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Games Political Butterflies Play

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., Nov. 23 (PinoyGlobal) - A certain political game has become fashionable among candidates in the Philippines. It's called "paro-paro politics" where a candidate for political office fly -- like a "paro-paro" (butterfly) -- from one party to another looking for the one that is attractive to the candidate. That candidate is known as a "political butterfly."

"Paro-paro" is popularized by the Tagalog folk song, "Paro-parong Bukid" (butterfly in the field). The song is about a young woman glamorously-dressed walking down the street with her hips swaying flirtatiously.

Several weeks ago, Sen. Loren Legarda launched her vice presidential bid with all the fanfare of a political campaign. But what was strange is that she didn't name her party mate, Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, as her presidential running mate. Since both Loren and Chiz -- who had indicated that he would run for president -- were members of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), it would be presumed that the two would form a tandem under NPC. Wrong!

Instead, Loren disclosed that there were five presidential aspirants who wanted her to be their vice presidential running mate. Amongst them were Manny Villar and Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro of the Nacionalista Party and Lakas-Kamp CMD (LKC), respectively.

Then, in an unexpected turn of events, Chiz bolted from NPC. With Chiz seemingly out of the presidential derby, Loren focused on pairing with either Teodoro or Villar.

Meanwhile, NPC was trying to forge an alliance with LKC. It would have been an ideal "marriage" if Gibo and Loren had teamed up. But Gibo picked showbiz celebrity Edu Manzano for his vice presidential running mate, leaving Loren and NPC out in the cold.

Last November 17, Loren's "butterflying" finally paid off -- Villar picked her as his vice presidential running mate. However, Loren insisted that she remains affiliated with NPC; thus, making her only as a "guest" candidate of Villar's Nacionalista Party. Does that mean that NPC would eventually coalesce with the Nacionalista Party? If not, who else would NPC support?

Three days later, on November 20, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) forged an alliance with the Nacionalista Party. KBL's leader Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said that the alliance was like a "wedding" and said that it's a "marriage" he'll never forget. As a result of that "marriage," Villar decided to include Bongbong in his party's senatorial slate.

But Bongbong is also included as a "guest" candidate in the senatorial slate of Joseph "Erap" Estrada's Puwersang Masang Pilipino. In addition, Bongbong is also a "guest" candidate in NPC's senatorial line-up.

It is interesting to note that prior to Bongbong's alliance with the Nacionalista Party, he tried to coalesce with the Liberal Party. In a press conference, Bongbong announced then that he'd be willing to run for senator under the Liberal Party if

Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III -- the party’s standard bearer -- invited him to join. Sounding sure of himself, Bongbong said that he was just waiting for Noynoy’s phone call. Apparently, that phone call never came; thus, forcing him to hurriedly go to the Nacionalista Party.

With Loren teaming up with Villar, and KBL coalescing with the Nacionalista Party, Villar has fashioned a political machine that would equal or surpass LKC.

But LKC is showing signs of structural distress. According to a party leader, 30-40 percent of the members have jumped ship and more are prepared to leave the party. Needless to say, the beneficiaries of the massive desertions are the Nacionalista Party and Liberal Party.

Speculation is rife that Gibo Teodoro -- whose 2% rating in the latest survey could doom his presidential bid -- might abandon his candidacy and throw his support behind his cousin Noynoy Aquino. If that happened, would LKC put up another candidate? But who? Or would Gloria cut her losses and forge a tactical alliance between LKC and the Nacionalista Party; thus, creating a formidable political machine capable of thrashing all the other parties in the 2010 elections... including the Liberal Party?

Some political insiders are also saying that Erap might abandon his quest for a second presidential term. If he did, he would most likely endorse Noynoy and the Liberal Party.

And how about Chiz? He said that he’s going to announce

his plans -- again -- soon. The word is that Chiz was able to get the financial support of several Filipino “taipans,” who unquestionably are some of the richest people in the country. But his problem is that he doesn’t have a political party and campaign machine to run an effective campaign. Would Chiz eventually decide to forego his presidential bid? If so, whom would he support -- Villar or Noynoy?

All things considered, it is beginning to dawn upon us that the 2010 presidential election will be a battle between the Nacionalista Party and the Liberal Party, the two parties that dominated the political scene from the days of the two-party system more 60 years ago until the late president Ferdinand Marcos imposed his authoritarian rule and created a political party -- KBL -- that held absolute power until the day he was deposed in the People Power revolution of 1986.

Today, the Nacionalista-Liberal rivalry has come to a full circle. However, the ideological divide that distinguished the two parties from each other is gone. The electoral process today is no longer about ideology; it is all about personal glory -- or gain -- and political power which tends to protect their economic interests and perpetuate their grip on power.

At the end of the day, the 2010 elections will, once again, be influenced by a combination of party machinery, command votes, campaign finances, and... election cheating. With the implementation of the new automated election system for the first time in 2010, there are grave concerns that the system might fail and throw the entire electoral process into chaos. Then what?