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### *Presentation of the IEEE Journal issue 21*

In this the 21<sup>st</sup> issue of the Revista del Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, we offer nine articles that we consider to be of great interest.

There is no doubt that the crisis unleashed globally by Russia's invasion of Ukraine is causing great consternation among the international community worldwide, but especially in Europe. It is yet another chapter in the catalogue of great power tensions that have characterised global geopolitics over the last decade, but it should not make us forget that the threat of transnational terrorism has not disappeared. That is why we are including three articles on this subject.

Ana Aguilera Raga examines the impact of the illicit economy security and stability in Libya and its regional neighbours, concluding that there is a strong link between this illicit trade and the rise of terrorism in the Sahel region. Political instability and conflict in Libya have created a power vacuum that has allowed strategic alliances between criminal enterprises and violent extremists to flourish, making Libya an exporter of regional instability. Elena López Werner, for her part, reviews the attacks, carried out from Syria to Libya, carried out between 2014 and 2017 under the self-proclaimed Islamic State's own brand of Foreign Operations Service, and succinctly unpacks the alleged origins of an intelligence agency within IS. Finally, Clara Bañares Martín offers an unusual, and therefore very interesting, view of terrorist activity. She studies this issue from the perspective of economic theory, with the aim of shedding light on the decision-making process of terrorist groups and identifying patterns of behaviour, thus opening up transcendental lines of research for the design of more effective anti-terrorist policies.

Beyond the phenomenon of terrorism, Emanuela Merck Giuliani tries to shed light on the applicability of International Humanitarian Law to belligerent occupations of territory and asks whether IHL has an expiry date in view of the already very long temporary occupation of Palestine. Guillermo Moya Barba, for his part, analyses how

principles have evolved in relation to failed states and what elements should be taken into account when initiating a discussion on peace-building in these territories within the framework of the United Nations Security Council.

The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China are also featured in this 21<sup>st</sup> issue. The importance of intelligence in a war such as the one in Ukraine, and consequently of counter-intelligence, has led Juan Carlos Estarellas y López to study counter-intelligence operations aimed at countering Russian foreign intelligence from a double dimension: offensive counter-intelligence, aimed at penetrating the enemy's services, and defensive counter-intelligence aimed at identifying agents, the methods they use and their sources of information. China's hypersonic weapons programme is analysed by Rodrigo Pardo de Santayana Jenaro, who notes that it has attracted a great deal of global attention and research interest in recent years, and concludes that the People's Republic's development of a hypersonic weapons system is relevant for what it shows in terms of military capabilities, but even more so for what it means in terms for the innovative capacity of Chinese defence technology.

Two other articles round off this issue. A topic that has so far received little attention in security-related studies, but deserves more attention than it usually receives, is the threat to Earth from cosmic impacts. Elisa Simó Soler, Alberto Coronel Tarancón and Eloy Peña Asensio undertake a rigorous review of the current scientific and technical capabilities for mitigating asteroid impacts, and through an extrapolation exercise they propose the concept of the *impact refugee* and the landless state, using climate refugees and environmental risks as a starting point.

Finally, Enrique Refoyo Acedo looks back at the 19<sup>th</sup> century Industrial Revolution, and develops some general reflections on Spanish geographical thought applied to the study of borders and transport in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He seeks to confirm that this industrial revolution did not only take place in the factories of the Europe's booming cities, but that a military revolution also took place, which adapted the inventions that emerged in the heat of this revolution for its military purposes.

We conclude, as is customary in this magazine, with reviews of works by two of the Institute's analysts, Federico Aznar Fernández-Montesinos and Javier Fernández Aparicio. The first one is on the book *Playing chess with the devil* by Vicente Gonzalvo Navarro, a reflection on the fate of humanity. The second is on *Australia's Security in China's Shadow* by Euan Graham, a detailed analysis of Sino-Australian relations.