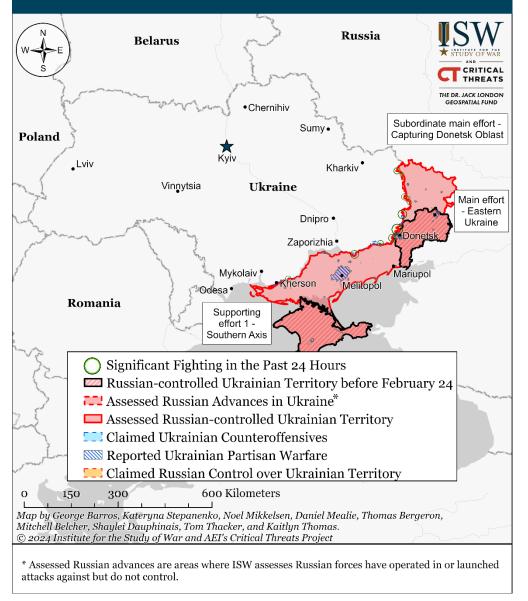
Yandex NV — the Dutch holding company of Russian internet technology company **Yandex** — announced that it will sell all of its Russian assets for 475 billion rubles (about **\$5.2 billion) to a purchasing consortium consisting of five Russian companies.** Yandex stated in a press release published on February 5 that the purchasing consortium will pay at least half of the considerations in cash using Chinese yuan.[19] Yandex NV will maintain no businesses in Russia but will continue to hold four international businesses. The *New York Times* (*NYT*) reported that Yandex NV made 95 percent of its revenues between January and September 2023 in Russia.[20] ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin is likely nationalizing Yandex in order to strengthen control over the Russian information space, especially in preparation for the March 2024 Russian presidential election.[21]

Key Takeaways:

- Russian forces conducted the second largest combined drone and missile strike of 2024 on the morning of February 7. The February 7 strike package is emblematic of the constant air domain offense-defense innovation-adaptation race in which Russia and Ukraine are engaged.
- Russia targeted Kyiv City during the February 7 strike for the third time thus far in 2024, notably coinciding with EU High Commissioner Josep Borrell's visit to Kyiv.
- Deputy Chairperson of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev continued his nuclear saber-rattling rhetoric likely aimed in part at deterring Western aid to Ukraine.
- The Russian Federation Council approved a bill on February 7 that allows the Russian government to confiscate property from individuals convicted of spreading "fake" information about the Russian military, likely as part of ongoing censorship efforts to limit criticisms of Russia's war effort ahead of the March 2024 Russian presidential election.
- Yandex NV the Dutch holding company of Russian internet technology company Yandex – announced that it will sell all of its Russian assets for 475 billion rubles (about \$5.2 billion) to a purchasing consortium consisting of five Russian companies.
- Russian forces made confirmed gains west of Horlivka and in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area amid continued positional engagements along the entire frontline.
- The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) stated on February 7 that Russia is mobilizing citizens from Syria who come to Russia under the guise of security guard jobs at oil refineries.

• Russian occupation authorities continue to militarize Ukrainian children and youth in occupied Ukraine.





We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are wellcovered 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

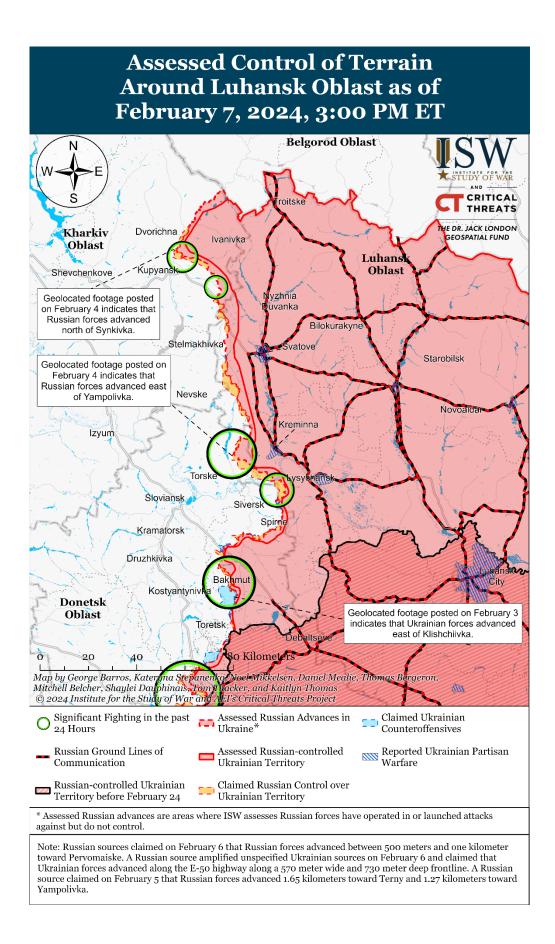
Russian	Main	Effort	_	Eastern	<u>Ukraine</u>

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

Select Rosgvardia elements have reportedly conducted an operational redeployment to Belgorod Oblast border areas. Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on February 7 that elements of Rosgvardia's 116th Special Purpose Brigade, namely its 900th and 902nd Regiments, redeployed to Belgorod Oblast from occupied Donetsk Oblast in the first week of February.[22] Mashovets noted that these regiments have a particularly powerful artillery complement, which is likely why they have been redeployed to the Belgorod Grouping of Forces. ISW previously observed that Rosgvardia's 116th Special Purpose Brigade and its new constituent regiments deployed to occupied Donetsk Oblast in late December 2023 to serve law enforcement purposes in occupied Ukraine, so their rapid redeployment away from occupied Ukraine is noteworthy.[23] ISW also previously assessed that Russian forces may launch tactical diversionary cross-border raids into Kharkiv Oblast from Belgorod Oblast to distract and pin Ukrainian forces away from the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna axis, where Russian forces are currently pursuing offensive operations, and the deployment of at least two Rosgvardia regiments may be in support of such future diversionary activities.[24] Russian forces remain unlikely to be able to conduct large-scale offensive operations into Kharkiv Oblast from Belgorod Oblast, however.[25]

Positional engagements continued along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on February 7, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian and Ukrainian forces reported 5 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project 2024

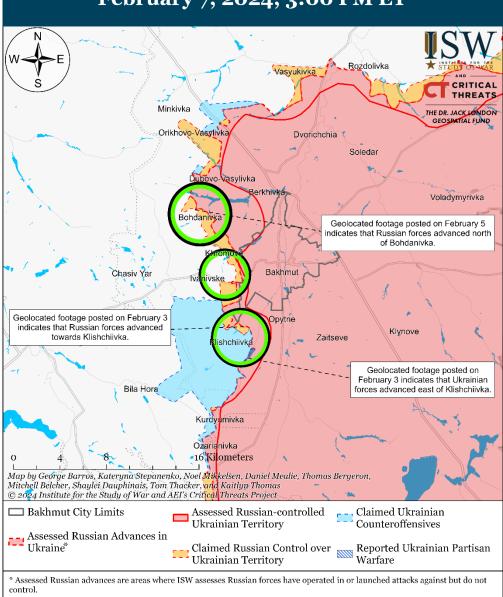
positional fighting northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka and Ivanivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Tabaivka; west of Kreminna near Terny and Torske; southwest of Kreminna near Hryhorivka; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[26] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces reached tactical heights east of Terny and captured a position in the Bilohorivka industrial zone, but ISW has not observed visual evidence of these claimed gains.[27] A Russian milblogger reported that Russian forces intend to reach the Oskil River in the Kupyansk direction and capture the city of Lyman west of Kreminna.[28] Elements of the Russian 7th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] Army Corps) are reportedly operating near Bilohorivka.[29]



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

Limited positional engagements continued near Bakhmut on February 7, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Ukrainian and Russian sources reported positional fighting northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka; west of Bakhmut near Ivanivske; and southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka.[30] Elements of the Russian 11th Separate Guards Air Assault (VDV) Brigade are reportedly operating west of Bakhmut, and elements of the 51st Guards VDV Regiment (106th VDV Division) are reportedly operating northeast of Bakhmut near Soledar.[31]

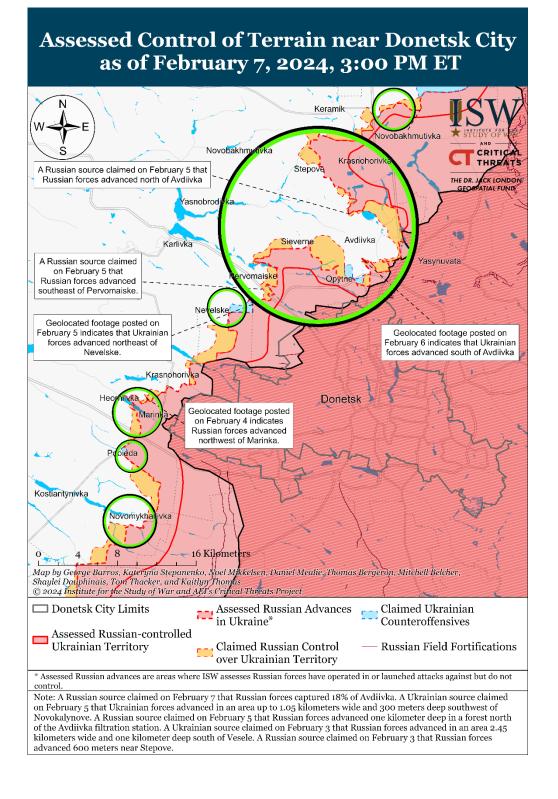
Geolocated footage posted on February 7 shows that Russian forces recently made a marginal advance northeast of Niu-York (west of Horlivka).[32] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks northwest of Horlivka near Shumy and Pivdenne.[33] Drone operators of the "Russkiye Yastreby" (Russian Hawks) detachment (33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment, 1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Army Corps] are reportedly operating near Horlivka.[34]



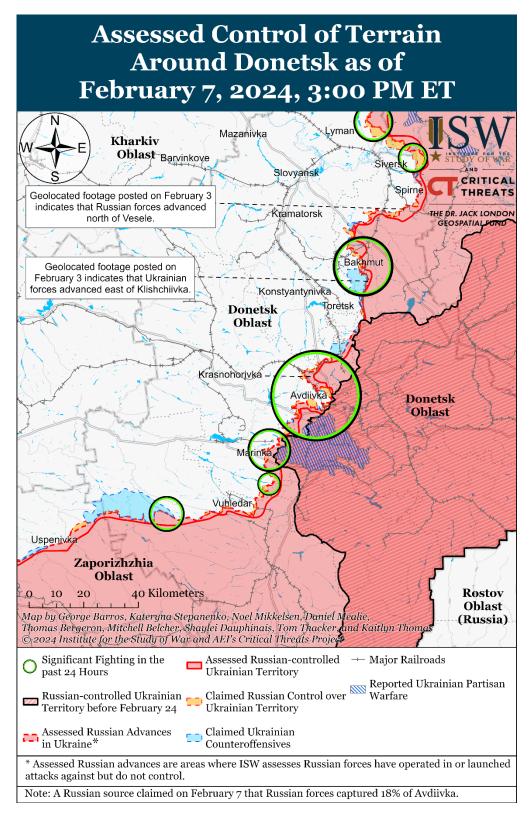
Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of February 7, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

Russian forces reportedly continued advancing in northern Avdiivka, although there were no confirmed control of terrain changes in this area on February 7. Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced southward along Zaliznychnyi Lane in northwestern Avdiivka.[35] One Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) and the 30th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) penetrated the Ukrainian grouping on Zaliznychnyi Lane in a maneuver intended to cut off and isolate Ukrainian forces into two groupings at the point of penetration.[36] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Russian forces have reached the northern part of a gardening partnership on Zaliznychnyi Lane.[37] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced westward towards the Coke Plant in northwestern Avdiivka.[38] Mashovets stated that Russian forces are now focusing on interdicting Hrushevskoho Street, the remaining Ukrainian ground line of communication (GLOC) that runs west of the Coke Plant and into Avdiivka via the northwestern part

of the settlement.[39] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces now control between 18 and 20 percent of Avdiivka.[40] Elements of the Russian 239th and 80th Tank Regiments (both of 90th Tank Division, 41st CAA, CMD); the 21st, 30th, and 15th Motorized Rifle Brigades (all of the 2nd CAA, CMD); and 9th and 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (both of 1st DNR Army Corps) are reportedly operating in the Avdiivka direction.[41]



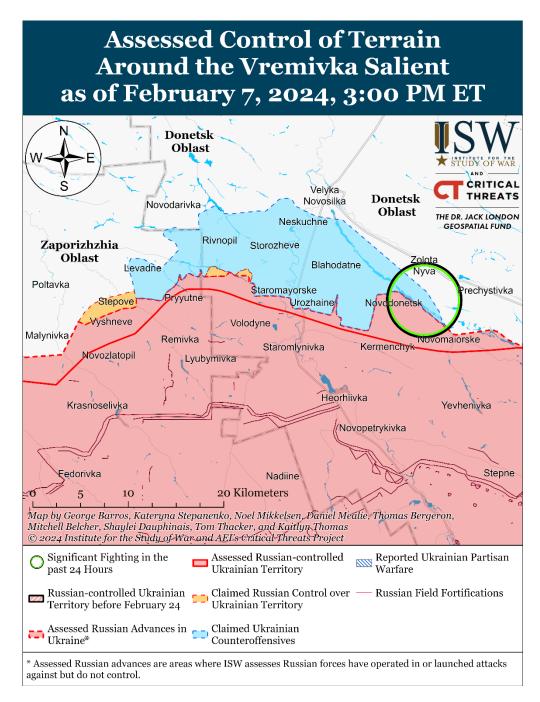
Russian forces recently made confirmed advances west and southwest of Donetsk City. Geolocated footage posted on February 7 shows that Russian forces advanced into the eastern outskirts of Heorhiivka (just west of Donetsk City), and several milbloggers claimed that Russian forces have gained a foothold in the settlement.[42] Additional geolocated footage posted on February 7 indicates that elements of the Russian 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) advanced into eastern Novomykhailivka along Lenin Street, which accords with several Russian milblogger claims that Russian forces entered eastern Novomykhailivka.[43] Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that positional engagements continued west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Pobieda and Novomykhailivka.[44]



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

Russian forces recently made confirmed advances in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area amid continued positional engagements in the area on February 7. Geolocated footage published on February

6 and NASA Fire Information for Resource Management (FIRMS) data from February 6 indicate that Russian forces advanced north of Mykilske (east of Vuhledar).[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced east of Vuhledar towards the Pivdennodonbaska Coal Mine.[46] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced south of Velyka Novosilka near Staromayorske, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[47] Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued southeast of Velyka Novosilka near Zolota Nyva and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Pryyutne.[48] Elements of the Russian 11th Air and Air Defense Forces Army (Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating near Urozhaine (south of Velyka Novosilka); elements of the 218th Tank Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th Combined Arms Army [CAA], EMD) are reportedly operating north of Pryyutne; and elements of the 114th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th CAA, EMD) are reportedly conducting strikes near Chervone (southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[49]



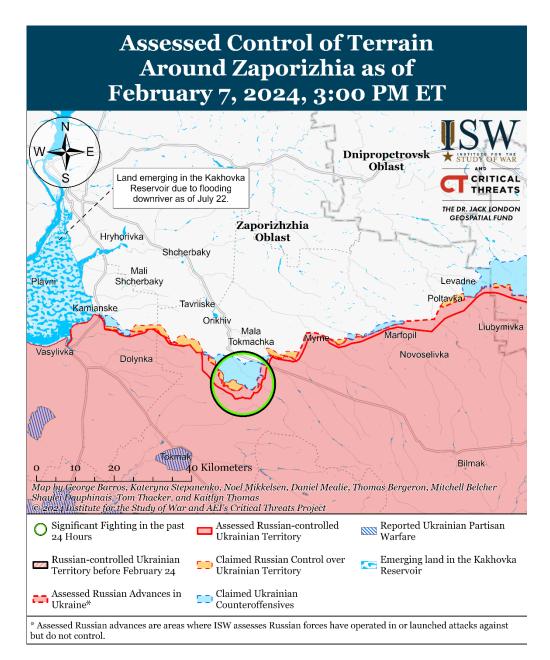
Positional engagements continued in western Zaporizhia Oblast on February 7, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued near Robotyne and Verbove (east of Robotyne).[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian drones are limiting Russian forces' ability to use armored vehicles during the day and night in the Orikhiv direction and that Russian forces are suffering from an acute shortage of drones.[51] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces are currently concentrating on the Bakhmut and Donetsk directions but suggested that Russian forces resume offensive operations in the Zaporizhia direction to stretch Ukrainian reserves and pull them away from other critical axes. Elements of the Russian 136th Motorized Rifle Brigade (58th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Zaporizhia direction; elements of the Russian 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Robotyne; elements of the

BARS-10 (Russian Combat Army Reserve) are reportedly operating near Kamianske (northwest of Robotyne); and elements of the 503rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (19th Motorized Rifle Division, 58th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Novoandriivka (northwest of Robotyne).[52]



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

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Rafael Grossi visited the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) on February 7. Grossi met with Ukrainian Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko on February 6 and stated that the number of personnel at the ZNPP is about 2,000 to 3,000, whereas the previous staffing levels had been 12,000 personnel.[53] Grossi stated that the situation at the ZNPP is "so far...stable" but in a "very delicate equilibrium." The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage on February 7 of Russian military personnel escorting Grossi and the IAEA delegation to the ZNPP.[54] The Russian MoD claimed that the delegation visited various parts of the ZNPP's fourth power unit and that experts have been present at the ZNPP since September 2022.



Ukrainian and Russian forces made confirmed advances in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast amid continued positional engagements in the area on February 7. Geolocated footage published on February 7 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced in eastern Krynky.[55] Additional geolocated footage published on February 7 indicates that Russian forces advanced in southern Krynky.[56] Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued in Krynky.[57]



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

See

topline

text.

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

The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) stated on February 7 that Russia is mobilizing citizens from Syria who come to Russia under the false promise of employment as security guards at oil refineries.[58] The GUR reported that Russia is using "tourist companies" to recruit civilians in Syria for jobs in the Sakha Republic. The GUR stated that about 1,000 Syrian mercenaries are currently undergoing training, especially in urban combat, in Syria before they go to the Sakha Republic. The GUR found that Russian authorities then "lure" the Syrians to "higher paying jobs" in Buryatia Republic, where Russian authorities issue them Russian passports and mobilize them into the military. The GUR noted that a group of Syrian mercenaries who received Russian passports are currently in Ulan-Ude and will join the Russian 5th Tank Brigade (36th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District).

Western sanctions are reportedly pushing Chinese banks to stop or restrict Russian transactions. Russian outlet Vedomosti stated on February 6 that the Chinese Zhejiang Chouzhou Commercial Bank, which is reportedly the main bank for Russian importers working with China, notified its clients that is suspending all transactions with Russian and Belarusian organizations.[59] Vedomosti reported that its sources stated that the bank initially stopped payments for certain goods that fall under Western sanctions in December 2023 but later completely stopped any transactions with Russia regardless of the product, the currency of payment, or the payment system used, out of fear of Western banks requesting reports on these transactions. Vedomosti stated that other unspecified Chinese banks are also restricting Russian transactions and are requiring confirmation that the buyer does not have contact with sanctioned people or companies, that the products will not be used in the Russian defense industrial base (DIB), and that the products will not go to occupied Crimea. At least two People's Republic of China (PRC)-owned banks reportedly ordered reviews of international transactions with Russian clients in January after the US authorized secondary sanctions on financial institutions that facilitate Russian sanctions evasion and support the Russian war in Ukraine.[60] Turkish banks also reportedly started to close Russian companies' accounts due to the threat of US secondary sanctions in early February.[61]

Russian state oil company Rosneft Head Igor Sechin is reportedly forming his own "Spetsnaz" (special purpose) force. A Russian insider source claimed that Sechin is forming a "Spetsnaz" force at his golf club in Krylyatskove Raion, Moscow City.[62] The insider source claimed that Sechin intends to use his "Spetsnaz" force to guard Rosneft's assets on "several continents," including Africa. The insider source reported that Sechin's "Spetsnaz" force is currently staffed by former Rosgvardia personnel and private security officers and that former Wagner Group and other veterans of the war in Ukraine are uninterested in joining due to low salaries. The source claimed that Sechin's "Spetsnaz" force currently consists of two groups of up to 10 personnel each, but that Sechin will likely expand the group because the group formed at the end of 2023 and only began to receive funding in 2024. ISW cannot independently confirm any of the insider source's claims. ISW previously observed that other Russian state-owned enterprises started their own similar "private military companies" (PMC) for security purposes, the with Gazprom's "Potok" battalion.[63] as was case

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

Russian state-owned defense corporation Rostec is testing the newly-developed "Prometheus" software and hardware complex that can turn an infantry fighting vehicle, armored personnel carrier, or tank into a remotely controlled robotic vehicle.[64] Kremlin newswire *TASS* reported on February 6 that a vehicle equipped with the Prometheus software and hardware complex can also move to a predetermined location without operator involvement while automatically determining the best route and avoiding obstacles.

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

Senior Ukrainian officials commented on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's announcement that Ukraine is forming a separate branch of unmanned systems forces within the Ukrainian military. Ukrainian Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov stated on February 7 that the branch will have a new command structure that will help solve problems relating to radio frequency planning, interaction with electronic warfare (EW) systems, and launching remote EW systems. [65] Fedorov also stated that the Ukrainian military has three attack drone companies that are ready for deployment and that the Ukrainian Army of Drones project currently consists of 67 different drone models.[66]

Fedorov also stated on February 7 that Ukrainian companies have developed an analog for the Russian Lancet loitering munition.[67] Fedorov stated that Ukrainian companies have already tested the drones in combat conditions and that these drones may appear on the frontline in about two months.

Ecuador will reportedly exchange Soviet-era military equipment for \$200 million worth of US-made equipment, allowing the US to then provide the Soviet equipment to Ukraine.[68] Ecuador is reportedly transferring six Osa-AKM anti-aircraft missile systems, 18 BM-21 Grad Multiple Rocket Launch Systems (MLRS), five Mi-17 helicopters, 128 ZPU-1-2 anti-aircraft machine guns, and 34 ZU-23-2 anti-aircraft machine guns to the US, which the US will send directly to Ukraine for use on the battlefield.[69]

<u>Activities in Russian-occupied areas</u> (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian occupation authorities continue to militarize Ukrainian children and youth in occupied Ukraine. The Russian Investigative Committee gave a lecture to schoolchildren in occupied Donetsk Oblast on "countering extremism and terrorism" in order to develop "moral standards and patriotism" in the children.[70] Russian opposition media investigations have previously found that the Russian Investigative Committee and its head, Alexander Bastrykin, are directly involved in facilitating the deportation of children from occupied Ukraine to Russia, and that Bastrykin himself has overseen the placement of deported Ukrainian children into Russian cadet courses.[71] Ukrainian government, military, and partisan sources additionally reported on February 7 that Russian occupation authorities continue to introduce Russian military-patriotic education and military indoctrination to schools in occupied Ukraine through the "Lessons in Courage" education program and other similar courses.[72]

Russian	Information	Operations	and	Narratives

Russian officials continue to claim that the West is at fault for the deteriorating relationship between the West and Russia.[73] Russian government officials are likely trying to frame continued Western support for Ukraine as the impetus for the deteriorating Russian-Western relationship to discourage the continued provision of Western military aid to Ukraine, despite the fact that Russia initiated military conflict with Ukraine in 2014 and then again in 2022 and has routinely threatened the EU and NATO.[74]

Russian Ambassador to North Korea Alexander Matseroga stated that Russian-North Korean relations are currently "unprecedented" and that the two states have developed "very close mutually beneficial cooperation" over the past several years, contrasting developing Russo-North Korean relations with Russia's relationship with the EU and NATO.[75]

<u>Significant Activity in Belarus</u> (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on February 7 that the Belarusian Committee of State Security (KGB) has increasingly questioned and searched Ukrainian citizens in Belarus in the past month.[76] The Ukrainian Resistance Center stated that Belarusian special services are looking to recruit Ukrainian citizens to use as informants.

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] https://www.facebook.com/CinCAFU/posts/pfbido2QE7Q3bM4v2tTGM3HCKP2DbWeLKYzVXU CipVr9D6B7sXDi2DqfA4n8U8Ui9zk9gKl; https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido L8f9GZw1XJgTP5LeHkg42hDnsWkZS2fCBXFypQv7PLWsNjfXo7WFabgnwjqW9mhal; https://www. facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido11av9jbSpaEqyuKbrziALcmx83jkJZ65xTFzPSfT2RrHpkL LffHEZ8eWCRjvzDBjl; https://t.me/astrapress/47535

^[2] https://www.facebook.com/CinCAFU/posts/pfbido2QE7Q3bM4v2tTGM3HCKP2DbWeLKYzVX UCipVr9D6B7sXDi2DqfA4n8U8Ui9zk9gKl; https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid oL8f9GZw1XJgTP5LeHkg42hDnsWkZS2fCBXFypQv7PLWsNjfXo7WFabgnwjqW9mhal; https://ww

w.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidot1av9jbSpaEqyuKbrziALcmx83jkJZ65xTFzPSfT2RrHp kLLffHEZ8eWCRjvzDBjl ; https://t.me/astrapress/47535

[3] https://t.me/VA Kyiv/4495; https://t.me/bbcrussian/60245

[4] https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbido2oExN39x9q517pSQqnVP7VucQPJ U91AM8TCTu9eeQUTCCMJusEzq7eANztYArSmuK1&id=100002276907245; https://suspilne dot media/679012-udar-rf-po-harkovu-7-lutogo-slidci-znajsli-znajsli-ulamki-raket-pivnicnokorejskogovirobnictva/?utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps; https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1 755222823721730489; https://suspilne dot______media/674236-u-harkovi-prolunali-vibuhi-vranci-7lutogo-so-vidomo/?utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps; https://t.me/synegubov/8313

[5] <u>https://suspilne</u> dot media/678584-stvorenna-okremogo-rodu-vijsk-v-zsu-nimeckij-koncernvidpravit-v-ukrainu-tisaci-snaradiv-714-den-vijnionlajn/?anchor=live 1707325687&utm source=copylink&utm medium=ps

[6] https://t.me/milinfolive/115898; https://t.me/rybar/56838

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