Media and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century

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Edited by
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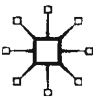

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Preface

Against a backdrop of conflict, the media facilitate mobilization of opinion, affect policymaking, and influence the different stages of waging war and making peace. Communications products range from the public diplomacy designed to help avoid or win support for conflict, to the real-time journalism that brings the battlefield vividly to the public. The intersections of communications and conflict are particularly important in a time when technology continues to transform communications fields and non-state actors add new and sometimes frightening dimensions to conflict.

The authors of this book have grounding in communications and political science disciplines, and so this volume looks at media and conflict from diverse viewpoints, ranging from theory to practical application. This diversity of outlook is the essence of the book. This volume illustrates that there is common ground shared by different approaches, and it will help anyone who is interested in communications and conflict, as joint or separate fields, to see the breadth of the range of relevant topics and draw from the findings of scholars with varied backgrounds. It covers conflict prevention, communications-enhanced interaction between public and policymakers, unconventional warfare, the use of communications technology to improve news coverage and mobilize publics, and changes in the content of news coverage.

The authors address ideas that are transforming the roles of the media. Eytan Gilboa's chapter analyzes the relationship between television news coverage and the making of U.S. foreign policy. The chapters by Steve Livingston et al., Cinny Kennard, Sean Aday, and Nel Ruigrok et al., look at the content of conflict coverage—what its components are and what effects it may have on the public and policymakers. The chapters by Robin Brown, Jayne Rodgers, and Kathy Fitzpatrick and Tamara Kosic examine the effects of communications tools on the mobilization of different levels of public opinion. Maura Conway reports about the

ways that terrorist organizations have put the World Wide Web to work for their purposes. Philip Seib describes the news media's efforts to define new geopolitical alignments on which to base post–cold war coverage.

This material is wide-ranging but shares the common premise that understanding the pervasiveness and influence of media is essential to understanding the causes and conduct of conflict. In such understanding might be found ways to help resolve the conflicts that have already stained the twenty-first century.

Acknowledgments

This book began as a project of the Comparative Interdisciplinary Studies Section of the International Studies Association, and special appreciation is owed to section president Felicia Krishna-Hensel, who developed the basic plan for the book as part of the ambitious CISS publishing program. She also organized a workshop in Heidelberg at which many of the authors were able to try out early versions of their chapters. Some of the work was refined at other ISA meetings in Budapest, Montreal, and elsewhere.

At Palgrave Macmillan, editor Toby Wahl and everyone else involved with the book were supportive throughout and were a pleasure to work with.

The authors of these chapters are a diverse group—scholars from different fields and with varied backgrounds. I thank them all for their hard work in producing a volume that illustrates the complexity and breadth of the relationship between media and conflict.