tial to defend and promote their team’s interests within a complex system of multiple political and media actors in world politics.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the evolution of a narrative told in the simulation story, from its most general topic introduced during the setup preparations, through the more focused initial scenario that is revealed before policy formation begins, to the acute change contained in the opening scenario that triggers the activities of world politics. As you plan your simulation, you are like a professional storyteller who knows the full story but discloses the details gradually and saves some new information for each publication. Such incremental information disclosure, with its dramatic impact in the transformation from pre-crisis to crisis or from limited change to drastic challenge, sets a gradual learning process in motion, motivates your students to deal with more focused and operational aspects of the subject matter, and leaves ample room for practice and critical thinking on the simulation events and the teams’ activities.

The following example from a simulation on the Russia-Georgia conflict demonstrates how the initial scenario fits in with the general simulation topic. During the preparations for the simulation, the educator introduced students to some basic information about the topic and actors of the approaching simulation. The students knew that they were going to play six teams in the protracted conflict between Russia and Georgia: Russia, the United States, Georgia, the European Union, Russian media, and American media. They studied the entire conflict, from its genesis to the most recent developments to gain a general overview of the topic of the simulation. Once students had become familiar with the big picture and its historical context, they were ready to handle more specific details, as illustrated in figure 5.2.

The report was designed to bring participants back in time and to reflect the tense atmosphere of July 25, 2008. It mentioned the dangers of escalation, so the teams could plan their policy to avoid violence and war. It referred to each team, political and media alike, to indicate that they have a role in the conflict and are relevant to the stability of the region. The initial scenario purposely added a hint on the possible mediation contributions of the United States and European Union teams, to trigger some diplomatic initiatives. As planned, this scenario led to immediate discussions within all teams, who weighed diplomacy and military tools to promote their goals.

Other examples of initial scenarios illustrate the wide range of possibilities you have, in formats and triggers, when writing a narrative that will set policy formation within teams in motion. In the Middle East simulation, summarized in the appendix, the initial scenario was formatted as a newspaper regarding regional developments on the Iranian nuclear program and the Palestinian issue. This scenario, illustrated in figure 5.3, was planned for a multi-issue simulation among ISA scholars who were assigned to three working groups in which negotiations took place. It described several simultaneous initiatives that all teams had to consider. The initial scenario requested all teams to compose opening initiatives for three