



NOTA EDITORIAL / EDITOR'S NOTE

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This new issue of the UNISCI journal focuses on two topics. The first is Japan and its major challenges in foreign policy and defense. This topic was programmed taking into account the dual year Spain - Japan 2013-2014 recalling the 400th anniversary of the first Japanese diplomatic mission to Spain and Rome. The second thematic group focuses on the Benedict XVI pontificate, given his unexpected resignation, something quite unusual, memorable and exemplary. For this reason we hastily sought the collaboration of three good specialists, professors José Luis Santos, Carlos Corral and Santiago Petschen, inviting them to write some brief reflections on the pontificate of Benedicto XVI. The journal thus collects three analyses. The first, on the moral guidelines of the encyclical "caritas in veritate" and the vision of the Pope on human development and the global human family. The second, on the diplomatic activities of the Holy See during his pontificate. And the third, on the agreements signed between the Holy See and various States in the last few years, an important aspect of the Vatican diplomacy, in order to understand the great value that different States attribute to the agreements and concordats with the Holy See.

On the topic of Japan, the journal invited very well known specialists from different countries. They focus on several key issues in foreign and defense policies of Japan: Territorial conflicts, the security environment, security and defense relations with the United States, foreign policies with his closest neighbors, with the States of ASEAN, and with Australia and India, taking into consideration the increasing bilateral exchanges with the last two states.

This issue attempts to discuss and clarify the Asia-Pacific regional environment and also the policies that Japan is developing or aims to develop. It is precisely this new regional environment the center of gravity for Japan. And, for this reason it has to devote unusual efforts and energies in order to avoid bitter awakenings. The speed of the changes that are taking place in Asia-Pacific and the transformation of the regional strategic balance in less than fifteen years forces it to do this. For Japan it is no longer a question of managing regional sensibilities. The challenge is deeper and more serious. It is a question of defending its national interests in a regional environment where pushy states, new military deployments and modernizations, including nuclear weapons and other WMD, and new regional economic designs are in a process of rapid development and implementation. The dilemmas, difficult dilemmas for Japan, are obvious.

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This set of perspectives on foreign, security and defense policies leaves out an assessment of the Japanese international economic policy; its approaches and policies with respect to global issues such as the environment, energy, food, migration flows, the fight against poverty; or its relations with other continents and regions. We hope to do so on another occasion.

Finally, I present the UNISCI gratitude to all the authors for their selfless contribution and in particular to the coordinator of the studies on Japan, Eric Pardo.