In the wake of the tragic and devastating attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the U.S. government has begun to prepare for military action of unknown scope and duration. As the preparations continue, many misconceptions and half-truths are being circulated by the media regarding the origins of the terrorists and their supporters, and certain elements in U.S. society are manipulating the circumstances to advance their pro-big oil, anti-human agenda, calling for war on all of corporate America's enemies. It is our hope that this question and answer sheet can provide the reader with some reasonable, researched answers to some questions they may have. In addition, we hope the facts and arguments presented here will convince the reader that war is not the solution to the problem that terrorism presents.

Who are the Taliban and what is their connection to Osama bin Laden?
The Taliban are the current rulers of much of Afghanistan. They assumed this position after their victory over other forces in the many sided Afghan civil war that followed the Soviet defeat and withdrawal from that country. The Soviets had originally invaded Afghanistan in 1980 following the failure of their client government in Kabul to keep power. The Taliban and bin Laden were part of the forces created by the CIA and Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) to defeat the Soviets. These forces were funded by the CIA and heroin sales facilitated by the CIA. Most members of these forces, which eventually numbered over 100,000, were not aware of the role they were playing in U.S. plans for the region, believing instead that they were only fighting a jihad (holy war) against the godless forces of the Soviet Union. The U.S., meanwhile, had its eyes not only on the total defeat of the Soviet Union, but also on the vast oil fields in Central Asia and Afghanistan's potential role in transporting that oil via a pipeline through that country and Pakistan to the Arabian Sea. After the Soviets were defeated, the various factions within the guerrilla forces began to compete for power, with the Taliban eventually winning. Bin Laden, meanwhile, had turned his attention from the Soviets to what he perceived to be his form of Islam's other great enemy—the United States. This attention intensified when the U.S. launched the war against Iraq and insisted on stationing U.S. troops throughout the region.

What about other countries that "host" terrorism?
There are elements within the U.S. military-political establishment who would like to use this tragedy as an excuse to rid the world of all those governments which oppose the United States, using the pretext that these regimes host or sponsor terrorism. Indeed, the media is already preparing us for possible intensification of the war against Iraq, to name one example. As for Afghanistan, there is evidence that the United States had plans prior to the attacks to invade that country in October 2001 (BBC 9/18/01) anyhow. The argument that a country hosts terrorism is a faulty one—after all, didn't most of the dead hijackers live in the United States? This argument is nothing more than an excuse for the more hawkish members of the U.S. establishment to manipulate the legitimate emotions of the American people in the wake of the mass murders of September 11th. It is our belief that these acts were criminal acts and should be dealt with as any act of mass murder is dealt with. When someone commits mass murder at the shopping

mall, we don't attack the neighborhood where the perpetrators lived. We shouldn't do that in this case, either. Nor should we blame all Muslims, Arabs, or other peoples from that part of the world.

But aren't the Taliban and bin Laden organizations based on Islamic religious principles?
Yes and no. All religions have their dogmatic and apocalyptic spinoffs. Not too long ago, citizens of the U.S. saw David Koresh's apocalyptic interpretation of Christianity bring the might of Washington's internal security apparatus down upon his group's compound in Waco, Texas. The Taliban and bin Laden, while divergent in their beliefs, apparently share a belief that non-believers in their version of Islam are the enemy. The majority of Muslims share a belief held by most of humanity—that the slaughter of innocents is absolutely wrong and a sin against God.

What can we do if we oppose war?
Read as much as possible on the history of the region. Gently remind folks that war is an act of terror itself and, if the U.S. military goes into any country and launches a massive attack and bombardment that kills innocents, it is no different than the men who drove the airliners into the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Work in the community to protect Muslim residents from the ignorant anger of those who feel a need to attack somebody. Encourage your representatives and senators to think with their brains and not their emotions and vote against war and any accompanying abridgement of our civil rights.

Some Questions And Answers About The "War on Terrorism"

-instant antiwar action group