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### *Presentation of the IEEE Journal issue 20*

Welcome to the latest, the 20th, issue of the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies (IEEE) Journal. The war in Ukraine and its immediate and long-term consequences condition international relations and exacerbate regional and global power dynamics. We therefore considered it to be important for our Journal to include an article focusing on this conflict. A group of analysts offer us an interesting paper on President Putin's speeches throughout 2021, seeking to identify his main ideas and communication strategy in the months leading up to the invasion that finally took place on 24 February 2022.

The People's Republic of China is one of the major players that is contributing most strongly to the reconfiguration of global power balances. Its growing presence in Africa and the Mediterranean basin raises concerns in the European Union and tensions in the Atlantic Alliance. Anass Gouyez Allal of Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra explains how Chinese penetration, whether through *soft power* procedures or more assertive initiatives, is seen by the countries of the region as an opportunity rather than a threat. Beijing's ambitions also extend to the South Pacific, where the great power struggle between the two giants, China and the United States, is being played out. In this regard, Mario Díez Martínez wonders whether the pact between China and the Solomon Islands will be a turning point in this struggle. Not far from there, Southeast Asia is witnessing an unusual boom in methamphetamine trafficking, to the detriment of other more common drugs in the region, which is the subject of Guillermo Moya Barba's analysis.

The United States, which in just a couple of decades had become a global hegemonic power following the collapse of the Soviet Union, could not remain indifferent to China's strength and the extension of its presence across the globe, as well as the commercial, technological and geopolitical challenge it presents. In this issue, Esteban Vidal Pérez provides an explanation of the US turn towards the Indo-Pacific, which was initiated by the White House during previous terms of office. He does so from

the perspective of neoclassical realism and concludes that US elites perceived the rise of China as a threat to their country's dominance and hegemony in the international order.

We complete this issue with three other papers. Ana Gallarín López assesses the impact that the European Union's sub-Saharan strategy has had on her training operation for the Malian Armed Forces, EUTM-Mali. José María Martínez Cortés addresses the impact that new technologies, among other factors, are having on military operations, more specifically on operations in outer space. Finally, Eduardo Zamarripa Martínez analyses the role of nuclear weapons in international relations and asks whether their hypothetical elimination would favour a more peaceful world scenario or whether, on the contrary, this circumstance would increase the number of possible conflicts.

We hope you enjoy the content of this issue.