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**Madrassahs and 9/11: Studies between Knowledge and Politics**

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4:00pm  
Psychology/PAIS Building 290  
Emory University

The years since 9/11 have witnessed a tremendous outpouring of writings concerning the madrassah in Pakistan and Afghanistan, most of which have either responded to the alleged role that institution played in inciting religiously motivated violence in peaceful societies or highlighted co-operation between secular and the religious actors in setting up networks of willing jihadi fighters for the great game in Afghanistan during the 1980s. What sense do we make of these opposing portrayals, and how do we assess them? From the perspective of the politics of knowledge, covert operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan led to the control of scholars and journalists, something that is evident from censorship of the press and the amplification of projects intended to Islamize society. These developments continue to influence the social scientific study of Islam in the contemporary world, and the resulting distortions in both theory and method require urgent critical consideration.