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## EUROPE BLINKS AMID CALLS TO STOP BACKING UKRAINE

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By Nicholas Vinocur and Jacopo Barigazzi

Russian President Vladimir Putin has made little secret of his plan to keep up the pressure on Ukraine until Western resolve breaks. More than 500 days into his war of aggression, he now has reason to believe things are working out the way he hoped, even if events are not playing out how he might have imagined.

Governments in Poland, Estonia, Slovakia and others in Central and Eastern Europe have been among Kyiv's staunchest allies since the first day of Russia's full-scale invasion. Beyond sending weapons and welcoming millions of Ukrainian refugees, they have been Ukraine's loudest advocates in the West, pushing for a tough line against Moscow in the face of reluctance from countries like France and Germany.

But as the leaders of some of these ride-or-die allies face reelection battles or other domestic challenges, and governments get nervous about the impact of Ukraine one day joining the European Union, that support is starting to waver.

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