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## Iraq vet speaks out

### Former soldier discusses desertion

**Matt Rocheleau, Collegian Staff**

Issue date: 11/7/08 Section: News

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After the talks, Mejía signed copies of his memoir, "Road from ar Ramadi: the Private Rebellion of Staff Sergeant Camilo," which he has been promoting on his national "Resisting Empire" tour.

"I would find myself riding in the back of a truck through the dusty streets of war-torn ar Ramadi," said a passage from the memoir. "I was supposed to be giving all my attention to watching out for the insurgents...But then I would catch sight of the children running to the front gates of their homes to watch our vehicles rolling by and they would remind me of the children I had seen back in Nicaragua." Mejía lived in Nicaragua before moving to the U.S. with his family in 1991.

Zurima Cisneros, a junior sociology major at UMass, bought a copy of Mejía's book.

"I thought it was very inspirational," she said. "It's really significant for people to be hearing about what it means to speak independently and conscientiously. It takes a lot of power from within."

Greenfield resident Beth Adams agreed.

"I admire his courage and conviction to walk this risky life of non-violence," Adams said.

Mejía serves as the board chair of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), who aim to give a voice to active duty service people and veterans who are against the War on Terror, but feel pressured to stay silent.

The event featured introductions by IVAW member Mike VanValkenburg and UMass history professor and author Christian Appy.

More information on Mejía's tour, sponsored nationally by Haymarket Books, Center for Economic Research and Social Change, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Alternet.org and Nation Books is available at Resistingempire.org.

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- Bichon Frise
- Chinese Crested
- Miniature Schnauzer
- Poodle
- Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier

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