

## **“Peace Mom” v. “Guardian of Power”**

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Credit both titles to the book authors. Cindy Sheehan as a mother, peace activist, and now candidate to succeed Nancy Pelosi in California’s Eighth Congressional District. Pelosi as both “guardian” and possessor of what Davids Cromwell and Edwards wrote about in their powerful critique of the media.

Both women represent hugely different interests, so let readers choose which ones they prefer. First some background on both candidates.

Sheehan is a peace activist, not a politician, and think how refreshing that is. Here’s some background about her from her [cindyforcongress.com](#) web site:

- born in California to working-class parents who experienced the pain of the Great Depression;
- raised four children, including her son Casey; killed in Iraq on April 4, 2004 at age 24 – five days after he arrived;
- Sheehan bitterly opposed the war and begged her son not to re-enlist in August 2003: “I begged Casey not to go. I told him I would take him to Canada. (I would do) anything to get him not to go to that immoral war;”
- as an adult mother, she attended Cerritos College and UCLA;
- she then worked as a Youth Minister at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Vacaville, CA for eight years and coordinated an after-school program for at-risk middle school children;
- everything changed when Casey was killed; it energized her to action;
- she founded Gold Star Families for Peace in January 2005, an organization of family members whose relatives were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan and that’s dedicated “to ending the occupation in Iraq and bringing our troops home;”
- in August 2005, she organized demonstrations close to the Bush ranch in Crawford, TX – what became known as “Camp Casey;” it drew thousands of activists and celebrities from around the world in protest against an illegal war they want stopped;
- prior to her congressional campaign, she travelled the world to meet with world leaders about resolving the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts; the US Congress and governments of South Korea, Scotland and Canada paid her special recognition;
- numerous organizations around the country and world now have her as a keynote

speaker and honored guest;

- she receives dozens of peace awards and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005; in addition, Dario Fo, 1997 Nobel Laureate for Literature, wrote a play about her called “Peace Mom,” the same title as her book;

- she’s also now an accomplished author of three books to go along with her other achievements that have gotten her featured in the mainstream press and alternative media;

- in sum: major achievements for a once simple “mom” who cared enough to change her life and shake the world; now she hopes to do it as a member of the 111th Congress next January and accomplished the first step toward it – in spite of a determined effort to stop her, she collected enough required signatures (by the August 8 deadline) to be on the November ballot as an independent candidate for Congress.

Nancy Pelosi is the current House Speaker and Democrat Congressional member since winning a special election in 1987. Her 8th Congressional District represents much of San Francisco and is considered one of the most liberal ones in the country. In November 2002, she became the first woman ever in Congress to lead a political party as Minority Leader. After Democrats won control of the House in the 2006 off-year elections, she was elected Speaker in January 2007.

She grew up in Baltimore in a very political family. Her late father, Tommy “The Elder” D’Alesandro, was a local party boss and served in various capacities in the city council, as a state delegate, congressman, and three times as mayor from 1947 – 1959. Her younger brother, Tommy “The Younger” D’Alesandro, also was Baltimore’s mayor for one term.

Pelosi’s husband, Paul, is a successful San Francisco financier and businessman. Largely because of his wealth, Pelosi is considered the ninth richest person in the House (according to OpenSecrets.org) with estimates of their net worth ranging from \$25 million to three or four times that amount and a life-style to go with it. Not a model populist in a strongly Democrat district where she’s been re-elected 10 times with at least 75% of the vote. Republicans need not apply, so Democrats win by showing up. At least so far.

On examination, Pelosi’s record is troubling, especially after becoming Speaker and failing to deliver on promises made in the 2006 mid-term election. Along with Senate Majority Leader (Democrat) Harry Reid, they share most blame for why the July Rasmussen Reports gave Congress its lowest ever approval rating at 9% with only 2% of respondents calling its performance excellent. The other 7% called it good. The majority 91% called it fair (36%) or poor (52%). That presents opportunity for Sheehan.

Pelosi on the issues explains why. She:

- supported the 1999 Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act that repealed Glass-Steagall and allowed commercial and investment banks and insurance companies to combine; it opened the door for some of the worst financial abuses now apparent;

- voted for the September 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) for “the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States;” it began the “war on terror,” the illegal wars that followed, as well as the Bush administration’s coup d’état against the Constitution and establishment of a police state;

- opposed the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution responsible for launching the war; but she supported the Afghanistan assault and all illegal war funding;
- on January 5, 2007 (after becoming Speaker), “informed the president” in writing of her opposition to the “surge;” only supported a non-binding February resolution against it and took no effective action to end it or the occupation;
- supported the 2007 Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act (HR 2956); it passed the House, but the Senate Foreign Relations Committee took no further action;
- supported the 2007 US Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Health, and Iraq Accountability Act (HR 1591) – the first legislation for supplemental Iraq and Afghanistan funding; it called for ending the occupation by September 1, 2008; a compromise bill was agreed to by the House and Senate; it passed both Houses; George Bush vetoed it, and House Democrats failed to override; a second attempt also failed; Democrats in both Houses (backed by Pelosi) agreed to approve supplemental funding with no occupation withdrawal timetable and clear evidence that their earlier efforts were more posturing than a determined effort to end it;
- despite considerable opposition rhetoric, indicated her support for the Iraq and Afghan wars (on December 5, 2006) after the mid-term elections when she looked assured of being elected Speaker; responding to questions said: “We will not cut off funding for the troops; absolutely not; let me remove all doubt in anyone’s mind; as long as our troops are in harm’s way, Democrats will be there to support them....;”
- voted for every Bush administration Pentagon budget request since 2001; and also supported:
  - the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act – a thinly veiled scheme to destroy public education and privatize it;
  - the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act;
  - the 2001 USA Patriot Act;
  - the 2005 Detainee Treatment Act – it denied detainees habeas rights and let US forces use cruel, abusive, inhumane and degrading treatment in the interest of national security;
  - the 2006 Homeland Security Department Authorization Act;
  - the 2007 Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendation Act;
  - the 2008 and 2009 Intelligence Authorization Acts to fund 13 intelligence agencies; and
  - the 2008 FISA Amendments Act – to weaken standards of proof and warrants required for surveillance and grant telecom companies retroactive immunity for warrantless spying post-9/11.

She’s also fully committed to and well-funded by the corporate interests she supports. She voted against withdrawing from the WTO, for NAFTA and for similar “free trade” agreements with Australia, Peru, Chile, and Singapore. She calls democratic Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez a “common thug.”

And when it comes to Israel, she states that she and the US “will stand with (the Jewish state) now and forever.” She further contends that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict isn’t over the issue of occupation. “This is absolute nonsense. In truth, the history of the conflict is not over occupation, and never has been: it is over the fundamental right of Israel to exist.”

Her AIPAC June 2008 conference address highlighted her “commitment to Israel’s security;” that passage of the 2008 Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Reform Act will expedite sending defense equipment and services to Israel; that Israel will be “treated like NATO members;” and that America will guarantee that “Israel’s qualitative military edge (will) be empirically assessed on an ongoing basis.”

She also highlighted Iran as one of her main concerns and said: “Ensuring the security of Israel and the entire world demands that we do more to convince Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions and cease its support for terrorist groups.” She further suggested that Iran represents an existential threat and that sanctions against it must be tightened – “and by tighten, I mean tighten.”

She then added: “Thank you (for) lobby(ing) on behalf of bipartisan legislation introduced by Congressman Ackerman” by which she meant H. Con. Res. 362. It contains outlandish, unsubstantiated accusations against Iran, and if enacted and implemented, will authorize a naval blockade and be an act of war. AIPAC is committed to its passage. Pelosi is committed to AIPAC. Its 2002 – 04 president, Amy Rothschild Friedkin, (a fellow San Franciscan) is her close friend.

Finally, as House Speaker, she declared that efforts to impeach George Bush were “off the table.” Most recently in an August 1 interview with James Carney of Time, Inc., she responded to a question about it as follows:

“I took (impeachment) off the table a long time ago. You can’t talk about impeachment unless you have the facts, and you can’t have the facts unless you have cooperation from the Administration. I think the Republicans would like nothing better than for us to focus on impeachment and take our eye off the ball of a progressive economic agenda.”

Pelosi, of course, turns a blind eye to very clear evidence for impeachment. On January 17, 2003, international law expert Professor Francis Boyle listed them in his “Draft Impeachment Resolution Against President George W. Bush” and presented it to the 108th Congress. It called for impeaching the President for high crimes and misdemeanors for:

- “violat(ing) his constitutional oath to faithfully execute (his) office;”
- failing to “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution;
- impos(ing) a police state and military dictatorship;
- ramming the totalitarian USA Patriot Act (and other repressive legislation) through Congress;
- trying to suspend the constitutional Writ of Habeas Corpus;
- mass-round(ing) up and incarcerat(ing) foreigners;
- kangaroo courts;

- depriving at least two United States citizens of their constitutional rights by means of military incarceration;
- interfer(ing) with the constitutional right of defendants in criminal cases to (be represented by) lawyers;
- violating and subverting the Posse Comitatus Act;
- (allowing) unlawful and unreasonable searches and seizures;
- violating the First Amendment rights of free exercise of religion, speech, assembly, and to petition the government for redress of grievances;
- packing the federal judiciary with hand-picked (totalitarian-minded) judges;
- violating the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions, US War Crimes Act, (UN) Convention against Torture, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” and other violations of US and international laws and norms – “to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.”

#### Cindy Sheehan on the Issues

Her positions on key issues stand in stark contrast to Pelosi’s. She’s for:

- “repealing all ‘free trade’ agreements;” replacing them with “fair trade” ones that respect worker rights and union empowerment to bargain on equal terms with management;
- enacting “single-payer healthcare and affordable housing” legislation;
- extending unemployment and food stamp benefits at a time of economic distress;
- “compassionate and humane treatment for immigrant workers;” their right to join unions; and for an “expedited path to legalization in the form of Green Cards;”
- ending the militarization of the border as well as funding for ICE and other government agencies that “terrorize immigrant workers (driven here by bipartisan support for unfair) ‘free trade’ and ‘structural adjustment’ policies;”
- making quality free education a “basic human right from infants in day care centers to students in universities;”
- “bring(ing) home our troops from all countries where (they) promote occupation, corporate greed and empire;”
- repealing the No Child Left Behind Act and backing government-supported public education;
- investing in the nation’s infrastructure, long neglected;
- slashing the Pentagon’s budget and putting federal money into job creation (and social services);
- reversing destructive deregulation that enables “corporate profiteers to (avoid) proper

oversight and health and safety regulations; reinstating Glass-Steagall that separated investment from commercial banking and insurance operations;

— regulating the corporate media; opposing the “multiple ownership of newspaper, cable, broadcast, internet and all other media operations;” supporting federally-funded “public labor-community broadcast and internet systems;”

— reversing the trend to “privatize and contract out jobs (that) threat(en the nation’s) workforce;” ending the privatization of federal jobs and letting all government workers join unions;

— preventing the US Postal Service from being privatized;

— establishing “a national energy system, for a mass transit system;” alternative fuels as well to end our dependence on oil, gas and nuclear;

— assuring civil rights and privacy protection; ending harassment and discrimination against union members and unorganized workers;

— repealing the Patriot Act and other repressive laws;

— ending pervasive spying - by the government on the citizenry and corporations on their workers; and

— repealing drug and other repressive laws that jail millions of working people in the world’s largest prison population.

Sheehan v. Pelosi. “Peace Mom and supporter of people rights v. “Guardian of Power” and defender of wealth and privilege. On November 3, the people of California’s 8th Congressional District will decide which agenda they prefer. So can readers.

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