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Once again, we return to our rendezvous with the academic community through the Journal of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies. On this occasion with a brand new issue, number 14, featuring seven articles and two reviews, chosen, as always, with the purpose of providing well-founded analysis on a variety of topics of major interest.

What could be timelier for a publication by an Institute such as ours than an essay on the transformation that the international system of relations is experiencing with its different actors? A transformation that is developing with almost dizzying speed, resulting from the possibilities of disruptive technologies; driven by the appearance of new powers that question the liberal democratic system characteristic of what we refer to as the West, and whose final state we can hardly fully sense. Luis V. Pérez Gil focuses his contribution on the most concrete aspects of the evolution of the disarmament treaties in force since the end of the Cold War, and points to their definitive abandonment by the signatories and to the very likely beginning of a renewed race for the possession of strategic weapons providing owners with guarantees of global influence. Outer space is but another new scenario for the development of this race, an increasingly accessible domain, and not only for the most powerful states. The big question facing us is whether the competing powers will be able to achieve the corresponding necessary treaties on control and disarmament.

We could consider the article by José Luis Juan Conesa, «North Korea and the United States: an analysis from the theory of international relations» as a case in point, illustrating what is indicated in the paragraph above. It is no easy task to explain the behaviour of the respective leaders of both countries. It is far easier to fall into the usual over-simplified shoddy news reports that give us an incomplete, if not biased, view of the decisions made by two such peculiar personalities as the presidents of North Korea and the United States. A tug-of-war dynamic centred on such an important issue as the North Korean regime's possession of nuclear weapons, in which not

only these leaders but also its powerful neighbour China, as well as South Korea and Japan all play their part, countries directly affected by a feared escalation or by a more desirable de-escalation.

Always topical in recent years –and particularly so at the time of publishing this edition of the journal in the wake of the death of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi– jihadist terrorism merits the detailed study presented by José Ramón Blanco Castro, which focuses in particular on the rivalry between its two major organisations, Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. This is a battle whose ultimate goal is survival itself; the weapons at stake being their ideological principles, the methods they employ, the recruitment of militants or sympathisers and the occupation of new settlements after the setbacks suffered in the Middle East. Daesh's decision to occupy a physical space had the unwanted result of enabling the territorial defeat of the caliphate; it is more difficult, the author tells us, to defeat an idea, a choice that AQ has opted for. The most disturbing question now is whether the latest developments will result in the reunification of the global jihad.

The article by Omar Ahmed Abenza deals with a subject that has been scarcely analysed, but of undeniable interest, especially for those who are affected by it – the right to health in Syria. A conflict that has been going on for too long, with an unusual number of warring factions, inevitably results in an enormous weakness of governance across the entire country, regardless of who holds the «authority» in each area. In these circumstances, human rights in general and the right to health in particular, will only be able to achieve a satisfactory improvement when there is a definitive end to the conflict and a properly executed institutional and material rebuilding programme is undertaken. For this very reason the author concludes his article with a series of recommendations that deserve our attention.

We complete this issue of the journal with three articles of diverse and wide-ranging content. Miguel Ángel Martínez Alonso analyses the need for an institution as distinctive in its nature and mission as the Armed Forces to embrace the need to define and present a digital reputation in keeping with the times in which we live. The role of prisons in National Security matters is presented by Sara Carou García, who reminds us that the rights of inmates cannot be violated in the process of obtaining necessary intelligence. Finally, Ana Gemma López Martín explores the maritime borders of Africa, a very significant issue on the continent with the largest number of coastal states.

The two reviews included in this edition are those of Francis Fukuyama's book: «Identity. The demand for dignity and the politics of resentment» and the work of Michael Ignatieff: «Blood and Belonging. Journeys into the New Nationalism».

As a farewell note, allow me to express the hope that the present selection of topics will not only be of interest and use to you, but you will also find entertaining and enjoyable. Why not?