Madam President, this Sunday is the halfway mark of the

year 2007. It is also the 2-month mark since President Bush vetoed the

supplemental appropriations bill we sent to him which would have set a

responsible path to reduce our combat operations, save lives, and

finally change course in Iraq. President Bush called our bill a

``recipe for chaos.''

Now that 2 months have passed, here is what has happened under the

President's escalation plan. It is clearly chaos: 126 brave Americans

died in May alone, and more than 100 in June. This quarter has been the

deadliest in the entire war. Sectarian killings have not declined.

Yesterday, more than 20 Iraqis were beheaded. There is little evidence

the Iraqi Government will meet any of the political benchmarks they

have set for themselves. The surge was supposed to create the space for

Iraq's political leaders to make the difficult decisions to unite their

country. That has not occurred.

I have said from the beginning that as long as President Bush remains

obstinate and the Republicans in Congress continue to toe his line,

this tragic war will continue. There is no sign of President Bush

awakening to the devastating reality of this intractable war. But this

week, there is new reason for optimism in that my Republican colleagues

in the Senate are finally willing to join in calling for a new

direction.

A couple of days ago, on Tuesday, I congratulated the ranking member

of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Richard Lugar, for

courageously breaking ranks with President Bush and calling for the war

to end. Senator Lugar said, among other things:

I agree with those words.

The day after Senator Lugar's comments, another distinguished

Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, George Voinovich, wrote

a letter to the President. In the letter, Senator Voinovich urged the

President to wake up to the truth that so many of us already know: that

the war cannot be won militarily.

It can only be won politically. Yet another distinguished member of

the Armed Services Committee, Senator Warner, then said he expects the

number of Republican defections with the President to rise.

I am encouraged by what we are hearing now from Republican Senators,

even though it is only a handful. But when you join these three

Senators with Senators Smith and Hagel, we are up to five. We still

have 44 to go.

I said earlier this week that this could and should be a turning

point. After the recess, we will turn to the Department of Defense

authorization bill, which is our next chance to force the President to

change course.

But we are still a long way from reaching our goal. More Republicans

are saying the right things, but now we badly need for them to put

their words into action by voting the right way also.

The current handful of Republicans isn't enough. We would not be able

to get any legislation passed without 60 votes, but we are getting

closer. We are not where we need to be yet.

In May, as I said, the President called our plan a

Each day that goes by we sink further and further into the

President's escalation, and it becomes even clearer that the best way

to ensure chaos, death, devastation, and destruction is to stick with

the President's failed policy. Let's go with our plan, which is not

chaos but stability and the saving of people's lives.

As we leave for the celebration of our Nation's birthday, the Fourth

of July, I ask my colleagues to listen to the call of the American

people. Choose the path that honors our troops, makes our country safer

at home, and stronger abroad.

When we return next week, let's get to work on a responsible new

direction that Americans demand and deserve and, in fact, is long

overdue.