As Life warns, "We must not allow the improvement of American society to be made our excuse for softness in the Cold War -- for dangerous evasion of life-and-death issues. For the development of a great American and even world civilization we need time -- decades, even centuries. But time is not on our side, not unless we make it so."*

*Life editorial, June 2, 1961

VI. Battle for Survival -- Or Popularity Contest?

The final question deals with the problem of national leadership within a voluntary coalition of free nations. The issue is 1) whether we restrict the area of U. S. action in the Cold War to those measures which can be unanimously agreed upon among a large number of allies, or 2) whether, after consultation with these allies, we take such actions as we consider necessary for our security and that of the Free World, seeking to convince them that it is in their national interest to associate themselves with us in our efforts to preserve freedom.

Surely by now the United States should realize that the philosophy of abrogating our own responsibilities for the security of the United States in favor of some form of lowest common denominator action by ineffective (OAS) or veto-controlled (UN) organizations is not in our national interest. Surely by now we should be aware that we are in a battle for survival, not a popularity contest. We cannot, merely because of our sensitivity to public opinion polls in the neutralist, the uninformed, or the newly emerging countries of the world, allow these nations to hamstring American policy. The fact that Cuba -- now acknowledged to be a Communist state even by the State Department -- 1) possesses the second largest military establishment in the hemisphere, and 2) threatens to export its brand of international Communism to at least five South American governments in the immediate future, underlines the need to invoke the authority of Article 6 of the Rio Pact of 1947 and the Caracas Declaration of 1954 before it is too late. Actions under Article 6 which may be taken by the Organ of Consultation, (composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 21 American republics), by a two-thirds majority vote include breaking of diplomatic and consular relations; partial or complete interruption of economic relations or rail, sea, air, postal, telegraph or radio communications and even use of armed forces. Surely the time is long overdue to determine once and for all whether or not the seventy-year-old Organization of American States is, in fact, capable of protecting the freedom and security of the Western Hemisphere.

This sentiment was expressed in no uncertain terms by the House of Representatives on May 17, 1961, when, speaking for the American people, they passed by a vote of 402 to 2, House Concurrent Resolution 226. This resolution states that it is the sense of Congress that 1) the OAS should re-evaluate the role of Cuba in inter-American affairs for the purpose of imposing sanctions, and 2) that the Cuban representatives should be excluded from the Inter-American Defense Board.

The provisions of this resolution would, for example, be implemented as follows: 1) President Kennedy should call a meeting of the presidents of all the 21 American Republics for the purpose of considering collective action against the Castro regime. 2) If there was an inadequate response to this call, the U. S. should ask for a meeting of the Organ of Consultation of the OAS. 3) If this meeting also failed to produce effective decisions, the U. S. should make clear to all concerned that we intend to carry out our obligation to defend the hemisphere against international Communism, acting alone if necessary. As Senator Gore has said, this is the only "manly, straight-forward, open-and-aboveboard manner of obtaining national and world respect for the courage and power of the American people."*

*Congressional Record, April 27, 1961, p. 6393.