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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USS HARTFORD DEPARTS LA MADDALENA

GAETA, Italy (November 18, 2003) - USS HARTFORD (SSN 768) departed La Maddalena today to return to the United States after the completion of temporary repairs to its rudder. Prior to its departure, the HARTFORD conducted an underway sea trial to ensure the repairs would support a safe transit. Also, the submarine's navigation team has undergone additional training to ensure they can safely perform their duties.

On October 25, the submarine briefly touched bottom at about 12:40 p.m. local while it was traveling on the surface in shallow water outside the national park east of Caprera. No personnel were injured in the incident, nor were any other vessels involved. HARTFORD returned to port at Santo Stefano under its own power where divers found damage to the rudder and scrapes on the hull. HARTFORD's water-tight integrity was not affected, nor did the incident affect the submarine's propulsion plant in any way.

The Commander of Submarine Group Eight, from Naples, Italy, immediately began the investigation into the incident and took a number of personnel actions to include relieving the commander of the locally based Submarine Squadron and the submarine's commanding officer.

U.S. officials notified the appropriate Italian Navy authorities after the incident. The incident did not cause significant hull damage, nor any oil or fuel leaks. No environmental damage resulted from the grounding.

USS HARTFORD is homeported in Groton, Conn.

For additional information please contact U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs at:

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