

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Karolina Hird, Kateryna Stepanenko, Grace Mappes, and Frederick W. Kagan
July 7, 5:45 pm ET

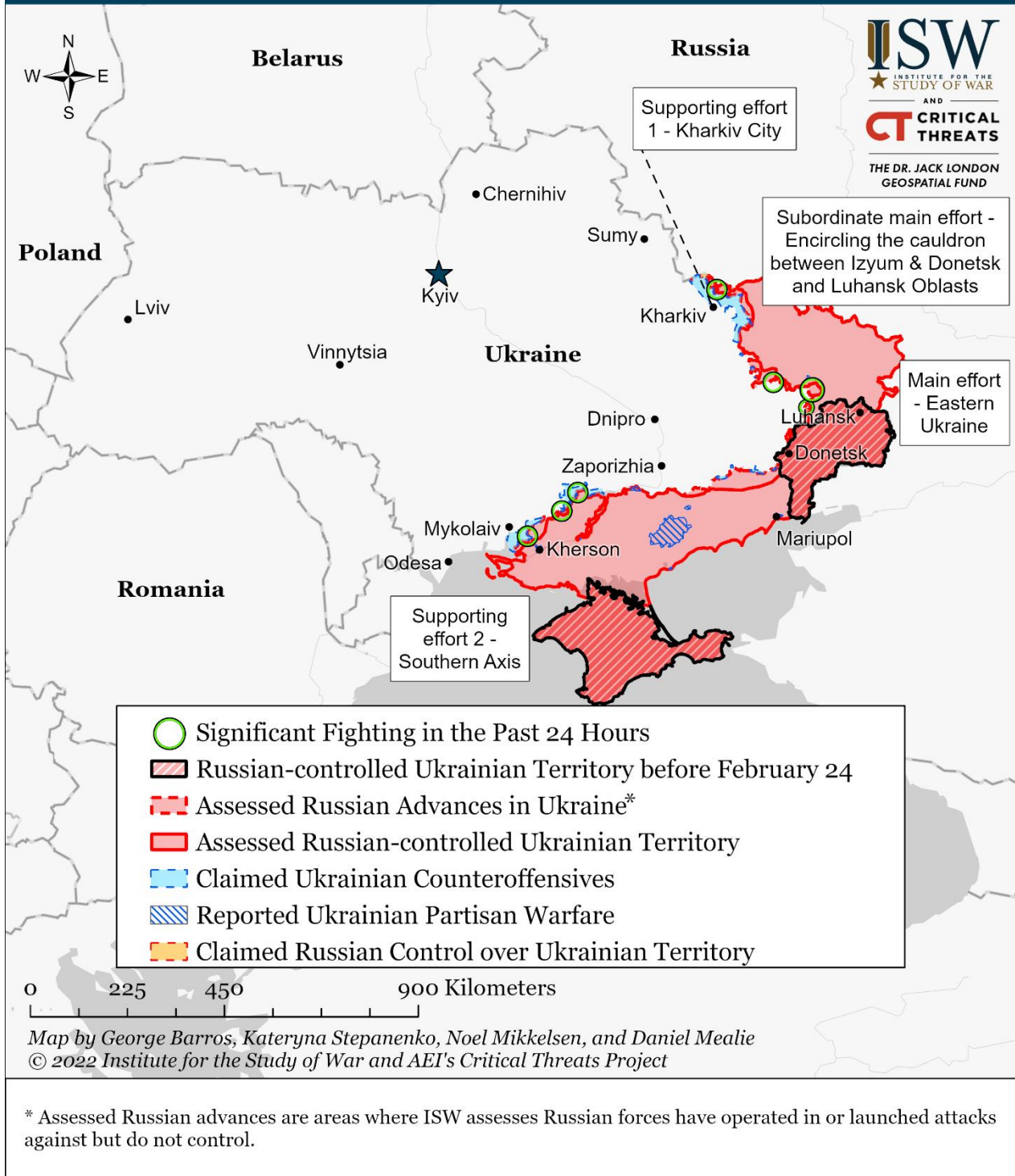
Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Russian Defense Ministry Spokesperson Igor Konashenkov announced on July 7 that Russian forces in Ukraine are pausing to rest and regain their combat capabilities, confirming ISW's assessment that Russian forces have initiated an operational pause.¹ Konashenkov did not specify the intended length of Russian forces' operational pause. As ISW previously assessed, Russian forces have not ceased active hostilities during this operational pause and are unlikely to do so.² Russian forces still conducted limited ground offensives and air, artillery, and missile strikes across all axes on July 7.³ Russian forces will likely continue to confine themselves to small-scale offensive actions as they rebuild forces and set conditions for a more significant offensive in the coming weeks or months.

Key Takeaways

- The Russian Ministry of Defense announced that Russian forces are conducting an operational pause to rest and reconstitute.
- Russian forces continued efforts to advance toward Slovyansk from the southeast of Izyum and may be setting conditions to advance from the southeast of Barvinkove—either toward Slovyansk or toward Kramatorsk.
- Russian forces made marginal gains to the southeast of Siversk and continued offensive operations west of the Lysychansk area.
- Russian forces continued offensive operations to the south and east of Bakhmut.
- Russian forces conducted a limited and unsuccessful attack north of Kharkiv City.
- Ukrainian partisans are likely continuing to target Russian-controlled railways around Melitopol.
- Russian oblasts are continuing to create their own ad hoc volunteer units to compensate for personnel losses in Ukraine.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of July 7, 2022, 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.

- Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and three supporting efforts);
- Subordinate Main Effort—Encirclement of Ukrainian Troops in the Cauldron between Izyum and Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts
- Supporting Effort 1—Kharkiv City
- Supporting Effort 2—Southern Axis
- Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine

Subordinate Main Effort—Southern Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk Oblasts (Russian objective: Encircle Ukrainian forces in eastern Ukraine and capture the entirety of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued offensive operations near the Kharkiv-Donetsk Oblast border toward Slovyansk on July 7. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted an unsuccessful assault on Bohorodychne, about 20 km northwest of Slovyansk.⁴ Russian forces also shelled several settlements northwest of Slovyansk, including Sulyhivka, Adamivka, Krasnopillya, Mazanivka, Dibrovne, and Dolyna.⁵ Russian forces additionally conducted limited artillery strikes to the south of Barvinkove and fired on Nikopol and Novopavlivka.⁶ These strikes may suggest that Russian forces are seeking to bypass Barvinkove to the east and either move toward the E40 Izyum-Slovyansk highway to advance southeast toward Slovyansk or move directly southeast from Barvinkove toward Kramatorsk. Russian forces may be setting conditions for an eventual assault on Kramatorsk—which would run parallel to advances toward Slovyansk. Russian forces conducted a missile strike directly on Kramatorsk on July 7.⁷

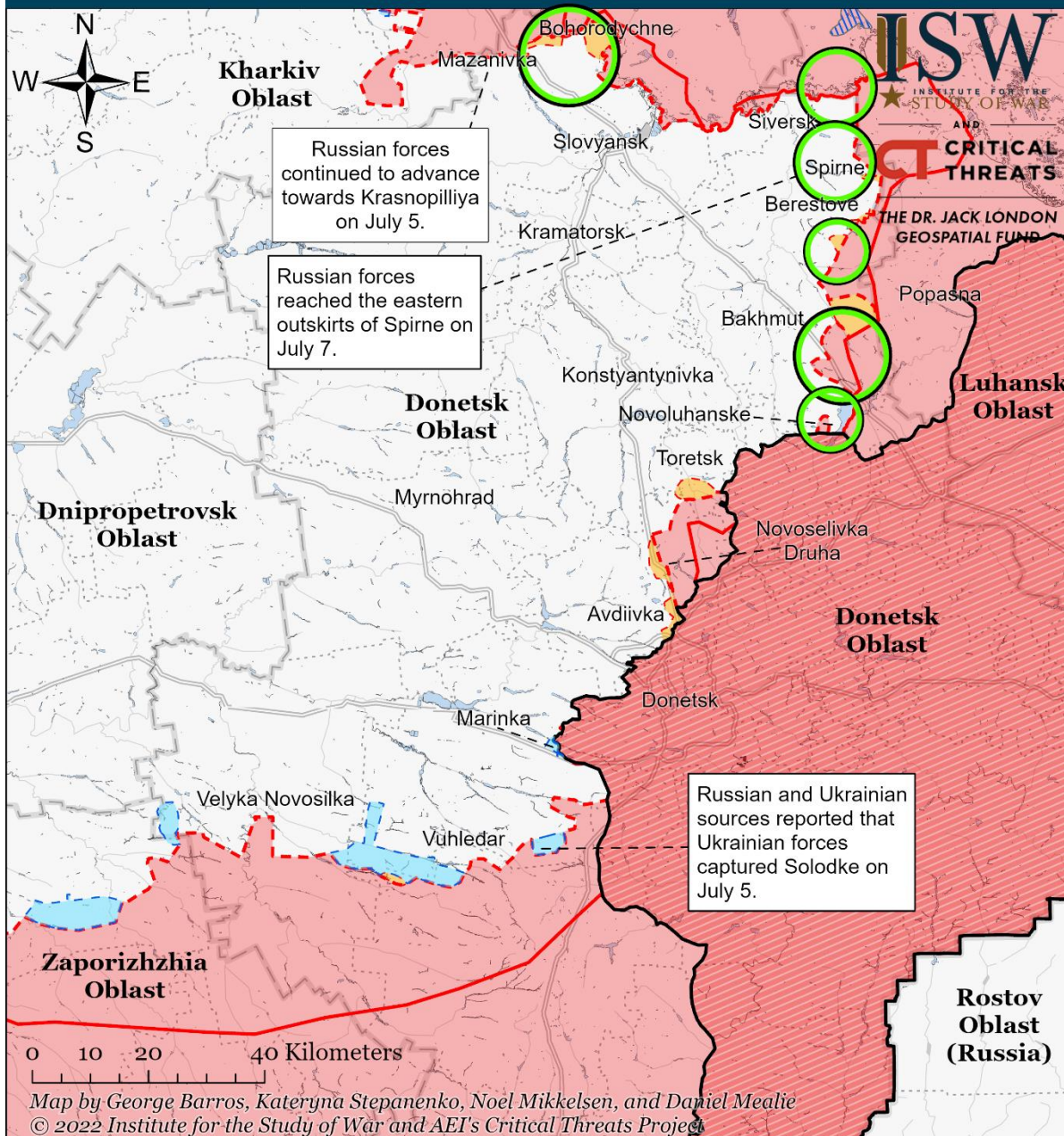
Russian forces continued efforts to advance west toward Siversk from the Lysychansk area and made marginal gains near the Luhansk-Donetsk Oblast border on July 7. Geolocated combat footage from July 7 confirmed that forces of the Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) entered the eastern outskirts of Spirne, about 10 km southwest of Siversk.⁸ Luhansk Oblast Head Serhiy Haidai reported that Russian and Ukrainian troops continued to fight around Verkhokamyanka, about 15 km directly east of Siversk.⁹ Russian forces also unsuccessfully attempted to advance in the direction of Hryhorivka (10 km northeast of Siversk) and Verkhnomayske (5 km directly east of Siversk).¹⁰ Russian forces shelled several settlements to the south and east of Siversk to continue to set conditions for further advances west of the Luhansk Oblast border.¹¹

Russian forces continued offensive operations to the south and east of Bakhmut on July 7. The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Russian forces attempted to improve their tactical positions in Vershyna, 12 km southeast of Bakhmut.¹² Russian Telegram channel Rybar additionally claimed that Russian troops fought in Pokrovske, directly east of Bakhmut, and prepared for attacks on Ukrainian positions in Novoluhanske and at the Vuhledar Power Plant, 20 km southeast of Bakhmut.¹³ Russian

forces reportedly shelled settlements to the east and south of Bakhmut to continue to set conditions for advances toward the city.¹⁴

Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area and fired on Ukrainian positions along the line of contact on July 7.¹⁵

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of July 7, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



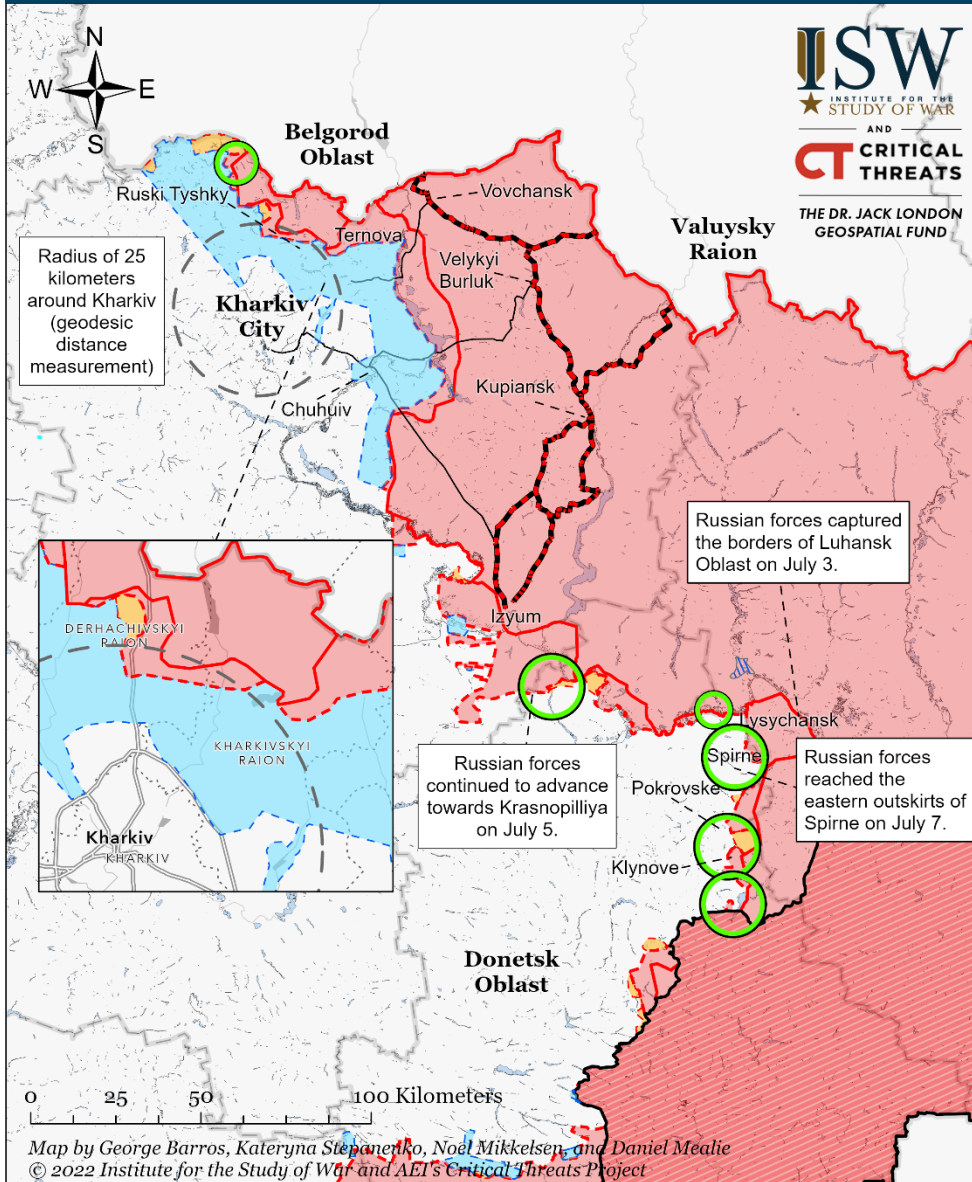
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory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

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

Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv City (Russian objective: Defend ground lines of communication (GLOCs) to Izyum and prevent Ukrainian forces from reaching the Russian border)

Russian forces attempted a limited ground assault north of Kharkiv City on July 7. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian offensive in the direction of Sosnivka, 8 km from the international border.¹⁶ Russian forces otherwise focused on maintaining their positions and repelling Ukrainian counterattacks.¹⁷ Russian forces shelled Slatyne, Mala Danylivka, Ruski Tyshky, Vesele, Kutuzivka, and Kharkiv City.¹⁸

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of July 7, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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Radius of 25 kilometers around Kharkiv (geodesic distance measurement)

Russian forces captured the borders of Luhansk Oblast on July 3.

Russian forces continued to advance towards Krasnopilliya on July 5.

Russian forces reached the eastern outskirts of Spirne on July 7.

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, and Daniel Mealie
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Key Ukrainian Roads
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- 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.

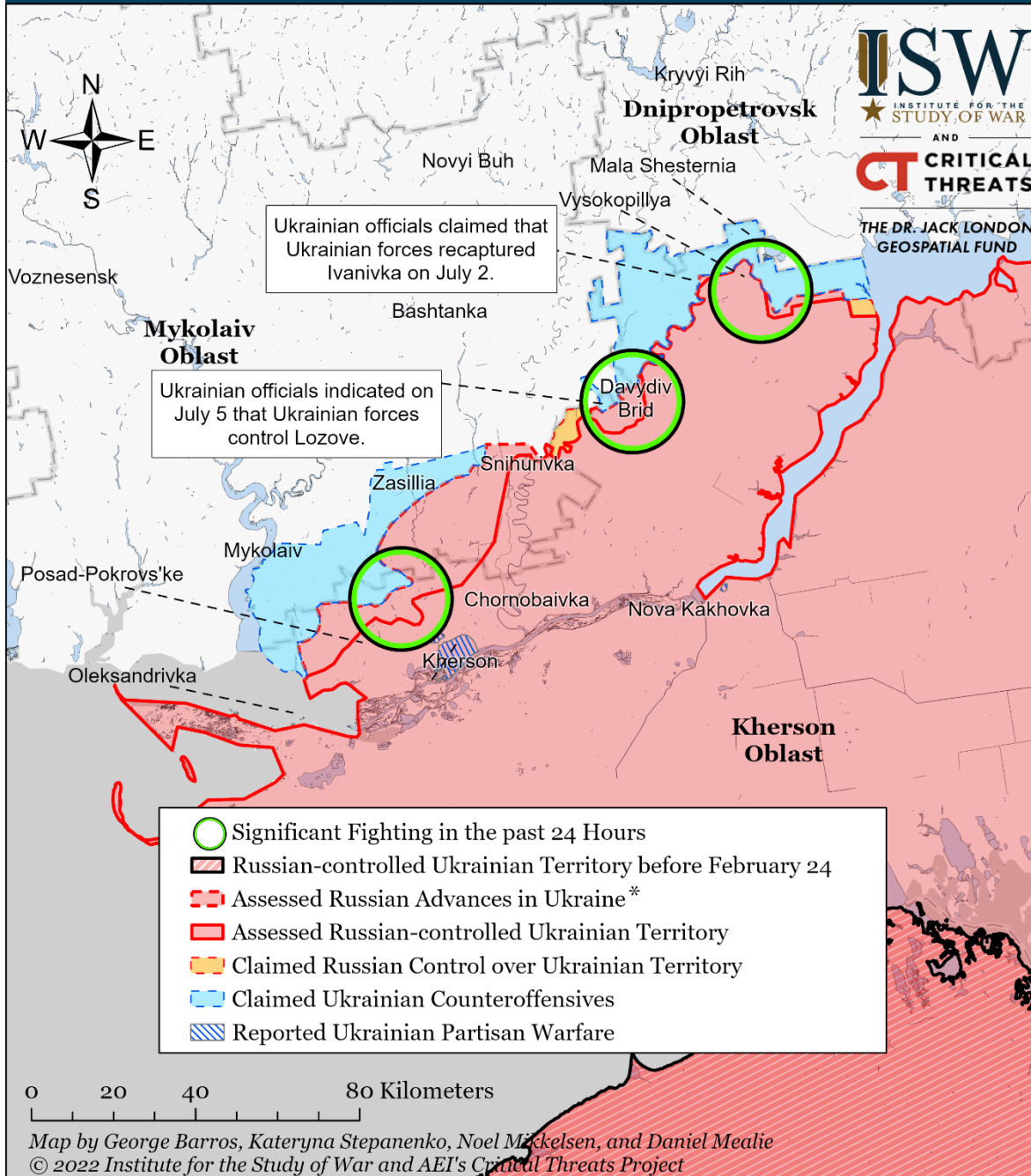
Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated on June 20 that Ukrainian forces have nearly reached the Ukrainian-Russian border. ISW will map Ukrainian counteroffensives when we observe corroborating evidence. We expanded Ukrainian counteroffensives in Rtyshchivka, just southwest of Chuhuiv, based on the Ukrainian General Staff report that Ukrainian forces repulsed a Russian reconnaissance-in-force attempt on the settlement on June 20.

Supporting Effort #2—Southern Axis (Russian objective: Defend Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts against Ukrainian counterattacks)

Russian forces attempted limited ground assaults to retake lost positions in Kherson Oblast on July 7. Ukrainian forces reportedly repelled platoon-sized and smaller Russian reconnaissance-in-force operations in Dobryanka, Myrolyubivka, and Potemkyne along the T2207 highway in northern Kherson Oblast on July 6 and 7.¹⁹ Ukraine's Southern Operational Command also reported that Russian forces launched 12 Kalibr high-precision cruise missiles at Mykolaiv City and Ochakiv, Mykolaiv Oblast from positions in occupied Kherson Oblast, likely targeting Ukrainian maritime infrastructure in both cities.²⁰ Ukrainian jets and air defense forces engaged a Russian Su-35 fighter jet as it launched missiles over Odesa Oblast, successfully intercepting the missile and forcing the jet to withdraw.²¹ Russian forces continued to hold their occupied positions and conduct artillery strikes along the entire Southern Axis to constrain Ukrainian counteroffensives.²²

Ukrainian partisans in and around occupied Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast are increasingly targeting Russian rail lines. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Ukrainian partisans blew up a railway bridge about 25 km north of Melitopol between Novobohdanivka and Troitske on July 7, likely further obstructing Russian resupply efforts from Crimea to the Zaporizhia Oblast front line.²³ Ukrainian partisans had previously blown up a rail bridge near occupied Lyubimivka between Melitopol and Tokmak on July 3 and derailed a Russian armored train carrying ammunition near Melitopol on July 2.²⁴ The increase in reported activity supports ISW's prior assessment that a Ukrainian partisan campaign is targeting Russian rail lines near Melitopol.²⁵

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of July 7, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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

Note: ISW expanded Ukrainian counteroffensives to Myrolyubivka in northwestern Kherson Oblast based on the Ukrainian Southern Operational Command report that Russian elements (up to rifle platoon sized unit) unsuccessfully attempted to launch an assault in the direction of the settlement on July 6. The phrasing implies that Russian forces are not in control of the settlement. We will refine our maps as we collect and confirm more information.

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

Russian sources confirmed that the Russian military leadership continues to create ad hoc volunteer battalions for deployment in Ukraine. Russian Telegram channel *Voennyyi Osvedomitel'* reported that Russia's Nizhny Novgorod Oblast is forming its own volunteer tank battalion as part of a continued trend of Russian oblasts creating so-called "nominal" and volunteer-based units for service in Ukraine.²⁶ *Voennyyi Osvedomitel'* stated that the Union of Russian Veterans of Afghanistan is registering volunteers for the Nizhny Novgorod tank battalion and that the campaign was officially confirmed by the Western Military District's press service, which is consistent with ISW's previous assessment that Russian authorities are forming ad hoc composite units to make up for continued personnel losses in Ukraine.²⁷

Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of occupied areas; set conditions for potential annexation into the Russian Federation or some other future political arrangement of Moscow's choosing)

Russian occupation authorities continued to face challenges with effective economic integration of occupied areas of Ukraine. Russian Telegram channel Rybar reported that farmers in occupied Kherson Oblast are experiencing logistical, supply-side, and economic problems with integration into the Russian market—a sign that Russian authorities have not yet developed consistent economic agendas to incorporate Ukrainian agricultural output into the Russian economy.²⁸ Rybar claimed that the wait times at border areas make perishable goods essentially impossible to import to Russia from Kherson Oblast and devalues products exported from Kherson on the Russian market.²⁹ According to Ukraine's Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security, over 22 million tons of grain remain blocked in Ukrainian warehouses due to the Russian invasion.³⁰ Taken together, these reports suggest that Russia is failing to institute effective export practices and economic processes for Ukrainian assets—to the detriment of the livelihoods of residents of occupied areas.



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¹ <https://tass dot ru/armiya-i-opk/15150167;>

² <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-6>

³ https://t.me/mod_russia/17471; https://t.me/mod_russia/17472;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0jqWK7vGuWz7EANbi5SiDc9XeHMLKZ6qqbjQuRMuqmwng96LPZKQuWRecTzfpk2>;

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⁷ https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/3949?single; https://suspilne_dot_media/258134-vnaslidok-raketnogo-udaru-po-kramatorsku-zaginula-1-ludina-ta-6-poranenih/;

<https://www.facebook.com/alexander.vasilyevich.goncharenko/posts/pfbid02x6F8wfC1vBfScFS4E1bynKQbj25fxYDAXNe1GECyG9uTF6KYzBcQ3Wa3Y8VekKTI>; <https://t.me/spravdi/12645>; https://t.me/Bratchuk_Sergey/15096;

https://t.me/kramatorsk_rada/4162

⁸ <https://twitter.com/zcjbrooker/status/1545071150828494850>;

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<https://twitter.com/zcjbrooker/status/1545071138795053060>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/7467>; <https://t.me/rybar/35070>

⁹ <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/4101>

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<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0jqWK7vGuWz7EANbi5SiDc9XeHMLKZ6qqbjQuRMuqmwng96LPZKQuWReccTtzfpk2l>; <https://t.me/rybar/35070>;

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¹³ <https://t.me/rybar/35070>

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¹⁸ <https://t.me/syngubov/3590>;

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²⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=464082752200380>

²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=735326434258091>

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²³ <https://sprotyv.mod.gov dot ua/2022/07/07/v-okupovanij-zaporizkij-oblasti-pidirvaly-shhe-odyn-mist/>

²⁴ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-4>

²⁵ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-4>

²⁶ <https://t.me/milinfoolive/86529>

²⁷ <https://t.me/milinfoolive/86529>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-6>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-2>

²⁸ <https://t.me/rybar/35082>

²⁹ <https://t.me/rybar/35082>

³⁰ <https://t.me/spravdi/12603>