



FORTRESS ON A HILL

Camilo Mejia and Nicaragua - Part 1 - Ep 123

Henri: [00:00:00] Welcome to Fortress On A Hill, a podcast about U.S. Foreign policy, anti imperialism, skepticism, and the American way of war. I'm Henri. Thank you for, uh, joining us today With me is, uh, Keagan and Jovanni. Fellas, how are you?

Jovanni: Hey, Hey. Hey,

Keagan: excellent.

Jovanni: Right here.

Henri: And, uh, we are joined by, uh, Camilo uh, sorry, I'm having word troubled.

Camilo Mejia: Camilo Mejia

Henri: my wife's from Mexico. This shouldn't be this hard for me. Um, he was, uh, born in Nicaragua, [00:01:00] but moved to the us as adolescent shortly after graduating high school, he joined the us military and eventually deployed to Iraq in 2003, after five months in active combat, including posts in Baghdad. I'm assuming this is Haditha, but they, they didn't spell it. Right. Um, Al Asad and Al Ramadi. He was sent home on leave where he recognized and publicly condemned the Iraq war as criminal and immoral. He was subsequently court martialled and charged with the desertion and sent to serve nine months of incarceration at Fort Sill uh, in Oklahoma, uh, Mejia lives in Miami and he continues to speak out against, uh, us imperialism, uh, Camillo, welcome to Fortress On A Hill.

Camilo Mejia: Thank you. Thank you. Uh, glad to be here.

Henri: So I'm gonna let, uh, let Jovanni take over here and, uh, let's uh, let's talk about Nicaragua.

Jovanni: Awesome. Yeah. So before we started the [00:02:00] recording, uh, uh, we're having like a side conversation. Um, and I thought it was be interesting if we get the conversation where, you know, we're having on recording. So, you know, public, everybody hear, uh, so Mejia, Mejia and I,, we go way back. Uh, we've done a couple of trainings together, uh, mostly about hybrid warfare. Uh, we have done workshops and we've had done, uh, and we have been invited by, by different organizations to do this workshops on hybrid warfare, but I've never met Mejia in person.

Right. I've almost met him in person about two years ago, but, uh, uh, but didn't kind of work out schedules. Didn't kind of work out. I was in, I was in his neighborhood. I was like, probably about what you said about what 10 minutes away from you. I was, um, so when I called him, I didn't know where he lives, so I just decided to call him and he said, well, you live you're about 10 minutes away from my home, but, uh, how you gonna be in the area?

Said, well, I'm gonna try, you know, just here for a day trip here in Miami and, uh, uh, you know, and, uh, uh, you know, maybe after work we can, we can [00:03:00] get together, but I think you had, you had a meeting afterwards and then you call me again saying it's going, the meeting's gonna run a little bit late, but I couldn't stay in Miami.

So I had to leave, so we weren't able to meet, but we've had several conversation. We have, you know, we dived in into different type of, um, you know, studies, uh, particularly hybrid warfare, which is the new way, just like, like, uh, Henri, uh, mentioned earlier, which is the way that the United States makes work nowadays, you know, um, you know, uh, multifaceted, you know, but different means and, and different ways, you know, to, to inflict pain on other nations.

So we've done, we've done, uh, um, work on that, but I've known about Camilo since, probably since about 2004, I believe 2003 or 2004 when the Iraq invasion, because Camilo was a, was a dissenter early, was one of the earliest, uh, dissenters of the Iraq war coming back from Iraq. And, uh, uh, and this part I'm gonna let him, uh, um, talk a little bit more about that, but I heard about him, [00:04:00] uh, through a, a piece that was done N talking about, uh, uh, the process and what was going with Camilo you share a on.

Camilo Mejia: Yeah, definitely. Um, so with, with a Iraq war, um, that was. Really towards the end of my eight year military contract, I'd been in the military in active duty first, um, since 19 90, 19 97, 19 98. I wanna say, well, 2003 was eight years for me. So no, 1990, I wanna say 1995. Yeah. 1995. I joined active duty. And then, um, well I got out of active duty and to finish my eight years, you know, I joined the Florida national guard because that gave me the opportunity to continue to, to serve as an infantryman.

And I didn't wanna have to go to, [00:05:00] um, you know, to any other school. I wanted to remain a, an infantry man and just finish my time and at home and go to college. And by that time I already had matured a lot. You know, I was a, about to graduate from college. I was already reading and questioning a lot, um, getting into geopolitics.

I knew that we didn't really have a solid case to go after Iraq. Um, but at the same time, you know, I was about one semester away from graduating at the university of Miami. And I had already started to get ready for grad school. And part of me. Didn't think that the war was actually going to happen, you know, at, at our level back then there was so much opposition, you know, international opposition, even NATO was not, was not for it least not in the beginning, major allies like France and, and Germany, uh, even Mexico, you know, which basically always [00:06:00] did what the us said.

Uh, the Dixie chicks were against it. You know, like there was so much opposition, millions of people marching against the war, all, you know, against the war, all over the world. Uh, so I guess, you know, I was somewhat naive, you know, when I believe that, you know, it's just going to be a huge show of force will be there a few months.

And then, you know, we'll, we'll come home heroes and continue on with our lives that unfortunately didn't play out. As I thought, the first mission that we had in Iraq was this place called Asad, which was a bombed out Iraq air force base. And we basically, you know, to be blunt about it, we torture people there.

We tortured, uh, prisoners who were, you know, had been Bedouins basically, you know, wrong time, wrong place. And that, that was the, the beginning of the war experience for me. Prior to that, we had been in Jordan, um, where we had been, um, [00:07:00] Protecting some, uh, Patriot sites where, you know, the us had, uh, made a deal with, uh, the Jordanian king that we would, um, intercept any Scott missiles that Sadam hue sent to, uh, to, to Israel, which is something that, that happened in the first, uh, during the Gulf war that, you know, to get Israel to retaliate and that way encourage other Arab nations to join the fight.

So this time around the us said to, to the Jordanian king, you know, let me use your desert as a staging ground. And, you know, I'll set up some, uh, Patriot missile sites on your, on your territory and intercept and it's God missiles, you know, that sad Jose might wanna launch that might, you know, fall in your territory.

So we had this secret deal with the Jordanians and our, our first mission was to basically protect this missile missile sites. But then after that, you know, very soon after the war started, [00:08:00] we, we, we went to Iraq, I wanna say, April. Yeah, April, April, may we, um, we arrived in, in Iraq. We spent some time at, uh, back then international.

And then from there, we went to Al Asad and then at Al Asad, you know, that was the first, the first mission. So from that point on, you know, obviously my, my opposition to, to the war is. Only political only ideological only based on what I had read, but now we're, we're in it. Right. And we're, we're torturing people.

It's not something we're reading about. This is not some news analysis. You know, this is not something we're, we're reading on a magazine. Uh, we're actually there and we're doing that stuff. And, and, and from there it just got worse. You know, we went to Haditha where we learned of some pretty nasty things that happened, you know, atrocities that were committed there.

And then from there, we went to, to Ramadi where I spent most of my time. [00:09:00] And that's where, where a lot of the, well, the bulk of the war crimes took place. Uh, but in an environment, I mean, obviously an environment where, you know, you're, you're struggling to stay alive, basically, you know, you're, you're moving target every day of your life.

Anything that you do could, could result in you being, you know, blown to pieces, you know, even going to take a shed at the, at the Larine or taking a shower, which you couldn't do in the daytime because too hot, you know, 104 hundred and 10 degree temperatures in this, um, metal water tanks, you know, would give you blisters if you took a shower at that time.

So we had to go at night when, which is when we had indirect fire attacks. Um, and so in, in an environment like that, you don't really think morally that much. I mean, I did to some degree, but you know, you're trying to, um, To foresee, you know, where the, the next attack might come from. And, you know, you're trying to keep your man alive [00:10:00] and in, in my particular case, um, and this is something that got me into hot water with my, my chain of command.

I always, you know, I'm, I'm proud to say that I let my man away from fire rather than into battle, um, away from battle because the things that we were doing were so arbitrary, and it was so clear also that we had people chain of command who were so bent on getting, you know, the, the coveted awards, you know, like the comedy infantry batch, or, you know, any other medals, you know, like, uh, officers oftentimes, you know, they view war and combat as, you know, career opportunities.

And in, in our particular case, you know, we had ma um, captains and, uh, majors, and we had Lieutenant colonels and colonels who had spent a lifetime in the military and had no combat experience. And so for them, it was really key to take advantage of the, the possibility. And we did a lot of things, um, [00:11:00] that were in violation of our training in violation of, um, you know, the, the, the rules of engagement, uh, pretty much everything that we were told, which wasn't much to begin with.

Uh, we violated in order to, to, to instigate the resistance into, into battle and, you know, the, the, the bulk of the. The casualties were suffered by the civilian population. And so long story showed my, um, initial opposition to the war, which had been very political, very ideological, became something very personal and became, became something very spiritual.

And, um, that's one of the things that I think that's tearing us apart. You know, once, once we get home is a moral injury, you know, the things that we do that violate our moral code, which is, you know, this written law that we have that guides, you know, our, our, our behavior, you know, our conscience, you know, and [00:12:00] violating that moral contract that we have with ourselves is what I think that that's, that's what getting a lot of people more, more than, than post-traumatic stress disorder, because I think post-traumatic stress disorder at the end of the day is a, is a fear response, you know, to a very traumatizing event, but moral injuries, more about the things that we, but that we have a hard time forgiving ourselves for, because we didn't do what we were supposed to do.

Or we did nothing when sh when we should have done something. Um, so coming home for me just basically just gave me the, um, The safety and the peace of mind to be able to go back to those moral questions no longer on survival mode. You know, thinking that, you know, anything that, that I do would be my, my last action.

And that's when you face your demons, you know, when you, when you're home and you know, nobody's shooting at you and, you know, um, you don't have to

deal with [00:13:00] improvised, explosive devices or indirect fire or anything like that. And then you, you know, you have to come to terms with what you did. And, and for me, that was a really difficult thing.

I had a small child she's 22. Now she was three at the time four. Um, and I didn't know if I could be a dad to her because of all the things that I had done, you know? I mean, how do you teach a, a, a kid right from wrong when you have done so much wrong yourself. Um, and just like all these questionings, you know, that began to torment me.

And eventually, you know, I realized that I was a conscientious objector. It was something that I fought mentally because I said, you know, I've already been there. You know, we, we were in combat. We torture people. We kill people. It's too late for me to be a conscientious objector, not knowing that it's, it's really the very experience of war.

What really makes you. Be anti-war, I don't think there's any, anyone who can be more [00:14:00] anti-war than a combat veteran, you know, who has actually experienced a horror war, but I didn't see it that way at the time. You know, I thought that it was too late for me. I was tainted, you know, I was already a bad person, but, um, I got some counseling and I started writing a constituency subjector application.

And that was a journey for me, a spiritual journey to come to terms with all the bad shit that we had done. And, you know, I, I was able to get over my fear also of what the military would do to me. If I spoke out against the war, because I began to think about really what humanity had sacrificed and what people were still sacrificing, you know, to oppose war.

I came across people like Brian Wilson, you know, who lost his legs, trying to stop, uh, weapons, shipments to central America, um, back in the days, and you know, people who had lost everything to war, you know, um, victims of war, victims of [00:15:00] landmines that were left behind. Um, and that gave me perspective, you know, that whatever happened to me could not be as horrible as what so many people had lost or had gone through.

And, you know, I, I felt empowered to speak out and, and say, you know what, I'm not, I'm not going to fight this war. I'm not, I'm not going to, uh, to be a party to, to this. Supreme war crime against humanity. And, you know, I'm, I'm not, I'm not gonna fight your war anymore. And of course I was the first combat veteran to do that at the time there were other, uh, objectors, you know, you

talk talked about NPR and we have, we have a couple of, um, um, early members of back then it was called the Iraq veterans against the war.

But Steven funk was one of 'em a Marine, uh, who came out out of the closet and out against the wars, which took a lot of, a lot of freaking courage, you know, for a Marine to come [00:16:00] out as gay. And anti-war, he was actually, um, just getting out jail as I was going through my journey. And then we also had an air force, captain Steven pots, and he came out on NPR as well.

Um, before, um, getting deployed. He never got deployed, uh, but I was the first one to speak from personal experience and, and talk about what was going on in Iraq, on the ground in Iraq. And, and so it was a pretty, pretty big deal, I guess, you know, for, for the media was not what it is today. There was still a little bit of objectivity, you know, like the media was not so co-opted as it is now.

And, you know, the story got a lot of traction, um, both in the us and internationally. And I think that that ended up, uh, you know, working to my advantage to have that, you know, that many eyes on my case and that included amnesty international. Which I'm not a fan of anymore, but, uh, back then, you know, they adopted [00:17:00] me as a prisoner of conscience and they issued a warning that if I was incarcerated, that they would launch a campaign to secure my, my safety and my release.

And, you know, I had a sham of, uh, court Al that lasted three days. You would thought of some bin Laden was being tried because of the amount of, um, uh, security around, um, the courthouse that was in, um, for Benning Georgia. No, I'm sorry. Fort Stewart. That was Ford Stewart. And yeah, I was found guilty of the assertion.

They put me away on a 12 month sentence. I did nine and Fort Sill, and then I got out, uh, nine months later and, you know, wrote the book, wrote from a Ramadi, which I think you guys have a copy of and began doing counter recruiting, work, joining Iraq veterans against the war, veterans or peace. And I've been doing, um, anti-war organizing and activism ever since.[00:18:00]

Jovanni: [00:19:00] Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. Um, I was, I was also in, I was active duty back then as well. [00:20:00] Um, and I was actually in Fort Benning. Um, I was at a, I was instructor status. I was, um, at the, uh, what formerly called School of the Americas, which is, uh, they got renamed to, uh, Western Hemi for security and cooperation.

I remember reading about your story, hearing about your story through NPR. Cause I was going through the same thing, which you just described. Right? I was going through the same thing at the time. I already hit 10 years in the military, the time and right there. And then, uh, at the beginning, uh, I didn't think that that the world gonna happen because, uh, um, I would military, I was a military, uh, dependent when the first golf war happened and I was inside of the military base and I saw deployments saw how everything ended and, and it was about a hundred days, cetera, cetera.

Right. So I figured it was gonna be something similar. Uh, but you know, uh, but, but you said mentioning, seeing all the resistance, seeing all the protests and everything like that, you know, I didn't think it was gonna happen, but when it happened, I was actually in [00:21:00] when shucking off started, I was actually teaching and my, my.

My supervisor interrupted my class and to show the students what was happening. And we had a big TV in the classroom and turned on the TV and watched, so were to watch all the, uh, the bombing and everything. Right. It was daytime on our side, it was nighttime their side. And it was like, uh, he was so excited and ecstatic about it.

Like as, as if we won the super bowl, you know, , you know, and I recall, and I recall thinking as, as he was being so, so, so excited about, so happy about it, that that was happening. I recall thinking about, um, you know, am I surrounded by psychopaths? You know, you know, this a psychotic, you know, and right then, and then that's when I decided that I couldn't continue in the military at the time.

I was 10 years in the military already. So I was like, uh, right at the hump, you know, you know, 10 more years I would've been retired. Um, but you know, at that time, you know, I decided that, [00:22:00] you know, that would be my last investment. And that was, that was it. Um, yes. Yeah. Anybody else wanna share before we continue?

Wanna add anything?

Henri: Um, I, I wonder about the, the experience of the soldiers that were under you when you came out, when you know that, that, um, what are leaders do really matters, even, you know, it, it, it affects us deeply. and I just would, I would ask, is that, you know, are you, are you still in touch with any of those guys?

Did they, um, you know, what did they say about that period of their lives, you know, in terms of, of you as a leader and what, um, what your choice to dissent did, I mean, was, you know, how did, how did, how did they view it?

Camilo Mejia: Yeah, definitely. I actually had, um, [00:23:00] a very interesting experience with two of them about a month ago. Uh, no, actually two months ago we, uh, we went to a firing range. I hadn't seen this guy since 2003, 2004 around that time. And, um, you know, we reconnected and I said, yeah, let's, let's, let's get together, let's do something.

And they said, let's go to firing range. So I wasn't really sure if you know how mad they were at me, if they wanna try to shoot me or something. Uh, but no, we have fun. We had a really great time, um, mixed feelings, you know, to be honest with you, because obviously we were very, very close in Iraq. We went through a lot of shit together, combat, you know, we survived a lot.

We did a lot of bad shit together. Um, but there was also a sense of betrayal from the chain of command and from the entire war experience as well. So. [00:24:00] One of them did not. It was two of 'em. Uh, we were in, in, in touch on the phone with a third, two of them were okay with the whole thing. One of them was still somewhat angry, um, because to him, um, once you're wearing the uniform, that's it.

If you're wearing the uniform, you do what you're told, whether you like it or not. And that's the end of it. And he, he holds a lot of resentment towards me, but he also holds a lot of resentment towards the military, um, because he does not. He's messed up. You know, he, he, um, I think he's on a hundred percent disability and he has severe post traumatic stress and other issues as well, you know, from our service in, in Iraq.

Um, prior to that, my, my contact with people in my unit, uh, was in the context of the court, Al where people from my squad came and testified. And again, you know, mixed feelings [00:25:00] because we had been very close, um, very close to each other and survived a lot of shit going through a lot of shit together. Um, I think that there's a sense that I did what I did because I felt that I had to, that I, um, I was always a person who was questioning everything.

You know, if, if we were given an order for instance, to, to engage a civilian vehicle for crossing a line, you know, in route to, to a hospital, I would say, we're not doing that. If you wanna open fire, that's the order. You won't get in trouble. If you disobey that order, you could get in trouble, but I'm not going to open fire because I have to live with this shit.

You know, we're the ones pulling the trigger, and this is a hospital route. And lo and behold, we have families go through that route. And I would always question things, you know, and if we had to set up a traffic control point, you know, I would make sure that we had cam lights. That we [00:26:00] had barricades that we had cons Taino wire that, you know, we, we fired warning shots, you know, I would do absolutely everything in my power to ensure that there was no contact with anyone enemy civilians, whatever the case may be.

I would question the soundness of missions when we'd go out there blind basically with no ops with no, you know, presence patrols, uh, in some cases, you know, without evac routes or anything like that, uh, it was like we were basically going out of our way to get killed, uh, to then unleash the power of the us military and, you know, instigate more fireies and things like that.

So I would always question things like that. So it wasn't a, a complete shock to them that I decided not to go back because I was questioning a lot of, a lot of the things. And also because I was protecting them, not only their safety by trying as much as I could to evade con having contact, but also [00:27:00] because I was thinking about the moral part and I was thinking about who is going to have to live with this crap, you know, it's us, this is our choice.

Um, so I think that there was a recognition of that, you know, that I did what I did because I felt morally compelled to do what I had to do. And so in that sense, I do think that there was a lot of understanding, but there's also a lot. Resentment in the sense that, you know, we were like a family and I was a father figure for many of them that were younger.

They hadn't been in the military that long. Some of them were only natural and guard, you know? So their training was not on par with, uh, active duty training. Um, so there was a sense of abandonment, you know, from some of them and there was some resentment, but I think in the end, um, we're still very close to, to one another.

It's not the same with a chain of command. I think my captain who's now, uh, a Lieutenant Colonel really hates my guts. My first Sergeant hates my guts. Um, I think my LT hates me as well. Uh, [00:28:00] but the man, you know, the men who were my squad, I, I was a squad leader. The men who were my squad, I was fired from my first position as a squad leader.

I was fired from a whole platoon because I was questioning a lot of what they were doing. You know, they were going after this, this guy. Coincidentally is one of the ones that I went out with about two months ago. And I began to

question, you know, I began to say, you know, look like we're going to combat with these kids.

You know, like the last thing we want is for them to hate us. And, you know, we're like a family out here and we need to correct whatever we need to correct. Like a family, you know, not with punishment and shit like that. And they felt like I had not injected enough testosterone in my leadership style. And so they got rid of me.

And so I, you know, on my, when I, um, when, when we end up in Iraq, I'm already on my second, um, squad leader position. And you know that, um, both of them, I think [00:29:00] that for both squads, you know, we, we got to, to get really close, you know, because I never, I never felt like I had to be punitive. I never felt like I had to, to put my boot in people's faces, you know, to make them fear me in order to follow me, I felt like.

You know, they had to know that I was there for them and that I respected them and that, you know, their lives were in my hands and my life was in their hands. And so we established that type of relationship, um, in Iraq, you know, with both, both squads. So of course there was going to be some resentment and there was going to be a sense of abandonment.

And that was one of the hardest things for me also to do. But it's also one of the things that works against you, you know, that they use this whole sense of family against you and say, Hey, you have to go back out there and you have to do it. And like, once you get into the media circus, you know, that's one of the things that they throw at that they throw at you, you know, they tell you all the men in your squad and like, oh, the fallen and whatnot.

And I'm like, well, why don't you go ask Cheney that question, ask [00:30:00] Bush, that question, you know, ask Rumsfeld you know, I didn't put them in that situation, you know, but at the end of the day, we have to live with our choices. You know, we have to live with, uh, the things that we did or that we failed to do. And that's, that's a personal choice.

I feel like we committed a lot of war crimes. We did a lot of harm to the Iraq people, but I would never judge any of the men that I served with because the choice that I made was a very personal choice. And I respect that they stayed, I respect that, you know, many of them felt the same way that I felt.

But, you know, they had this sense of duty that said, you know, while you're wearing a uniform, you have to do what you're told and you have to stay. And I

respect that. You know, I, I, I disagree with it personally. I think that, um, you know, you, you could, you could, um, you could bring this into any war where there have been war crimes.

You, you could bring this to Nazi Germany, you could bring this into, you know, Molinas military. You could bring this into, you know, [00:31:00] any, any situation where there have been horrible atrocities. And you know, what soldiers will say is, you know, we're following orders. That's not good enough for me. And that wasn't good enough for me back then.

Camilo Mejia: It's not good enough for me now. Um, But I think I've made my peace with it. And I think the minimize squad have made their peace with it. And, and, and I think we're okay now

Henri: I think the, the, the choice of the all volunteer force, uh, after Vietnam to move from where guys would go on deployments, without connection to the home unit in any way you went home, I mean, you literally went home versus Iraq and Afghanistan, where exactly what you're describing is that, you know, you go with this group of guys, you train up with them, you go there with them, you come home with them and it creates this family mentality, however, positive or toxic, anybody, anybody wants to see it, but it makes you hold on in a different way.

It makes you, you express yourself in a, in a different way. And I think that that was [00:32:00] a very deliberate choice, whether anybody wants to say it or not to try to make sure that those ties, those uniform ties are that much stronger and that much harder to break off of. But I, I, I must say, dude, I think you gave a, a fucking fantastic example to your men and, and to, and especially that made it clear that it was your choice, you know, is that it was, it was, you know, and, and a hard one, a very hard one. I mean, you know, you were in, in, uh, at fucking cell for, for nine months. I mean it, um, but, uh, powerful stuff, man.

Jovanni: Yeah. Um, I think one of the, uh, one reasons I think we ended up connecting Camilo is because, um, uh, we have a share interest and our share of interest. It has been, you know, mil us mil and activity in Latin America. Um, and, uh, [00:33:00] particularly, uh, your country of origin, uh, Nicaragua, and also my, uh, one, my country's of origin, Dominican Republic also has a share history as well, which also, you know, simultaneously, uh, was happening with you.

One thing, the invasion occupation of both of our countries, both of immigrant Pelican and, and the, uh, um, and Nicaragua and long, long, uh, um,

occupations, uh, and the aftermath of the occupations, which is, uh, after the, the us troops withdrew from both the public and Nicaragua, right, the left behind strongman to left behind, uh, uh, uh, a, a, a dictatorship to, to, uh, uh, to suppress the population, but also to, uh, uh, keep, uh, you know, uh, safeguard American interest in those particular two countries.

Right. And I'm talking about, uh, Nicaragua [00:34:00] for example, was invaded and was part of. The what the so-called banana wars, um, you know, when banana wars is because, uh, you know, you could always consider banana country. Uh, it was same as the many Republic and all the central American countries, because the United fruit country, United fruit company, uh, had a lot of interest, a lot of influencing those countries and they, and they, they, uh, import a lot of bananas out of those countries, right?

So that's, that's hence the term banana Republic come from, uh, because it was ran by the United through company, which is an American company. Uh, but, uh, I'm talking about Nicaragua, you know, the, the invasion, uh, I believe happened in 1910, all the way to 19 to 19, uh, twenties and, you know, the occupation and the Republic was 1916 and ran all the way to, to the 1920s.

Um, in the case of, uh, Nicaragua, when they withdrew, left behind the samosa family, which rule for about another 30 years. [00:35:00] And, and in the case of the Nicaraguan Republic, uh, live behind it through your family, which they ruled for another 30 years. Uh, can you, and that pretty much sparked you, cuz I know you said you did a lot of work, you've done a lot of work since your experience in Iraq, you did a lot of work in anti-war and anti, recruitment cetera, but you also done a lot of work in, in bringing, uh, education of.

Of hybrid work for us activities in, in Latin America. Uh, what we're seeing today, you know, violence and aggression against Europe country still, you know, in 2022. Can you, can you talk a little bit about that?

Camilo Mejia: Yeah, definitely. Um, the great Dave Klein, who was a long time, um, president of veterans or peace, and he was one of the original, um, Vietnam veterans against the war activists, you know, he, um, at one point I think he ran the O STR, uh, which was a GI coffee shop.

Uh, but I heard him, uh, [00:36:00] talk once about the, um, the awakening of the anti-war soldier, right? When you go from being a gungho, you know, young guy, you know, out there in 'Nam or Al Ramadi, or, you know, whatever the case may be. And you realize, um, that you start with this sense of betrayal, you know, that's grounding your own experience and that's akin to getting punched

in the face and, you know, falling face down, you know, in, in the mud and you become an anti-war soldier as you get up and you wipe the mud of your eyes and you start seeing the larger picture.

Henri: That's part one of our discussion with Camilo join us for part two, which will drop in about a week. We'll be discussing Nicaragua hybrid warfare and Camilo's advocacy for the Sandinista movement. There. It's another amazing episode. You don't wanna miss it.