

Constantin Hlihor, Ecaterina Hlihor  
*Comunicarea în conflictele internaționale –  
Secolul XX și începutul secolului XXI*  
Comunicare.ro, București 2010

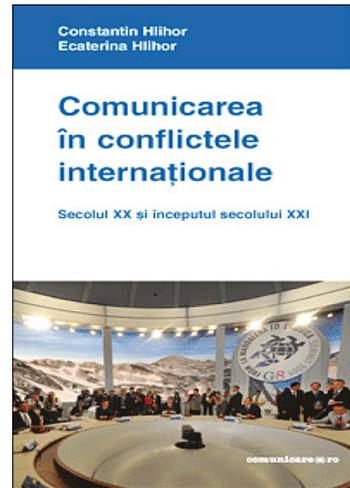
Communication has become, over the last few decades, an essential component of any national or international settlement that crucially determine the actual order of society. Subsequently, the overwhelming majority of the conflicts in the modern society and not only, are based on poor communication or even more, on the failure to communicate.

Any type of miscommunication (due to cultural, linguistic, politic or religious differences) can and will generate conflicts of various intensities going from simple disagreements to diplomatic incidents and severe crisis situations.

Crisis communication is one of the most complex and difficult communication activities, as both the success and the failure of a crisis communication strategy may determine the public image and market position of an institution or even a country. This is the reason why crisis communication must be conducted according to clear and specific principles and must have certain characteristics that a PR specialist definitely has to master. Also, understanding how public opinion works and its mechanism is essential to managing a crisis communication strategy, as an effective management of public opinion and public demands/expectations is a key element in getting public understanding and support.<sup>1</sup>

Mastering effective crisis communication becomes even more important when we refer to international conflicts, when any interruption in the communication process can lead to a diplomatic, political, civil or even military disaster.

What the research conducted by Constantin Hlihor and Ecaterina Hlihor in *Communication within International Conflicts - The 20th Century and the Beginning of the 21st Century* tries to bring to our attention is precisely the importance and the distinctive features of different types of communication according to specific international context. From this point of view, the book is a perfect tool for students, journalists and communication specialists that may at any time confront or ana-



1 Irimieș, C., *Crisis Communication and the Role of the PR Specialist, Studies on Literature, Discourse and Multicultural Dialogue*, Târgu-Mureș, Ed. ArhipelagXXI, 2013.

lyze an international conflict, no matter its proportions. It is a book on public relations and communication, it is a book on war and terrorism, but also on political sciences.

Most studies from this field showed the importance of various aspects of communication in the amicable settlement of conflicts of any nature, and because of that, they developed theories that take into account the psychological and sociological elements combining the scientific accomplishments from various research fields with field studies. Lately, new areas of research have emerged in the social science and the humanities field which took a great interest in the communication techniques used to solve conflicts.

The book presented here starts with a brief, but not at all thin analysis of the international context of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century also, these being the reference time periods taken into consideration for the research.

The authors make an overall presentation of the general international context, describing international policies and political actors determinant for the specific period of time, and succinctly mention ethics and legislation on contemporary international relations in order to establish a framework for future analysis just to get to wars and diplomatic conflicts in the contemporary international environment, where international politics is seen as a reality built through communication.

After having established the general framework of their research, the authors of *Communication within International Conflicts - The 20th Century and the Beginning of the 21st Century* introduce the reader into the particular aspects related to communication as an active, dynamic part of the modern and contemporary international settlement, paying increased attention to five distinct historical moments of reference: the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, the Cold War, the following Cold War period and the most recent terrorist actions regarded to and defined as an asymmetric conflict.

As I have already mentioned above, after having established the framework, the book refers to specific features and different types of communication in nowadays international environment. It refers to large and basic communication performed daily by ordinary people through cultural exchanges, trips, commerce or the Internet. It also mentions organized communication performed by state organizations on other state organizations on one hand and on other country's public opinion or population on the other hand.

Describing these major levels of communication leads to the specific types of communication: the political communication seen as diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, debates, but also the economic communication and the cultural communication. It also leads to the most influential actor, that are governmental institutions, elites (social, economic and political), mass-media and pressure groups, all having as final receiver the population and/or the international society.

The last four chapters of the book analyze public communication, propaganda, secret diplomacy and their consequences on the international situation in different crucial moments: the two World Wars, the Cold War and the so current issue on terrorism each with its specific features.

The research conducted by Constantin Hlihor and Ecaterina Hlihor in not only provides important theoretical basis for any future research, but offers a valuable perspective on the international conflict environment of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, challenging the reader to meditate on the growing importance of communication in domestic and global politics and diplomacy, as communication in a crisis situation should focus on facilitating defusing the crisis using efficient and rapid communication methods<sup>2</sup>.

**Reviewed by**

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2 Irimieș, C., *Crisis Communication and the Role of the PR Specialist, Studies on Literature, Discourse and Multicultural Dialogue*, Târgu-Mureș, Ed. ArhipelagXXI, 2013.