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Introduction to issue 15 of the IEEE journal

The circumstances in which, on this occasion, we have faithfully kept our rendezvous with you are admittedly very different from those we might have imagined when closing the previous issue of this Magazine. We at the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies were well aware that the possibility of an epidemic –or pandemic as it finally turned out to be– was very considerable, and this was demonstrated by the timely publication, in February 2020, of *Cuaderno de Estrategia*, number 203, under the title “Pandemic Emergencies in a Globalised World: Threats to Security”. In the interim we have not been immune to the upheaval caused by the virulence and speed of transmission of this new coronavirus. Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulties, including widespread consternation, we were determined to turn up for our appointment with the academic community interested in the Security and Defence of our country and of the entire world in general. After all, if there is one thing that has been made clear by this crisis, it is that the highly interconnected and interdependent world in which we live leaves no room for indifference in the face of events and circumstances that, in other not so distant times, and precisely because of geographical distance, would have seemed alien to us.

On this occasion there are several articles that address issues with a pronounced military content. “Targeting as an enabling factor in NATO military operations” proposes an analysis of the concept of targeting, which seeks to maximise the effectiveness of armed interventions in order to – although this may seem paradoxical at first sight – minimise the damage caused and where possible resolve the conflicts in the shortest time; and all of this, within the strictest framework of international legality and the ethical conditions that democratic societies impose on themselves. This will mean revising and updating doctrines, structures and procedures. If the most advanced technologies play a predominant role in this particular article, they are no less relevant in the application of “The ‘Silver lining methodology for the development of strategic foresight exercises”, especially artificial intelligence. And the same goes for the

“Prospective analysis of the implications of using autonomous aerial systems in USAF Air Defence Interception Missions. From 2019 to 2035”, an area in which we should not ignore the obvious ethical repercussions that derive from the simultaneous use of human-operated and other autonomous platforms.

European initiatives to strengthen its industrial and technological infrastructure in the field of defence equipment, in search of the often proclaimed, but still incipient, European strategic autonomy, serve to highlight another of the contributions in this issue of the Journal: “An Empirical analysis of international collaboration in the provision of Defence assets: Advantages and Limitations”. This collaboration has many positive aspects, ranging from the strengthening of international relations to the always desirable interaction between the allied forces. These advantages are complemented by the catalytic effect for much-needed industrial restructuring, especially in the light of the impact of the economic crisis that will undoubtedly follow the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the article “The United States and Saudi Arabia Alliance in the 21st Century. The presidency of George Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump” provides a very interesting review of the evolution of relations between these two global actors throughout the first two decades of this century.

We complete this issue with a review of the book entitled “Hybrid Threats: Hybridisation Theory and the New International Order” by Pablo Andrés Mazurier and Claudio Augusto Payá Santos.

Once again, I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that the content of this issue of our Magazine will be of great interest to you, and furthermore that it will be entertaining and enjoyable to read. We look forward to meeting up with you again with the next edition of this, your Journal of the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies.