Mr. Speaker, how did the 20-year war get started? It had

been long assumed that the United States Government, shortly before

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August of 1990, gave Saddam Hussein a green

light to attack. A State Department cable recently published by

WikiLeaks confirmed that U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie did indeed have

a conversation with Saddam Hussein one week prior to Iraq's August 1,

1990, invasion of Kuwait. Amazingly, the released cable was entitled,

``Saddam's Message of Friendship to President Bush.'' In it, Ambassador

Glaspie affirmed to Saddam that ``the President had instructed her to

broaden and deepen our relations with Iraq.'' As Saddam Hussein

outlined Iraq's ongoing border dispute with Kuwait, Ambassador Glaspie

was quite clear that, ``we took no position on these Arab affairs.''

There would have been no reason for Saddam Hussein not to take this

assurance at face value. The U.S. was quite supportive of his invasion

and war of aggression against Iran in the 1980s. With this approval

from the U.S. Government, it wasn't surprising that the invasion

occurred. The shock and surprise was how quickly the tables were turned

and our friend, Saddam Hussein, all of a sudden became Hitler

personified.

The document was classified, supposedly to protect national security,

yet this information in no way jeopardized our security. Instead, it

served to keep the truth from the American people about an event

leading up to our initial military involvement in Iraq and the region

that continues to today.

The secrecy of the memo was designed to hide the truth from the

American people and keep our government from being embarrassed.

This was the initial event that had led to so much death and

destruction--not to mention the financial costs--these past 20 years.

Our response and persistent militarism toward Iraq was directly related

to 9/11, as our presence on the Arabian Peninsula--and in particular

Saudi Arabia--was listed by al Qaeda as a major grievance that outraged

the radicals who carried out the heinous attacks against New York and

Washington on that fateful day.

Today, the conflict has spread through the Middle East and Central

Asia with no end in sight.

The reason this information is so important is that if Congress and

the American people had known about this green light incident 20 years

ago, they would have been a lot more reluctant to give a green light to

our government to pursue the current war--a war that is ongoing and

expanding to this very day.

The tough question that remains is was this done deliberately to

create the justification to redesign the Middle East, as many neo-

conservatives desired, and to secure oil supplies for the West; or was

it just a diplomatic blunder followed up by many more strategic

military blunders? Regardless, we have blundered into a war that no one

seems willing to end.

Julian Assange, the publisher of the WikiLeaks memo, is now

considered an enemy of the state. Politicians are calling for drastic

punishment and even assassination; and, sadly, the majority of the

American people seem to support such moves.

But why should we so fear the truth? Why should our government's lies

and mistakes be hidden from the American people in the name of

patriotism? Once it becomes acceptable to equate truth with treason, we

can no longer call ourselves a free society.