

**Historians Against the War** join people gathering around the world today to urge the United States and its “alliance of the willing” to step back from the brink of war. As historians, we are particularly disturbed by the misuse of history by those arguing in favor of starting a war. This misuse has taken many forms. Unwarranted analogies—comparing Germany in the 1930s to Iraq today, comparing Colin Powell urging war to Adlai Stevenson urging peace—abound. The actual history of U.S. involvement in Iraq, particularly our patronage of Saddam Hussein throughout the 1980s, is forgotten or dismissed as irrelevant. The lessons of history are rarely as easy to draw as some policy makers would want. History does not repeat itself. But time and time again, war unleashes forces that those who wage it never envisage. For most of the last century, when our country has gone to war, these nightmares have been confined to lands far away. After 9/11, in all likelihood they will also be visited on us.

The statement we made last month is even more urgent today: *“We historians call for a halt to the march towards war against Iraq. We are deeply concerned about the needless destruction of human life, the undermining of constitutional government in the U.S., the egregious curtailment of civil liberties and human rights at home and abroad, and the obstruction of world peace for the indefinite future.”*

February 15 and 16, 2003  
<http://www.historiansagainstawar.org/>



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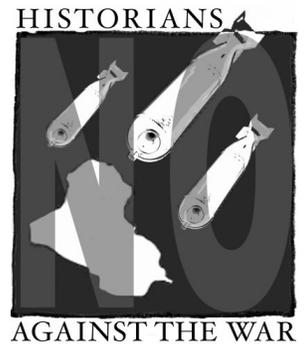
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