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Once again, we bring to readers the latest iteration of the Journal of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies in its 24th issue, framed within a geopolitical situation characterised by intense competition between great powers that is causing our world to move towards greater multipolarity in a turbulent and highly uncertain environment. Rafael Gálvez Bravo analyses the economic links of the threat of terrorism, scrutinising its legal considerations dating back to the 19th century, although he postulates that terrorism could also be recognised in other primitive forms of crime such as ideological assassinations or assassinations motivated by economic interests. As is the case with almost all activities, it requires money for its commissioning, and the means of funding have been changing, as have the ways in which it is executed.

Mario Lozano Alonso studies the rise and fall of an African icon, Abiy Ahmed Ali, who went from Nobel Peace Prize winner to regional security threat. This article seeks to analyse the main events that have occurred in Ethiopia since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in April 2018 until September 2024. During the first few months of his mandate, his public persona enjoyed a meteoric rise, culminating in the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, only to then become wildly unpopular in the country, especially among the Oromo and Tigrayan people. The article is a brilliant analysis of his policy successes, condensed in his *Medemer* ideology, and his failures, especially those related to the Tigray war, the Oromo Conflict, the Fano insurgency of Amhara and the recent crisis over Ethiopian access to a Red Sea port.

The volume then shifts to the geopolitical competition between the US and China, where Miguel Ángel Melián Negrín analyses US-China strategic competition from the perspective of realism, a theory that emphasises power, national interest and security in foreign policy. Although there are political and ideological differences, both actors seek to maximise their influence in an international scenario marked by uncertainty. In order to maintain its regional hegemony, the United States has strengthened its

alliances and military presence with the aim of curbing China's rise. At the same time, China is expanding its military, technological and economic capabilities, challenging the existing order and posing a systemic challenge to US hegemony. The Pacific Ocean thus becomes the epicentre of a competition that reflects the tensions between the two nations, where the balance of power is played out in a context of growing rivalry. Understanding these geopolitical, technological and diplomatic dynamics is key to analysing the evolution of competition in this critical region within the international system.

Within the scope of strategic analyses, Antonio Notario Ezquerro examines British grand strategy under Tony Blair's New Labour between 1997 and 2007, focusing on Great Britain's identity as an "axial power" and its role as a bridge between the United States and Europe. Within the ideological framework of constructivism and liberal interventionism, Blair merged values and interests in a highly attractive intellectual mix. It was with this ethical approach, where post-modern security pointed to human rights protection as the ultimate goal, that the interventions in Kosovo and Sierra Leone began. However, in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, British support for the 2003 invasion of Iraq reflected a shift towards *realpolitik*. This episode, which has been widely criticised, has parallels with the current era, where historic decisions, such as Brexit and its subsequent development, do not seem to be based on truly strategic considerations.

Rodrigo Pardo de Santayana Jenaro focuses on the present-day conflict of the war in Ukraine to study the importance of numbers in military conflicts between superpowers, demonstrating that these wars still largely adhere to the parameters of the modern era and the massive use of conventional weapons. One inevitably wonders how these observations apply to the case of China's claims to Taiwan; arguably the most dangerous source of tension the world faces. The focus of this research is China's very large population base, which strengthens the nation's position, and which may prove decisive on the geopolitical chessboard. Observations from the War in Ukraine urge caution and highlight the importance of not relying solely on the deterrent effect of US military superiority to maintain the status quo on the Taiwan issue. It also stresses the need for Spain and the European Union to promote policies that strengthen and consolidate their defence industries.

Referring to the same conflict, but from a different angle, Luis V. Pérez Gil and Daniel Saurín Martínez analyse the importance and role of war technology and economics in the Ukrainian conflict from the point of view of analysing the Russian war effort, in a war in which both sides need to mobilise their own resources to sustain a large-scale conflict. Today, after almost three years of attrition, Russia is proving to be a resilient and determined power in the face of the military challenge posed by Ukraine and Western support. At the operational and organisational level, a number of changes have been activated to prepare Russian ground forces for a protracted conflict. Russia has also adapted its resources and industries to overcome the restrictions caused by Western economic sanctions and to advance its war effort. There is a clear correlation between Russian operational adaptations, technology

and war economy. This article analyses the impact of Russia's military and economic changes on the battlefield.

Subsequently, Daniel Terrón Santos, in his article on artificial intelligence and biometric systems for military use, redefines artificial intelligence from the perspective of ethics and law and addresses the use of biometric systems as a world of opportunities within the security sector, but which at the same time clashes with inalienable rights and guarantees. This confrontation must be resolved on the basis of ethics and law, without in any case setting an absolute limit to the use of a decisive tool with basic and essential military applications.

Within the field of migration strategy formulation, Gabriella Thomázy applies content analysis in a comparative study that examines and compares strategy documents from four South American countries (Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru), in addition to two European countries (Portugal and Spain) as benchmarks. She uses a qualitative content analysis methodology and examines current trends and challenges. The results point to the countries' readiness for a migration crisis, highlighting similarities and differences in their documents.

Within the framework of energy and natural resources, Ana Valle Padilla addresses the geopolitics of Russian gas pipelines in Europe in a study that moves between energy realism and liberalism. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 intensified the conflict that began in 2014, raising concerns regarding Europe's energy security due to its dependence on Russian natural gas. Three of the four pipelines supplying Russian gas to Europe were of particular concern: Nord Stream (1 and 2), Yamal-Europe and the Ukrainian Transmission System, piping gas to Germany, Poland and Ukraine, respectively. This article analyses Russia's relations with these countries from the perspectives of realism and liberalism, examining how both theories interpret energy geopolitics. While Poland and Ukraine treat Russian gas from the perspective of offensive realism and view their dependence as a strategic vulnerability, Germany has traditionally adopted the stance of institutional liberalism and perceives gas as a commercial good that promotes stability.

Jesús Gutiérrez Villalta and Daniel Casal Oubiña devote their attention to the highly important field of intelligence to study how Spanish democracy controls its intelligence community by means of three analytical dimensions: the Government's political management of the set of institutions that make up the public administration, including the intelligence services; the supervision exercised by the Spanish Parliament or *Cortes Generales*; and, finally, the jurisdictional control exercised by the bodies that make up the judiciary. The article analyses aspects of the configuration, design and performance of this type of control instruments and reveals how they have evolved in parallel with the development of Spanish political institutions.

Finally, Bernardo González-Lázaro Sueiras' latest article analyses Chinese-Russian strategic synergies in North Africa, applying the analysis model of the Carlisle Scholars Program. The article examines the potential synergies between Russian and Chinese strategies in North Africa by applying the strategic analysis model of the U.S. Army

War College's Carlisle Scholars Program. This research analyses how coordinated efforts between the two powers within the diplomatic, informational, military and economic spheres could significantly amplify their regional influence and undermine Western interests. The study employs a systematic methodology that assesses the ends, ways and means of each actor, identifying specific areas of strategic convergence. The findings suggest that this cooperation, although not formalised in an explicit alliance, generates synergistic effects that amplify the influence of both powers and effectively challenge Western interests in the region, especially in the control of critical infrastructure, military power projection and anti-Western narratives. The analysis suggests that the war in Ukraine has accelerated this coordination, as demonstrated by the divergent responses of North African countries to the conflict. The article concludes by proposing specific recommendations for adapting Western strategies to this emerging strategic environment, emphasising the need for a comprehensive approach that recognises the unique characteristics of each North African country.

Finally, the reviews of the books by Annie Jacobsen (*Nuclear war: a scenario*), José Ignacio Domínguez García de Paredes (*Winston Churchill and his time*) and Chongrui Nie (*A distant mountain*) are presented.

I wish you a pleasant and fruitful reading.