

Biggest naval build-up since Gulf War

Russia and NATO are engaged in the biggest build-up of naval and air forces since the 2003 Invasion of Iraq. Five U.S. strike groups have been sent to the Mediterranean and Gulf regions while Moscow has sent an aircraft carrier task force to the eastern Mediterranean and deployed its Black Sea Fleet



1 Black Sea: Ten NATO warships including guided missile destroyer **USS McFaul**, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter **Dallas**, three frigates; **USS Taylor**, Germany's **FGS Luebeck**, and Poland's **General Pulaski**. Spain's **Admiral Juan de Borbon** and five ships from Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria

2 Eastern Mediterranean: Commander of Russia's Northern Fleet, Admiral **Vladimir Vysotsky** (left), orders flagship aircraft carrier **Admiral Kuznetsov** – which carries 52 aircraft – plus up to 15 support ships, including submarines, to be deployed to Syrian port of Tartus



3 Sevastopol: Ukraine's President **Yushchenko** heightens tensions with Moscow by threatening to raise rent on HQ of Russia's Black Sea Fleet



4 Mediterranean: **USS Iwo Jima Expeditionary Strike Group**. Amphibious assault ship leading six-vessel group with 2,200 marines. Group includes landing ships **USS San Antonio**, **USS Carter Hall**, guided missile cruiser **USS Vella Gulf**, guided missile destroyers **USS Ramage** and **USS Roosevelt**, plus fast attack submarine **USS Hartford**

5 Arabian Sea: Aircraft carrier strike group led by **USS Abraham Lincoln**, carries some 65 fighter aircraft. **USS Ronald Reagan** strike group includes nuclear submarine **USS Springfield** and five surface ships. **USS Theodore Roosevelt** strike group with 80 combat planes due early September

6 Red Sea-Gulf of Aden: Expeditionary strike group headed by amphibious assault ship **USS Peleliu**

