

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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April 25, 2024, 8:15pm ET

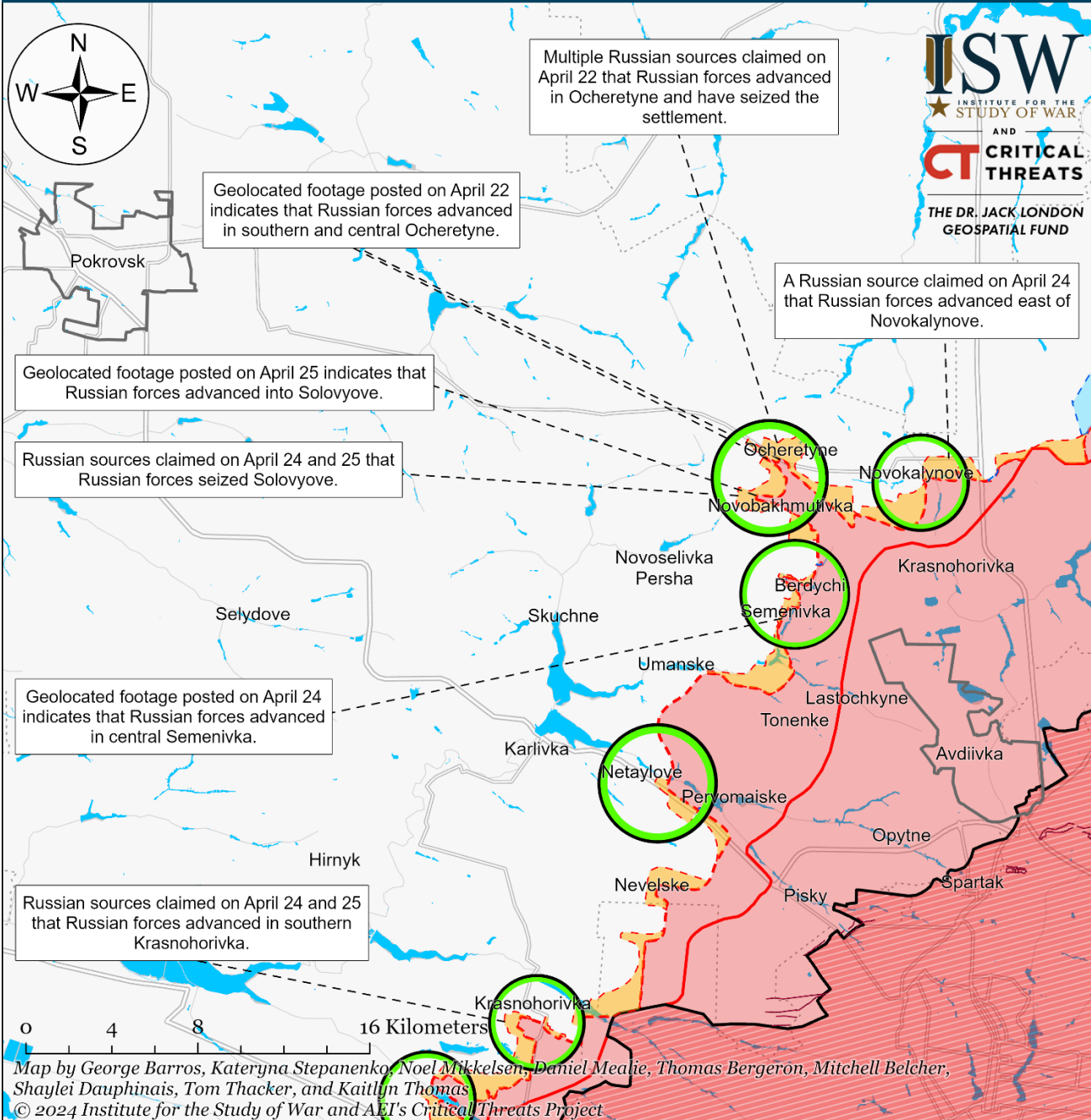
Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1:15pm ET on April 25. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the April 26 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces are stabilizing their small salient northwest of Avdiivka and may make further tactical gains that could cause Ukrainian forces to withdraw from other tactical positions along the frontline west of Avdiivka to a more defensible line. Geolocated footage published on April 25 indicates that Russian forces advanced into central Solovyove (northwest of Avdiivka) from Novobakhmutivka after likely seizing all of Novobakhmutivka on the night of April 24 to 25.[1] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces seized all of Solovyove on April 25 and advanced up to two kilometers in depth in eastern Novokalynove (northwest of Avdiivka) on the night of April 24 to 25.[2] Russian sources claimed that elements of the 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) and the Arbat Spetsnaz Battalion made the advances in Novobakhmutivka and Solovyove.[3] Russian forces have committed roughly a reinforced division's worth of combat power (comprised mainly of four CMD brigades) to the frontline northwest of Avdiivka and appear to be attempting to widen their penetration of the Ukrainian defense in the area following significant advances into Ocheretyne (northwest of Avdiivka) as of April 18.[4] These recent Russian gains northwest of Avdiivka have been relatively quick but still relatively marginal, with Russian forces advancing at most roughly five kilometers in depth since April 18. Russian forces continue offensive operations throughout the frontline west of Avdiivka but have so far only achieved gradual marginal gains west and southwest of Avdiivka.[5]

The recent Russian advances in Novobakhmutivka and Solovyove widen the salient Russian forces are advancing along northwest of Avdiivka and afford Russian forces a more stable position from which to pursue a wider penetration. This salient is roughly two kilometers in width at its widest section, however, and would still be vulnerable to Ukrainian counterattacks should Ukrainian forces stabilize the tactical situation in the area. Ocheretyne notably sits on a junction between the Ukrainian defensive line that Russian forces have been attacking since their seizure of Avdiivka in mid-February 2024 and a subsequent defensive line further west, which Russian sources have identified as a more heavily fortified line.[6] Russian forces could further stabilize their salient northwest of Avdiivka and advance further west of Ocheretyne, making positions along the Berdychi-Semenivka-Umanske line increasingly difficult for Ukrainian forces to hold. The Ukrainian command could decide to withdraw Ukrainian forces further west if it deems Russian tactical gains in the area to be too threatening to current Ukrainian positions. Ukrainian forces withdrew from Avdiivka to relatively poorly prepared defensive positions immediately west of Avdiivka following the Russian seizure of Avdiivka in mid-February and proceeded to slow Russian advances.[7] Positions further west would likely afford Ukrainian forces similar or better opportunities to blunt Russian advances, and Russian forces would likely have to maintain a relatively high tempo of offensive operations to place these subsequent Ukrainian defensive positions under immediate pressure. Russian forces will likely have to replenish and reinforce attacking units northwest of Avdiivka and will likely not be able to maintain the tempo of offensive operations required to rapidly advance west of the Berdychi-Semenivka-Umanske line. **Russian forces will likely continue to make tactical gains northwest of Avdiivka, but these gains are unlikely to develop into an operationally significant penetration, let alone cause the collapse of the Ukrainian defense west of Avdiivka.**

Russian offensive operations west of Avdiivka aim to exploit opportunities for tactical gains while the Russian offensive operation to seize Chasiv Yar offers Russian forces the most immediate prospects for operationally significant advances. Russian forces in the Avdiivka area remain roughly 30 kilometers from their reported operational objective of Pokrovsk and roughly 17 kilometers from relatively large villages east of Pokrovsk.[8] Even if Russian tactical gains do cause Ukrainian forces to withdraw to positions further west, the current Russian gains northwest of Avdiivka are unlikely to become operationally significant advances in the near term. Russian pressure on Chasiv Yar is more significant. Russian forces currently on the eastern outskirts of Chasiv Yar have been intensifying efforts to seize the city since March 2024.[9] The offensive effort to seize Chasiv Yar offers Russian forces the most immediate prospects for operationally significant advances as the seizure of the town would likely allow Russian forces to launch subsequent offensive operations against cities that form a significant Ukrainian defensive belt in Donetsk Oblast.[10] Russian forces do pose a credible threat of seizing Chasiv Yar, although they may not be able to do so rapidly.[11] Russian forces are likely attempting to seize as much territory as possible before the arrival of US security assistance significantly improves Ukrainian defensive capabilities in the coming weeks, and the Russian military command may be intensifying offensive operations northwest of Avdiivka because the area provides greater opportunities for making more rapid tactical gains despite the relative operational insignificance of those gains.

Assessed Control of Terrain Northwest of Avdiivka as of April 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



- Avdiivka and Pokrovsk City Limits
- ▭ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▭ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- 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 24 that Russian forces advanced two kilometers in Novokalynove. A Russian source claimed on April 24 that Russian forces control two-thirds of Ocheretyne. A Russian source claimed on April 21 that Russian forces advanced 400 meters deep in the southern outskirts of Pervomaiske.

US officials are reportedly worried that the latest package of US military aid to Ukraine may not be enough for Ukraine to regain all of its territory. US military assistance is only part of what Ukraine currently needs, moreover; but Ukraine is itself working to address other war fighting requirements — primarily manpower challenges and the expansion of its defense industrial base (DIB). *Politico* reported on April 25 that three US officials believe that the recent provision of US aid may not be enough for Ukraine to restore its territorial integrity due to changes in the situation on the battlefield in the past few months.[12] One US official reportedly stated that the “immediate goal” of the US aid package is to stop Ukrainian losses and help Ukraine “regain momentum” on the battlefield, after which the goal will be to help Ukraine regain its territory. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan stated on April 24 that it is “certainly possible” that Russian forces could make further tactical advances in the coming weeks but that the US will be able to provide Ukraine “with what it needs through 2024.”[13] The commander of the Ukrainian 93rd Mechanized Brigade, Colonel Pavlo Palisa, stated on April 25, however, that Ukraine’s manpower problems are “much more important than ammunition.”[14] Palisa stated that one Ukrainian soldier is currently having to perform the tasks of three to four soldiers and that Russian forces outnumber Ukrainian forces by about five to seven times in the Bakhmut direction. Palisa stated that Russian forces are taking advantage of this numerical superiority by conducting attacks that result in personnel and equipment losses, which Ukrainian forces cannot afford to do.

ISW previously assessed that Ukraine’s ability to defend against Russian offensive operations and eventually challenge the theater-wide initiative heavily depends on both the US provision of military aid and on Ukraine’s efforts to restore and reconstitute existing units and create new ones.[15] US military assistance is currently en route to Ukraine, and Ukraine has recently taken steps to address its manpower issues.[16] Ukraine is also dramatically expanding its defense industrial capacity to develop the ability over time to satisfy its military requirements with significantly reduced foreign military assistance.[17] Russian forces are likely trying to take advantage of the limited period of time before US aid appears on the battlefield by intensifying offensive operations on certain sectors of the front in order to make tactical gains in the coming weeks.[18] Russian forces are unlikely, however, to translate these tactical advances into operationally significant gains before this window closes.[19] The timeline for Ukraine’s resolution of its manpower challenges is less clear. Ukraine has recently taken steps to increase significantly the pool of manpower conscripted into the army and will need time to induct and train new conscripts. The Ukrainian command has been taking steps to get more manpower to front line units already on a limited scale, as ISW has previously reported.[20] The arrival of new ammunition and equipment will likely help blunt ongoing Russian offensives, but the timeline for the incorporation of new manpower will likely play a larger role in determining the timeline for future Ukrainian counteroffensive operations.

Russian forces are reportedly fielding drones adapted to be more resilient against Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) capabilities on critical sectors of the frontline, likely in an attempt to leverage new technological capabilities to exploit a limited window before US security assistance arrives in Ukraine. *Ukrainska Pravda* reported on April 15 that its sources in the Ukrainian General Staff stated that the number of Russian drones in “hot” sectors of the frontline has “at least doubled” in the past three months.[21] The Ukrainian General Staff sources reported that Russian forces are using modernized drones that operate on frequencies between 700 to 1,000 MHz, which are difficult for Ukrainian EW to jam because Ukrainian EW systems are chiefly designed to jam Russian drones operating on frequencies around 900 MHz. The sources stated that Ukraine is developing a unified system to collect information about Russian drone adaptations in order to quickly adapt Ukrainian electronic warfare systems to counter the Russian drones. ISW previously assessed that Russian forces are attempting to adapt their drone technology and tactics along the frontline as part of an offense-defense arms race to mitigate Ukrainian technological adaptations designed to offset Russian material advantages.[22] The Russian military likely chose to deploy drones operating on a frequency more difficult for Ukrainian EW to jam to support continued ground operations in critical sectors of the frontline to further exploit Ukrainian materiel shortages. The Russian military may have assessed that Ukrainian forces would eventually adapt their EW systems to jam drones at a larger frequency range and employed them now to support ongoing offensive operations as Ukrainian forces wait for US security assistance to arrive. The pattern of one side seizing on a fleeting technological advantage to support immediate ground operations while it lasts will likely become a characteristic of this kind of conflict.

A prominent Kremlin-awarded Russian milblogger channel announced that it opened a “media school” in the Balkans, likely supporting Kremlin efforts to expand its reach in the international information space. The *Rybar* Telegram channel claimed on April 25 that it opened the “Rybar Media School” in the Balkans and that a *Rybar* team spent the past week in Serbia and the territory of Republika Srpska (the Serbian political entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina).[23] *Rybar* claimed that its team taught students, journalists, politicians, and academics how to create and run Telegram channels, organize these channels into networks, distribute “correct” content, and fight “misinformation.” *Rybar* claimed that founder Mikhail Zvinchuk gave lectures, adopted 10 “bright and promising” projects, and reached agreements to hold regular in-person masterclasses with authors of unspecified Russian Telegram channels. *Rybar* previously gave a masterclass on the importance of Telegram and other social media to press heads and communications personnel at Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec likely in an effort to normalize the war without involving the Kremlin.[24] *Rybar*’s public expansion to international media influence operations is notable, particularly as the Kremlin seeks to expand its influence over the Russian information space and coopt more Russian milbloggers like it has with *Rybar*. [25] Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev met with Republika Srpska

President Milorad Dodik in St. Petersburg on April 23 and discussed increasing interstate cooperation and the situation in the Balkans and Europe.[26]

French President Emmanuel Macron emphasized the importance of Europe's self-sufficiency for its defense and sovereignty during an April 25 speech.[27] Macron stated that Russia has “no inhibitions” and “no limits” and threatens Europe's ability to ensure its security.[28] Macron called on Europe to build a strategic concept of “credible European defense” and develop its defense industry to build its sovereignty and autonomy.[29] Macron stated that European countries should give preference to European suppliers when buying military equipment and supported proposals for an EU loan program to finance preferential buying. Macron also supported increasing Europe's cybersecurity and cyber defense capacities, closer defense ties with the UK, and the creation of a European academy to train high-ranking military personnel.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces are stabilizing their small salient northwest of Avdiivka and may make further tactical gains that could cause Ukrainian forces to withdraw from other tactical positions along the frontline west of Avdiivka to a more defensible line.**
- **Russian offensive operations west of Avdiivka aim to exploit opportunities for tactical gains while the Russian offensive operation to seize Chasiv Yar offers Russian forces the most immediate prospects for operationally significant advances.**
- **US officials are reportedly worried that the latest package of US military aid to Ukraine may not be enough for Ukraine to regain all of its territory. US military assistance is only part of what Ukraine currently needs, moreover, but Ukraine is itself working to address other war fighting requirements - primarily manpower challenges and the expansion of its defense industrial base (DIB).**
- **Russian forces are reportedly fielding drones adapted to be more resilient against Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) capabilities on critical sectors of the frontline, likely in an attempt to leverage new technological capabilities to exploit a limited window before US security assistance arrives in Ukraine.**
- **A prominent Kremlin-awarded Russian milblogger channel announced that it opened a “media school” in the Balkans, likely supporting Kremlin efforts to expand its reach in the international information space.**
- **French President Emmanuel Macron emphasized the importance of Europe's self-sufficiency for its defense and sovereignty during an April 25 speech.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently made confirmed advances near Siversk, and Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Avdiivka and the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin justified Russia's ongoing efforts to nationalize Russian enterprises, including defense industrial base (DIB) enterprises on April 25.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Shaylei Dauphinais, Tom Thacker, and Kaitlyn Thomas.
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* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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.

- 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

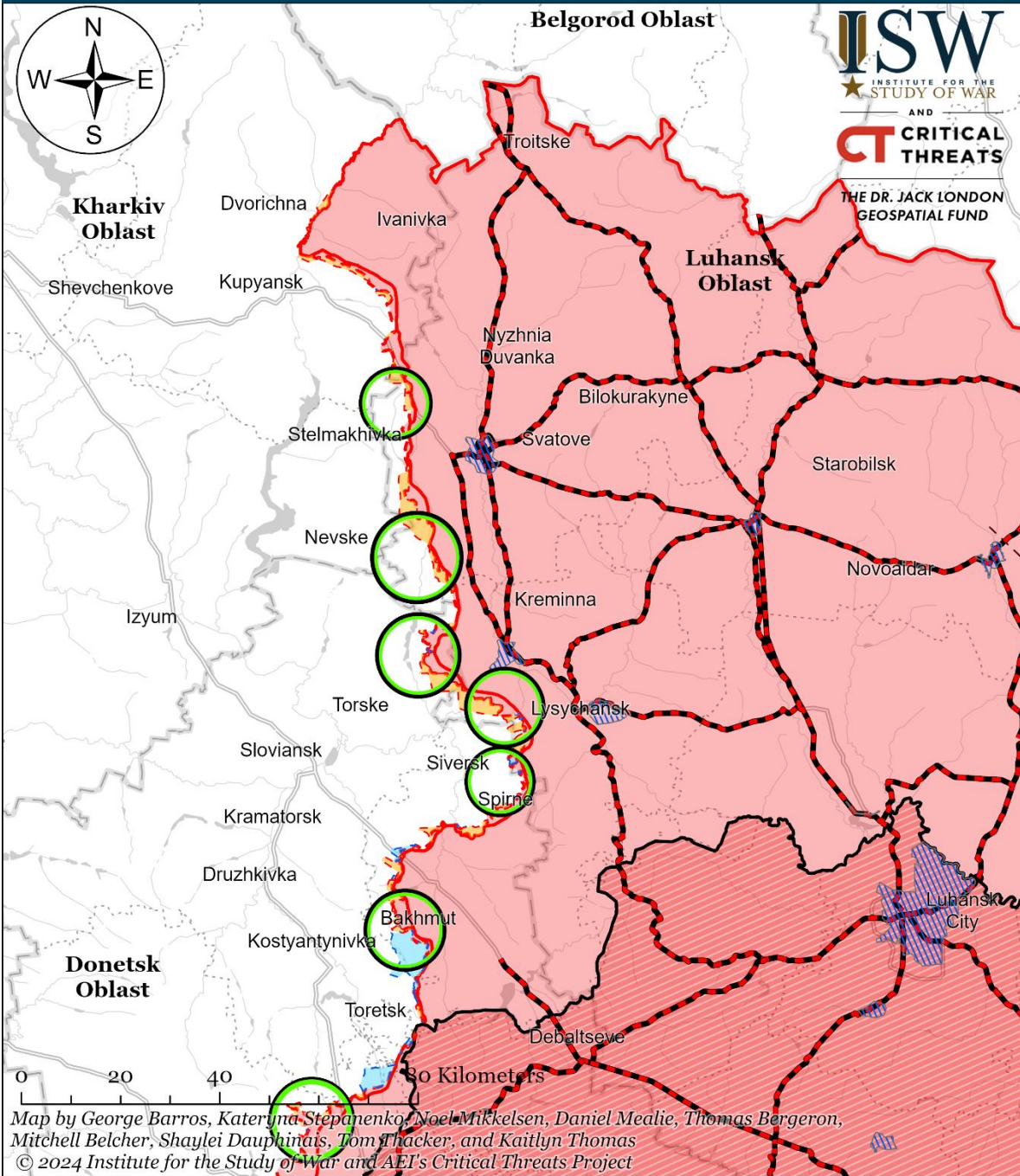
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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)

The Ukrainian Border Service reported on April 25 that Ukrainian forces recently repelled a Russian sabotage-and-reconnaissance group on the Sumy Oblast border.[30]

Positional fighting continued on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on April 25, but there were no changes to the frontline. Positional fighting continued northwest of Svatove near Berestove and Stelmakhivka; southwest of Svatove near Novovodyane, Druzhelyubivka, Makiivka, and Nevske; west of Kreminna near Terny, Torske, and Zarichne; and south of Kreminna near the Serebryanske forest area and Bilohorivka.[31] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported that elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Regiment (2nd Motorized Rifle Division, 1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) are fighting towards Berestove; elements of the 347th Motorized Rifle Regiment and 26th Tank Regiment (both of the 47th Tank Division, 1st GTA) are deploying to the front in the Kupyansk direction; and elements of the 7th Motorized Rifle Regiment (11th Army Corps, Baltic Fleet) are operating in the Kyslivka direction (southeast of Kupyansk).[32] Mashovets also reported that elements of the 252nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (2nd Motorized Rifle Division, 20th Combined Arms Army [CAA], MMD) are fighting near Makiivka; elements of the 283rd and 488th infantry regiments (both of the 144th Motorized Rifle Division, 20th CAA) are fighting near Novosadove (northwest of Kreminna) and Terny, respectively; and elements of the 37th Motorized Rifle Regiment and 164th Motorized Rifle Brigade (both of the 67th Motorized Rifle Division, 25th CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are fighting near Torske.[33]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of April 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

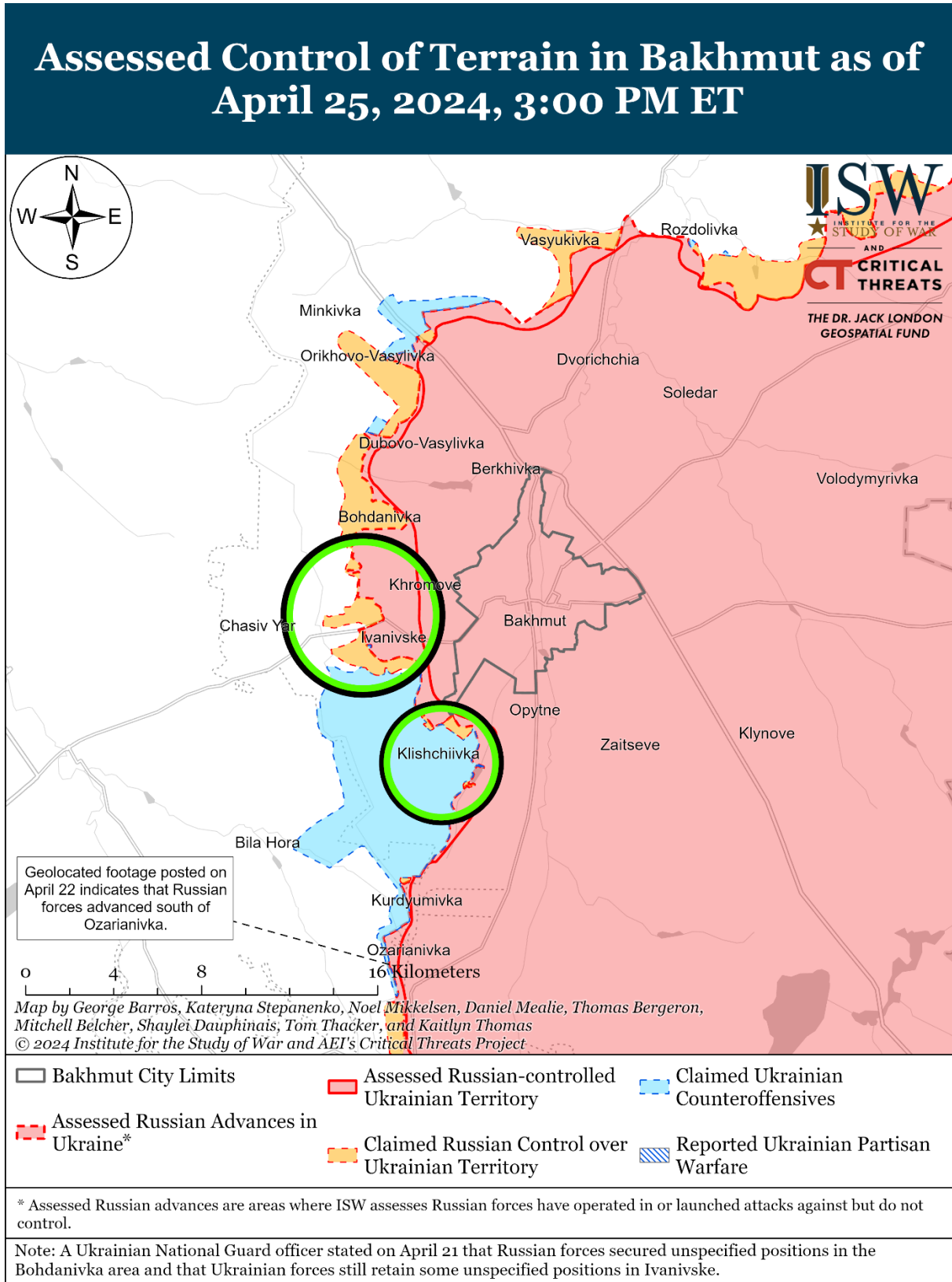


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February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

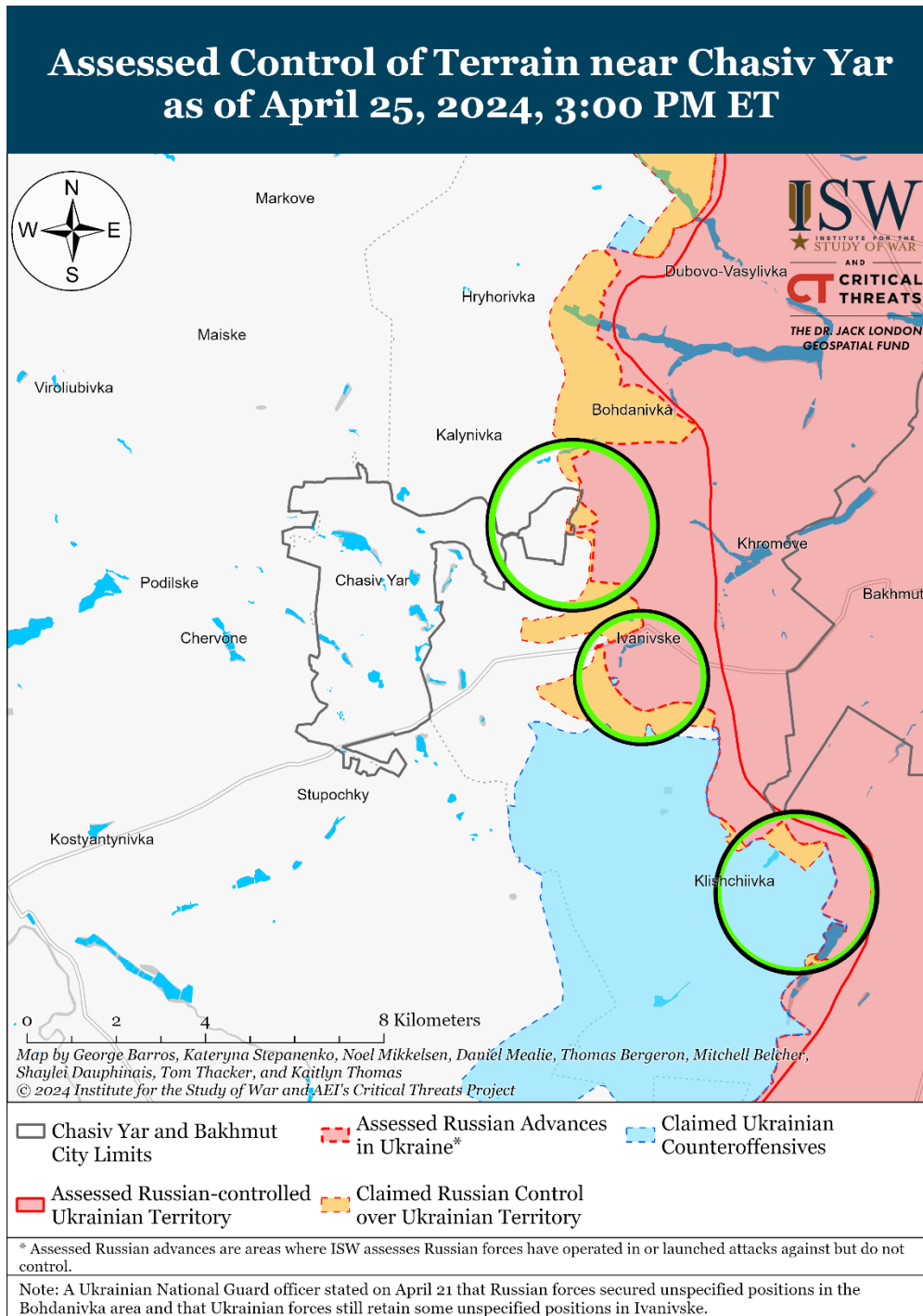
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Positional fighting continued in the Siversk direction (northeast of Bakhmut) on April 25. Geolocated footage published on April 25 indicates that Ukrainian forces have advanced further east of Verkhokamyanske (east of Siversk) than previously assessed but likely did not make this advance recently.[34] Fighting continued east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske and southeast of Siversk near Spirne and Vyimka.[35]

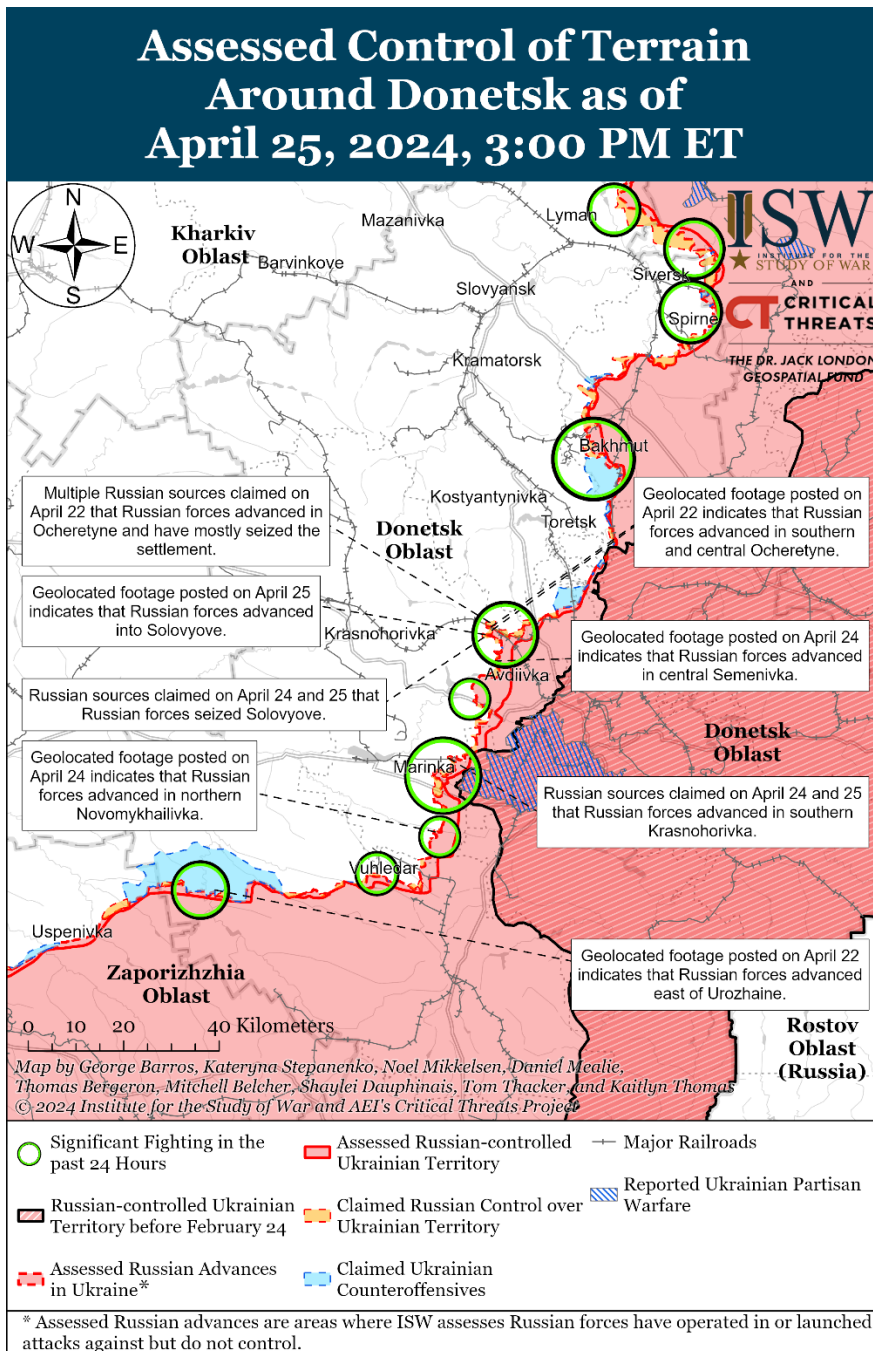


Fighting continued near Chasiv Yar on April 25, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Fighting continued on the eastern outskirts of Chasiv Yar, in the Novyi Microraion (southeastern Chasiv Yar), and southeast of Chasiv Yar near Ivanivske and Klishchiivka.[36] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced near Klishchiivka, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[37] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of Russian 217th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (98th VDV Division) and 11th VDV Brigade are operating near the Kanal Microraion (easternmost Chasiv Yar) and that elements of the 102nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) and 11th VDV Brigade are operating near Ivanivske.[38] Mashovets stated that elements of the 331st VDV Regiment (98th VDV Division) are fighting near the Novyi Microraion and trying to advance west of the Siverskyi Donetsk-Donbas Canal. Mashovets stated that the Russian military command likely understands that it is risky for Russian forces to attempt further advances towards Chasiv Yar and Stupochky without making further advances on the southern flank near Ivanivske and Klishchiivka. Mashovets stated that Russian command is likely preparing elements of the 1307th Motorized Rifle Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd Army Corps [AC]) for assaults near Klishchiivka from the east and elements of the Russian 88th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd AC) and 83rd VDV Brigade for assaults from the north and northwest.



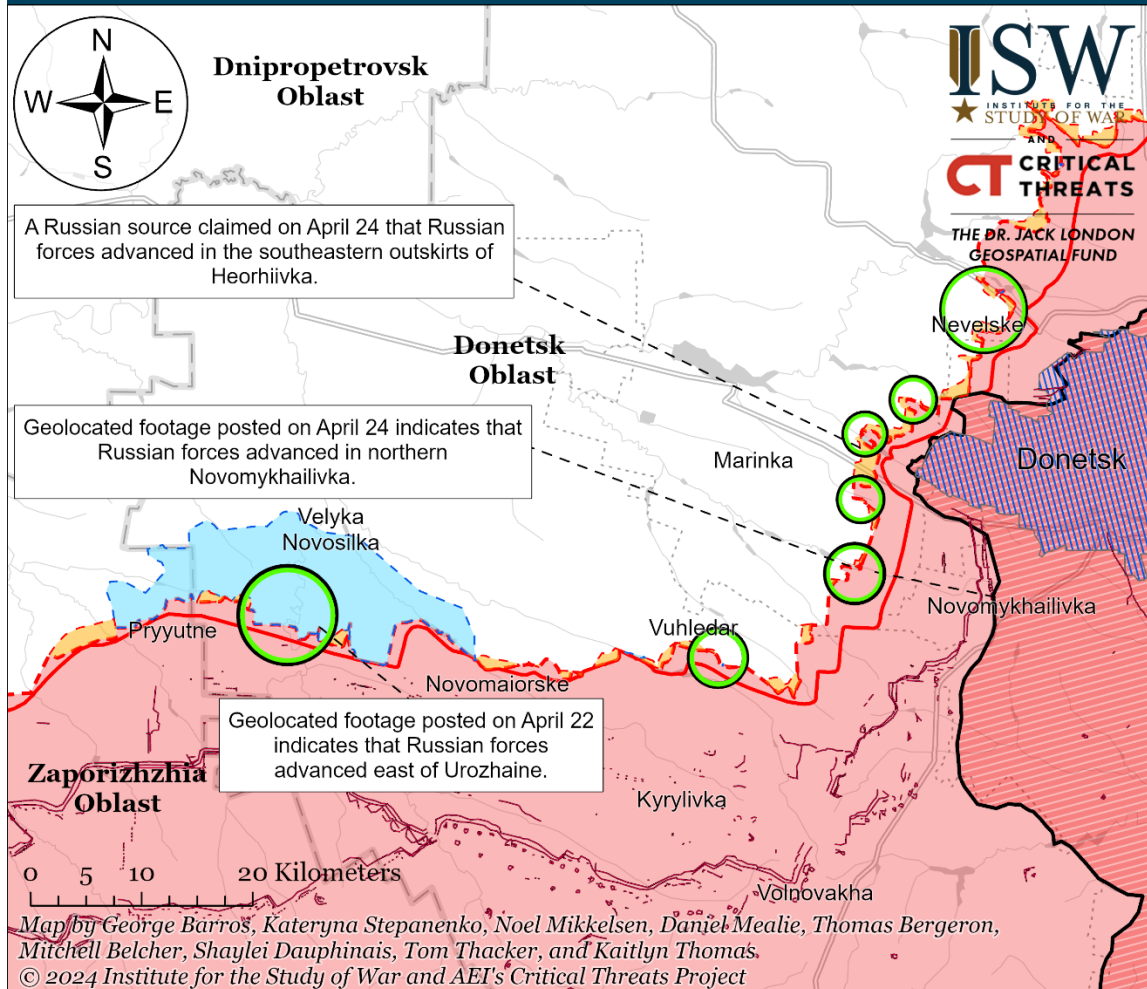
See topline text for updates on the Avdiivka area.

Russian forces reportedly advanced west of Donetsk City amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on April 25. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces conducted a reinforced company-sized mechanized assault from two directions and advanced in southern and southeastern Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City), although ISW has not observed visual evidence of these claims.[39] Several Russian sources amplified footage purportedly showing personnel of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] AC) hoisting a flag over a building in the Krasnohorivka brick factory in central Krasnohorivka, although ISW has only observed visual confirmation that Russian forces advanced up to the southwestern outskirts of the factory.[40] Russian forces continued attacking west of Donetsk City near Krasnohorivka and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Novomykhailivka and Vodyane.[41] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted 30 FAB-500 glide bomb strikes on Ukrainian positions in Krasnohorivka on April 24.[42] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 103rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) and of the 242nd and 255th motorized rifle regiments (both of the 20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) continue to operate along the Heorhiivka-Pobeida-Novomykhailivka line.[43] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) and 10th Tank Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA) are operating within Novomykhailivka.



Russian forces recently advanced in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area amid continued positional engagements in the area on April 25. Geolocated footage published on April 25 indicates that Russian forces advanced southeast of Urozhaine (south of Velyka Novosilka).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted assaults against Urozhaine's southern outskirts after conducting intense air strikes for several days.[45] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka).[46] Elements of the Russian 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces and Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly conducting glide bomb strikes near Urozhaine.[47]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Donetsk Oblast as of April 25, 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
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Field Fortifications

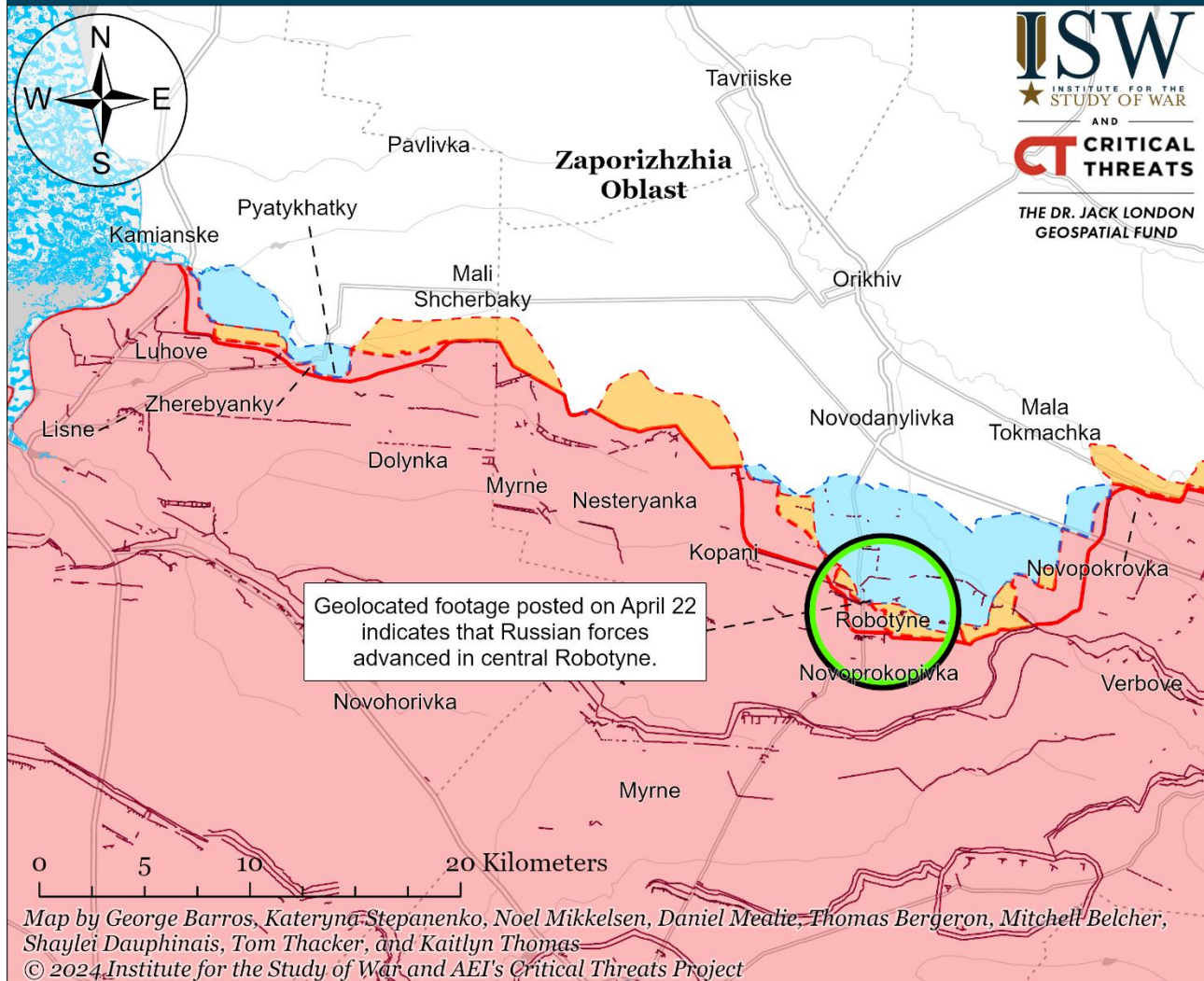
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on April 24 that Russian forces advanced 140 meters west of Berdychi. A Russian source claimed on April 21 that Russian forces advanced 1.3 kilometers deep and 1.2 kilometers wide near Novomykhailivka.

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

Positional engagements continued in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on April 25, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Positional engagements continued near Robotyne and northwest of Verbove (east of Robotyne).[48] Elements of the Russian 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) reportedly continue operating near Hulyaipole (northeast of Robotyne).[49]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of April 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

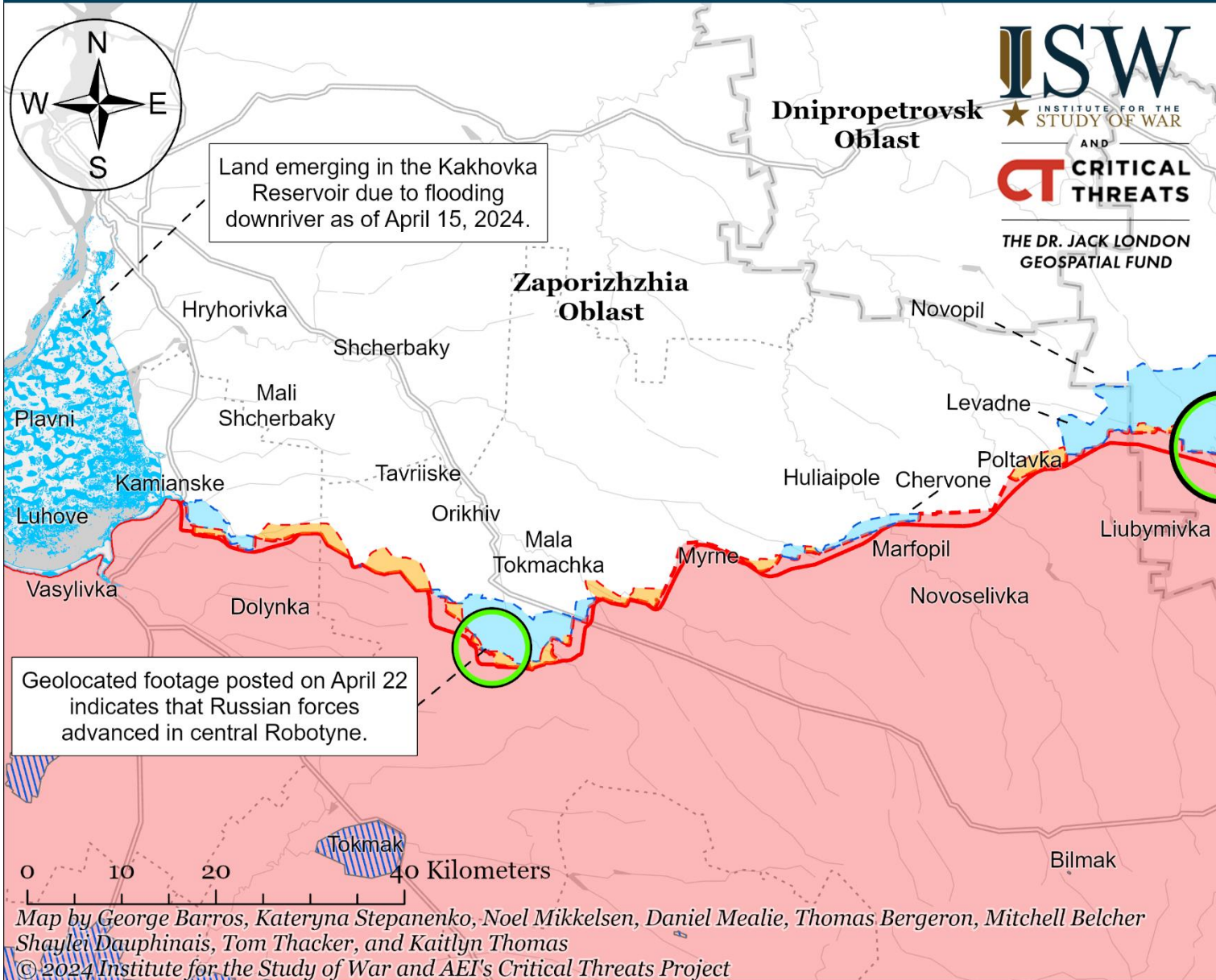


Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Shaylei Dauphinais, Tom Thacker, and Kaitlyn Thomas
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Russian Field Fortifications
- 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.

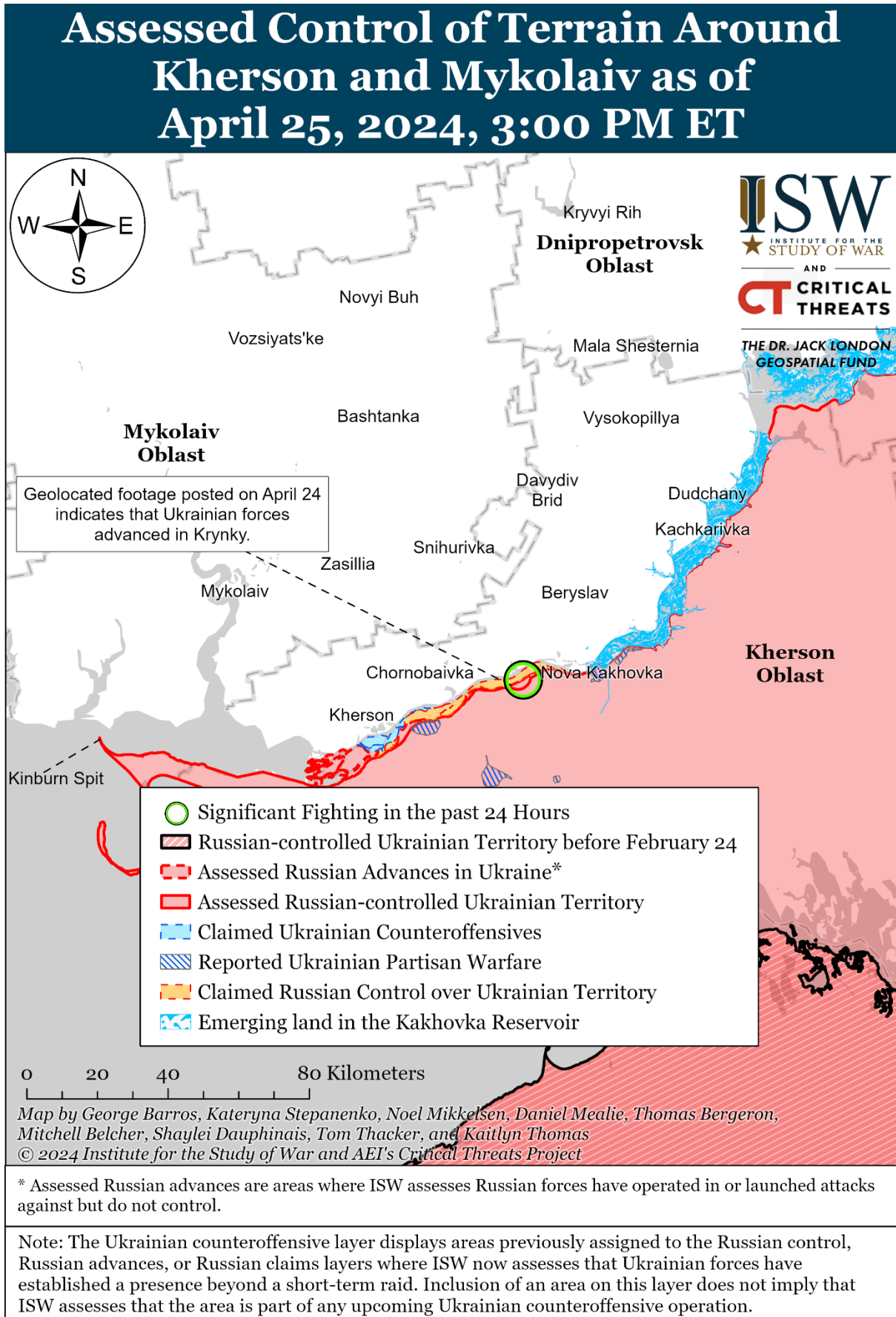
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of April 25, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

Positional engagements continued in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast, including near Krynky, on April 25.[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces recently intensified drone operations and shelling near Krynky.[51]



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 strikes against Ukrainian railway and logistics infrastructure on April 25. Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces struck a logistics and railway connection point in Smila, Cherkasy Oblast likely with an Iskander-K missile.[52] Kharkiv Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Synehubov stated that Russian forces struck a railway station in Balaklia, Kharkiv Oblast with an unspecified missile, wounding civilians in train cars.[53] Ukrainian military officials stated that Ukrainian forces destroyed an unspecified cruise missile over Kryvyi Rih Raion, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.[54] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Major Ilya Yevlash stated that Russian forces launched the cruise missile from an Su-57 fighter aircraft over the Black Sea and that the missile travelled through Mykolaiv Oblast to Kirovohrad Oblast before changing course towards Kryvyi Rih Raion.[55] ISW recently assessed that Russian forces may be shifting their target set to strike Ukrainian transportation infrastructure to delay the improved capabilities that the arrival of US security assistance will afford Ukrainian forces and constrain Ukraine's ability to sufficiently distribute manpower and materiel to critical sectors of the frontline.[56]

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

Russian President Vladimir Putin justified Russia's ongoing efforts to nationalize Russian enterprises, including defense industrial base (DIB) enterprises on April 25.[57] Putin stated at the Congress of Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs that Russian law enforcement agencies have opened an unspecified number of cases to nationalize companies when the actions of the owners of the nationalized enterprises caused direct damage to Russian interests, which Putin labeled as the only acceptable circumstance for the Russian state to seize a company.[58] Exiled Russian opposition outlet *Novaya Gazeta* reported on March 12 that Russian authorities filed 40 demands to nationalize more than 180 companies worth over one trillion rubles (about \$10.8 billion or about 0.6 percent of Russia's GDP) since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.[59] *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's* northwestern Russia service *Sever Realii* stated on April 25 that Russia has nationalized companies that manufacture rare earth metals, defense industrial products, electronics, methanol, ferroalloys, and explosives, as well as several companies not related to military needs, such as a Rolf car dealership owned by former State Duma deputy Sergei Petrov, who criticized the Russian government.[60]

Russian defense industrial enterprises continue to struggle with labor shortages. Putin stated at the April 25 congress that Russia expects the labor shortage to continue in the near term and that migrant labor cannot solve these shortages, so Russia must find develop new methods to mitigate the shortages.[61] *Sever Realii* reported on April 25 that a manager at the St. Petersburg Special Technology Center (STC), which makes Orlan-10 reconnaissance drones, stated that several employees left after a Ukrainian drone struck a building in St. Petersburg recently.[62] The manager stated that STC authorities are considering creating an "electronic warfare (EW) dome" around the enterprise but have not resolved the issues this EW dome will cause to the enterprise's own electronics. *Sever Realii* reported that an employee at the Kingisepp Machine Building Plant in St. Petersburg, which produces armored vehicles and military boats, stated that many of the plant's workers are from Uzbekistan and Russian authorities often conduct raids targeting the migrant workers – prompting many employees to leave. The Kingisepp Plant is reportedly offering monetary awards to employees who recruit additional workers or promote a bumper sticker with the enterprise's logo on their cars.

China continues to indirectly support Russia's war effort in Ukraine by providing dual-use goods to Russian DIB enterprises. US Ambassador to NATO Julianne Smith told *Politico* on April 24 that the US is increasingly observing that China is supplying dual-use products, such as machine tools, microelectronics, drone technologies, and nitrocellulose (used for gunpowder), to Russia.[63] Smith noted that there is no evidence of China providing "lethal support" to Russia. The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) told the *Telegraph* on April 25 that satellite imagery indicates that the Russian Angara ship, which likely transported North Korean ammunition to Russia recently, has been moored in China's Zhejiang province since February 2024.[64]

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

Nothing significant to report.

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)

ISW is not publishing coverage of activities in Russian-occupied areas today.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Kremlin officials and mouthpieces continued information operations aimed at deterring further Western security assistance to Ukraine in reaction to reports that the US secretly provided Ukraine with long-range ATACMS in April 2024. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov claimed that providing Ukraine with ATACMs will not change the war's outcome in favor of Ukraine and claimed that Russia will win the war.[65] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova claimed that the ATACMS delivery shows that the United States is not committed to peace and wants to support terrorism.[66] Russian Ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov suggested that providing ATACMS to Ukraine only escalated tensions between Russia and the US.[67] US Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink and US Department of State (DoS) Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel confirmed on April 25 that the US sent the long-range ATACMS to Ukraine in April.[68]

The Russian MFA summoned Latvian Charge d'Affaires Dace Rutka and declared two Latvian diplomats persona non grata on April 25. The Russian MFA stated that these acts were retribution for the Latvian MFA declaring two Russian diplomats persona non grata on March 27, and the Russian MFA threatened "painful" steps if Latvia continues "hostile actions" towards Russia.[69] It is unclear why the Russian MFA only responded nearly a month after the Latvian persona non grata declaration. Kremlin officials and mouthpieces have consistently targeted Latvia and other Baltic states with information operations aimed at portraying these states as hostile to both the Russian state and Russian "compatriots" in their countries.[70] Zakharova criticized Latvia on April 25 for allegedly discriminating against Russian speakers by not teaching Russian as a second language in schools.[71]

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)

Senior Belarusian officials made false claims about alleged Western threats to Belarus, resembling recent Russian efforts to baselessly tie the West to alleged "terrorist" acts against Russia.[72] Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko oddly claimed that Belarusian opposition actors abroad want to seize a part of Belarus with NATO support.[73] Belarusian Committee of State Security (KGB) Chairperson Ivan Tretel claimed on April 25 that the Belarusian KGB and other security forces prevented drone attacks on Minsk from Lithuania.[74] Tertel claimed that Lithuania and Poland are attempting to produce combat drones to attack critical targets in Belarus and are attempting to create an extremist force to conduct "terrorist attacks" against Shmyany, Smorgon, and Braslav raions, which border Lithuania. Lithuanian military spokesperson Major Gintautas Ciunis called Tertel's claims "nonsense." [75]

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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