

'WE MUST ACT'

U.S. Lags Behind More Every Day, AFA Men Assert

By CLARDY McCULLAR

America lags farther behind Russia every day in both Space Age science and military strength,

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the Air Force Association charged Friday at its Dallas convention.

AFA insisted that something be done about this at once.

As it has before, AFA suggested that the wisest possible move would be to unify the armed forces.

Actually, the statement was approved by AFA directors at a meeting Thursday, but not made public until Friday.

It said:

"The free world is fighting a war for its survival on many fronts — technological, military, economic, education, ideological. At this juncture in history the immediate concern of the Air Force Association is with two of these fronts.

"One front is technological; it includes the war of the laboratory, the classroom, the drawing board and the test stand. The other front involves military forces in being: The ability to deter conflict, through a day-by-day military capability to be used in support of international policies which must be clearly understood by the aggressors and by ourselves.

"Under current programing the free world is losing ground on both of these fronts.

"Soviet strength and striking power continues to grow at a more rapid pace than our own. Our margin of security continues to dwindle. The Soviet lead in the satellite race should make this fact clear.

"In the face of this danger, we must better organize and integrate our efforts upon both fronts.

"The defense effort today represents less than 12 per cent of our gross national product. Estimates of the gross national product devoted to the Soviet Union's military effort range from 30 to 50 per cent. Yet the threat posed by the enemy's actual force in being today, and by the more advanced weapons systems he is rapidly developing and producing, places a far greater requirement upon our defense effort now and over the next decade than was the case 10 years ago.

"We believe the people of the United States should be frankly

informed of the grave danger in which they live. Any policy or program, no matter how costly, must leave no margin of doubt that it is sufficient to meet the growing threat . . . to our nation's security.

"We must concentrate on weapons systems best designed to cope with the threat and ruthlessly eliminate the others. Service tradition and rivalries are inefficient and expensive luxuries that do not add to our national defense."