

Paris Set To Fight If Necessary

Pineau Terms Nasser 'Dictator'

By William J. Humphreys

French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau informed the National Assembly yesterday that France is ready to fight Egypt if military action is the only means of making Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser relax his "dictator's" grip on the Suez Canal.

M. Pineau, in a television-radio appearance last night with Premier Guy Mollet, amplified his government's determination by pointing out that to permit Col. Nasser to hold on to the canal would compromise the 450,000 French Army regulars and reservists who are now "risking their lives in North Africa."

After this reference to Col. Nasser's stated aim to link up the Arab world from the Persian Gulf to Morocco on the Atlantic, M. Pineau said that the withdrawal of the United States offer to help Egypt build the Aswan High Dam followed his pleas to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to make Egypt choose between the free and Communist worlds.

'Shall Not Hesitate'

Premier Mollet informed the nation-wide audience the French government had decided not to relive the indecisive hours before World War II, when concession after concession to Nazi Germany only increased Adolf Hitler's demands.

"I give to the nation this evening the assurance that the necessary measures are already taken in France as in Great Britain," he said. "France cannot be flouted. Peace cannot be put on trial. We shall not hesitate to assume our responsibilities."

Three-fourths of the French Fleet, which is assigned to the Mediterranean squadron in accordance with agreements with the North Atlantic Treaty Organiza-

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Pineau

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tion, was ordered Thursday to be prepared for instant orders to put to sea. The squadron consists of about 200,000 tons of warships.

He made clear the government's determination to use military measures if the Egyptian President rejects peaceful overtures, when he announced that "all necessary means" will be taken to prevent Col. Nasser from maintaining in force his unilateral decision to nationalize the waterway.

Like the British government, which yesterday proclaimed a state of "great emergency," France, he said, has had to take precautions against the eventuality that Col. Nasser will resist the proposal of the Anglo-American-French conference in London to internationalize the canal.

Cites Juridical Right

His statement on the decision taken last night by Britain, France and the United States pointed out that Egypt's right to nationalize the canal was a juridical one, but that the manner in which it was done by Col. Nasser proved that he was not a man who could be trusted to carry out the 1888 canal convention guaranteeing all nations use of the waterway.

There are two basic reasons for the United States, Britain and France having decided to call a 24-nation conference in London, Aug. 16, to consider substituting an international system for the nationalized regime which Col. Nasser forced upon the Suez Canal last week, the Assembly was told.

The first reason cited by the Foreign Minister was that "we are unable to count on the word of honor of the Egyptian President. M. Pineau explained that for eight years of the United Nations protest, Egypt has violated the 1888 canal convention by refusing to allow Israeli vessels to use it.

The second reason given by the Foreign Minister was the manner in which the canal's nationalization was announced. M. Pineau explained that Col. Nasser, from the French viewpoint, had demonstrated in boastful speeches about his seizure of the canal that the action was another step in building himself up as "a dictator."

It would be impossible for the