

While in Iraq recently, as a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, I sat down with representatives of the Oil Ministry to discuss the issue of graft. After I repeatedly pointed to independent analyses documenting the serious corruption problems within the Iraqi oil sector, the Iraqi officials finally acknowledged that there were "small" problems with graft in this sector. Considering that oil accounts for more than 90 percent of the country's revenues, this ought to be extremely disturbing to Congress and people all across America.

Just as the President made the case to go to war, he owes it to Congress and the American people to come to Congress and lay out his plan and his budget for achieving a lasting peace in Iraq.

Congress owes it to the American people and the institution to vote.

If the President refuses to come to Congress in the coming weeks with his plan and his budget to win the peace in Iraq, Congress owes it to the American people to vote up or down on whether to keep American troops in Iraq for at least 3 more years.

The President's case for winning the peace in Iraq should address these concerns:

First, how the President can help make the Iraqis self-reliant so that they can defeat the deadly insurgency.

Second, how the President intends to help Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish leaders break the political impasse so that they can form a unity government.

Third, how the President intends to pull the Iraqi people back from the brink of all-out civil war and the specter of another Rwanda or Darfur.

Fourth, how the President intends to help rebuild the Iraqi infrastructure and ensure that Iraqis have access to basic services like electricity and clean water.

And fifth, how the President intends to bring the troops home from Iraq.

If need be, to be sensitive to national security matters, I would not be averse to the Senate moving into Executive Session to consider portions of the President's plan and his budget for securing the peace in Iraq.

I simply ask the President to come to Congress and describe his plan and his budget specifically, and let Congress consider its potential to succeed before the Congress, with its silence, consents to 3 more years of very costly involvement in Iraq.

The vote I call for today, if held, won't be about cutting-and-running. It won't be about who comes up with the best spin. It will be about holding the President and Congress accountable. The vote will hold the President accountable for presenting a plan and a budget for securing the peace. And the vote will hold Congress accountable by making it finally act like a co-equal branch of government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Oregon, who has just spoken, for what he has said. I shall read his speech carefully tonight, the Lord willing, the general theme of which I am in accordance with. His was a speech that had to be said and ought to be said. It was in his words. I might have made it with a change or two. But we are together, as we were when the Senator and I joined the immortal spirits of the 23 who on that day cast the most important vote that I have ever cast in my 48 years now in the U.S. Senate.

EASTER WEEK

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this Sunday, April 9, is Palm Sunday, thank God. It marks the beginning of the Christian holy week and Easter. The Senate will recess today so that Members might celebrate this holy week in the home churches, among their families, friends, and constituents. Before we adjourn, I would like to give a little consideration to those world-shaping events of some 2,000 years ago.

Whether one counts himself or herself as a Christian of any denomination or a follower of any other faith, one must admit that the man, the person, at the center of the Easter celebration was and is a figure of historical import, just as are the founding figures of the rest of the world's religions. There are today, by some estimates, approximately 2.1 billion Christians of all denominations, more than any other religious affiliation, and almost twice as many as those who describe themselves as secular, nonreligious, agnostic, or atheist—1.1 billion. By way of contrast, there are approximately 1.3 billion adherents of Islam and just 14 million of Jesus' Jewish faith. That one man's example and teachings have affected so many people so deeply and for so many years is a testament to his faith.

On Palm Sunday, a rabbi from Galilee, whom we know best today as Jesus, made a public entrance into Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Passover.

In doing so, Jesus surely knew what was in store for Him. He knew—He knew—He was a wanted man. He knew He was a wanted man—He knew it—marked for arrest by the civil authorities who feared that He would incite a rebellion that would lead to Roman occupation and unprotected by religious authorities who feared His teachings and who could not countenance His refusal to deny being more than human. But still He came. Still He came and the people cheered and threw palm leaves, a symbol of triumph and the national symbol of an independent Palestine, before his path. What a remarkable act of faith. What a remarkable act of faith to come willingly to one's tragic end, seeing through the suffering to the miracle of resurrection. The miracle; the miracle of resurrection. What a remarkable act of courage, to remain silent and smiling at the people

He knew would not or could not aid Him in His final hours.

Some 2,000 years later, those 2.1 billion Christians around the world commemorate Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem by making crosses out of palm fronds, combining the triumphant entrance with the lasting image of Jesus Christ on the cross.

By Thursday, called Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday, Jesus' freedom ended after His last meal, when He was arrested and imprisoned, betrayed—yes, betrayed—by Judas for 30 pieces of silver. Foreknowledge could not have made those fateful moments any easier to bear. On Good Friday, Christians will solemnly remember His suffering and death upon the cross. Candles and lights will be extinguished in memory of His final hours. Good Friday remains a sad, dark day despite the knowledge of His resurrection to leaven the terrible suffering He endured.

Holy Saturday is a day of vigil, as Christians figuratively keep watch over Christ's tomb and await the glorious resurrection to come. And Easter Sunday, or Resurrection Sunday, is a joyful, glorious day of reaffirmed faith, of promises kept, of hope restored.

I read now from the Book of St. Matthew, the 28th chapter, the first through the seventh verses, the King James version of the Holy Bible:

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where [Jesus] lay.

The scriptures say:

Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, He "goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: Lo, I have told you."

For the next 40 days, Christ proved to his followers that He had, indeed, risen from the dead. Then He ascended into Heaven, fulfilling the final promise of His wondrous life. As John 3:16 so beautifully summed up the central promise of the Christian faith, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God offers the greatest and only proof of His love and His promise that in death, there is life in faith. That—that, not chocolate bunnies and colorful eggs—is the great gift of Easter. Its comfort and solace linger on in the soul even longer than chocolate does on the lips. It warms us even more during sad times—yes—than does the spring sun after a cold and cheerless winter.

And so it is because of this great gift, this promise—yes, this promise of everlasting life and the heart-searing proof through sacrifice that Christianity survived the passing of its founder. Nearly 2,000 years later, the words and example of the Rabbi from Galilee motivate and support over 2 billion—over 2 billion—people around the world. Governments have tried to stamp Him out, but still He endures in the hearts of His devout followers. Technology has tried to distract us, but still His word—yes, his word—beckons. I am sure that whatever trials and tribulations lie ahead, His teachings and faith will offer comfort and hope no matter how bleak the future might appear. In all of the moments of our lives, large and small, joyful and desolate, triumphant and abject, He—yes, He is there at our side with support and hope. I do feel for those 1.2 billion people who do not have faith to sustain them and give them strength. It is a deep, deep well of support and nourishment for the weary soul—for the weary soul.

Mr. President, I close my speech with the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow from his poem “Christus: A Mystery.” In the poem, Prince Henry is speaking to Elsie as they cross the square:

This is the day, when from the dead our Lord arose; and everywhere, out of their darkness and despair, triumphant over fears and foes, the hearts of his disciples rose, when to the women, standing near, the angel in shining vesture said, “The Lord is risen; He is not here!” And, mindful that the day is come, on all the hearths in Christendom the fires are quenched, to be again rekindled from the sun, that high is dancing in the cloudless sky. The churches are all decked with flowers, the salutations among men are but the Angel’s words divine, “Christ is arisen!” And the bells catch the glad murmur, as it swells, and chant together in their towers. All hearts are glad; and free from care the faces of the people shine. See what a crowd is in the square, gayly and gallantly arrayed!

Mr. President, let me close—and I hope I have not imposed too long on the Senate and on my friends who may have been waiting—let me close with these words spoken by William Jennings Bryan in his speech on immortality. Now is the time to think about it. That is what Easter is: the promise of immortality.

If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn, and make it burst forth from its prison walls again in the mighty Oak, will He leave neglected in the Earth the soul of man, who was made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rosebush, whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He withhold all the words of hope from the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If Matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of Nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the imperial spirit of man suffer annihilation after a brief visit to this tenement of clay?

No.

Rather, let us believe that He who, in his apparent prodigality, wastes not the raindrop, the blade of grass, or the evening’s sighing zephyr, but makes them all to carry

out His eternal plans, has given immortality to the mortal.

Amen.

IN THANKS TO JAY AND SHARON ROCKEFELLER

Mr. President, at this time of Easter, at this time of rejoicing in the promise of eternal life, I also rejoice in the friendship that I share with my colleague from West Virginia, Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER, and his lovely wife, Sharon. JAY and Sharon Rockefeller are jewels. They have always opened their doors and their hearts to me and to my darling wife, Erma.

For more than 20 years, JAY ROCKEFELLER and I have worked in partnership for the people of West Virginia. There have been good times and bad; moments of great joy and moments of great hardship. But at each turn, we have stood together for our State, the Mountain State, West Virginia, where Mountaineers are always free.

In the past few years, when my wife battled against illness, JAY ROCKEFELLER always took the time to ask about her. He and Sharon always wanted to know how Erma was. Stand her side-by-side with JAY, and Erma probably didn’t reach his chest. But she had a place in his and Sharon’s heart, just as he and Sharon did in hers.

Today, Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER is recovering from back surgery. He has missed some time in the Senate, and we have missed him here. I know that JAY will be back on his feet soon. And, when he walks through the Senate door, I shall welcome him with open arms.

I wish Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER and his charming wife, Sharon, a most blessed Easter, and I thank them for their long and warm friendship toward Erma and me.

I thank all Senators, and I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING PAUL COVERDELL

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today with a little bit of sadness in my voice, but also with a lot of happiness about an occasion that is going to be taking place in about 30 minutes at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA, where I had hoped to be today, but, unfortunately, the business of the Senate required us to stay here. Today at 2 o’clock there will be a dedication of the Paul Coverdell Center for Biomedical and Health Sciences at the University of Georgia in Athens. This building is going to be named for a man who was not only a close friend of mine, but he was a close political ally.

He is a man who served in the Georgia Legislature for almost two decades

and served in the U.S. Senate for 8 years, from 1992 to 2000, when, unfortunately, he died much too early as a result of a very sudden illness that he developed.

Paul Coverdell was a man of great vision, one of the hardest working individuals I have ever known in my life, and a man who truly believed in what was best for his country. He was a man who served, not just in the Senate in Washington, but he also was a director of the Peace Corps under President George Herbert Walker Bush. Today, President Bush and Mrs. Bush are in Athens to be the keynote speakers at the dedication of this building.

Paul Coverdell was a man who really took the Peace Corps to a different level. I was very pleased, along with a number of other Members of this body—particularly his close friend, Phil Gramm, the former Senator from Texas—and a number of other individuals who attended the dedication ceremony at the Old Executive Office Building in 2001, when President George W. Bush announced that we were naming the headquarters of the Peace Corps the Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters Building.

Paul had a great vision for biomedical science as well as research, so I think it is only fitting that today the building in Athens at the University of Georgia be named for him. Were it not for the hard work and the vision of another Member of this Senate, Senator Zell Miller, who succeeded Senator Coverdell, that probably would not have happened.

While it is sad to think of the fact that Paul is no longer with us, for him to be remembered as he is being remembered today, once again, on the campus of the University of Georgia, which is my alma mater, gives me a great feeling about carrying on the life, the vision, and the hope that Paul Coverdell had for our country.

His wife Nancy was very active in Paul’s political life. She continues to be a very vivacious lady today. She happens to serve as the chairman of my military academy appointment committee, and does she ever do a terrific job. She is a great lady in and of herself, but Paul Coverdell was a special person.

He rose very rapidly in the leadership of the Senate after his election. He became the secretary of the conference and served his conference well. He served not only his Republican colleagues well, but he was an individual who, on virtually every occasion when he worked on an issue, reached across the aisle to Members on the Democratic side to make sure they were included in the process, and that his ideas and his visions for a greater America would always be shared and there would be cooperation with the folks on both sides of the aisle.

Today I stand with a little bit of a heavy heart but with a wonderful remembrance of a great friend, a man with whom I spent so much time, talking about not only politics. During the