



Caring People Coming Together Nationwide to Support Cindy

Join a Vigil in Your Community

The movement to bring the troops home has a new, powerful voice in Cindy Sheehan. She's the mother of Army Specialist Casey Sheehan, who was killed in Iraq, and her vigil outside President Bush's ranch has become an international symbol for the effort to end the war. This week, let's show the world that there's a huge number of people across America who want this war ended. Here's how you can keep the momentum building!

Cindy has asked supporters to start candlelight vigils in their communities to remind people of the terrible price of war. TrueMajorityACTION and Democracy for America have teamed up with MoveOn to organize nationwide "Vigils for Cindy Sheehan" (and for all military families and Gold Star families) this coming Wednesday, August 17, starting at 7:30 p.m. local time. The vigils are an easy way for people to come together to show support for Cindy and to speak out against the war. You can either find a vigil in your neighborhood or start one of your own. Click below to get started.



Attend a Vigil in Your Community for Cindy Sheehan (and for all military families and Gold Star families) on **Wednesday, August 17, starting at 7:30 p.m. local time.**

Visit MoveOn's event site to find the vigil closest to you:
<http://www.moveonpac.org/event/cindyvigils/>

<http://www.moveonpac.org/event/cindyvigils/>

Here is what Cindy has said about the vigils: "I invite mothers everywhere to stand up with me so that no more of our sons and daughters lose their lives for a war based on lies and deception. Join me in demanding the truth- and an end to the war- by organizing vigils across the country, before one more mother's child is lost."

TrueMajorityACTION members have been remarkably generous with donations to support Cindy as she stands up to the president of the United States. As well as giving her media and organizing tools she needs to keep speaking out, your support is also helping to send members of other families with fallen soldiers around the country, following the president with Cindy's message. Already, last week you helped Casey's high school sweetheart follow President Bush to Illinois to keep the pressure on, and more trips are coming.

Words of encouragement and financial support are important, but the very heart of this movement is all of us coming together. So please come to a vigil this Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. Support Cindy, support each other, and BE the peace movement.

Use this online tool provided by our friends at MoveOn to find a vigil near you:

<http://www.moveonpac.org/event/cindyvigils/>

SPECIAL INVITATION: We're extending a special invitation to Iraq veterans, the families of military members in Iraq today and Gold Star families. Bring a photo of your loved one to remind all of us what is at stake. Two great organizations, Gold Star Families for Peace and Military Families Speak Out, are leading the way to make the voices of military families heard loud and clear. Thousands of people are already doing a lot- organizing events and more- to help bring Cindy's stand to communities across America.

You can attend a vigil or host one. Hosting a vigil is really simple. All you have to do is choose the location, invite some friends and get some candles. If you can't host, it's really easy to attend one- just RSVP, get some candles and show up. We'll send invitations to other TrueMajorityACTION members in your neighborhood, too.

Thanks for all you do,
Duane Peterson
TrueMajorityACTION Coordinator

P.S. Cindy's earned a tremendous amount of news about her request for Bush to level with her and the American people. Here's the latest:

http://www.insidebayarea.com/argus/news/ci_2940391

Learn more about Military Families Speak Out and Gold Star Families for Peace

<http://www.mfso.org/>

<http://www.gsfp.org/>

Cindy's Victory

By William Rivers Pitt
t r u t h o u t | Perspective

Monday 15 August 2005

This thing, the wheels are coming off it.

- Gen. Barry McCaffrey, after returning from an inspection of Iraq, 08/12/2005.

They are sunburned and storm-lashed. They sleep in tents that sit along the muddy earth of drainage ditches by the side of the road. They have been heckled by "counter-demonstrators" who chanted "We don't care!" during a rendition of "God Bless America." They have been attacked by fire ants and hassled by local health inspectors. On Thursday morning, at about 5:30am, they were blasted awake by a fourteen-car convoy of Secret Service SUVs which roared through the camp at high speed while leaning on their horns the whole time.

They have been jolted with fear when a local resident fired his weapon into the air several times to make them go away. When the shooter, one Larry Matlage, was asked why he was firing his gun, he said, "We're going to start doing our war and it's going to be underneath the law. We're going to do whatever it takes." It is safe to say, therefore, that their lives have been threatened.

The thing is, they've already won.

Cindy Sheehan and her ever-growing band of supporters intend to stay in those ditches outside Bush's Crawford "ranch" until he comes out to talk or until August 31st, whichever comes first. If he does not come

out by the end of the month, she intends to follow him to Washington and camp out in front of the White House. She and the others have been there for more than a week now, garnering more and more attention from the national and international press. Yes, they are tired. Yes, they are uncomfortable. Yes, they have already won.

The nearly 2,000 crosses, crescents and Stars of David that make up the Arlington West cemetery, erected by the demonstrators a few days ago to represent all the fallen American soldiers in Iraq, stretch almost a mile down the country road. Bush had to drive past that on Friday when he went to his fundraising shindig at the Broken Spoke Ranch. 54 crosses have been added to the cemetery since he first showed up for his vacation at the beginning of August. It takes a while to drive past them all. This man, who cannot abide hearing or seeing anything in the way of dissent or disagreement, saw those crosses whistle past his window. That is a victory.



August 10, 2005 | A portion of Arlington West in Crawford.
(Photo: Will Pitt / t r u t h o u t)

Over the weekend, as the camp prepared for the arrival of the counter-demonstrators, a huge diesel pickup truck rumbled into camp with its nose menacingly pointed towards the tents. It sat for a while, and everyone waited to see what would happen. Ann Wright, the main organizer of camp activities, finally approached the truck and met the driver. He was a father, Wright discovered, and his son had been killed in Iraq.

He did not agree with this protest, he said, but wanted to know if his son's name was on one of the crosses in the Arlington West cemetery. Ann Wright invited the man to walk the rows of crosses and find his son's name. They found it. Ann and the man from the truck sat down in front of the cross, wrapped their arms around each other, and wept. Later, the man shared a beer with Cindy Sheehan and told her he loved her. That is a victory, one that surpasses any sort of mean politics.

For three years now, both before the invasion of Iraq began and then after it was unleashed, millions of people have marched and screamed and stomped in order to try to put a stop to this disaster. The Bush administration was not pushed off its tracks even an inch in all this time. Discussions and debates on why we are there and whether or not we should leave have been bunted aside.

Half a dozen reasons for the invasion and occupation have been put forth - weapons of mass destruction, ties to al Qaeda terrorism, the building of a democracy, Hussein was a bad man - but in the end, the debate is halted by the kind of brainless thinking that left us in Vietnam for far too long: "We are there, so we have to stay." This was the accepted wisdom.

Not anymore.

All the protests, all the articles, all the books, all the whistleblowers, all the criticism combined have not packed the kind of punch that one mother in a ditch has delivered to this administration's carefully crafted fantasy vision of what is happening in Iraq. Suddenly, Bush has been forced to go before cameras and try to explain why staying in Iraq is the only option available. Suddenly, the accepted wisdom isn't so accepted anymore. A majority of Americans, according to every available poll, agree with the lady in the ditch and not with the president.

Bush isn't doing a very good job of explaining his side of things, and his people seem unable to keep their



August 10, 2005 | The grave of Casey Sheehan, who died in Iraq, from the Arlington West cemetery.
(Photo: Will Pitt / t r u t h o u t)

stories straight. After the fourteen Marines from Ohio were killed in Iraq, Bush got up and stated that it would be unreasonable for him to lay down a timetable for withdrawal. Yet at the same time, his generals were bent over maps and logistics notebooks, trying to do exactly that.

The Los Angeles Times on Saturday took a look at the mixed messages coming from the war party. "Are the president and the Pentagon on the same page over the war in Iraq?" asked the Times. "That question is percolating in Washington after President Bush twice in the last 10 days tried to clarify a message sent by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and military leaders. After Rumsfeld and other Pentagon officials indicated their desire to shift away from discussing the struggle against terrorism as a 'war' - saying it placed too much emphasis on military solutions to terrorism - Bush repeatedly used the word 'war' in an Aug. 3 speech to conservative state legislators."

"Then," continued the Times article, "on Thursday, Bush dismissed as 'rumors' and 'speculation' reports that U.S. commanders were contemplating significant withdrawals of American troops from Iraq next year. His comments came after Army Gen. George W. Casey, the top U.S. military official in Iraq, and Army Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, the top ground commander, had publicly raised exactly that possibility."

Hm.

On Sunday, out of nowhere, the Washington Post published a page-one story titled "US Lowers Sights on What Can Be Achieved in Iraq." The story stated, "The Bush administration is significantly lowering expectations of what can be achieved in Iraq, recognizing that the United States will have to settle for far less progress than originally envisioned during the transition due to end in four months. The United States no longer expects to see a model new democracy, a self-supporting oil industry or a society in which the majority of people are free from serious security or economic challenges."

The article goes on to describe how any "democracy" will have to bend itself around the laws of Islam, a fact that chucks the secular-government talking points into the round file. Iraqi women, should not get their hopes up about being granted significant rights of any kind. The kicker came in the third paragraph, which quotes an unnamed US official saying, "What we expected to achieve was never realistic given the timetable or what unfolded on the ground. We are in a process of absorbing the factors of the situation we're in and shedding the unreality that dominated at the beginning."

In other words, the whole thing was a Charlie Foxtrot from soup to nuts. There are no weapons of mass destruction, the terrorists connected to 9/11 were not there (though there are plenty there now learning how best to kill Americans with bombs), and democracy is not to be found anywhere on the menu. The hearts and flowers we were promised have not come, and are not coming. Sure, Hussein is still a bad man, but that rationale for this war is an outright laughter when compared to the cost of getting rid of him. Though Bush clings desperately to his canned lines to defend his actions, the facts speak for themselves. This whole bloody enterprise has been a colossal, expensive, murderous failure.

big picture



August 10, 2005 | Wearing a hat with supporting messages from friends, Cindy Sheehan of Vacaville, California, takes a moment's rest in the ditch on Wednesday. On Friday afternoon, she was contacted by Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks.

(Photo: Will Pitt / t r u t h o u t)

The funny part is that Bush almost certainly could have maintained the public fantasy with one simple act. He could have jumped into his pickup truck last Saturday, when Cindy Sheehan was alone except for her sister in that ditch, and driven down to see her. He could have invited her into the shotgun seat and driven her around the neighborhood for a few minutes. He could have then gone back up to the "ranch" and told the press corps that he met with her, and that they had looked into each other's hearts. That would have been the end of it.

He did not do that. Now, his generals are at loggerheads with the public line coming from the White House about getting out of Iraq. Unnamed officials are going on the record to state that the whole plan was hare-brained from the word "go," and that the entire deal sits now in the ashes of its own utterly ruined failure. Bush has to keep explaining why we have to stay, why rearranging the deck chairs on this Titanic is a noble and worthwhile process. Meanwhile, the whole world mocks him for hiding from one woman and her broken heart.

Cindy Sheehan has done this with one act of conscience. She has managed to do what no other protest or action or statement has been able to do. She has knocked the wheels right off this absurd applecart. She has called the man to account. She can hang her own "Mission Accomplished"

banner above her tent in that ditch. She has already won.

Her son would be very, very proud.