



Saturday, September 29, 2007

## USS Normandy arrives in Diégo Suarez

Antananarivo – Guided missile cruiser USS Normandy arrived off the coast of Diégo Suarez, Madagascar, September 29, as the first U.S. Navy ship to visit the Island Nation in more than 20 years. Sailing as part of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa's newly established Southeast Africa Task Group CTG 60.5, Normandy is in the region to build partnerships and promote maritime safety and security initiatives.

“Being the first U.S. Navy ship to come to Madagascar in 20 years is a unique and exciting experience for everyone aboard Normandy,” said Capt. Robert S. Kerno, Jr. : “We are thrilled to be here and hope to forge strong relationships with the people and government of Madagascar. Safe and secure oceans are the building block of long-term stability and economic development for every nation in the world. We look forward to partnering with Madagascar and other countries in Southeast Africa to combat maritime security threats like piracy, unlawful fishing and smuggling.”

To mark the arrival of USS Normandy, the U.S. Ambassador R. Niels Marquardt and his wife Judi and the Defense Attaché Cecil Bridges traveled to Diégo to reinforce the message of partnership in maritime safety and security between the United States and Madagascar. While in Diégo, Ambassador Marquardt will have the opportunity to meet with civilian and military authorities, the local press and visit community projects funded by the U.S. Government.