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The Truth About Romulo Kintanar

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Some groups and individuals abroad are claiming that Romulo Kintanar was killed by an arresting team of the New People's Army (NPA) of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) for no reason other than leaving the CPP and dissenting against it. They completely obscure the fact that Kintanar had become an intelligence agent and combat asset of the Manila government and had resisted his arrest with force. Let us set the record straight with more facts in detail.

An acknowledged intelligence agent of the Manila government

Romulo Kintanar was an intelligence agent of the Manila government's military and police since 1992. As such he was a combatant in the ongoing civil war between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the revolutionary movement of the Filipino people, represented by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in peace negotiations between the GRP and the NDFP.

No less than GRP President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo confirmed that Kintanar was an intelligence agent of the Manila government.

The Philippine Star on 27 January 2003 reported in its banner story, NPA Admits Kintanar Slay: "President Arroyo confirmed that Kintanar was working as a government intelligence agent at the time of his assassination."

Earlier, on 23 January 2003, an official in Arroyo's Malacanang Palace said Kintanar was "a consultant of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), but was drawing his salary from the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID)" (*Philippine Daily Inquirer, Breaking News, 24 January 2003, Communist Party Chief Blamed for Slay of Former NPA Head*). He was also a security consultant to the National Electrification Administration (NEA) at the time of his death.

Efforts to recruit Kintanar into the military intelligence were successfully carried out in the period of March to August 1992 when PNP intelligence officer Col. Robert Delfin faked the arrest of his asset Ricardo Reyes, a renegade expelled from the CPP more than a decade ago, and put him in the same detention cell as Kintanar in order to turn him against the revolutionary movement. After his release from prison through an amnesty

program of the Manila government in September 1992, Kintanar made known his separation from the CPP. He started to work for the intelligence services of the GRP and also became thoroughly involved in the criminal world of corrupt military and police officers engaging in protection rackets, armed robbery, kidnapping and murder for hire, even putting up his own private security agency (*Philippine Daily Inquirer, 24 January 2003, Ibid*) as cover for his nefarious activities.

Kintanar, together with his uncle, Gen. Galileo Kintanar, former head of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP) during the Marcos regime, was linked to the murder of movie star Nida Blanca and was known to facilitate transactions with the military and police for a fee. Two days before his death, Kintanar was one of the special guests of PNP chief Gen. Hermogenes Ebdane at the 12th founding anniversary of the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO), hobnobbing with top police officers (*The Philippine Star, 24 January 2003, Ex-NPA Chieftain Slain*). Also another special guest was Arturo Tabara, who is the chieftain of the RPA gang, a security force of big landlord and Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco in

Negros Occidental.

In 2000, after becoming security consultant to Gen. Alexander Aguirre, former President Joseph Estrada's national security adviser, Kintanar was designated project officer in an assassination plot against Prof. Jose Maria Sison in The Netherlands. He followed the direction of Gen. Panfilo Lacson, head of the PNP at the time. (*Manila Times*, 24 January 2003, *Ex-NPA Chief Assassinated Inside QC Restaurant*) He also took part in surveillance and other "counter-insurgency" operations by the military and police against the CPP and NPA.

At the time of his death, Kintanar was with two bodyguards and was personally armed with three guns: a .45 caliber pistol, an HK machine pistol and a Glock 9mm pistol (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 6 February 2003, *Kintanar Lost Rolex, Cash, 3 Guns, Golf Set*). As an intelligence agent of the GRP, he was always ready for combat against the revolutionary movement. Kintanar was definitely



a combatant. He was fully armed and dangerous at the time of his death. These facts are well known in the Philippines. But some groups and individuals abroad would rather peddle lies than tell the truth about events in the Philippines in their vicious scheme to malign the Philippine revolutionary movement.

Who was Romulo Kintanar before 1992?

Romulo Kintanar used to be chief of staff of the NPA. He became notorious for his so-called exploits in leading groups to kill traffic policemen in Agdao district of Davao City in 1984, at a time when erroneous ideas began to run in the CPP leadership and it adopted urban insurrectionism as a form of military strategy. But unknown to the CPP leadership, Kintanar had by then also started to engage in such criminal activities as bank robberies, holdups and extortions.

When he took over the NPA in 1986, he gave full vent to his gangster activities by organizing "special operations groups" allegedly to raise funds for the movement but in reality to sustain his luxurious and decadent lifestyle. He ordered these groups to carry out kidnapping-for-ransom, holdups of banks and other businesses, dollar counterfeiting operations, and other criminal activities. He corrupted and debased these groups by giving them a share in the spoils and allowing them to carry out small operations according to their personal wishes. He even connived with criminal syndicates and corrupt elements in the military and police in these special operations that led to the death of several operatives.

He directed these special

operations without reporting and accounting for them to the CPP leadership. These special operations included the kidnapping of Japanese businessman Noboyuki Wakaoji and Bombo Radyo-Philippines owner Roger Florete and the holdup of a bank in mid-1991 which reportedly netted more than P60 million. Kintanar used his position to enrich himself and his cohorts (*The Philippine Star*, 27 January 2003, *Ibid*). When his gangster operations became known to the CPP leadership he was ordered to stop but he refused until his supposed rearrest in August 1991.

Kintanar was also the one mainly responsible for expanding and bringing on a national scale the urban insurrectionist strategy. The unwarranted killings of traffic policemen in Metro Manila (200 in a span of two months) elicited violent retaliation from military and police death squads that led to the summary executions of six human rights lawyers and several prominent mass leaders in 1987. Likewise, mass arrests, zonings and saturation drives with hooded informants became nightly occurrences then in urban poor communities that led to the destruction of people's organizations and livelihood programs.

For his criminal activities and military adventurist errors, Kintanar was held accountable to the people by the revolutionary movement. Instead of owning up to his crimes and errors, Kintanar chose to fight the movement, sowed intrigues against the CPP, and participated actively as an intelligence agent in the planning and implementation of "counter-insurgency" operations against the NPA.

For committing serious crimes, he was charged before a revolu-

tionary court. The court found prima facie evidence for his crimes and issued an arrest order. Always armed and dangerous and accompanied by bodyguards, no NPA arresting team could get close to him to serve the arrest warrant until 23 January 2003. On that fateful day, however, the NPA arresting team was forced to shoot him because he made a move to bring out one of his guns in order to resist arrest while cussing the leader of the NPA arresting team (as told by an eyewitness, Willie Milan, a film director who was in the same table with Kintanar at the time of the shooting, to DZMM, a leading radio station in Manila). In fact, his two bodyguards had already drawn their weapons (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 24 January, *Ibid*).

The justice system of the revolutionary movement

The justice system of the Philippine revolutionary movement operates according to international laws and norms governing armed conflict and in consonance with its capabilities. The revolutionary movement subscribes to due process as a fundamental principle in the administration of justice. This is enshrined in the Guide for Establishing a People's Democratic Government issued in 1976 and affirmed by the NDFP's Unilateral Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions and Its Protocols in 1996.

The revolutionary movement has amply demonstrated in practice its commitment to due process in the treatment of prisoners of war (POW) as can be attested to by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in its participation in the releases of POWs by the NPA on humanitarian grounds on numerous

occasions in the past.

In the case of Romulo Kintanar, a competent body of prosecutors in the revolutionary movement made a thorough investigation of the charges against him. It interviewed witnesses and gathered evidence before preparing the charge sheet and presenting it to the people's court. Through intermediaries, Kintanar was informed of the charges against him in writing. But instead of replying to the charges, Kintanar chose to be an active combatant against the revolutionary movement while continuing with his criminal activities under the protection of his superiors and

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cohorts in the reactionary military and police. Thus the prosecutors asked the people's court to issue a warrant for his arrest.

Maligning the revolutionary movement

For any group or individual now to claim that Kintanar was killed for simply leaving and opposing the CPP is a brazen lie. Kintanar was a combatant and a criminal who deserved to be haled to the people's court to answer the charges against him. But he chose to arm himself to the teeth and surround himself with bodyguards to prevent the peaceful service of

the arrest warrant. And he tried to resist arrest with force when about to be taken into custody by an NPA arresting team.

Some groups and individuals abroad even make the preposterous claim that the NPA killed Filemon "Popoy" Lagman, an erstwhile member of the CPP, in February 2001. They should listen to Edcel Lagman, brother of Popoy and a former congressman, who pointed out that "never did the NPA own up in (Popoy's) case". He added: "a certain senatorial candidate in the May 2001 polls, on whom Popoy had the goods, could have been the mastermind. The candidate has access to sophisticated equipment for accurately monitoring Popoy's communications." (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 6 February 2003, *Popoy Lagman Killers Still 'Out There,' Says Kin*)

Echoing the Manila government's military intelligence reports, these groups and individuals also speak of a so-called NPA hit list as if such reports could be relied upon for truth and accuracy. The CPP called such reports about the existence of a hit list a Malacanang concoction and branded military intelligence a contradiction in terms (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 27 January 2003, *Communists Call 'Hit List' a Malacanang 'Concoction'*). In the administration of justice, the NPA through prosecutors secures first the warrant of arrest from the revolutionary people's courts by presenting the complaint and prima facie evidence. The NPA does not take any offensive action against any individual suspect without due cause.

Not content with the above lies, these groups and individuals also make the blatantly false accusation that Prof. Jose Maria Sison had foreknowledge of what hap-

pened to Kintanar. The fact is Prof. Sison had issued a statement the day following Kintanar's death, disclaiming any knowledge of the killing and noting three widely known theories about it, even including the possibility that it could have been done by the NPA. (*Romulo Kintanar Had Too Many Rivals and Enemies in the Criminal World of Military and Police Operatives, Press Statement, Prof. Jose Maria Sison, January 24, 2003*). Two days later, the Spokesperson of the CPP, Gregorio Rosal, made an announcement on the killing. (*It Was Absolutely Correct to Apprehend and Punish Romulo Kintanar, Press Statement, Gregorio Rosal, January 26, 2003*).

Some of those maligning the Philippine revolutionary movement are renegades. Having failed in their earlier attempt to wreck the movement from within, they are

now out to destroy its name abroad among solidarity friends. They speak of upholding democracy and civil rights but have been most vicious in attacking the CPP and NPA in the most undemocratic way and means possible. But their lies will never erase the truth that Kintanar was a combatant and criminal, that Lagman was not killed by the NPA, and that a so-called NPA hit list does not exist.

Among the most active vilifiers of the CPP and NPA are Ricardo Reyes and Sixto Carlos who are using their contacts with Trotskyite groups and right wingers in non-governmental organizations to spread lies against the revolutionary movement. Their international campaign of demonification against the CPP, NPA and Prof. Sison jibes with the "terrorist" listing of these by the US and other pro-US governments and with the

escalating campaign of human rights violations by the military, police and paramilitary forces of the US-Arroyo regime under the pretext of antiterrorism. Since the "terrorist" listing, the US-Arroyo regime has gone all out with its brutal campaign of repression against the people and the revolutionary movement. As of 31 May 2003, there have been more than 2,010 recorded cases of human rights violations by the regime, including the summary executions of "30 unarmed civilians, three of whom were human rights activists and 27 community activists, most of whom were members of the political party, Bayan Muna" (*Amnesty International Report 2003, AI Index: ASA 35/002/2003*). The US-Arroyo regime has been using Bush's war on terror as a convenient cover for its own brand of state terrorism. ☐