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[19 May 82]

BACKGROUND PAPER
U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN GREECE

The U.S. maintains four major and twelve secondary defense installations in Greece. Approximately 3,700 U.S. military personnel and a like number of dependents are associated with these facilities. The major installations are Hellenikon Air Base near Athens, Nea Makri Naval Communications Station on the mainland near Marathon Bay, Iraklion Air Force Communications Station located on the north central coast of Crete, and the Naval Detachment at Souda Bay on the northwestern coast of Crete near Hania.

U.S. installations in Greece serve missions similar to, but not duplicative of, those in Turkey: wartime beddown of forces, peacetime training, strategic airlift, naval support, storage of POL and war reserve materiel and munitions, and defense communications. Some of these facilities also support airborne reconnaissance and maritime patrol operations in the Eastern Mediterranean and perform communications research. There are no U.S. tactical fighter aircraft based in Greece.

These facilities currently operate in accordance with agreements dating from the 1950's. A new defense cooperation agreement (DCA) was initiated in July 1977 but not signed or approved by the Congress. That agreement, modeled on the defunct 1976 Turkish DCA, contained a specific multiyear assistance commitment. The new U.S.-Turkish defense and economic cooperation agreement (DECA), signed on March 29, 1980, does not contain any specific assistance commitments.

Following the October 20, 1980, reintegration of Greek armed forces into the military structure of NATO, talks were resumed with the Greek government on a new defense and economic cooperation agreement. Negotiations began in January 1981 and were suspended by the Greek government in June of that year because the agreement could not be completed before parliament's summer recess and the national elections scheduled for October.

In the Greek parliamentary elections which took place in October, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) won a clear majority of seats. We have informed the new Greek government, headed by Andreas Papandreou, that we will be prepared to resume negotiations whenever his government is ready to do so. At this time a date has not been set for the resumption of talks, but the earlier agreements under which the facilities have been operating remain in force and all facilities have continued to operate normally pending the resumption of talks.

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