Your experience with simulations will lead you to develop useful assignments of your own, to replace or supplement the ones suggested herein. The main reason for these assignments is to get the students ready for the simulation, as individuals and as teams. Assignments are intended to make sure the simulation experience advances the goals of your course, adds the most to the learning efficiency of your students, and extends their expertise in theory, empirical cases, area studies, or methodology.

Table 4.3 summarizes twelve assignments related to the simulation, divided into tasks for (1) all participants regardless of the actor they play; (2) political teams only, be they a state, nonstate, or international organization; and (3) media teams only. Each assignment is described in terms of its contents and explained further in chapters 5 and 6 as well as in the third part of the book with respect to postsimulation feedback and debriefing. Many assignments are offered as individual ones and are easy to grade, based on a detailed instruction sheet for each one of them. These assignments trigger solitary learning, which is later expanded and enriched by collective discussions in class, on cyber platforms, or both. Some assignments are collective from the start and raise concerns on how to grade individuals, like heads of teams or other committed participants, who have contributed considerably more than others to the final collective product. An advanced discussion on the assessment of students and of the simulation project as a whole is presented in chapter 10.

Assignments 1 and 2 include the preparation of an actor portfolio and character biography for a political or media team the student was assigned. These tasks apply to all students and include presimulation preparation and individual hand-ins based on solitary learning. Actor portfolio is suggested as a 10-page report on the actor, like an essay on Russia. Character biography is designed as a one-page summary, like a short review on Vladimir Putin. Both may include graphic as well as written items, starting with the icon that represents the actor or character, be it a flag, a logo of a media organ, a seal of a character role such as the president, defense minister, or foreign minister; and photos of leaders, chief editors, and reporters. Maps, official information, academic publications, and statistical data also contribute to the students’ knowledge about the actor they play.

The purpose of the actor portfolio assignment is to stimulate solitary learning about the actor and to have the students integrate a wealth of relevant information and diverse aspects in a single report. We include two parts in