

2 U.S. Greek Bases Closing

Athens

Greece and the United States announced yesterday that an American air base near Athens will be closed and some naval facilities granted to the American Sixth Fleet will be ended.

The decisions came after new talks aimed at ending the American military presence in Greece.

Greek intentions toward American facilities were announced last November by Premier Constantine Karamanlis, who said that only "installations necessary to Greek national defense" would remain.

The talks began in February.

The agreement came from

three weeks of talks that followed Greece's withdrawal from the military wing of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The U.S. bases in Greece operate under bilateral agreements but come under the NATO forces umbrella.

Hellenikon is the U.S. air base which will be closed. Home port facilities at Eleusis Bay, near Athens, which allowed six destroyers of the Sixth Fleet to remain in the Mediterranean for two years at a time, will be ended.

Relations between the United States and Greece have been cool after allegations of a pro-Turkish position by America during last

summer's fighting in Cyprus.

Officials said that bases where U.S. facilities continue to operate will be placed under Greek command.

They also said more talks will be held to discuss the scope and conditions under which remaining facilities will operate.

They added that agreement is also expected on the further reduction and elimination of other U.S. facilities in Greece.

Karamanlis has made it clear that while Greece has withdrawn from NATO at the military level it will remain a member of the alliance itself.

Agence France-Presse