

## **THE TRUE BELIEVER**

**Belief has to do with conviction or acceptance that certain things are true or real. Can we believe the Petraeus/Crocker report on the current status of Iraq or do we subscribe to a NY Times transposition of Petraeus/Betrayus or somewhere in between? The never-ending war continues with apparent measured military progress but suspect political and reconciliation results. Counter-insurgency strategy continues to include a proviso for troop draw-downs. If one assumes continuance of the Anbar experience, along with positive military and political gains, and mid-2008 there is hope for a quasi-turnover of political and military process to the Iraqis...what then?**

**The great dilemma: Do we honestly believe that the boys(and girls)will all come home? Or will we realize this is a small achievement within the greater conflagration: War of Civilizations as many of us believe?**

**A prescient book, "The True Believer" written by a self-educated, well-read man, Eric Hoffer , longshoreman, gold-miner, and migrant worker found a ready audience for mass movements. It was post WWII and Fascism and Communism were enticing movements fraught with ideology, terror and fanaticism. The world was a stage, and the audience wondered at their audacity, goals and prospects, often fearfully.**

**"All mass movements generate in their inhereents a readiness to die and a proclivity for united action; all of them irrespective of doctrine instill a fanaticism, enthusiasm, fervent hope, hatred and intolerance; all of them are capable of releasing a powerful flow of activity in one's life, and each demand blind faith, allegiance according to Hoffer ."**

**History reminds there are differences between the fanatical Christian, Moslem, Nationalist, Nazi, Communist yet there is much in common. A devout Christian recognizes that Jesus sought to love his enemy and change him but many died martyrs rather than obeisance. A devout Islamic sees no compromise or acquiescence. Fanatics succor their cause and would rather die than relent. A void of reason tends to eliminate any indulgence in compromise.**

**Since the nature of our system is compromise and patience together with a tenacious argument about 'separation of church and state' it is difficult to comprehend we are in a 'war of ideas' as the 9/11 commission warned: 'numbers of hours funding broadcasting in Pashtun, the Arabic dialects, in Farsi, Urdu is miniscule.' Islamofascism as some call it continues like the incessant tide, on and on and the failure to define it and declare war on it and the countries who harbor 'the true believers' appear like discussions at cocktail parties rather than strategy to eradicate this cancer.**

