

By JOSEPH G. LARIOSA

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CHICAGO, Illinois (JGLi) – Cezar O. Mancao II does not want to blur the lines between truth and politics.

In a 40-minute call Saturday (Aug. 29) morning to his U.S.-based lawyer, Arnedo S. Valera, Mr. Mancao said he could not believe former President Joseph “Erap” Estrada has denied ever knowing nor even talking to him.

Mr. Valera, in an email to this reporter, said that the recent news items issued by Mr. Estrada since Thursday on TV, Radio and print media that he (Mr. Estrada) does know him (Mancao) from Adam nor even talked to Mancao is like “Peter’s denial of Jesus.”

Mr. Mancao said it pains him that his small contribution to the rise of Mr. Estrada into prominence as an anti-crime Czar had gone for “naught.”

“It pains me further to think that if he could do it to me, how much more of the many personnel we have asked to protect him and deliver major accomplishments in his supposed anti-crime Czar efforts. For what? For photo opportunity!” Mr. Mancao rued.

Cezar Mancao further stated, “I have placed my life and career for the cause of justice and have worked professionally for peace and order in our native land. I have always adhered to the principles of courage, loyalty and integrity. Times like this, I will not allow myself to be a subject of ridicule especially from the person whom I faithfully served and respected not until lately.”

Mr. Mancao wanted to tell the entire nation why Erap is telling a lie based on the following circumstances: According to Cezar Mancao:

* 1. He met Erap on Feb. 17, 1993 when during a mission, Col. Mancao shot and killed the No. 1 enemy of the country, Red Scorpion Kidnapping Gang leader, Joey De Leon. Erap arrived at the scene for the picture taking. It was followed by a party, which was intended to thank him and give monetary reward to Mancao's informant, who incidentally received a fraction of it.

* 2. Mancao met Erap again after the Kuratong Baleleng incident and in some meetings when Mancao was with Special Project Alpha together with (then. Gen. and now) Sen. (Panfilo) Lacson and Michael Aquino preparing for the presidential campaign from 1997-May 1998. Mancao was also responsible in bringing to Erap and Lacson (for secret meetings), then Brig. Gen. Jocelyn Nazareno, who became Erap's first AFP Chief of Staff.

* 3. Mancao is also the counterpart of now Sec. Ronnie Puno in his Byron Hotel Election operations. Mancao brought both of them to the hotel to personally congratulate Mr. Puno for the successful efforts his group did during the May 1998 elections. During the campaign, Mancao's group was tasked to do "advance party" and active security roles in numerous rallies and engagements in Mindanao. Mancao was also among those who were tasked for some underground operations for him.

* 4. After elections, Mancao met Erap on several occasions when Mancao received awards and recognitions for his exemplary services to the nation. Mancao categorically states that he even saw Erap in the most sacred and secret places in Malacanang.

* 5. Mancao also had the honor together with Lacson and Aquino to be personally served lunch by him in his kitchen nook while his VIP's were waiting for us outside the living room. And

* 6. Mancao said for many more occasions, he cannot just stress but the last was about one week after Erap was deposed, when Mancao arrived from his training in the United States when after EDSA II, Lacson, Aquino and Mancao visited Erap in his residence at Polk St., Greenhills, San Juan, and Erap told him "Sar, bakit ang tagal mong bumalik?"(Sar, what took you so long to return?), which struck Mancao thinking that he was an important person to Erap.

Based on these instances, Mancao is asking Erap, "How can he say that he does not know me? After all my efforts, sacrifices and even the lost lives of our men were just nothing?"

Cezar Mancao reiterates his position even prior to his extradition that he does not want to be used in any political battle and more so in the upcoming 2010 elections. He is asking Erap not to lie to the Filipino people.

Atty. Valera said Mr. Mancao as a decorated police officer came home to tell the truth and for justice to come out. He further quoted Mancao as saying, "Let us just wait for the court to hear and decide the result of the Dacer-Corbito case and spare me from unnecessary attacks." (la riosa_jos@sbcglobal.net) # # #