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In this 23rd issue (first half of 2024) of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE) Journal, we present seven articles on a variety of topics and three reviews that we hope will be attractive to readers interested in strategic, geopolitics and security and defence issues. In these times of enormous uncertainty and growing international tension, where the decisions that may be taken can lead to very different scenarios, some of them very worrying, these works address highly topical issues. In this sense, Covadonga Moreno Vílchez, in her article entitled “¿Sería posible mantener un orden mundial multipolar? Enfoque analítico de un sistema internacional liderado por varias superpotencias” (Would it be possible to maintain a multipolar world order? Analytical approach of an international system led by several superpowers), reflects on coexistence in the international system if the United States and China were to be joined by other superpowers in order to maintain a stable and safe global order.

Using a different approach, in “La doctrina de las grandes potencias en la guerra de la información” (The doctrine of the great powers in information warfare), Pau Muñoz Pairet describes how this type of warfare, which transcends the traditional sphere of armed confrontation, has been present throughout human history, evolving with each advance in information management technologies. The article focuses mainly on the vision and doctrinal approach of today’s three major powers: United States, China and Russia.

In “La República Popular de China y Australia: ¿fin a años de tensiones?” (The People’s Republic of China and Australia: an end to years of tension?) Mónica Román González describes Australia’s difficult geopolitical relationship with China. While the country is economically and commercially dependent on the Asian superpower, it is more aligned with the United States on security issues. The growing tensions between the two superpowers thus pose a real diplomatic challenge for the home of kangaroos.

Central Asia, rich in natural resources and a key corridor linking Europe and Asia, is a region of particular geopolitical interest to both Beijing and Moscow. Rafael Santiago Ortíz's "El choque ruso-chino en Asia Central. El caso de Kazajistán" (Russia and China clash in Central Asia. The case of Kazakhstan) reveals how historic Russian dominance in Kazakhstan is gradually being displaced by China, and how, despite this, Russia retains significant influence in the region and does not relinquish its interests in Kazakhstan.

Miguel Ángel Pérez Cabrera introduces another dimension in "El espacio ultraterrestre como dominio operativo: un análisis de los retos y desafíos para las Fuerzas Armadas de España" (Outer space as an operational domain: an analysis of the challenges and dares for the Spanish Armed Forces). The article reveals how, in just a few years, outer space has become increasingly important in the field of defence, becoming a new operational domain on which military operations depend to a large extent and where military operations could be conducted independently in the future.

Rodrigo Liras Molinero, in his article "Pistolas y probetas: el efecto del gasto militar público en I+D. Evidencia con datos de países de la OCDE entre 1985 y 2020" (Pistols and test tubes: The effect of public military spending R&D. Evidence with data from OECD countries between 1985 and 2020.), rigorously discusses the number of public resources that governments should allocate to military spending, considering the relationship between such spending and the development of Research and Development (R&D), and reaches some very interesting conclusions.

Finally, Arturo Dueñas Díaz introduces a very different, but ever-present, theme in war, the protection of cultural assets. The title of the article "Atena contra Marte: la protección del patrimonio cultural ucraniano en la guerra contra Rusia" (Athena versus Mars: the protection of Ukrainian cultural heritage in the war against Russia) speaks for itself.

This issue of the journal also includes the following reviews:

- *Privacidad es poder: datos, vigilancia y libertad en la era digital* (Privacy is power: data, surveillance and freedom in the digital age)
- *La guerra: teoría para comprender los conflictos del siglo XXI* (War: theory for understanding 21<sup>st</sup> century conflicts).
- *Observar el arroz crecer: cómo habitar un mundo liderado por China* (Watching rice grow: how to inhabit a world led by China).