

A statement presented the night before she headed for Crawford, Texas.

> Address to Veterans For Peace Convention

> Cindy Sheehan

> Friday 05 August 2005

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> It's so great to be here.

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> Last year when you guys had your convention in Boston, my son had
> only been dead a few months, and we were really honored because the
> Santa Barbara chapter took my daughter's poem "A Nation Rocked to
> Sleep" (and they did it again this year), and I remember Michael
> Cervantes, he brought the booklet over to our house and showed it to
> us, and I never dreamed in a year I'd be standing here in front of
you

> as one of the speakers at your convention. I never dreamed I'd be
> doing this at all, but isn't it weird what life hands you.

>

> I never heard about Veterans For Peace until, I can tell you the
> exact day I heard about VFP, it was May 4th, 2004, and my son had
been

> dead exactly a month, and I was watching CNN, and something came on -
> it was a report on Arlington West in Santa Barbara, and we lived
about

> 6 hours north of Santa Barbara, and it was the May 4th before
Mother's

> Day, which was May 8th, and VFP was going to put it up on Sunday,
> every Sunday - so I called my husband and I said, "There's only one
> place I want to be on Mother's Day this year, I want to be at Santa
> Barbara. I want to go and see Arlington West."

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> When we went, the first time we went, there were a little over
700

> crosses. Now there are over 1,800 crosses.

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> And I'm glad to hear everybody else's words, because somebody's
> gotta stop those lying bastards. Somebody has to stop them.

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> I got an email yesterday - if you guys heard, I just had a story
> published called "Where Do I Live?" - it talks about an
> Iranian-American who got the shaft because a recruiter liked him, and
> the recruiter falsified his paperwork, so he ended up in prison.

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> He's been in prison since November without due process.

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> Another mother whose son was found dead in Iraq, they told her
> that he died from a drug overdose. Three months later, they got the
> toxicology report: no drugs. She was devastated. She said, "I know my
> son, he did not do drugs." She was told that her son's wife and his
> battle buddies said in a report that yes, her son abused drugs in
> Iraq. But when she got that report it said categorically that no, he
> did not abuse drugs. So how did her son die?

>

> And then there's Kevin and Monica Benderman. Kevin did exactly
the

> right thing and got 15 months in prison. Whereas, like Dahr [Jamail]
> said, the war criminals in Washington DC, they don't even lose a

> night's sleep.

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> Then we have this lying bastard, George Bush, taking a 5-week
> vacation in a time of war. You know what? I'm never going to get to
> enjoy another vacation, because of him.

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> My vacation probably ... this is really sad because I have a
> really cute dress I was going to wear to the banquet tomorrow night,
> but I'm either gonna be in jail or in a tent in Crawford, waiting
> until that jerk comes out and tells me why my son died.

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> Anyway, I got an email, I kinda got off track, a man emailed me
> yesterday, I get contacted by all kinds of people with their stories,
> and he said Cindy, I read everything you write, I read it on
> LewRockwell.com, he said, "I get tears in my eyes, but today I cried
> real tears, and I screamed, because my dear sweet nineteen ear-old
> cousin was killed in Iraq."

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> And he said, "Cindy, why didn't I save him? Why didn't I knock
him

> out, why didn't I take him to Canada?" and I wrote him back and I
> said, "You know what? We all think that."

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> I said to my son not to go. I said, you know it's wrong, you know
> you're going over there. You know your unit might have to kill
> innocent people, you know you might die. And he says, "My buddies are
> going, I have to go." He said, "If I don't go, someone's going to
have

> to do my job, and my buddies will be in danger."

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> So what really gets me is these chicken-hawks who sent our kids
to
> die, without ever serving in a war themselves. They don't know what
> it's all about.

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> Thirty of our bravest young men have already died this month, and
> it's only the 5th of August. And the tragedy of the marines in Ohio
is
> awful.

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> But do you guys remember back in March when we were having our
2nd

> year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, which was pre-empted by
> Terry Schiavo, so that's all that was on the news, not 5,000 of us in
> Fayetteville. Wolf Blitzer said it was insignificant, but they put
> Terry Schiavo on, and I wrote something then called "The Amazing
> Hypocrites" and I asked, why does she deserve life more than my son,
> and the Iraqi people? And more than the other people that this war
has

> killed.

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> But do you think George Bush will interrupt his vacation and go
> visit the families of those 20 marines who have died in Ohio this
> week? No, because he doesn't care, he doesn't have a heart. That's
not

> enough to stop his little "playing cowboy" game in Crawford for 5
> weeks.

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> So, as you can imagine, the grieving parents who lost - lost, I
> don't like to use that word - whose child was murdered, it's
extremely
> difficult, you can't even get a small scab on our wound, because
every
> day it rips open. Every day, I don't know why I do it because I
> already know that war is ugly, I already know that war is hard. But I
> open up the DOD site to see who became an angel while I was sleeping.
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> And that rips my heart open, because I know there is another
> mother whose life is going to be ruined that day. So we can't even
> begin to heal.
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> So anyway that filth-spewer and warmonger George Bush was
speaking
> after the tragedy of the marines in Ohio, he said a couple things
that
> outraged me.
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> Seriously outraged me.
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> And I know I don't look like I'm outraged, I'm always so calm and
> everything, that's because if I started hitting something, I wouldn't
> stop 'til it was dead. So I can't even start, cause I know how
> dangerous that would be, but George Bush was talking, and he never
> mentioned the terrible incident of those marines, but he did say that
> the families of the ones who have been killed can rest assured that
> their loved ones died for a noble cause.
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> And he also said, he says this often, and this really drives me
> crazy, he said that we have to stay in Iraq and complete the mission,
> to honor the sacrifices of the ones who have fallen.
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> And I say, why should I want one more mother to go through what
> I've gone through, because my son is dead. You know what, the only
way
> he can honor my son's sacrifice is to bring the rest of the troops
> home. To make my son's death count for peace and love, and not war
and
> hatred like he stands for.
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> I don't want him using my son's death or my family's sacrifice to
> continue the killing. I don't want him to exploit the honor of my son
> and others to continue the killing. They sent these honorable people
> to die, and are so dishonorable themselves.
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> So, as many of you have heard, and I didn't mean to cause any
> problems with the convention, but I was writing an email to
everybody,
> and I was so mad, like I said, and I just had this brainstorm, I'm
> going to Dallas, I don't know where Crawford is. I've been in Texas,
> Casey was stationed at Fort Hood. I drove from northern California to
> Fort Hood one time - it took, like, 30 hours. And I thought, I could
> be driving for days to get from Dallas to Crawford!
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> But I don't care, I'm goin'. And I'm gonna tell them, "You get

> that evil maniac out here, cuz a Gold Star Mother, somebody whose
> blood is on his hands, has some questions for him."
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> And I'm gonna say, "OK, listen here, George. #1, you quit, and I
> demand - every time you get out there and say you're going to
continue
> the killing in Iraq to honor the fallen heroes by continuing the
> mission - you say, except Casey Sheehan.'">
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> "And you say, except for all the members of 'Gold Star Families
> for Peace' cuz we think not one drop of blood should be spilled in
our
> families' names. You quit doing that. You don't have my permission."
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> And I'm gonna say, "And you tell me what the noble cause is that
> my son died for." And if he even starts to say "freedom and
> democracy," I'm gonna say "bullshit."
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> You tell me the truth. You tell me that my son died for oil. You
> tell me that my son died to make your friends rich. You tell me my
son
> died to spread the cancer of Pax Americana, imperialism in the Middle
> East. You tell me that, you don't tell me my son died for freedom and
> democracy.
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> Cuz, we're not freer. You're taking away our freedoms. The Iraqi
> people aren't freer, they're much worse off than before you meddled
in
> their country.
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> You get America out of Iraq, you get Israel out of Palestine.
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> (massive round of applause)
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> And if you think I won't say "bullshit" to the President, I say
> move on, cuz I'll say what's on my mind.
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> So, what's gonna happen? I started this, I thought it was gonna
be
> just me and my sister driving to Crawford, but it kind of mushroomed
> and people from as far away as Dayton, Ohio are coming, to help us,
to
> stand behind us, because I travel all over the country, I speak, I
> write, I get feedback on my writing, and just in the little over a
> year that I've been doing this, I've seen a major turnaround in this
> country.
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> People don't just want to hear it - they want to know, what can
we do?
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> What can we do to get him out of power? And I'm gonna say the "I"
> word. Impeach. And we have to have everybody impeached that lied to
> the American public, and that's the executive branch, and any people
> in congress, and we gotta go all the way down and we might have to go
> all the way down to the person who picks up the dog shit in
Washington
> because ...

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> We can't let somebody rise to the top who will pardon these war
> criminals. Because they need to go to prison for what they've done in
> this world. We can't have a pardon. They need to pay for what they've
> done.

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> So anyway, I'm gonna go to Crawford tomorrow, and I'm gonna say I
> want to talk to him, and they say he's not coming out, I'm gonna set
> up my tent there until he comes out to talk to me.

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> And I have the whole month of August off, just like him. It's
just
> the way it worked out, I was supposed to go to England tomorrow to do
> some Downing Street things, but Conyers cancelled, so hey, I have a
> lot of free time on my hands, and I'm gonna stay until he comes out
> and talks to me. And if he quits his vacation and goes to DC, I'll
> pull my tent up, I'll go to DC and put it on the White House lawn,
and
> I'll be waiting for you guys when you get there September 24th.

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> Another thing that I'm doing is - my son was killed in 2004, so
> I'm not paying my taxes for 2004. If I get a letter from the IRS, I'm
> gonna say, you know what, this war is illegal; this is why this war
is
> illegal. This war is immoral; this is why this war is immoral. You
> killed my son for this. I don't owe you anything. And if I live to be
> a million, I won't owe you a penny.

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> And I want them to come after me, because unlike what you've been
> doing with the war resistance, I want to put this frickin' war on
> trial. And I want to say, "You give me my son, and I'll pay your
> taxes."

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> I live in Vacaville, come and get me if you can find me there and
> put me on trial, because like Camilo (Mejia) - Camilo knew what was
> right. And he went to prison for that. And Henry David Thoreau, he
> went to prison, he refused to pay his poll tax, and Emerson - I call
> them HT and RW - and RW came to visit HT and said, what are you doing
> here, buddy? And HT said, why aren't you here? This is the only place
> for a moral person in an immoral world.

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> It's up to us, the people, to break immoral laws and resist. As
> soon as the leaders of a country lie to you, they have no authority
> over you. These maniacs have no authority over us. And they might be
> able to put our bodies in prison, but they can't put our spirits in
> prison. And I know that Camilo came out a much stronger person, he's
> one of my heroes, it's great a row of heroes in front of me here.

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> And everyone gave such great testimony this evening, I have to
> wonder, why do we keep doing this to each other? Why do we let this
> continue time and time again, why do we let it happen? And it's
> because our country is so good at demonizing people. I still have
> relatives from WWII that still call Japanese people "Japs." And we
> demonize the Iraqi people, where most of this country doesn't even
> think we're killing innocent people.

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> Because, "Oh Cindy, don't you remember what happened on September

11th?"

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> "Yeah, but, were any of those people in Iraq? And the people who
> flew those planes into the Trade Center, where they from Iraq?"

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> When I was growing up, it was "Communists." Now it's
"Terrorists."

> So you always have to have somebody to fight and be afraid of, so the
> war machine can build more bombs, guns, and bullets and everything.

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> But I do see hope. I see hope in this country. 58% of the
American

> public are with us. We're preaching to the choir, but the choir's not
> singing. If all of the 58% started singing, this war would end.

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> I got an email the other day and it said, "Cindy, if you didn't
> use so much profanity ... there's people 'on the fence' that get
> offended."

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> And you know what I said? "You know what? You know what, god damn
> it? How, in the world is anybody still sitting on that fence'?"

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> "If you fall on the side that is pro-George and pro-war, you get
> your ass over to Iraq, and take the place of somebody who wants to
> come home. And if you fall on the side that is against this war and
> against George Bush, stand up and speak out."

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> But whatever side you fall on, quit being on the fence.

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> The opposite of good is not evil, it's apathy. And we have to get
> this country off their butts, and we have to get the choir singing.

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> We need to say, bring our troops home now.

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> We can't depend on the people in charge bringing our troops home.

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> Because you don't plan on bringing the troops home when you drop
> so much of the reconstruction money into building permanent bases.

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> I was hoping to come to the banquet tomorrow night, but unless
> George comes out and talks to me, I'll be camping at Crawford.

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> Thank you.

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