

“The Good Life”

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“The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge,” said Bertrand Russell, one of the most original thinkers and philosophers of the twentieth century. Let us analyze the present invasion of Iraq from Russell’s perspective.

It has often been claimed that the war with Iraq is being fought in the name of democracy, to liberate the Iraqi people. That motive, most certainly, can be claimed as being “inspired by love”. For, who among us would not like to see the Iraqi people govern themselves, to see them liberated from the oppressive rule of the Ba’ath party, and its leader, Saddam Hussein? But are the actions of this, and past U.S. administrations in concert with their claimed motives? Consider the fact that 12 years of U.S.-led sanctions has killed over 500,000 Iraqi children, while making Saddam Hussein more powerful and rich. Consider the fact that the use of depleted uranium shells in the last Gulf War has led to a 700% increase in the incidence of cancer in southern Iraq. Consider the fact that water treatment facilities and dams were bombed in the last Gulf War, in blatant violation of the Geneva Convention. Consider the fact that over 300 missiles landed in Baghdad, a city of over 5 million people, in a single day a few weeks ago. Is it possible for anybody with a conscience to declare that these bombs are “inspired by love”? I think not.

Let us consider next the question of whether we, as Americans, are “guided by knowledge”. How many of us know that this administration, which is forever exhorting us to support our troops, has slashed veteran medical care by \$844 million this year alone? How many of us know that under Article VI of our constitution, which declares that international treaties signed by the U.S. are to be considered supreme law, this war against Iraq is illegal? How many of us know that when the Congress signed off a resolution to authorize the President to declare war at his choosing, that action was unconstitutional? If the majority of us knew these facts, would we still support this cruel war? I think not.

I have great faith in the innate goodness of human beings, and I believe that if we all did indeed make the effort to let love and knowledge guide our lives, we could make this world a far better place, for us, and for the generations to come. But we must act now to stop this insane quest for world domination, for the sake of our brothers and sisters in the U.S. army, for the sake of the citizens of Iraq, and for the sake of our children. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, we must learn to *“live simply, so others may simply live.”*