



★ FORTRESS ON A HILL

Ep 124

Henri: [00:00:00] Here's part two of our discussion with Camilo Mejia. If you haven't heard part one, definitely go back and listen to it. Although it's not needed to understand part two, enjoy folks.

Camilo Mejia: And, you know, uh, for me, you know, that really captures my, my experience. You know, when I, when I went to Iraq, I was questioning a lot of things, but. I, I came from a Sandinistas background, right. I, my parents are both Sandinistas fighting against this dictatorship that you talked about. The Somoza family was actually more than 40 years.

Um, uh, it was most of the time it was the Somoza you know, but, you know, for very brief periods of time, during more than, than four [00:01:00] decades, you know, it was Somoza puppets and yeah, indeed they were left behind by, by the U.S., You know, when they, the U.S. Left. Um, after that occupation that ended with Sandino, uh, when Sandino the, the liberal general, you know, who went rogue, um, refused to, to put down his weapons, you know, after a deal that was made, um, brokered by the U.S. Between the liberals and the conservatives and which, which is almost to say like, you know, like the, the Democrats and the Republicans here.

Right. Uh, but we could, we could even go back further because U.S. Imperialism is Western imperialism, right? So it's, it's like, it's something that continues, you know, from the colony before the U.S., you know, in, in, in the north, it was, it was the British crown and here was the Spanish crown. We were basically subjects to the Spanish crown uh, much like people in the U.S. You know, were subjects to the British crown.

[00:02:00] And what you have is, uh, a struggle of power that, um, on one hand, Traditional, this has, this has been the conservatives, right? But on one hand

represents, you know, that crown power, you know, it represents the extraction of goods and, and, and resources from the land, you know, to be brought into the empire.

Um, and in the case of the U.S. That was the British crown in the case of Latin America, that was the Spanish crown. And with the U.S., U.S. Imperialism, once the U.S. Kicks off Spain and says, you know, America for, for Americans, it's basically just a change of management, right. But it's basically, it is the same thing, right?

It's the same, it's the same stuff that, that, that happened all over the American continent, you know, first with the British and the Spanish, and, you know, after that, with, with the U.S. But what happened was that we had an [00:03:00] oligarchy, which unlike other oligarchy, or like the, the concept of oligarchy in a place, like for instance, um, Ukraine, where, or Russia, you know, where an oligarch is, someone who has X amount of money and access to media resources and things like that in Nicaragua.

These were the people left behind by the crown, the, uh, the landowner, you know, who viewed in indigenous and, and poor people as an extension of the right and their land and their power, you know? And, and, and when the Spanish left, they left behind these people, you know, who had all the political power, all the social power, all the economic power, all the land.

And, you know, they never really had a vision of progress. You know, they, they inherited that, that, uh, feudalist mentality. But alongside that you had the merchants, you had the people who wanted to get into imports and exports, and they were not landowners. You know, they were, they were into [00:04:00] commerce and they wanted to bring people from the rural areas, into the metropolis and develop roads and railroads and bridges.

And they needed to build schools for the workers, the people who would come from the, the rural areas into the cities. And so they had a bit of a more progressive, um, vision of, you know, what kind of nation they, they wanted to have. And so we had that in, in Nicaragua and we had that all throughout Latin America, right.

You had the oligarchy, which is like the all power, you know, handed over by the, the Spaniards that left. And then you had the new power, you know, the new money, the BJA. And so in Nicaragua that has completely played out, you know, um, you know, to the T basically where you had this two forces that always were fighting and the U.S. Was basically, um, the, the role that the U.S.

[00:05:00] Played in Nicaragua historically has been to basically broker the piece between those two factions of political and economic power so that whatever government is there basically oversees U.S. Interest. And so within that power struggle, you know, we had, um, uh, Abuja liberal nationalist, which was president Celia who wanted to basically build schools and wanted people to be able to learn, to read and write, wanted to build hospitals.

And, you know, had a lot of progressive ideas was not like a revolutionary, like Sandino was because Sandino, um, he was the son of a rich landowner and a servant, uh, peasant woman. Right? So he had a little bit of both, you know, he had a little bit of like this oligarchic mentality. His dad was very progressive and his, his brother ended up fighting with him, but you know, like half of him was, you know, like this [00:06:00] wealthy, he lived in poverty until he was like, I think 11 years old or something.

And that he was a bastard child, of course. But he, he had seen both of those. He had seen that, that extreme poverty and he had seen wealth. And so for him, you know, the, when Sandino comes into the picture. He basically disrupts that balance, you know, between liberals and conservatives, you know, between old money and new money that at the end of the day, did whatever the us told them to do.

So Sandino brings in another, a very different kind of nationalism into the picture because it's a popular nationalism. And so the revolution that we have with Sandino is not Abuja revolution. Like the revolutions that we had in the past, which were revolutions in which conservatives and liberals were fighting for power and the us would come in and basically mediate a piece between them so that they could continue extracting the wealth.

When Sandino comes into the picture, he comes in with ideas from the Mexican [00:07:00] revolution and communism and other things like that. And he Al he, obviously, he comes from like this extremely poor background, you know, where his mother was, this person, woman who had been highly exploited and kicked to the side and his dad was this wealthy landowner.

And so he came, he comes in with a sort of like class analysis into the picture. And from that moment on, and we're talking about now 1927, when Sandino basically rejects this balance between liberals and conservatives. Uh, but from that moment on, you know, the, uh, the nationalist struggle of San Al and that's what, that's his birth, um, The people, you know, the peasants, the, uh, indigenous people, people without shoes, people without education, people who are illiterate, become actors of change in Nicaragua.

You know, they become actors of revolution in Nicaragua. And so we have a dark period, you know, which [00:08:00] is when Sandino rebels against this P you know, between liberals and conservatives. And he takes up arms against the us and beats the us. And this is one of the very few military defeats of the United States, you know, back in the, uh, the, the 20th century, um, and Marines actually learned guerrilla tactics from pursuing, um, Sandino through the mountains of, you know, Northern Nicaragua.

We were actually the first side of aerial bombardment, um, which is basically when the us was going after Sandino, you know, they had planes, they had, you know, warships, they had artillery, they had entire Marine units go after Sandino and they could never catch him because the people that followed him were peasants. You know, there were people from the mountains, there were people who knew the area well. In fact, you know, they were people who were, who worked up mines, you know, they were minors. And so they would use dynamite and they knew how to use dynamite, you know, to [00:09:00] work with, you know, the, uh, the natural environment.

And they were able to evade capture and to score a lot of big wins to the, to the point that the Marine. Left Nicaragua. And it was only through treason that they're able to get Sandino. You know, they live, they live behind, uh, a contingency of U.S. Trained, um, national guardsmen and they put this man in charge.

His name is general Somoza and Somoza signs a piece deal with Sandino, and then he assassinates him. And when he assassinates Sandino, that's basically the end of that movement. You know, for between, I wanna say 1934, I wanna say for maybe 22 years, 23 years, something like that when, um, the, the, the Somoza patriarch gets basically, uh, assassinated by this patriot known as Rigoberto López Pérez. And then Rigoberto López Pérez basically inspires the Sandinista movement a [00:10:00] few years later in 1961, the Sandinistas front of national liberation is founded, and it's basically very much defined as a, as a popular revolutionary movement. Nationalists against U.S. Imperialism, proxy U.S. Imperialism.

Because of course, we had this family that was an Nicaragua family, a military dynasty in the Somoza that were there basically, you know, safeguarding us interest and this. Somoza family. That was a military family. Their, their roots are in the liberal movement, but they were dictators. And, you know, they didn't really care much for this balance between liberals and conservatives.

So that means that the Bouri and the oligarchy in Nicaragua did not like Somoza either, you know, because he only represented U.S. Interest in Nicaragua. And so that's, that's one thing that worked against him was that, you know, the, the, the Sandinistas were able to tap into that [00:11:00] resentment, you know, in all sectors of Nicaragua society to lead a, a popular revolutionary movement to overthrow the U.S. Proxy dictator, which was this family, the Somoza family that had basically three precedents, you know, the, the father and then two, two of his kids.

And then in 1979, you know, we win, we overthrow the, the dictatorship and, you know, pretty soon we have elections, we win overwhelmingly. And for the next 10 years, you know, the revolution is basically besieged by a number of tactics, you know, uh, employed by the U.S.. You know, you guys probably know about the Iran contract fiasco, um, and other schemes, you know, the, the, the U.S., um, cooked up to, um, to sustain the contrast, you know, that we're sabotaging and terrorizing the population.

There was an embargo, there were terrorist acts that led to. A trial at the Hague, you know, [00:12:00] that Nicaragua won again, you know, and, and, um, the U.S. Was fine. I believe 17 billion in damages for, um, acts of terrorism against the Nicaragua government and people. Um, but it was really difficult to keep the, um, the people, um, aligned with, with the revolution, even though like, I, I wanna believe.

And, and I think that there's a lot of evidence to the fact that the people were with the Sandinista movement with the Sandinistas government, but they, we had lost in total more than 50,000 people to the war. Uh, we were in really bad shape. Our infrastructure was crumbling. Um, you know, we were embargoed.

So our economy was, was in, in really bad shape and people didn't want their, their sons and daughters to, to get killed anymore. They didn't want anymore people to, to suffer from the war. And so we lost the elections in 1990 and from [00:13:00] 1990, until 2006, we had a succession of governments back to the old dynamic of liberal versus conservative.

And, you know, we had governments that were, you know, a little bit of both, you know, they had maybe a liberal president, you know, with like conservative ministers and to them, it was always a power. Power dynamic, you know, like if they can keep the power balance, you know, they're okay. Uh, but eventually, you know, they always go back to fighting and, you know, they were fighting amongst them and the Sandinista, uh, movement was able to take advantage of that.

And, and, and, um, because of their, their, um, the fracture within the oligarchy and the, the, the liberals and the conservatives, we were able to, uh, to win back power with, uh, a majority of the vote that was bigger than the majority that they had together. So I believe we won, we won the election with 35%.

They had more than 35% together, but because of the fracture, [00:14:00] we were able to, to win back the presidency. And we started implementing a lot of changes that we had already implemented from the beginning, you know, with the help of president Chavez at the time, uh, president Chavez, uh, came to Nicaragua to offer Alba funds to the, um, conservative president.

The conservative president had, I believe already signed kafta, Dr. Which is the neoliberal treaty, uh, in central America and the Dominican Republic. And so the president said no to Chavez, you know, like we're, we're, we've been Neo liberalized, and we don't want anything to do with you, or you're. Petroleum money or anything like that.

So Chavez turned to the Sandinista movement and the Sandinistas.

Jovanni: And just to point out, Chavez, you talking about Hugo Chavez from Venezuela

Camilo Mejia: President Hugo Chavez. Yeah. And so the Sandinistas took the funds, you know, from the Venezuela government and then started to implement anti-poverty measures, even not being in the presidency.

[00:15:00] And so what you start to see is you start to see an anti-poverty movement. That's focusing on hunger and malnutrition and, uh, housing and things like that. That of course, under a neoliberal government, you know, both liberal and conservative, um, you know, we had mortality rates that were through the roof.

We had, uh, crumbling infrastructure. We had no access to healthcare, no access to education. You know, the country was in really, really bad shape. So this injection of funds into the Sandinistas front allows the Sandinista movement to start implementing a lot of these programs. And so by the time we, we win the presidency already have a lot of support, you know, popular support because we were meeting a lot of the basic needs that have been neglected by the neoliberal governments.

And since 2007, Until now I do believe you have some figures, but we have been able to reduce dramatically, um, infant mortality, um, maternal [00:16:00]

mortality. We've, we're up to, I believe a hundred percent in, um, electric coverage, you know, in, in the entire country. I, I believe about 65% is renewable clean energy.

I believe about 35% of the land is in the hands of original peoples. Um, we are like the fifth country in terms of gender equality, uh, because of the representation of women in different sectors of the economy and the government. Um, I mean, I could keep going, but the, uh, the, the changes that have been affected, you know, which are continuation of the first period are transcendental, you know, the, uh, the power institutional power beginning with the, the security apparatus is in the hands of the people.

And that's one thing that sets apart Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela from other, you know, progressive or pseudo progressive governments in Latin America [00:17:00] is that we were able to overthrow a U.S. Supported dictatorship, you know, via, um, an armed revolution. And that gave us the ability. To build the society from the ground up, along with all its institutions.

So we have a popular police. We have a popular military. We have, you know, we have a ministry of women, you know, that, uh, helps, um, women and families. We have anti-poverty measures, you know, uh, education. We have universal healthcare. We are the second poorest nation in the hemisphere and we have universal healthcare.

Uh, so it's like we represent an existential threat to U.S., uh, power, because if you are just a little bit richer than Nicaragua, which is 98% of the hemisphere, and you see that this pollination is able to educate all citizens, to eradicate, um, illiteracy, [00:18:00] to provide 100% electricity to all citizens, to build new hospitals, to rebuild infrastructure, to have amazing roads and all these things.

If you invest in people, if you invest in the public sector and you reject neoliberal policies that basically extract your wealth, you know, to sell you back products, you know, after they've been manufactured in the, you know, industrial house, industrialized north. There's a lot that you can accomplish.

Right. And so simply by being sovereign and, and, and looking after the interest of your people, you are able to accomplish so much. So because of that, I think that we remain in the, in the sites of the U.S., but also one thing that I didn't mention. And, and that, that, um, that adds to your analysis of the, the, the United fruit company and, and U.S. Corporate interest along this whole, you know, banana Republic, uh, period, is that Nicaragua has a river that connects to a great lake.

And [00:19:00] it's basically a naturally made canal between the, the Caribbean and the Pacific and the U.S. Is always viewed Nicaragua as, as a strategic point first, you know, to build a canal. And then once they build a canal in Panama to prevent from other powers to come into Nicaragua and build a canal that would rival the Panama canal.

And right now we have China basically wanting to build a canal, um, in Nicaragua. And, and of course, you know, that's a, a major, uh, geostrategic interest that, you know, historic geostrategic interest that the U.S. Has had in Nicaragua and, and why they have been so harsh with, um, what happens in Nicaragua, you know, is that, you know, we have not, not naturally made, uh, resource that, um, that creates a lot of interest in, in our geography.

Um, but yeah, so. That, you know, with all that said, I think [00:20:00] that the, the good example that Nicaragua provided, you know, became something that the U.S. No longer could tolerate. And so in 2018, we were basically targeted by this hybrid war, uh, that you and I had been studying a great deal.

Jovanni: Let me, let me interject real quick here, hybrid war, just, just so people know what that means. Uh, hybrid war is. Not just war with bombs and bullets, right? So here's, I'm gonna read a, uh, the definition from Wikipedia, right? Hyper warfare is a theory of military strategy first proposed by Frank Hoffman, which employs political warfare and blends conventional warfare, irregular warfare, and cyber warfare, with other influencing methods, such as fake news, diplomacy, lawfare, foreign electoral intervention by combining kinetic operations with subversive efforts, the aggressor intends to avoid attribution and or retribution.

The concept of global war [00:21:00] of hybrid warfare has been authorized by a number of academics and practitioners due to its alleged vagueness, its disputed consecutive element in its alleged historical distortions. So it's a, it's a type of warfare that combines different types of methods. Um, just like the Wikipedia, uh, definition gives it right.

It combines, you know, irregular forces, you know, by way of, you know, um, like Nicaragua suffered in the eighties with the Contras which was an overt, uh, military insurgency actually, you know, operating from the countryside, you know, and they were being assisted by neighboring countries, like, like Costa Rica and Honduras and Panama.

Uh, and it also involves, you know, uh, uh, just chaos in the streets, just, just, you know, so quote, spontaneous uprisings and whatnot, just like, um, just like,

uh, an experience in 2018, when you have actually, uh, laid the conditions .You have paid agitators, paid [00:22:00] instigators in the streets and, you know, try bring chaos to the streets.

Uh, you have, you know, so, you know, you support local unrest, you know, information warfare, propaganda diplomacy, some things, something about law fair, uh, hybrid law, what you call a law fair, which is, uh, the use of, you know, legal instruments. You know, when you're targeting a particular in, uh, individual, you, you use these different legal instruments pretty much to, to give it the approval of legitimacy, uh, where in fact is, you know, you, manipul your, your weaponizing, the legal system, that's pretty much where it's and you have economic warfare, which, uh, which, uh, before 2018 Nicaragua was under sanctions, uh, they were under extreme sanctions during the, uh, uh, during the eighties. Uh, they were under sanctions again when, when the, uh, when Daniel Ortega came, uh, was elected in 27, 20, uh, 2007. Yeah, 27. Then there were, the sanctions were [00:23:00] increased after the 2018 period. Um, you know, uh, uh, a street, um, protest that, uh, that, uh, Camilo's gonna go into right now, was that accurate with that, Camilo?

Camilo Mejia: Yeah. I mean, there's so much to say, but yeah, you captured it. And, uh, and I think that, uh, going back to what I was saying about getting into power through an armed revolution, you know, makes a huge difference between, because this law fair, imagine if for some reason, you know, like a populist in the U.S. Is able to win the election, which is like something in, in my opinion, it's like anything that's outside of the, uh, Republican and the democratic party right now, it would be pretty much impossible because of all the laws that they have in place.

But imagine if somebody wins the election in the U.S., you know, what the hell are they going to be able to do? Absolutely nothing because the institutional power is in the hands of the two parties. Right? And the media is in the hands of the two parties, particularly the [00:24:00] Democrats, the courts are in the hands of the two parties, the judicial, the legislative.

The media, all the industries that pull the strings, you know, military industrial complex, the entire nonprofit industry, Hollywood, everything. Right. And so lawfare basically speaks to that, that you get a populace, you know, that wants to implement laws that are for the benefit of the people. You know, you cook up some, uh, corruption charges and you'll get rid of them, you know, like they did to Al mine Brazil, or, you know, um, I, I think that with Sai was a little bit different because they criticized some of, some of this, uh, political, uh, reforms that he intended to do.

But in the end it ended up being, um, a military pool because, you know, they use the military to get 'em out. But, uh, by and large, you know, this law firm refers to the fact that this old guard, you know, whether it's the bourgeoisie or the oligarchs, you know, they [00:25:00] are in, in the, in power, institutionally, militarily, economically in Nicaragua.

That's not the case in Nicaragua. We have popular led, um, institutions, you know, police, military, judicial electoral, um, council. Uh, so yeah, indeed. Uh, so in 2018, basically, One, one thing that,

Jovanni: I'm sorry, let me add up that Lawfare. Also with this happened here as well in the United States. And I can think about, uh, FDR, FDR was, uh, considered a popular president.

He was popular across the street, you know, across the working class Americans and because he was popular, um, they were conspiracies against them by the, by the, the, the mechanisms that you talked about, uh, most Americans don't know, or most Americans might not know that, that this, this constraint of two consecutive of, of term limits on a president's right.

Didn't exist prior to, to FDR. Uh, it was put in pie. It was put in place because of FDR cause [00:26:00] FDR won four consecutive, uh, uh, elections, because he was so popular amongst amongst the average Americans. Right. But because he was popular amongst, uh, um, average Americans, once he, he passed, right. They, they created this mechanism of two turns because they they're trying to, because this, this mechanism of people, the people that pull the strengths are trying to avoid another FDR to come into power in the United States.

Camilo Mejia: Yeah, exactly. Yeah. And it has to do with the fact that, uh, you can dismantle status quo in one or two terms. It requires more than you have a long term vision that you need to re hold the entire system, you know, economic, political, social, financial. There's no way you can do it in two terms. So even if a, if a president is incredibly popular and has a lot of people support, um, for any president to be able to dismantle the system, it would take a lot more than two terms.

And so I think that [00:27:00] that's one of the reasons why, uh, people like Putin, you know, it's still empower, you know, or like people like Merkel, you know, nobody talks about Merkel being power since the year, 2000 until, you know, just a few weeks ago. Um, but, um, yeah, so in 2018, one of, one of the dead giveaways also is that usually the IMF is in the background, right?

This usually some kind of deal or some kind of reform, you know, that has to do with, you know, liberalizing the economy or, you know, signing some kind of deal or some kind of bailout. Um, and, um, I think, uh, in, in, in the Ukraine, there was the association deal with, uh, with the European union that would impose a lot of austerity measures, you know, but of course, Ukrainians would get traveled through the European union without any restrictions and be able to work and whatnot.

And so they turned it into this like west versus east, you know, struggle, but behind it was a deal, you know, with the IMF. [00:28:00] And, um, if you look at a lot of the stuff that's happening right now, where there are a lot of, um, uprisings, you know, in, uh, response to neoliberal policies, usually you'll see the IMF or the world bank, or some kind of European union financial institution behind, you know, trying to implement, uh, changes, you know, um, that affect working and middle class people by and large.

Jovanni: And NGOs, don't forget about NGOs, like, um, you know, NGOs that you'll think, um, that they're, you know, uh, like the national endowment for democracy and the, uh, USAID um, um, you know, different organizations, the, uh, what do they call the other one? The, um, the international Republican Institute, voice of America, national democratic Institute.

I mean, society open society. It's another one. So these NGOs as well, they, they, they interject because they don't, cuz they're not connected to the [00:29:00] state per se. You know, they come in as, as, uh, people to people type of initiative and they come in into your country and they do this type of you call democracy, promotion, et cetera, you know, they do, they might come in and do some type of, of work, um, in your country, you know, establish, you know, some type of infrastructure media, but the end of the day, a lot of time, what there are, they're an extension to the, to the actual, to the, to the state where they come from, you know, particularly the Western states and, and, and one of the things that, that, that was happening in, in Nicaragua, for example, when they were, uh, they target the youth a lot, a lot of the youth and they do these, um, These workshops, you know, it's media workshops and they do these, uh, um, um, you know, workshops and you know, what they call democracy.

Lot, lot of these democracy promotion workshops that has to do with, um, teaching people, particularly young people, uh, how to, you know, uh, um, do protests, you know, [00:30:00] how to do these different type of, you know, what call nonviolent actions, you know, where, but where they actually use these, uh, um, uh, these actions where they do invite violence and whatnot.

Uh, you saw that in different different countries. You saw that in, in Maidan you saw that in, in Caracas you see guys recently in July 11th in Cuba, what to do is right. Uh, it's called a, um, a marginal violence, you know, marginal, uh, something of violence and it was created and where it is, is put so much stress into, into the security forces where they actually, they, they respond and once they respond, once they respond, then you catch in the camera.

Then you proliferate all the images and stuff like that. And, and you create this state of, of, of anxiety and panic and warfare in a country, right, where you're actually promoting instead of what they call democracy. And you actually promoting the overthrow with the current government to, you know, to conform to whatever [00:31:00] agenda you bring into, uh, into, you know, the intentions, the general intentions you have.

Camilo Mejia: Yeah, it's very insidious and it's very, um, it's, it's, it's very deceitful. Uh, a lot of it you can read on gene sharps manual, uh, from dictatorship to democracy. I think that he, um, describes about 198 tactics, you know, uh, nonviolent tactics that, um, or basically use, um, alongside selective use of violence and an entire, um, apparatus of propaganda that is made up not only by of, um, social media, but also, um, you know, traditional media, global reach media and, you know, um, global reach human rights organizations, you know, like the UN the OS, um, human rights watch, amnesty and whatnot.

And so [00:32:00] the, what, what happened in Nicaragua was that they were going after. Retirement loss. And, you know, they, they, the IMF was basically telling the government that, you know, you need to increase the amount of years that people have to pay into the system to be able to qualify for retirement. And, you know, you need to, uh, kick out all these people, you know, who didn't pay enough and that you gave a retire, you know, like an emergency retirement, because they were older and they never partook in the, uh, traditional economy.

And so they were older and very poor and they didn't have any retirement. So the government gave them a limited retirement and the IMF said, you need to do away with all that stuff. You know, they can't give away anything. You know, people have to pay double the amount of time and you can give that much healthcare as well.

And so they, they try to implement a lot of measures, you know, that would really hurt people, especially really, really poor people. And the government said, no, we're not going to do that. What we're going to do [00:33:00] is we're going to increase a little bit, the amount of money that, um, you know, working people are going to pay into the system so that we can close the gap, the deficit,

and we're going to, um, we're going to take 5% from the cash benefit from retirees, and we're gonna put that into the healthcare benefit.

Uh, so it was a transfer of 5% and an in an increment of like maybe 1.2, 5% and. The way that they framed it was that the government was cutting, um, retirement, uh, that they were basically targeting old people, old, poor people. Um, they didn't, of course they didn't talk about the other part of the deal, which was, you know, kick all these people out and like increase the amount of payments that people have to make.

And, you know, they just basically selectively took one part of it and then turned it into, uh, this horrible news that the government was, you know, uh, in an effort [00:34:00] to, uh, to make up for its corruption was basically targeting poor old people. And so there were, um, rallies, you know, against the government.

And what happens oftentimes with these color revolutions is that there's some kind of legitimacy to it, right? Like there's some kind of issue going on that they use, uh, in order to get people to come out. And then once people come out, there's violence and there's a lot of confusion, right? There's snipers, there's beatings, you know, and there was always a lot of out of context, capture of specific moments, you know, uh, footage or pictures, you know, where you have basically for, you know, for instance, you know, you may have snipers shooting at cops.

And then when cops realize that they're being shot at with real bullets, they should back. And so you already have people there on the scene ready to capture that and say, They're using deadly [00:35:00] fire against people. And then before, you know, it, they already have like thousands of bots ready to like bombard people with messages and images and memes and things like that.

And then before, you know, it, the entire machinery of U.S. Finance and, non profits, human rights groups and media, traditional media and social media groups, there's like this coordinated, highly coordinated explosion of news, basically portraying the government as criminal. You know, like they're going out there, they're killing innocent civilians or killing students and whatnot.

And then before, you know, it, you know, amnesty is involved, the UN is involved, you know, the entire, you know, global machine of regime change is involved and it, it's actually in order for them to do that because this is also, this is usually done in a place where the government that's in, that's in power has [00:36:00] implemented measures that are contrary to the IMF reforms, world

bank, neoliberal deals and things like that. Right. And so there isn't really a whole lot of opposition like popular opposition to the government. The opposition is basically it's it sprouts out of the manipulation of the news and like the rallies and like the selective use of violence.

But by and large, when you look at what's been going on in the country long term, you know, you don't really see a history of oppression. You don't see a history of violence. And what you see is universal healthcare. What you see is housing programs, you see lowering mortality rates, you know, whether you're talking about Cuba or you're talking about Venezuela, or you're talking about Nicaragua or Bolivia, you know, all these DIC, horrible dictatorships, all offer universal healthcare, they offer housing and all these things.

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Jovanni: most, you know, the most wealthiest country in the hemisphere of not of the world, uh, which with a bigger population, you know, doesn't really make sense.

And also I'm looking at the, uh, the expenditure of Nicaragua being a country considered the poorest country, world [00:39:00] countries have been, uh, in war, you know, since, since the 80 actually haven't, didn't really, they haven't really recovered from, from the eighties. Uh, you know, however they're able to, to spend, uh, 8.4% of their, uh, uh, of their budget on medical, uh, uh, expenditure, right, and comparing it to Dominican Republic, for example, which one kind like say one countries of origin, which was the population of 10 million people, uh, and a much wealthier country than, than Nicaragua Iraq.

Their expenditure is 5.9% of, of the population now. Immigrant public is considered a it's it's a close eye to the United States. It's considered a, a Flant democracy, cetera, such cetera, whereas Nicaraguas is horrible dictatorship, however, right. There's spend more money on healthcare than, than, than the, than it's, uh, uh, it's democratic counterpart.

The immigrant public. I'm looking at the other one at El Salvador spends about seven, 7% of their budget on [00:40:00] healthcare. Honduras, 7% of the budget on healthcare Guatemala has a population of 17 million people. It only spends 6% of the budget on healthcare, whereas Nicaragua, uh, a poor country spends 8.4% of their, uh, of their healthcare of their budget on healthcare. Uh, I just wanna throw in some numbers there, um, for you. Um, yeah,

Camilo Mejia: yeah. Right. And so it's, you can imagine how difficult it would be to turn the population against a government like that. And so what the us has to do is they have to resort to real, real nasty elements within the society. And this is also something that you see in other applications of regime change, you know, whether you call color revolution or or whatever.

But in Nicaragua, they used, um, uh, gang members and, you know, uh, petty criminals, um, drug addicts, and they even imported some of the Mads, you know, which were like [00:41:00] this U.S. Deported, uh, gang members, you know, young gangsters, you know, that were from mostly from LA. I wanna say, uh, from California that ended up in, in, uh, El Salvador and Honduras and, you know, to a lesser degree in Guatemala.

And so they brought a lot of those people to Nicaragua to basically run, uh, these, these things called Traks, which were basically barricades. And it's how they hope to, uh, to stop the economy in order to put pressure on the people. And they were incredibly violent and, you know, they would kill people, uh, kidnap people.

They would set people on fire, all that stuff is recorded. Of course the media won't pick it up, right? Like the CNN won't pick it up. I'm gonna see international, won't pick it up human rights, watch won't pick it up. But it's basically what the people of, of Nicarag were going through. If you look at the Ukraine, what they use there is neo-Nazis right.

Because by and large, even the people who are pissed with Yanu [00:42:00] Covich because of all the corruption and all of that, like I said, you know, there's usually some, some degree of truth in all of this, uh, color revolutions. And so there was some degree of, you know, uh, truth in people going out there because it was this reform and they were cutting.

The benefits of retirees and whatnot. Uh, but by and large, the people did not want to overthrow the government. Um, and so they had to use these nasty elements of society and even import some, some, uh, some help from the outside to overthrow the government or to try to, to try to overthrow the government.

It's the same thing that they did in Ukraine with new Nazis in Venezuela, they use what in BES, you know, very highly violent, you know, gang members and, you know, organized crime, um, in, uh, in, in, in Syria, they use ISIS, you know, and you know, all this moderate rebels they call, they're not moderate at all.

You know, they're nasty, nasty people, uh, in Libya, Libya had the highest standard of any African [00:43:00] country. Uh, they used people from the awakening councils in Iraq, you know, a lot of the people that were paid to stop fighting the us, you know, ended up in this awakening councils. They were the origin of, uh, ISIS and, and ISO and all these groups, they ended up fighting against GHI and Libya.

Um, and so like every time that you have a popular government, you know, that's both populous and popular because of all this loss and this transformative changes that they have undergone. Um, you need to bring in this nasty elements either, you know, French elements within the society. Don't really have a whole lot of power politically or economically, or, you know, militarily.

And then they get, you know, financed and trained by the U.S.. Um, and so in Nicaragua was this, this, you know, people from the Maras, you know, in El Salvador and Honduras, and some people, you know, um, very, very poor people, drug addicts and gang members that were [00:44:00] basically, uh, running this, this, um, highly, um, you know, horrific, you know, scare campaign to basically turn the people against the government.

They were not able to do it. You know, the militancy came out and was able to dismantled. A lot of people saw what was really going on, you know, people who, uh, fell prey to a lot of the, the media, um, um, efforts, you know, to portray the, the, the government as criminal. Um, and so we were able to beat it. And of course, you know, after that, you know, the U.S. Has continued, um, with the sanctions and, and whatnot. But one, one quick word on the sanctions is that the larger, the larger. Analysis here. The larger context is the end of USA Germany, right? And this is something that we see many ways, you know, like politically diplomatic influence the financial system is, you know, coming under question, uh, because of [00:45:00] all the sanctions, you know, that have been applied unilaterally.

Uh, so there's all these things happening that are basically pointing to U.S., Germany and Western hegemony, really being in decline in the face of emerging powers, you know, from outside of the west, like China, Russia, Brazil, you know, India, the bricks countries. Um, and so what we are seeing basically is that the U.S. Is doing whatever it can to hold onto this hegemony, to hold onto this, to this influence.

And it's, it's just not working in the case of Nicaragua. Nicaragua has a commerce, a trade surplus with the U.S. Because we have been subject to sanctions for such a long time. That we've had to rely on our own peasantry our own people from the rural areas to continue production and to continue growing food.

We're 97%, uh, food sovereign in Nicaragua. If you look at the basic, [00:46:00] um, the basic staples, you know, we could be a hundred percent food, food sovereign, so sanctions hurt us, but they won't bring us to our knees. We won't starve because we have been able to develop our, our agriculture and many other sectors independently from U.S. Investment and U.S. Capital industry technology and whatnot.

Jovanni: And so, and that's one of the differences between Nicaragua and Venezuela before, uh, uh, before the, uh, uh, you know, the Arian revolution, for example, uh, there were the Venezuela economy was so linked, so interlinked with the, with the United States, which, you know, they, uh, imported about what I think, uh, over 80% of, or the consumer goods were all imported from the United States from abroad.

So when sanctions started hitting. Uh, it was really, it was, it was really hard for them because they had, they didn't, they didn't cushion 'em they weren't able to cushion themselves. Uh, they had time to cushion themselves right too, um, to S

right. Whereas Nicaragua for example, Nicaragua has [00:47:00] been under sanction since, you know, since, since the late seventies.

Uh, and once, once the, uh, Sandinistas defeated the Contras for example, sanctions weren't even harder on Nicaragua et C, right? The sanctions wasn't wasn't lifted until the neoliberal governments came in 91, 92, but once Ortega came back to power, once the Sandinistas came back to power, the sanctions started creeping up again, you know?

So you guys like saying you guys. Been cushion, you guys have been used to, uh, living on a sanctions. So you guys were able to create an economy within, uh, to, to resists, whereas Venezuela didn't didn't have that, that, that opportunity. So when sanctions hit them really hard, uh, you know, after 2014 and then increasingly on the Trump in 2018, you know, that's what you saw, all those images that you saw here about how terrible Maduro is and how, how evil, uh, the Arians and ch are and everything that, but they, they're not taken into context sanction, but, uh, um, you know, same with Cub [00:48:00] example, Cuba was also, uh, suffer sanctions, you know, since the 1960s, since actually the revolution, um, they had a, they had a string, you know, they, they had, they were embedded within the rest of the socialist blocks and the cold war. But after the Cold War ended in the nineties, right, that's when they entered a special period because they were pretty much left alone, just like North Korea.. So they were left outside of the, the global economy and they were, were increasing on them as well, but they also learn how to, how to live with it. They also learn how to go around it.

They also learn how to, you know, survive, uh, S um, you know, just like you're describing with, uh, with Nicaragua.

Camilo Mejia: And alongside that, um, going back to this decline in hegemony, the bind that the U.S. Is in right now is that. What happens if the us goes after these economies, you know, that are highly productive and that are very independent, you know, like in Nicaragua, there's a lot of people driven programs, you know, that on tourism, for instance, or trade local, regional, [00:49:00] international, um, you know, high levels of production, even during the pandemic, you know, because we were able to use other tools to keep people safe.

We did not stop production. So we sort of became the bread basket, you know, of the region. And so the buy that the us is in is that with decline in hegemony and, and the face of this emerging powers, is that where the us withdraws. Another power comes in and fills the void, right? So if we stop doing trade with

the us, because the us says, you know, this horrible dictatorship, you know, there's not, it's not the serving of doing trade with the us.

Then China comes in and China says, well, well, I'll buy it from you. You know, you have, you have meat, you have beans, you have cheese, you know, whatever you have, we'll buy it from you. Right. And so, and this is something that's not just true of Nicaragua, but pretty much anywhere, you know, the U.S. Is in a really difficult situation because of Chinese influence.

And because there are all these other nations that, you know, like if, if you look at the, uh, the production and [00:50:00] wealth being produced by, by the bricks nations, and you look at the European union, bricks are more powerful. You know, India is a superpower in terms of technology, military superpower, China in technology, in, in, in finance, you know, along with Russia, you know, Russian weapons are like. Years ahead of, you know, Western technologies in many cases, not all cases, obviously, but so what hap, so the situation that the us has in is that if they go really harsh against a particular economy, it's almost like an invitation for the Chinese to, to step in and say, okay, well, we'll buy it from you.

And the U.S. Does not want any more Chinese influence in, in the continent. So we have been subject to, to, uh, to sanctions, but a lot of those sanctions have been limited in scope. You know, many of them have been targeted at individuals. They've heard us, but you know, they, they're not going to bring us to our needs.

And, you know, they have not gone completely, um, out of their, their way to, to, to completely [00:51:00] close off trade with Nicaragua. Because again, like I said, you know, that would invite other powers to, to step in and the us is not want that anymore. Um, so I mean, I don't know. I think I've, I've gone, uh, a lot into it.

I don't know if you guys have any questions or if you wanna maybe shift gears and talk about something else, but, um, more or less as a gist of the, um, the attempted coup.

Henri: Um, have a, a few questions about the, about the Ortega government Ortega administration, as it exists today. Um, in, in researching for this, you know, that there's, there's, you find so many different divisions on where people sit about, um, What's happening, you know, the, the, the revolution, the state of it, the, um, that, um, I'll just name off some of the things that I, I noticed, and I, I'm not, I don't expect you [00:52:00] to, to answer to each of 'em anything, but

just kind of in creating the general idea that, um, the recent anti-terrorism law that, uh, Outlaws any dissent towards Ortega, um, his wife becoming vice president, um, you know, the, the removal of term limits and, um, public services, um, being restricted to only his supporters.

And so my, my, my real question for you, you know, I, I, I, like I said, I don't, I don't want you to, uh, to have to defend any of those points, but I do wonder about, you know, the, the recent, or it's not recent, but, but recent last decade that the Sandinista split,, you know, that the, um, the different things that have come out of, you know, like the open letter from nom Chomsky and, and Daniel Ellsberg.

And again, I don't, I don't, um, I don't necessarily agree with everything they said, but I, I, I do [00:53:00] notice that there's, there's a lot of people saying what what's really happening here. Are we still is, is what we understand about Nicaragua and about the Sandinista movement, um, the same as it was, you know?

And, and, um, lastly, just, and I'll let you, you know, talk about it that you're, you know, your old man, your own dad, um, someone who stood with the movement for a very long time and, and, and risked his life, um, you know, as had, had a change of heart. And, um, I'm curious for you, you know, is that the, the, if you know, what, what would be the criticisms that you would make of the Ortega government?

Again, not that you know, every government does, does things that we don't agree with, you know, and I, and so I, but I, I, I think that there's some real questions here about is the movement still, um, wedded to the same ideas that it began with.

Camilo Mejia: Yeah, definitely. Those are very, uh, say, um, [00:54:00] very valid questions. And so let me start with the, uh, law dissent, um, outlawing, uh, dissent, right? So that was of law very much modeled after us law. The first ones, the first iteration of that law was actually, uh, passed by a, uh, new liberal oligarchy government, the government of Al.

Um, and that was the beginning of that, you know, to basically outlaw dissent. It's not really outlawing, uh, dissent as much as it is, um, basically banning anything that is coming from a foreign power to destabilize the country. Right. And so I'll give you an example of that picture. Um, picture Ron Paul picture, Ron Paul, [00:55:00] um, expressing that he wants to be the president of the us, and then traveling to China and giving an open, um, interview, a press

conference, you know, basically saying that, you know, that we've had it with a Biden dictatorship, you know, we need sanctions on the.

Um, I don't think anything should be off the table. I think that we should even look into a Chinese invasion of the us. And, um, you know, we, you know, we really need to overthrow this, this, this dictator, you know, because Biden has to go and, uh, you know, we need your, we need the Chinese, government's help, you know, the communist party needs to step in and basically, you know, protect freedom in the us.

And, you know, we need you to, to. People on, you know, in our land, you know, we need you to finance nonprofits. We need you to finance media. We need you to pass sanctions. You know, we need you to isolate the us diplomatically. That's the kind of the SC that has been banned in [00:56:00] Nicaragua. Right. And so like the people who were banned, uh, from running and many of whom are in jail were people who did things like that.

You know? So we asked the question because we don't really know what these people have been up to. Uh, but that's basically what, what this boils down to, you know, the people who have been incarcerated we're involved in highly violent tactics that led to the deaths of hundreds of Nicaraguans, you know, during this attempted coup and they were forgiven, you know, via an amnesty law.

And they were told, you know, you can't engage in that anymore, you know, but for the sake of reconciliation, we're going to let it go and we're going to pass this amnesty law. And they went back at it, you know, the us continues to try to undermine Nicaragua, the Nicaraguan government and the Nicaragua revolution, and these people are open about it.

Right. And so I, I actually believe that it's part of the, uh, the strategy of the us, you know, it's to basically throw these [00:57:00] people on, out into the lion SP and make them do things that will, uh, force the government to take action and say, you know, we're not going to tolerate this and we're going to arrest them.

And then of course, you know, the story gets selectively reported. And they said, well, these were all political candidates that were not political candidates. They were not people who belonged to any real party. They had not been elected by anyone in any party to run. You know, the, the vast majority of the people who were arrested were arrested in may.

When there was an election in November of last year. So for you to be a, a, a, you know, legal opposition, you know, basically because they said that, you know, like he basically ran an election without opposition. That's not true. The traditional opposition. So the parties, you know, that had legal, uh, standing legal status, you know, they all pretty much ran unless, you know, they were involved in destabilizing the country or they, they were involved in the commission of [00:58:00] crimes, but these people did not have.

You know, a political platform did not have a party. They, um, but they had not been selected by anyone as political candidates and they had been involved in the commission of crimes Anderson against Nicaragua. So if you, if you, if you try to understand that, you know, from an American perspective and you think about a, you know, a us politician, whether they have declared that they want to run or not, or whether they have been nominated by the one of the official parties, um, just the fact that they would go to a foreign power, you know, and one of, one of these guys actually came to Nicaragua with a back full of dollars, you know, I mean, like that's how blatant it was, you know, that these people, the kinds of things that these people were doing, you know, talking about a Panama option, you know, talking about the invasion of Panama, talking about, you know, um, handling president Ortega the mu way, you know, which you guys remember that he was hanged upside down those kinds of things.

Right? So the political opposition in [00:59:00] Nicaragua was very much alive. And, you know, if they're not thriving, it's because their interests do not align with the interests of people, but they still able to run. They get votes, they have representation in the national assembly and all of that. So there's a lot of, um, you know, um, there's a lot of twisting and, and, and, um, of the information as far as, uh, Ortega's wife being the vice president.

You know, this goes back to what we were talking about, the term limits and whatnot, Nicaragua. It's not a regular democracy because Nicaragua has been in the sites of the us since the 1850s. Basically, if not before that, uh, when this is when we had the first invasion, you know, it was in a us government innovation, but it was a us government supported innovation, um, that we had been in the sites of the.

and, um, because the, the, the, uh, the, the traditional, uh, [01:00:00] political establishment and the economic establishment and the institutional establishment in Nicaragua has been so incredibly racist and classes and pro imperialists, you know, whether it's for Spain or for the United States, um, and the Sandinista movement, you know, beginning with Sandino in the 1920, in the late 1920s, up until this very day has been basically a rejection of the status quo.

It has been a rejection of Western imperialism and whether Spanish or American, and the way that that has played out is that we have not been really able to live or to, you know, carry on with our business in a normal way, because we have always been in the sides of, you know, us aggression, whether it's via sanctions or, you know, uh, direct military invasions or proxy invasions, or, you know, sabotage or you name it.

Right. And so we are not a country that's able to say, well, you [01:01:00] know, we're going to work on a. Revolutionary plan, you know, where we're going to have, uh, precedents that are going to be basically, you know, working the same way that the United States work to be able to transform the entire status quo, to be able to transform the power dynamics and to change history in the way that the Sandinista government has changed history.

And because of that, Daniel Ortega has continued to run and the people have, have continued to believe in him. What happened in the 1990s was that after the, uh, the Contra war and after the sabotage, you know, the USS found guilty at the Hague after the, uh, the sanctions and the blockade and everything like that.

When the Sans lost the election, everyone thought that, uh, the Sandinistas movement was. Right. And you guys might remember that. I said that because Somoza had disrupted that, you know, [01:02:00] liberal, conservative balance, he had been hated by everyone. And the Sandinistas were able to gather a lot of the different sectors within the population to fight against the dictatorship of the Somoza family.

And that included oligarchs. And that included people from the BJA middle class people, people who are not necessarily, um, in line with a popular revolution, but that hated so, so much that they had to be a part of a movement to overthrow him. And so what happened after the overthrow of somosa is that the Sandinista government is a mixed government.

We have people in power who are BJA, all arcs. You know, we have intellectuals, we have people who are literate. We have people who are peasants. We have people who are college, professors, writers, you know, priests, everything, everything under the sun became a part of the revolution because Somoza was so hated.

And so fast forward to the 1990 election we lose. And a lot of the people who were. [01:03:00] Upper upper middle class. And that includes my dad, you know, who was a famous musician, but all the intelligence in Nicaragua, you

know, the, the, the, the BJA revolutionaries, the oligarch revolutionaries, those were the people who held down the international relations in Nicaragua.

Those were the ambassadors. You know, those were the college educated people who became ministers. They became judges. They became, you know, um, they held down the, uh, solidarity movement between Nicaragua and a lot of the people who were in solidarity with Nicaragua, like Chomsky and Ellsberg and people like that.

And so when there's this disruption, you know, when the Sandinistas lose the, the, the election, everybody thinks, well, it's over, you know, let's play nice with the us, let's get neoliberal. And there, there is a, a battle within the Sandinistas party between those who wanted to remain popular, and those who wanted to become neoliberal, you know, like we remain nationally populist movement for the people, [01:04:00] and we're going to continue fighting from the ground up.

And they were the ones, you know, like the, the BJA. Um, former Sandinista leaders and the oligos, um, some of the wealthiest families were part of the Sandinista movement. They were, you know, part of the government. Uh, and so what happened was that they took all their, their political power, which was basically a lot of the deputies on the national assembly, former ministers, former diplomats.

And there was a split. And within that split, you know, a lot of the people who were the intellectuals and like all the, the OI, like upper middle class and wealthy class, uh, formed the rev renovation, Sandinistas movement. My father was part of that and the people who were working class, the people who are peasants, the people who were, you know, workers and whatnot, the proletariat basically stayed with the Sandinistas, with the Daniel Ortega faction of the Sandinista.

And so that was devastating because they had so much of that institutional power. They have [01:05:00] so much education, they have so much experience, you know, with diplomacy and all these things. And the line of communication between the revolution and a lot of the movements of solidarity in the us and Europe was held by this class of Sandinistas that now were like jumping ship.

That's it, we lost to the us. And so what happens, you know, once you Neo liberalize on revolutionary country, the government steps back, you know, the government withdraws from education, from healthcare, from energy, from all of that. And it all becomes privatized, but the private sector does not want to meet the needs of the people.

They want to make a profit. And so they focus on the people who are able to. , if you can pay, you have healthcare. If you can pay, you have education, you can pay, you have electricity. And so that leaves a huge vacuum and who fill that vacuum the nonprofit, um, the nonprofit system. And so a lot of these people, a lot of these former, you know, revolutionary BJA and oligo Sandinistas became executive [01:06:00] directors of nonprofits and human rights organizations and media organizations.

And they were all financed by the USA and the national endowment for democracy and the, you know, the so foundation and the open society foundation. And, you know, like all the money that's behind the nonprofit industrial complex in the us. And it movements you all over the world, you know, from Hong Kong to the Ukraine, to whatever they were active in Nicaragua that entire time.

Right. And so what happened was that after we lost this, all this institutional power that went with this people who wanted to play nice with the us and become Neo liberalized, um, at the next election, we lost to this, um, coalition between the oligarchy and the, the brei and, you know, like the Sandinistas, um, that split off we lost in terms of.

The our [01:07:00] base was less than their combined base. We had about 35%, but the faction of the Sandinista that broke off from the Daniel Ortega faction did not win anything. They won like maybe 5% of the vote while we won about 35% of the vote. So we took back. All of the institutional power, the national assembly, you know, we won a lot of regional elections, um, mayors, you know, councilmen and women.

And it became clear that the popular base had remained with the, the Daniel Ortega faction while the BJA sea and the middle class and the intelligence, they basically became isolated politically. They did not have any political power. They did not have any popular power. So their Alliance with the rich, with the liberals, the conservatives, the BJE embassy, the us, the us embassy.

And you can read all the shed on the, on the Wiki leagues, embassy cables, you know, like all these alliances that were brokered by [01:08:00] USA operatives, you know, working out of the embassy with the former Sandinistas us. Um, and so that's basically, you know, what explains that split off and that a lot of the people who were one Sandinistas us and were very high profile Sandinistas, well, they were very high profile because they were well spoken, educated, spoke several languages and whatnot.

And because they came from a class that was not a popular class, it was not poor people. It was not peasants. And so. The Sandinistas, you know, um, were able to reclaim, um, the power because they, they stuck to a popular, you know, nationalist, you know, people center agenda while the, the faction of the Sandinistas movement that split off, went with the BJA sea and the us and the, you know, neoliberal model.

Um, and so the, the wife of president Ortega is not like just his wife. You know, she was someone who had been part of the insurgency, you know, prior [01:09:00] to the overthrow of the, uh, of the, um, of the dictatorship. She's a well-known figure in Nicaragua. She's a very capable woman. And at one point, you know, people had the choice to elect him and continue on with a, with a program that the Sandinistas, um, movement and party and government had been implementing, implementing for a long time.

By voting for them or vote for the opposition, you know, for the oligarchs now split and they chose to vote for the Sandinista party. So at the end of the day, you know, it was a clear choice. It was an open election, it was highly observed and monitored. And the people voted for that type of change, you know, and they didn't care that the vice president was married to the president.

And, you know, that's something that as long in my, the way that I view it, as long as the people voted for. That's it. That's what we have. And I support the government. I support the vice [01:10:00] president. I support the president because the kind of transformative change that the people in Nicaragua have seen under the, the ni Ortega and Rosa government is unlike anything that has ever been seen in Nicaragua.

And if you have a history of oppression, you know, Fu oppression where people are not viewed as people, but they're viewed as the extension of the ride of the oligarchs. And you go from that to being an actor of change and to being in a society that has been built from the ground up, the choice is very clear.

You're going to vote for the Sandinistas, you know, whether the vice president and the president are married or not. And so to me, that's really what matters. And I think that the combination between Rosa and Daniel Ortega is brilliant because he's a visionary. And he's someone who has been through so much, you know, as a gorilla, as a commander, as a president, as somebody who was leading a movement from the ground up, when everybody thought that that Sandinista movement was over [01:11:00] and has gone through so much that he has this command of the people, and he has this command of the history and the trajectory while she is someone who's, uh, uh, somebody who's able to

execute and to make things happen and to manage and to administer and someone who shares a vision with Daniel Ortega and the militancy.

And so. You know, they compliment each other in a way that has worked out for the Nicaraguan people, unlike anything has worked out for the Nicaraguan people in our entire history. So I support our government. I support our president and vice president. I know, I think Jovanni has something to, to add. Yeah, I was saying this is not, and this is not uncommon.

This not been uncommon in, in the region is not been common in politics. I mean, if you look at, uh, in Argentina, for example, the, the, the popularity of, of Juan for example, was, was highly, uh, due to the popularity of, of his wife, Eva Petro, who she wasn't a, she [01:12:00] wasn't AJU vice president, but she was kind of a defacto vice president.

She was very, uh, very active in, in the decision making in the government of Argentina. Um, something similarity here in the United States. You can, you can say the same thing about FDR, you know, uh, part of the popularity of FDR, you know, was due in large part because of the popular of Illinois who, although she wasn't.

She wasn't a, uh, an official in government, you know, she was a first lady, but she was highly involved in the decision making and, and, and the activity of, of government in, in the United States doing that era. Um, another thing I wanna touch in what you said about liberalism, you know, and, and, and, and liberal democracy was, you know, was more liberal democracy.

Jovanni: I think you touched, you know, you, you, you touched the, uh, the head of the nail when you said about, uh, an inactive, you know, an inactive government, you know, so the political project [01:13:00] that's being under liberalism, that's being projected throughout the world is that of having governments who are inactive, who, who set back and let the, let, let the other agents, you know, uh, whose whose structure who are structured, who are, who are, who are incentivized by profit to govern and to, and to run the affairs of the state.

Right. Um, you know, you mentioned, you know, you mentioned near, you mentioned the, uh, the nonprofit organization, but I could say, you know, here in the United States, you know, um, everything stepped up to the markets, you know, and that's the, and that's the type of government that's being projected. You know, when COVID hit the first thing that will say, you know, let the market take care of it, you know?

Uh, so we have, you know, so you, you're promoting this, this inactive government, you're not promoting this, this government of actions, this, this active government, when you have active government, then that is called, um, here in, at least here in the United States that is projected as authoritarianism, you know, dictatorship because they're active, they're involved, you know, so what you, what you're saying is you want, [01:14:00] you know, government, they're not involved in the affairs of the people.

They're not taking care of people and you just lift it up to the market. Who's who's, uh, uh, whose incentives, like I said, is profit. Like you mentioned, Another thing I wanted to mention before we close off is, you know, uh, mentioned Juan, be Juan be said that, uh, that real politics is international politics.

Everything else is, is, uh, administration and management, right. Something to that affair. Uh, I wanna know what is, um, Nick, I was international politics, um, international geopolitics, most countries in the hemisphere, uh, doesn't have a, a, an independent, um, international, uh, uh, policy, most of their most countries in the hemisphere policy extended to that or the United States.

Right. Whereas, you know, governments like Cuba, for example, for a long time, that's had independent politics, international policy. I wanna know what is, if, you know, if, you know, if you. And share with us, you know, what is NICAR I's international policy. [01:15:00] And another thing before we close also, you know, you live in Miami, uh, Miami has been the center of Latin American reaction for, you know, for decades, you know, um, every time a popular government comes to power and somewhere in Latin America, you see reactionaries just flock flocking to Miami.

And from Miami, they, they, they, they do operations of the stabilization. Right. And they're, it doesn't help that they get, they have politicians like, like, like Debbie, like Debbie Schultz, uh, from democratic party, like, uh, BA Rubio from the uniform Republican, you know, that party, you know, that, that play interference for them, for the, for the, uh, uh, this reactionary forces that, that congregate in Miami and, you know, and project, and pretty much direct American policy, you know, to, you know, to placate to this reactionary forces.

Right. But you live in that, in that city. And I can, and I bet it's hard to organize in a city like that. Uh, can you just share, you know, how, how, how, you know that experience, how is that like?[01:16:00]

Camilo Mejia: Yeah, definitely. Um, ever since the cold war, you know, we have declared ourselves as a nonaligned nation and, you know, I, I do believe that as with a lot of other revolutionary movements for independence, you know, where people have become emancipated. They have looked up to the United States, right. And, and initially a lot of the, the countries that have become, uh, free from the oppression of another power or a dictatorship have initially, you know, reached out to the us, uh, for help and, you know, for cooperation and, uh, to basically have a friendly relationship Cuba did that, you know, Castro did that.

Um, I think Ho Chi Minh did that, you know, in Vietnam, we did that and, you know, we remain open to working with the us as long as it's, you [01:17:00] know, on, on, on equal footing. We have never, um, viewed the United States as an enemy. Uh, we've had obviously to fight for our sovereignty and our democracy with us governments, but we've also been blessed with a lot of internationalism coming from the us and, you know, other parts of the west.

And there is a lot of love between Nicaragua and U.S. Solidarity. In fact, uh, Brian Wilson, you know, who's a naturalized, Nicaragua was honored, you know, during the, uh, 43rd anniversary of the revolution. Not, not, not that long ago on July 19th and Ben Lin, you know, who's a martyr, you know, who also also a us citizen who was killed by the contrast, uh, who was a clown and an engineer, you know, who was working on, on projects in Nicaragua when he was killed.

Um, he's very much a part of, um, you know, the, the Nicaragua, uh, psyche, you know, in, with regards to U.S. [01:18:00] Internationalism, uh, in terms of the foreign policy, we are open to working with anyone. We still do trade with the United States, but we also do trade with China. We do trade with Russia. Uh, we, we have a working relationship with pretty much any nation out there that wants to, to do work with us.

You know, we, we also help in any way that we can during the pandemic. Um, a lot of the, um, regional governments shut down their economies, uh, to go into quarantine and social distancing and whatnot. Like a lot of industries, uh, were basically, um, halted completely, and that created food shortage in, in, in the region.

And Nicaragua stepped in and helped a lot of our partners who are. Pro Nicaragua revolution, you know, partners that are very much in alignment with us policies and, you know, who had basically been installed by the us, you

know, like in Guatemala and El Salvador and Honduras and [01:19:00] whatnot, and we have continued to work with them.

Um, so we have a, I guess like the best way that you can define our foreign policies, that we are a sovereign nation, and we're always going to act in a way that is in the best interest of our, our country, our people, our land, our natural resources and, and our independence and our freedom. And if the us wants to be a partner to that, then great, uh, we will work with the us, but if not, then, you know, we'll look elsewhere.

You know, we'll work with the Russians. We'll work with the Mexicans, we'll work with anybody who wants to do trade with us, you know, will do trade within anybody who wants to do solidarity work with us. We're open to that, um, regarding, um, the Miami atmosphere. Um, you'd be surprised, you know, a lot of the, uh, the institutional powers in the hands of, you know, that highly reactionary exile, not only from Cuba, but also, you know, you have a lot of Venezuela and you have Colombians and, you know, you have a lot of people who [01:20:00] adhere to, you know, the, um, the us puppet, um, in the, in their countries of origin mentality, right?

Like whether it's people who are now anti Petro, Or people who are anti Chavez or anti now Maduro, or, you know, people who think that Bo H is a leftist or people who think that Fernandez and Argentina is a leftist, you know, we have them all here. Uh, but by and large, I think that the majority of the people who had, you know, uh, migrated from south America and other parts of Latin America to Miami are people who are, um, economic at styles, you know, they're not very political.

Um, and so the struggles that we, that I work on here are struggles that people, um, of all, uh, walks of life, you know, ideologically and politically are supporting, you know, we have a housing crisis just like anywhere in the us, and we're out [01:21:00] there advocating for housing. We have, uh, police brutality, we're out there, you know, calling out police brutality.

We have pretty much, I mean, I'm pretty sure that you guys in Portland and in Texas, you know, you have some of the same, the same things that are going on here. And those are the things that I'm, I'm working on here. You know, I work on local policies and, and in coalitions with other organizations, I don't really do a whole lot.

Um, Latin American, um, work in, in Miami, most of that work happens on a national or an international level, you know, like what we're doing right now, or

like the work that we have done, um, in the past, you know, on hybrid warfare or, you know, um, going to conferences and things like that. But I don't really do a whole lot of Latin American, um, activism.

Um, one, because it's not really, uh, something that I'm in a position to, to move people on. [01:22:00] Um, because here would be really difficult, you know, to get something like that off the ground. And two, because there is so much more that has to do with people's day to day living, um, you know, families being kicked out, you know, food insecurity is a huge thing here.

Um, you know, lack of access to healthcare, lack of access to education, disenfranchisement of returning citizens. I mean, you name it and we have all those issues here. So my work as an activist and as a professional really are focused on that particular type of work, you know, not, not so much on, uh, calling out, you know, us hybrid war in Latin America or, or elsewhere, but, you know, that's that's work that I'm involved in, but more like on a national level, not so much here in Miami,

Jovanni: Thank you. Thank you. Henri, if you wanna, uh, you have anything else to add, um, you know, close us out.

Um, Camilo I thank [01:23:00] you. Thank you so much for your, uh, for your time. I, uh, I appreciate you being willing to, to wade through my questions and, and, you know, I, I, uh, Nicaragua and Latin America are still pretty new subjects for me, but it, it, it is getting easier to understand all the different layers that come in with hybrid warfare and like NGOs and, and all, all these different areas that you know, where information comes from. Um, but, uh, thank you again for, for your time for, uh, for answering our questions and everything. Um, is there anything that, uh, you'd like to plug talk about stuff that you have upcoming or, uh, website, Twitter, anything like that?

Camilo Mejia: No, not really. I think we've covered a lot. And, uh, but you know, I just wanna say thank you for the opportunity. And, uh, if you wanna keep working together, I'm willing, you know, like just reach out anytime. Obviously, you know, I don't mind answering tough questions, you know, I know that there's a lot of misinformation and a lot of times that's the only [01:24:00] information that people have. Yeah. So, um, this is, this is part of why we do this work, you know, cuz we want people to know and you know, I'm also willing to learn, you know, I don't think I'm I'm right all the time.

You know, I think that, uh, we're all subject to making mistakes and whatnot. So, um, you know, if you ever wanna do this again or, you know, maybe change

the format to a debate or something like that, I'm willing, you know, I'm always willing, as long as we do it in a way that leads to people, um, questioning things, you know, I don't, I don't, I don't want people to necessarily believe what I have to say, but, and that's, that's one of the ways that I open, you know, my talks, you know, when I, whenever I give a talk, I tell people, please don't believe anything I say to skip an open mind and then go do your own research.

Right?

Henri: Yeah. Yeah.

Jovanni: And, and, and, and question what you're being fed, uh, by main, by the mainstream and, uh, maybe take, take some notes and go out there and, you know, do some fact checking, um, will you, uh, remind our audience, the, the title of your [01:25:00] book. Yeah. It's, The Road From al Ramadi: The private rebellion of Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia.

And I'll make sure I, I, uh, include a link to that in the show notes.

Camilo Mejia: If anybody wants to, to pick it up and read about your story, I've just gotten started on it, but it's already been a, a really good read. It's really a, a fascinating story and a powerful one. Um, and, uh, last thing before we close out here, I wanna make sure to mention our, uh, telegram channel Fortress On A Hill is now on telegram.

Please, if you, uh, use telegram for, uh, other stuff that you follow, please come and say, hi, join our channel, send us stuff that you think is, uh, important. And, uh, I think that'll do it for us today. Um, thank you so much for, uh, for being here Camilo and, uh, to all of our listeners, we will see you all real, real soon.

Henri: Take care.

Jovanni: Thanks. Camilo.

Camilo Mejia: Take care guys.