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Ukrainian Politicians Brawl After Vote to Send Military Reserves East

By The Moscow Times

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Ukrainian parliamentary deputies tussle during a session in parliament in Kiev July 23, 2014.

Nationalist and pro-Russian lawmakers brawled in Ukraine's parliament on Tuesday after the legislature narrowly approved a presidential decree to send more reserve soldiers to battle separatists near the Russian border.

The brawl erupted between members of the nationalist Svoboda (Freedom) party and politicians from the once-ruling Party of Regions after 232 deputies, barely half of the legislature's 450, voted in favor of sending more troops to the country's east.

The so-called "partial mobilization" measure is an extension of a similar plan initiated 45 days ago that has since expired.

While heavy fighting continues in the separatist-controlled Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine, national military forces said this week that they had made some gains against pro-

Russian militants in the nearby Luhansk region.

The Ukrainian parliament has witnessed a number of brawls in its history. The last time was in April, when politicians traded punches after communist leader Petro Symonenko accused nationalists of having surrendered the country to Russia after adopting extreme positions early in the geopolitical crisis.

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