

## Angelica Evans, Riley Bailey, Christina Harward, Grace Mappes, and George Barros

April 5, 2024, 8:15pm ET

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

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

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

*Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1pm ET on April 5. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the April 6 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.*

**Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) and Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted one of the largest series of drone strikes against military facilities within Russia, targeting at least four Russian airbases, on the night of April 4 to 5.** Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) and Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted one of the largest series of drone strikes against military facilities within Russia, targeting at least four Russian airbases, on the night of April 4 to 5. Ukrainian media reported that sources within Ukrainian security services, including the Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR), stated that the SBU and Ukrainian forces conducted successful strikes on airfields near Kursk City and Yeysk, Krasnodar Krai; the Engels Airbase in Saratov Oblast; and the Morozovsk Airbase in Rostov Oblast. These Ukrainian security sources reportedly stated that the Ukrainian drone strikes significantly damaged three Tu-95MS strategic bombers at Engels airbase, damaged two Su-25 fixed-wing aircraft at the airbase near Yeysk, and destroyed six unidentified aircraft and significantly damaged another eight unidentified aircraft at the Morozovsk Airbase. The Ukrainian strikes reportedly killed four Russian military personnel at the airbase near Yeysk and seven Russian personnel at the Engels Airbase and wounded and killed up to 20 Russian personnel at the Morozovsk Airbase. Geolocated footage shows explosions and Russian air defenses activating near all the airbases except for the one near Yeysk. ISW has not yet observed any visual confirmation that Ukrainian forces damaged or destroyed aircraft or infrastructure at any of the airbases. Satellite imagery collected on April 4 indicates that there were three Tu-160 heavy strategic bombers, five Tu-95 strategic bombers, an Il-76 transport aircraft, and a Tu-22 bomber at Engels Airbase; ten L-39 training and combat aircraft, five An-26 transport aircraft, an An-74 transport aircraft, an An-12 transport aircraft, four Su-27 fixed-winged aircraft, four Su-25 fixed-wing aircraft, one Su-30 fixed-wing aircraft, and several Ka-52 and Mi-8 helicopters at the Yeysk Airbase; and 29 fixed-wing aircraft, primarily Su-34s, at the Morozovsk airfield. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces intercepted 44 drones over Rostov Oblast, six drones over Krasnodar Krai, and a drone each in Saratov, Kursk, and Belgorod oblasts on the night of April 4 and into the morning on April 5. Ukrainian drone strikes have

typically only targeted individual airbases within Russia, and Ukraine's ability to strike four separate airbases in one strike series represents a notable inflection in the capabilities that Ukrainian forces are employing in their campaign against Russian military infrastructure, critical infrastructure, and strategic industries within Russia.

ISW continues to assess that Ukrainian strikes against targets within Russia are a necessary component of Ukraine's campaign to degrade industries that support the Russian war effort and military capabilities deployed in the Russian rear through asymmetric means. Russian forces routinely use Tu-95 strategic bombers stationed at Engels Airbase to launch Kh-101/Kh-555 cruise missiles at targets in Ukraine, and the Russian military had roughly 60 Tu-95 aircraft as of 2023. If confirmed, the possible loss of roughly five percent of Russia's strategic Tu-95 bombers in a single strike would be notable. ISW has also previously observed that the loss of fixed-wing aircraft is not negligible since Russia likely has about 300 various Sukhoi fixed-wing aircraft. Russian forces are currently using Sukhoi fixed-wing aircraft to conduct guided and unguided glide bomb strikes along the entire frontline in Ukraine and have previously leveraged significantly intensified glide bomb strikes to make tactical gains. Sustained Ukrainian strikes against Russian airfields within Russia will degrade the Russian Aerospace Force's (VKS) ability to conduct missile and air strikes throughout Ukraine.

**The recently intensified tempo of Russian offensive operations in Ukraine will likely result in increased manpower and materiel losses, but the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) appears to be successfully mitigating these losses.** Russian forces have conducted several mechanized assaults roughly at the platoon, company, and battalion levels west of Bakhmut near Chasiv Yar, west of Kreminna near Terny, and west of Avdiivka near Berdychi, Semenivka, and Tonenke over the past week after primarily conducting infantry-led "meat" assaults across the theater following the start of the campaign to seize Avdiivka in October 2023.[10] The previous pattern of Russian infantry-led attacks did not employ armored vehicles at scale at the expense of greater manpower losses, and Russia appears to have successfully leveraged its ongoing crypto-mobilization efforts to make up for increased manpower losses.[11] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Deputy Chief Major General Vadym Skibitskyi stated on January 15 that Russia recruits around 30,000 personnel per month, which the Russian military uses to replenish personnel losses in Ukraine and form tactical and operational-level reserves.[12] The observed new trend in which Russian forces are now employing more vehicles than was the previously observed standard for tactical assaults suggests that the Russian military may no longer be as constrained or concerned about its armored vehicle and tank losses. The British International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) think tank reported on February 12 that Russia is likely able to sustain its current rate of vehicle losses (over 3,000 armored fighting vehicles annually) for at least two or three years by mainly reactivating vehicles from storage.[13] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported on February 4 that the Russian defense industry can produce 250-300 "new and thoroughly modernized" tanks per year and can repair around 250-300 additional damaged tanks per year, suggesting that Russia can currently compensate for its vehicle losses in Ukraine by refurbishing vehicles from Soviet-era storage.[14] The Kremlin is unlikely to conduct unpopular manpower or economic mobilization efforts in the short term

unless Russia's manpower or materiel losses significantly increase past the point that Russia's current crypto-mobilization campaign and defense production capacity can accommodate. The recent intensification of mechanized attacks in eastern Ukraine indicates that the Russian command appears to believe that Russia is capable of compensating for losses in these intensified mechanized assaults while preparing for a forecasted offensive effort in Summer 2024.

**Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal indicated that Ukraine is starting to staff new units, but that Ukraine needs further Western military assistance to properly equip them.** Shmyhal stated in an interview with Estonian outlet Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR) published on April 4 that Ukrainian forces are staffing an unspecified number of new brigades with new personnel but are waiting for Western partners to deliver military equipment, weapons, and ammunition to equip these brigades at their full end strength.[15] Shmyhal stated that Ukraine can meet its necessary objectives with "usual mobilization" and that Ukraine has begun rotating out frontline personnel, which is consistent with Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi's recent statements that Ukraine does not need to conduct a proposed effort to mobilize 500,000 new personnel.[16] Ukrainian forces have recently transferred rear area personnel in noncombat units to frontline units to enable force rotations and lowered the mobilization age from 27 to 25 to address ongoing manpower issues.[17] Shmyhal's statement highlights Ukraine's need for continued timely and consistent Western military assistance in the short- and medium-term to maintain its defense.

**Shmyhal also reported that Russian missile and drone strikes have damaged or disrupted roughly 80 percent of electricity generation at Ukrainian thermal power plants (TPPs) in recent weeks, as Russian forces continue to exploit the degraded Ukrainian air defense umbrella in an effort to collapse Ukraine's energy grid.**[18] Russian forces intensified missile and drone strikes on March 22 and have since been primarily targeting Ukrainian critical energy infrastructure, and Shmyhal added that these strikes have damaged or disrupted more than six gigawatts of power generation at Ukrainian TPPs and hydroelectric power plants (HPPs).[19] Recent Russian drone and missile strikes have notably expanded their target sets to include Ukrainian HPPs.[20] The increasing damage and disruptions to major Ukrainian power plants threaten to accelerate the degradation of Ukraine's energy generation capabilities and constrain Ukraine's ability to stabilize future disruptions to its energy grid in the long term.[21] The Russian effort to collapse the Ukrainian energy grid may aim to heavily degrade the critical defense industrial capacity that Ukraine needs to support a long war effort against Russia.[22] Continued delays in US security assistance will continue to degrade Ukrainian air defense capabilities and present Russian forces with greater opportunities to severely damage Ukraine's energy infrastructure.[23]

**Ukrainian officials continue to warn that Russian forces are systematically and increasingly using chemical weapons and other likely-banned chemical substances in Ukraine.** The Ukrainian Support Forces Command stated on April 5 that Ukrainian forces have recorded 371 cases of Russian forces using munitions containing chemical substances during the last

month and 1,412 cases of Russian forces using chemical weapons between February 2023 and March 2024.[24] The Ukrainian Support Forces Command reported that Russian forces primarily use K-51 and RG-VO grenade launchers to launch munitions containing chemical agents. Ukrainian officials, and a Russian military unit, have previously reported on increasingly common instances of Russian forces using chemical substances in combat that are banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), to which Russia is a signatory.[25]

**An unattributed drone reportedly struck a military unit in the pro-Russian Moldovan breakaway republic of Transnistria on April 5 amidst an assessed ongoing Kremlin hybrid operation aimed at destabilizing Moldova from within.** The Transnistria Ministry of State Security (MGB) claimed that unspecified actors conducted a drone strike against a Transnistrian Ministry of Defense (MoD) military unit in Ribnita on the Dniester River on the afternoon of April 5.[26] The Transnistrian MGB claimed that the drone strike targeted a radar station, which sustained minor damage. Transnistrian authorities did not report any casualties. The Transnistrian MGB did not specify the actor behind the drone strike but noted in their press release that Ribnita is six kilometers from the Transnistrian-Ukrainian border, likely to vaguely allege Ukrainian involvement. Transnistrian sources posted footage of a drone allegedly flying in the area and posted photos of where the drone allegedly hit the ground, but neither the footage nor the photos showed the drone hitting a target or any radar station.[27] Kremlin newswire TASS and other Russian outlets amplified the Transnistrian MGB's claims.[28] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Spokesperson Andriy Yusov stated that Ukraine had nothing to do with the drone strike and "would not waste valuable drones for such minor provocations." [29] ISW cannot independently verify the details of the reported drone strike or identify the responsible actors, but it is unlikely that Ukrainian forces conducted the strike given the limited means used in the strike. Russian authorities previously baselessly accused Ukraine of conducting a reported drone strike against a military base in Transnistria on March 17 and may similarly blame Ukraine for the reported April 5 strike as part of ongoing Kremlin hybrid operations against Moldova.[30] Yevgenia Gutsul, the governor of the other pro-Russian Moldovan region, Gagauzia, claimed on April 5 that Gagauzia would "immediately" begin the process to secede from Moldova should Moldova unify with Romania, a NATO and European Union (EU) member state.[31] ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin is likely trying to exploit both Transnistria and Gagauzia to forward its efforts to destabilize Moldova from within and prevent Moldovan EU accession.[32]

**Russia reportedly has conducted thousands of cyber-attacks against Czechia's rail transport infrastructure and that of other European states as part of a broader effort to degrade NATO members' transport logistics since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.** Czech Transport Minister Martin Kupka reportedly told Financial Times (FT) in an article published on April 4 that Czechia suspects Russia of conducting a hacking campaign consisting of thousands of attacks against Czech national railway operator České dráhy to destabilize the EU and destroy critical infrastructure.[33] Kupka noted that Czechia is capable of defending against all the attacks. The European Union Agency for Cyber Security (ENISA) published its first threat report in March 2023 consisting of data collected between January 2021 and October 2022 and found that pro-

Russian hacker groups had escalated major cyberattacks against railway companies in Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Estonia.[34] ENISA's March 2023 report also found pro-Russian major cyberattacks against air and maritime transport in the EU more broadly.[35]

## Key Takeaways:

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- Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) and Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted one of the largest series of drone strikes against military facilities within Russia, targeting at least four Russian airbases, on the night of April 4 to 5.
  - The recently intensified tempo of Russian offensive operations in Ukraine will likely result in increased manpower and materiel losses, but the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) appears to be successfully mitigating these losses.
  - Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal indicated that Ukraine is starting to staff new units, but that Ukraine needs further Western military assistance to properly equip them.
  - Shmyhal also reported that Russian missile and drone strikes have damaged or disrupted roughly 80 percent of electricity generation at Ukrainian thermal power plants (TPPs) in recent weeks, as Russian forces continue to exploit the degraded Ukrainian air defense umbrella in an effort to collapse Ukraine's energy grid.
  - Ukrainian officials continue to warn that Russian forces are systematically and increasingly using chemical weapons and other likely-banned chemical substances in Ukraine.
  - An unattributed drone reportedly struck a military unit in the pro-Russian Moldovan breakaway republic of Transnistria on April 5 amidst an assessed ongoing Kremlin hybrid operation aimed at destabilizing Moldova from within.
  - Russia reportedly has conducted thousands of cyber-attacks against Czechia's rail transport infrastructure and that of other European states as part of a broader effort to degrade NATO members' transport logistics since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.
  - Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Avdiivka amidst ongoing positional fighting along the entire line of contact on April 5.
  - Russia's defense industry continues to mobilize to meet the Russian military's needs in Ukraine.
  - Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on April 4 that Russia will open two youth centers aimed at indoctrinating Ukrainian youth into Russian culture and historical narratives in occupied Zaporizhia and Kherson Oblasts in the near future.
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*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.*

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- 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
  - Activities in Russian-occupied areas
  - Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
  - Russian Information Operations and Narratives
  - Significant Activity in Belarus
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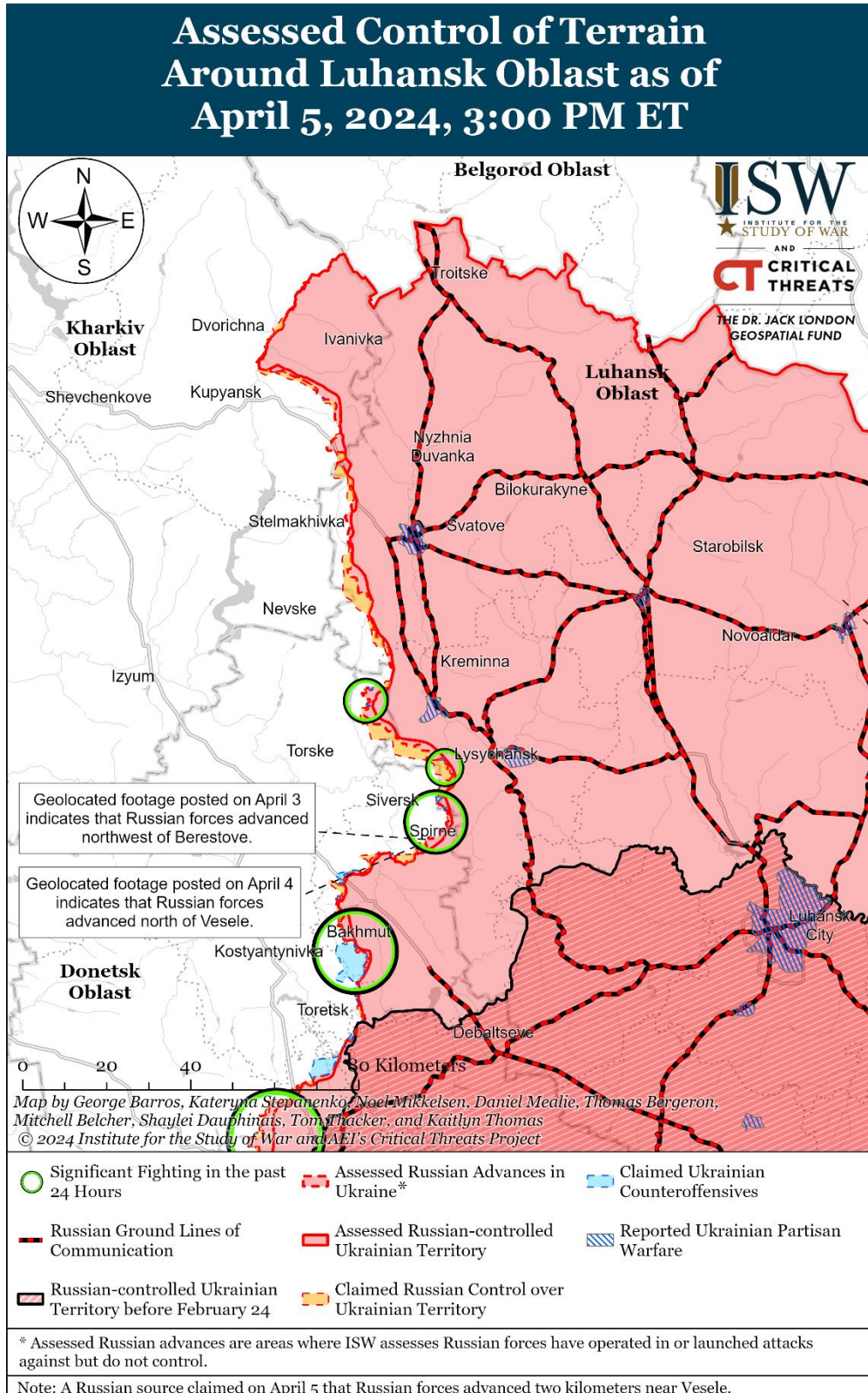
## Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Positional fighting continued along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on April 5. A Russian milblogger reiterated claims that Russian forces advanced up to the outskirts of Terny (west of Kreminna).[36] ISW previously observed Russian forces within about 700 meters of Terny. Positional fighting continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka; west of Kreminna near Yampolivka and Terny; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[37] Elements of the Russian 488th Motorized Rifle Regiment (144th Motorized Rifle Division, 20th Combined Arms Army [CAA] Moscow Military District [MMD] [formerly Western Military District]) are reportedly operating near Terny, and elements of the "Aida" group of "Akhmat" Spetsnaz forces and the 7th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] Army Corps) are reportedly operating near Bilohorivka.[38]



Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on April 5 that Russian forces are preparing to intensify offensive operations in both the Kupyansk and Lyman directions.[39] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 423rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (4th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army (GTA), MMD) have resumed offensive operations west of Svatove in the direction of Andriivka.[40] Russian forces conducted offensive operations west of Svatove near Raihorodka in the summer of 2023 but have since rarely conducted assaults in the area until resuming offensive operations west of Svatove on April 3.[41] The 1st GTA appears to have operational responsibility for offensive operations northwest of Svatove and the reported involvement of elements of the 4th Tank Division in assaults immediately west of Svatove suggests that the 1st GTA may be assuming responsibility for the area from the 20th CAA's 3rd Motorized Rifle Division (MMD).[42] Footage published on April 4 shows elements of the 4th Tank Division recently in transit, possibly redeploying, in an unspecified area of occupied Luhansk Oblast.[43]



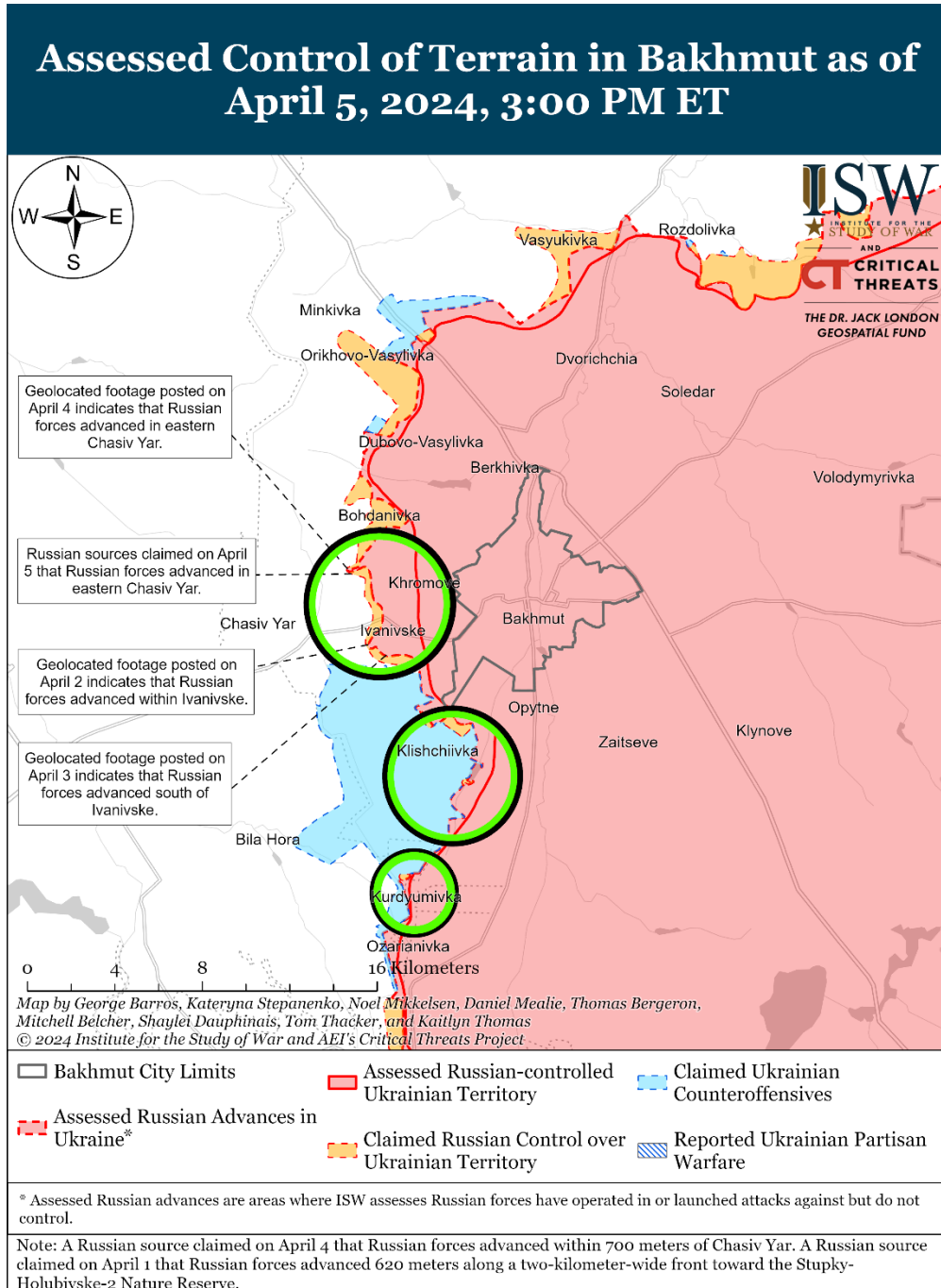
## **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Russian forces reportedly advanced northeast of Bakhmut on April 5, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced north of Vesele (northeast of Bakhmut).[44] One milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 106th Airborne (VDV) Division attacked with armored vehicle support and advanced two kilometers in depth near Vesele.[45] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims, however. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Spirne (northeast of Bakhmut).[46] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People’s Republic [LNR] Army Corps [AC]) with support from elements of the 106th VDV Division have advanced near Vyimka (northeast of Bakhmut) and are attempting to advance near Spirne.[47]

Russian forces appear to have intensified their efforts west of Bakhmut to seize Chasiv Yar. Russian milbloggers claimed on April 5 that Russian forces, including elements of the 98th VDV Division, advanced into and near the eastern outskirts of the Kanal micro-district (the easternmost part of Chasiv Yar on the east side of the Siverskyi-Donets Donbas Canal) and advanced to the northeastern outskirts of Kanal near the railway.[48] Russian milbloggers are likely referring to Russian advances up to the Kanal micro-district on April 4 following a roughly reinforced company-sized Russian mechanized assault on Chasiv Yar, which Ukrainian military observer Yuri Butusov stated was larger than previously reported with a strength of 32 unspecified Russian armored vehicles, 19 of which Ukrainian forces destroyed.[49] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces in Kanal are about 1.2 kilometers from the Siverskyi-Donets Donbas Canal, although ISW has only observed visual evidence of Russian forces about 1.4 kilometers from the canal.[50] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced south of Kanal near the Stupki-Holubivske-2 nature reserve and are near the eastern outskirts of the Novyi micro-district (southwest of Kanal and across the Siverskyi-Donets Donbas Canal), with one Russian source claiming that elements of the Russian 11th VDV Brigade are approaching Chasiv Yar from the south.[51] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these various Russian claims of advances, however. The Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces on April 5 denied reports that Russian forces breached Chasiv Yar.[52] A Russian source claimed that fighting assumed a positional nature on April 5 following Russian advances and subsequent Ukrainian counterattacks on the night of April 4-5.[53] Russian milbloggers claimed on April 4 and 5 that Russian aviation, including Su-25s, are supporting Russian attacks on Chasiv Yar.[54] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces may try to avoid crossing the Siverskyi-Donets Donbas Canal by advancing to the area where the canal runs underground for a 750-meter stretch north of Chasiv Yar near Kalynivka.[55] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces will not be able to seize Chasiv Yar without first seizing Bohdanivka and Ivanivske northeast and southeast of Chasiv Yar, respectively - both of which Russian forces currently do not fully control.[56] The commander of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the

Bakhmut direction stated that Russian forces have started a new wave of assaults in the Bakhmut direction.[57] The commander stated that Russian forces are concentrating their efforts on the Chasiv Yar area and are continuing to storm Ivanivske as part of efforts to flank Ukrainian positions in Chasiv Yar. The commander stated that Russian control of Ivanivske has fluctuated between 40 and 60 percent for the past three weeks.

Positional engagements continued elsewhere in the Bakhmut direction on April 5. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked west of Bakhmut near Ivanivske and southwest of Bakhmut near Andriivka, Klishchiivka, and Zelenopillya.[58] Elements of the Russian 85th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd LNR AC) are reportedly operating near Klishchiivka.[59]

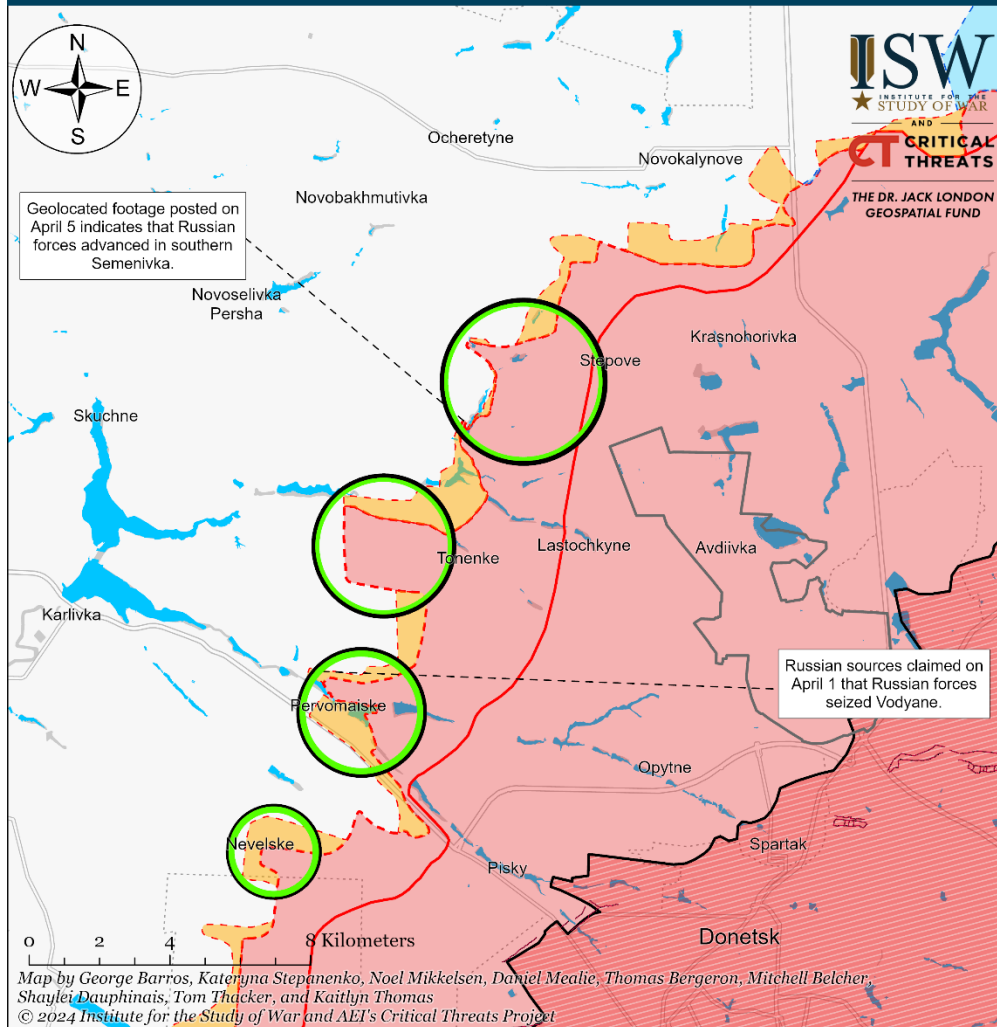




Russian forces recently made confirmed advances during a roughly reinforced platoon-sized mechanized assault with dismounted infantry near Avdiivka. Geolocated footage published on April 5 indicates that Russian forces advanced within southern Semenivka (northwest of Avdiivka) while conducting a roughly reinforced platoon-sized mechanized assault.[60] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces also advanced near Berdychi (northwest of Avdiivka), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[61] The Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces posted footage on April 4 of a roughly platoon-sized Russian mechanized assault near Berdychi (northwest of Avdiivka) and reported that Ukrainian forces repelled the attack.[62] Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued northwest of Avdiivka near Berdychi, west of Avdiivka near Umanske and Yasnobrodivka, and southwest of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske.[63] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are struggling to hold their positions in Semenivka and Berdychi due to superior Ukrainian drone capabilities.[64]



## Assessed Control of Terrain near Avdiivka as of April 5, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

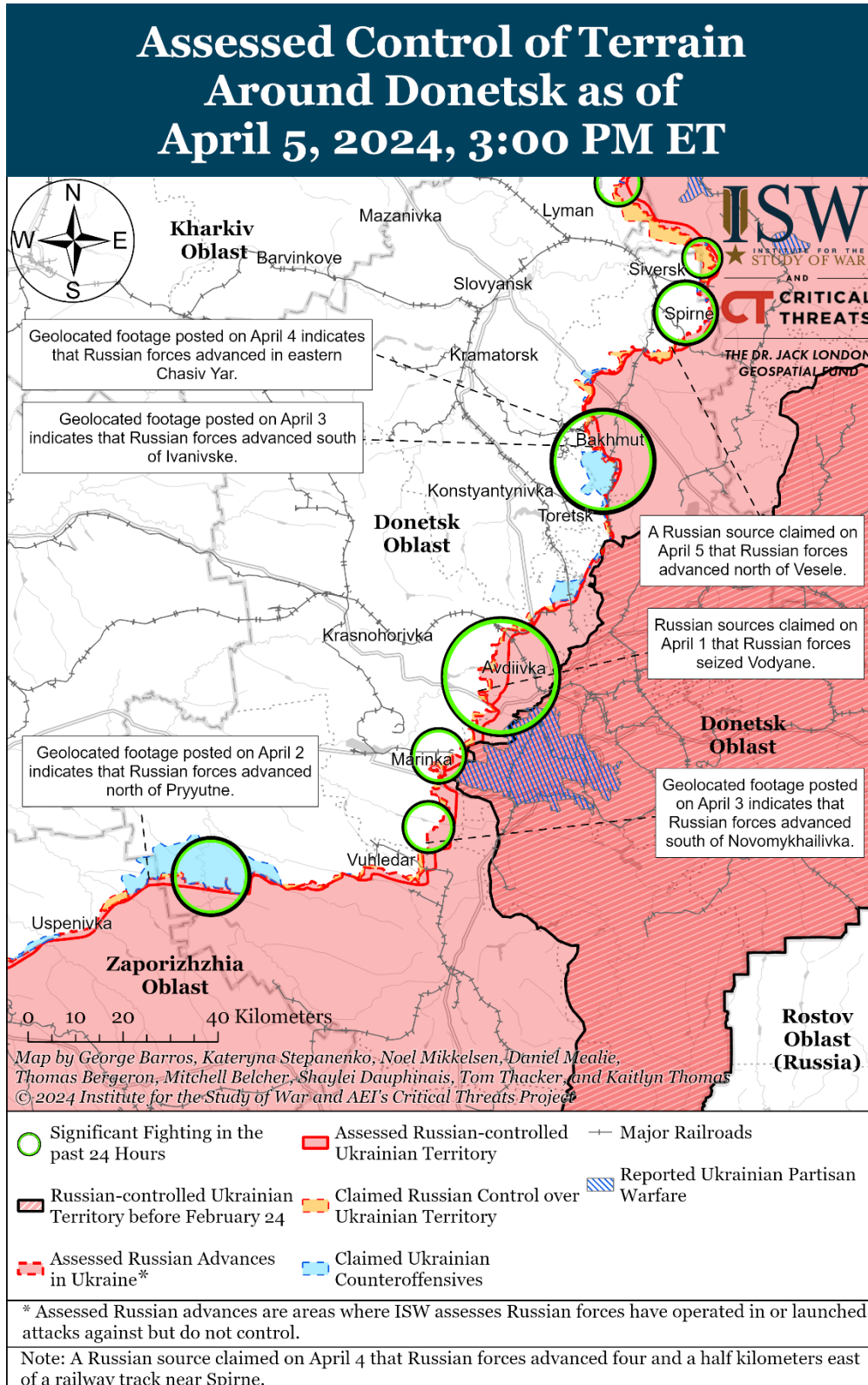


Avdiivka City Limits	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Russian Field Fortifications

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

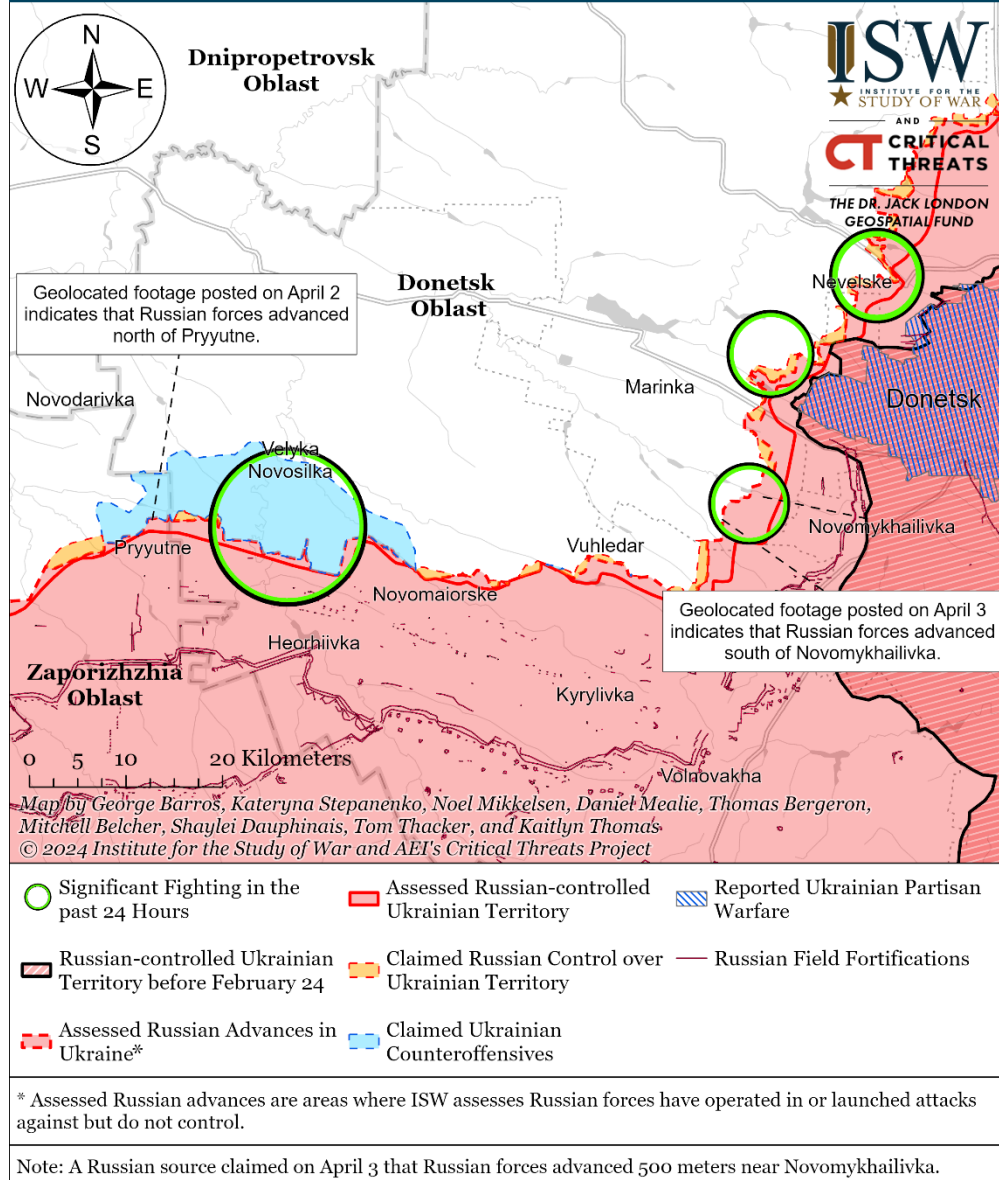
Note: A Russian source claimed on April 4 that Russian forces control between 20 to 25 percent of Semenivka. A Russian source claimed on April 4 that Russian forces advanced along two tree lines up to 830 meters north of Vodyane. A Russian source claimed on April 4 that Russian forces advanced along a 600 meter deep and 200 meter wide frontline near Semenivka. A Russian source claimed on April 3 that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers in width and depth east of Umanske and Netaylove. A Russian source claimed on April 1 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer west of Tonenke. A Russian source claimed on April 1 that Russian forces advanced 650 meters along a 200-meter-wide front in Vodyane.

Positional engagements continued west and southwest of Donetsk City on April 5, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Novomykhailivka and Kostyantynivka.[65] Elements of the Russian 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating near Novomykhailivka.[66]



Positional engagements continued in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on April 5, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Velyka Novosilka, Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka), and Urozhaine (south of Velyka Novosilka).[67] Elements of the Russian 60th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th Combined Arms Army [CAA], EMD) are reportedly operating near Staromayorske, and elements of the 38th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating in the Polohy direction.[68]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Donetsk Oblast as of April 5, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

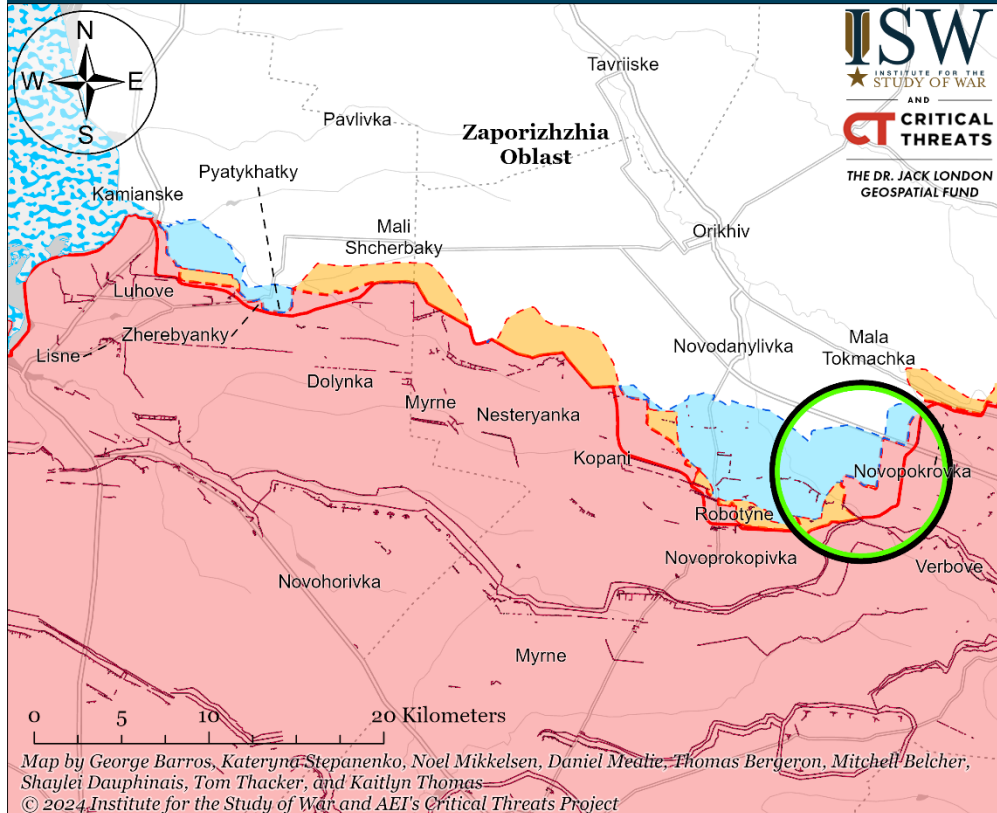


## **Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)**

Limited positional fighting continued in western Zaporizhia Oblast on April 5, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Positional fighting continued northwest of Verbove (east of Robotyne).[69] Elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) continue to operate near Robotyne, and elements of the 34th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th CAA, SMD) reportedly operate in the Zaporizhia direction.[70]



## Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of April 5, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

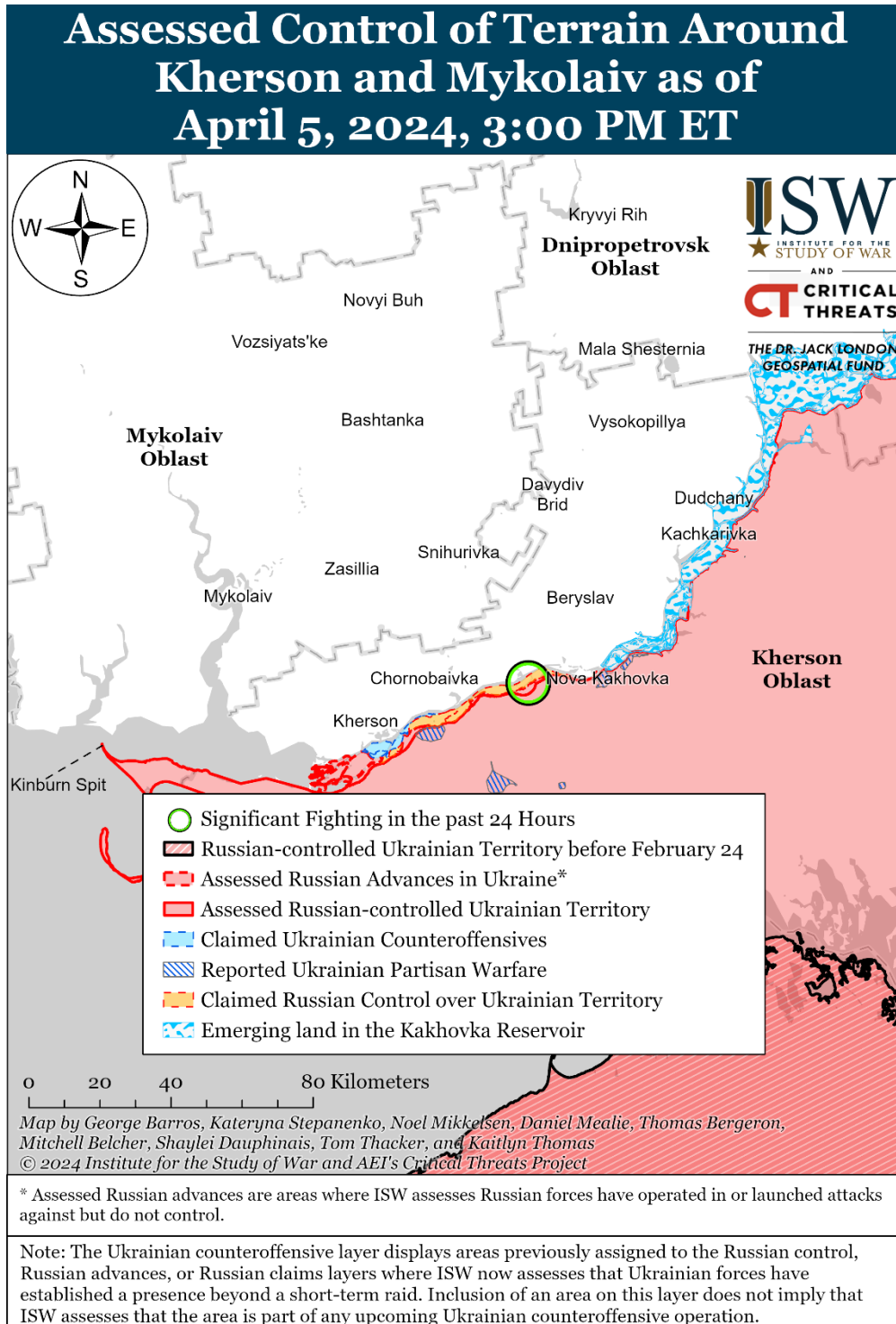


Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Russian Field Fortifications
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed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

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



Positional fighting continued in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast near Krynky on April 5.[71]



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

Russian forces conducted missile and drone strikes against Ukraine overnight on April 4 to 5 and during the day on April 5. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched two S-300/S-400 air defense missiles and three Iskander-M missiles from Belgorod Oblast and 13 Shahed 136/131 drones from occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea, overnight.[72] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces shot down all 13 Shahed drones. Ukrainian authorities reported that two S-300 missiles struck Pokrovsk, Donetsk Oblast, and that strikes also damaged energy infrastructure in Odesa Oblast overnight.[73] The Ukrainian National Police reported that Russian forces conducted two separate missile strikes against Zaporizhzhia City during the day on April 5; Russian forces launched three missiles at a residential building and then launched two additional missiles a short time later after emergency services arrived at the impact site.[74] Russian forces conducted similar "double tap" missile strikes against Kharkiv City on April 4 and Odesa City on March 15.[75]

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

Russia's defense industry continues to mobilize to meet the Russian military's needs in Ukraine. Rostec subsidiary United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) reported on April 5 that Russia's Novosibirsk Chkalov Aviation Plant delivered a batch of Su-34 bombers to the Russian Air Force (VKS).[76] UAC noted that the Novosibirsk plant must recruit over 1,000 additional workers and specialists this year to increase its production volume. Rostec subsidiary Kurganmashzavod delivered a batch of third-generation BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles to the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).[77] The Russian Simbirsk Design Bureau, which was founded by Russian drone specialists, announced that it is producing 300 "Piranha-10" first-person-view (FPV) drones per day at two facilities in Ulyanovsk, Ulyanovsk Oblast.[78]

Russian sources highlighted how Russia's force-generation efforts are creating tensions within Russian society and impeding Russia's military capabilities. A Russian insider source claimed on April 5 that the Russian MoD needs to address several force generation issues ahead of the summer 2024 Russian offensive to ensure that Russia can break through Ukrainian defenses.[79] The insider source claimed that the Russian MoD needs to accumulate manpower reserves, better prepare and motivate volunteer servicemen, provide rotations and improve salaries for Russian personnel who were mobilized in fall 2022, and recruit a high number of reserve officers with technical specialties. A prominent Russian milblogger responded to the insider source, claiming that the Russian military command needs to address the tension that inequalities in treatment and compensation that volunteer and mobilized Russian military personnel experience compared to contract servicemen.[80] The milblogger acknowledged that it will be difficult for the Russian MoD to develop a plan for these issues given that the Russian military command often receives inaccurately positive reports about a wide range of issues, likely including force generation issues, from their subordinates.[81] The milblogger also questioned if Russia has the training capacity to train a significantly larger number of incoming personnel.

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

Russian forces are attempting to equip their armored vehicles with electronic warfare (EW) to protect them against Ukrainian drone strikes. Russian tank manufacturer Uralvagonzavod reported that it has begun equipping Russian tanks and other armored vehicles with a new standard EW system to counter drones.[82] Russian and Ukrainian sources amplified imagery of Russian tanks, possibly a T-72 and T-90, jerry-rigged with an EW system and diesel generator to power the EW system.[83] Head of Ukrainian outlet Censor Yuri Butusov reported that the placement of the EW system on the tanks worsens the tank's visibility and impedes machine gun fire from the tank. Butusov noted that Russian forces are willing to sacrifice some tank performance for increased protection from Ukrainian drones because the drone threat is so great.[84]

Russian forces are attempting to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) technology with quadcopter strike drones to identify and strike targets even when the drones experience EW interference.[85]

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

*ISW is not publishing coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts today.*

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

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on April 4 that Russia will open two youth centers aimed at indoctrinating Ukrainian youth into Russian culture and historical narratives in occupied Zaporizhia and Kherson oblasts in the near future.[86] Putin praised the leadership of the Russian "Istoki" youth center in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea, who briefed Putin on their efforts to indoctrinate Ukrainian children as "heirs" of Russian culture in occupied Crimea. Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhaev reported that over 2,000 children have attended programs at the "Istoki" youth center and that the center expects 3,000 children and parents to visit the center this summer to learn about their supposed Russian heritage.[87]

Russian opposition media continues to report on Russia's forced deportation of Ukrainian minors to Russia amid continued Ukrainian efforts to return Ukrainian children to Ukrainian-held territory. Russian opposition outlets Verstka and Vazhnye Istorii published a report on April 3 identifying and interviewing 285 Ukrainian children and teenagers that Russian authorities have forcibly placed within the Russian federal orphanage system.[88] Verstka and Vazhnye Istorii reported that Russian authorities have placed Ukrainian children in institutions in at least 15 western Russian federal subjects and determined that it is likely that Russian families have adopted more than 450 Ukrainian children since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Verstka and Vazhnye Istorii reported that Russian



authorities divided some siblings by placing them in different institutions and even placed some older children in Russian cadet schools, where Russian authorities forced them to swear allegiance to Russia. Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada Human Rights Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets told Verstka and Vazhnye Istorii that one of Ukraine's priorities is the return of all deported Ukrainian children from Russia. Lubinets stated separately on April 3 that Ukrainian authorities returned seven Ukrainian children and their families from occupied Zaporizhia and Kherson oblasts to Ukrainian-held territory.[89]

## Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian authorities continue information operations baselessly accusing Ukraine of involvement in the March 22 Crocus City Hall attack. The Russian Investigative Committee claimed on April 5 that it found photos of Ukrainian personnel on the phones of the terrorists that committed the attack at the Crocus City Hall concert venue.[90] The Russian Investigative Committee stated that it is continuing to investigate whether Ukrainian special services were involved in the attack.[91] The Kremlin will likely continue alleging that Ukraine and the West are responsible for the attack as it continues efforts to capitalize on domestic fear and anger to generate perceptions about a wider Ukrainian and Western terrorist threat in hopes of increasing Russian domestic support for the war in Ukraine.[92] ISW remains confident that the Islamic State (IS) conducted the Crocus City Hall attack and has yet to observe independent reporting or evidence to suggest that an actor other than IS was responsible for or aided the attack.[93] Russian law enforcement and intelligence responses in the North Caucasus and intensified measures targeting Central Asian migrants in Russia are further evidence that Russian authorities in practice assess that the terrorist threat is emanating from Russia's Central Asian and Muslim minority communities instead of Ukraine.[94]

Russian Security Council Deputy Chair Dmitry Medvedev promoted Kremlin efforts to intensify existing information operations meant to force the West into self-deterrence on April 4 and 5. Medvedev stated on April 4 that Russia should provide maximum rewards to Russian soldiers who hypothetically kill personnel of NATO members in Ukraine.[95] Medvedev proceeded to post the same statement to his English language X (formerly Twitter) on April 5 and claimed that the deployment of NATO forces to Ukraine would mean that these personnel would become part of the regular Ukrainian military fighting against the Russian military.[96] Medvedev's deliberate effort to make his post in English strongly suggests that these comments are aimed at Western audiences.[97] Kremlin officials appear to be intensifying information operations that use threatening language in order to delay and influence important decisions regarding Western support for Ukraine, and Medvedev will likely continue to make escalatory and threatening statements to support these efforts.[98]

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

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko submitted a bill to the Belarusian House of Representatives on April 5 that will suspend Belarusian participation in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.[99] The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) specified that the bill will not withdraw Belarus from the treaty but instead suspends Belarusian adherence to CFE provisions.[100] Twenty-two NATO members and Warsaw Pact states signed the CFE Treaty in 1990, and it was ratified in 1992 after the fall of the Soviet Union.[101] The CFE was meant to set equal limits on the number of

tanks, armored combat vehicles, heavy artillery, combat aircraft, and attack helicopters between NATO and Warsaw Pact states in order to counterbalance the Soviet Union's advantage in conventional weapons systems in the final years of the Cold War.[102] Belarus' suspension of the CFE indicates that Belarus may intend to pursue military expansion efforts or may intend to set conditions for the Russian military to deploy larger permanent forces in Belarus.

**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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## End Notes

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