

India and the Future of Militancy

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From sectarian strife to suicide bombing and the founding of Al-Qaeda's global jihad, South Asia has provided the site for every important development in militant Islam. And it is today the arena of the greatest struggle with such militancy. But while the Cold War conflict over Afghanistan and Pakistan's rivalry with India are recognized to have set the stage for Islamic militancy in the region, comparatively little attention has been focussed on the way in which it is received and justified there. In this paper I will look at the unexpected role that militancy plays in the political and ideological landscape of modern India, one that differs significantly from its expression elsewhere, not least because it does not depend upon the deployment of clichés about Islamic emirates or universal caliphates and rarely entails any public backlash. In particular I will analyze the repercussions of the spectacular attacks launched in Mumbai in November 2008, and ask how they allow us to rethink standard narratives of religious terrorism, securitization and inter-state competition more generally.