

Assignment 3

Course: **War and Peace**

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Warfare is a pretty simple concept right? Two opponents in disagreement line up in a field, draw weapons, then go to town until whoever comes out alive wins. The definition of “Unconventional Warfare” proves this idea might not be so straight forward. There are many worldwide conflicts involving terrorism and drug trafficking, as described by Mark S. Steinitz in *The Terrorism and Drug Connection in Latin America’s Andean Region*, which provide insights to how Unconventional War differs from Conventional War.

It can be easy to think of war as a simple event that involves two or more disgruntled countries battling out their problems. Under the definition of Conventional War, aspects of war such a battle methods, timeline, location, and resolution are all for the most part, well defined. Under the definition of Unconventional War, most of these aspects begin to get blurry. In addition, typically the conflicts involves a state side and a non-state side. An example of Unconventional War can be found between the Latin America’s governments, terrorist groups, and drug trafficking organizations. Steinitz’s analysis of these complex relationships outlines some key points: there is a well-developed relationship between terrorism and drug trafficking that began in the late 1970’s, there is a significant amount of control that terrorist groups have over Latin America’s finances and territory, the search for peach in Latin America has and will continue to be difficult and time consuming (Steinitz, n.d.). These are important points to consider when determining the type of conflict. Understanding that the details of unconventional war are different and complex can help create the best solution.

The many complexities that arise from Unconventional War extend well into how the conflict is handled and resolved. Unlike Conventional War, the involvement of non-state entities increases the likelihood that there will not be traditional battles. While states are typically set up with militaries, funding, and political backing, non-states do not have this guaranteed. Therefore, it is up the organization to fund there motives, which usually involves illegal funding. Additionally, terrorist organizations, for example, use tactics such as guerilla warfare or violent attacks for displays of power. It must be remembered that war is just means to push an opponent to ones own will. Without political and financial backing, it makes sense that unconventional conflicts have a large amount of aggression. The state-side often finds unique ways to handle these conflicts, and can have lasting consequences. Steinitz explains how the Peruvian government handled its terrorism and drug problem in the mid-1980’s, which shows how complicated the resolutions for these issues can be. Once Huallaga, Peru was placed under a state of emergency, General Julio Carbajal decided to temporarily forgo fighting the drug problem in Peru and only focus on terrorists. By leaving drug traffickers alone, there was less reason for them to fight back. Carbajal also got the support of poor farmers and traffickers, who could then rely less on terrorist for protection, since it wasn’t needed (Steinitz, n.d.). By using his tactics, the SL terrorist eventually retreated, which unlinked the drugs and terrorists. Unfortunately, the lack of drug control indeed resulted in drugs going out of control; in particular, coca leaf’s new low prices were helping it run rampant. When antidrug operations were reinstated, the SL terrorists reformed in Huallaga. The forthcoming years saw a repeat of this process and eventually pressure from neighboring countries such as the USA to suppress its drug and terrorist problems (Steinitz, n.d.).

The affects of Unconventional War have a complicated and lasting result on the parties involved and sometimes even those who aren’t. It is important to differentiate between Conventional and Unconventional Wars, both in the moment, and while looking back to find solutions that work. *The Terrorism and Drug Connection in Latin America’s Andean Region*, written by Mark S. Steinitz provides examples of how complicated an Unconventional War can be.

# References

Steinitz, M. S. (n.d.). *The Terrorism and Drug Connection in Latin America’s Andean Region*.