

Strategies and Statistics: The Presidential Battle for Ballots

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Speakers:

Rep. Raul Daza

Campaign Manager, Liberal Party (LP)

Gov. Luis Villafuerte

*Campaign Manager, Laban ng Demokratikong
Pilipino (Fight of the Democratic Filipino - LDP)*

Mr. Tomas Achacoso

Campaign Manager, Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC)

Rep. Jose de Venecia

*Campaign Manager, Lakas Edsa-National Union of
Christian Democrats (Strength of Edsa-NUCD)*

Mr. Reli German

*Campaign Manager, Partido ng Masang Pilipino
(Party of the Filipino Masses - PMP)*

Discussants:

Prof. Felipe Miranda

Social Weather Stations, Inc. (SWS)

Prof. Alexander Magno

Department of Political Science, UP Diliman

Dr. Priscelina Legasto (Fellow, Third World Studies Center): This session hopefully will be a lively exchange among the men responsible for the temper and character of the race for the presidency as they share with the academe their campaign strategies, plans, and projections. We do not expect our speakers to sell their "presidentiables" to us or discuss their party's programs. We are interested in what they think will make their candidates win in the presidential elections.

Rep. Raul Daza: The name of the game is numbers so I would like to talk about statistics. Perhaps one of the most interesting questions in terms of statistical projections in the coming elections is how many votes would a presidential candidate need to win. We are sure by now that we are not going to have a majority president. We are going to have a plurality president. There is no way that a presidential candidate will get more than half of the votes cast come May 11, 1992. We have made our analysis. We do not claim to be political scientists or statistical experts but, at least, we began our analysis from past events.

In 1957, we elected a plurality president. There were four candidates for president in that election. They were Carlos Garcia, Nacionalista Party (NP); Jose Yulo, Liberal Party (LP); Manuel Manahan, Progressive People's Party (PPP); and Don Claro Recto of the NCP (Nationalist Citizens' Party). As students of UP then, we were strongly pro-Recto. And if the campus preference was an indication of the national preference, Recto should have made it. As it turned out, Don Recto was fourth in a four-cornered race which Carlos Garcia won with 30% of the votes.

We did our analysis on the basis of the total number of registered voters. That is a number which is more predictable or, at least in point in time, is something that you get before election time arrives. The turnout is something you learn about after the voting. Using several procedures -- statistical accounting and mathematical analysis -- the percentage of the total number of voters that probably would be the winning percentage is 26.666% or 27%. So we projected that out of the 31 or 31.5 million total voters, anything between 8 to 8.5 million votes will be it.

Why does Mr. Salonga think that he would get this number of votes? After all, Mr. Estrada, Mr. Mitra, Mrs. Santiago, and anyone else can say that it would be easy for them to get 8 to 8.5 million votes and be the president of the country. We think, however, that Mr. Salonga is somewhat different from the other presidential candidates because it is only he who can really point to a concrete statistical track record, and that is the election of 1987 when 12,988,000 Filipinos wrote the name Salonga on their ballots. That is almost 13 million Filipinos who voted for Salonga.

To be liberal about this figure, let us say that perhaps a million of them had died since then. This constitutes quite a high mortality rate. Let us just say 2 million changed their minds because Mr. Salonga was too nationalistic, too progressive, too leftist, specially when he led the Senate rejection of the US Bases Treaty. So let us take off 2 million and then there will be cheating so we lose another million. So that leaves 4 million votes for their team. And then let us add to this statistical base the new voters, those who reached the voting age during the period 1987 to 1992. Their number is somewhere between 3 to 3.5 million. With this, we think we have a logical basis for saying that Mr. Salonga is winnable.

Our strategy is simple. We try to hit between 8 to 8.5 million votes. And at the risk of the other groups finding out what our strategy is, our strategy is to go for that. We expect a turn-out of about 80% because of the many candidates, the machineries of the candidates, and the various political parties who will be urging the people to go out and vote. There probably would be about 25 million voters out of the 31 to 31.5 million total number of voters and we will try to get 8 to 8.5 million of that.

We think that we are strongest in Mindanao where we hope to get 2.8 million votes. That is a tall order considering that the figure is 50% of the expected turn-out in Mindanao. But we have some basis for our projection of getting one out of every two votes there: 1) Mr. Aquilino Pimentel, our vice presidential candidate, happens to be the only vice presidential candidate from Mindanao; 2) in the 1987 and all past senatorial elections, Mr. Salonga had topped in the four regions of Mindanao, Regions IX, X, XI, and XII. He was number one in previous elections when he ran for the Senate. So we will go for 2.8 million votes in Mindanao.

The Visayas, we think, is our weakest spot. We expect a turn-out of 5.4 million and we only expect to get one out of every five votes and hope to get about 1.1 million. I am from Northern Samar, a province of Region VIII, where it is my second term as congressman. In Region VIII, we feel we are a little ahead of the other groups. The region has five provinces and one subprovince which roughly translates to 1.7 to 1.8 million votes. In Northern Samar -- which has two districts -- the governor happens to be a Liberal. Majority of the members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Board) are Liberals. Of its twenty four town mayors fourteen are Liberals. In the province of Samar -- which has two congressional districts -- the governor, again, is a Liberal. Majority of the members of its Sangguniang Panlalawigan are Liberals. In Eastern Samar, the governor is PDP-Laban (Partido Demokratiko ng Pilipinas-Lakas ng Bayan, Democratic Party of the Philippines-Strength of the Nation). As you know, the LP and PDP-Laban are in a coalition with Akbayan [literally, arms over each other's shoulders], a national organization of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), people's organizations (POs) and cause-oriented groups.

In the subprovince of Biliran, the governor is also a Liberal. So four out of six governors are Liberals so we think we might seek one out of every three votes there. Then in Eastern and Western Visayas, we have five congressmen. This is the region which is supposedly the birthplace of the Liberal Party. In Luzon, where Salonga comes from, we are hitting for 4.2 million votes. That is three out of every ten votes. That is good enough for us.

To sum up: Mindanao, 2.8 million; Visayas, 1.1 million; Luzon, 4.2 million. So we hope to be able to get 8.1 million votes and see Sen. Salonga become the next president of the Philippines.

Dr. Legasto: Thank you Rep. Daza. And now, we would like to call on Gov. Luis Villafuerte, campaign manager for the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP).

Gov. Luis Villafuerte: My work at the LDP is really as a tactician. We look at the 1992 campaign just like any battle. We say that politics is war, and we better be very clear and elaborate about the many dimensions of this particular and peculiar sort of war. I cannot disclose to you many of the things that we believe need to be done or what we plan to do but let me categorize my discussion into the following major classifications. We look at the May 11, 1992 elections as 1) the politics of geography, 2) the politics of demographics, 3) the politics of local elections, i.e., the elections of 1992 is less of a national election and more of local elections, 4) the politics of political bigwigs, 5) the politics of the POs, NGOs, and private voluntary organizations (PVOs), 6) the politics of ideas and ideals, and 7) the politics of the machine. All of these will have their own ramifications, implications, and dimensions, and several conclusions can be derived if the discussion will be along these different lines.

There are two very significant and noteworthy aspects of the May 11 elections upon which we must anchor all battle plans.

1) This is the first time in history that we are going to have simultaneous elections from the presidential down to the municipal. This has never happened before. It will happen for the first time on May 11 and it has its own very peculiar implications. It creates its own complexities so it calls for a special strategy and tactic for one to overcome some of its precise complications.

2) For the second time in our history -- but in a more complicated way this time -- we have a multiplicity of candidates at the national scene. It has happened before during the time of Pres. Carlos Garcia in 1957, as already mentioned by Rep. Daza. In 1957, there were about 6.4 million votes cast and Pres. Garcia only took one-third or 2.2 million to win in 1957. Now, we have more candidates than in 1957. The dynamics of 1992 is quite different

from that of 1957 and, therefore, it calls for a different kind of scrutiny and analysis.

The archipelagic make-up of this country in terms of political configurations is essentially composed of something like thirteen to fourteen political tribes with their own "ethnocentricities". The sympathy and sentiments of people sometimes initially revolve around the geographic origin of a particular candidate. And, therefore, in terms of strategy, the tacticians usually divide the country into several political corridors. And it is upon this kind of consideration that subplans would have to be made. They have to be constructed based upon the different corridors which are essentially divided according to socio-cultural characteristics of the different "tribal political communities."

Theoretically, in this country, a presidential candidate will already win if he gets an overwhelming majority, for example, from the Dagupan-Lucena corridor. This already has an 11.1 million voting population as of the last senatorial elections of 1987. The Dagupan-Lucena corridor is the biggest. The second one would be the old Davao province. It used to be one province. Now you have Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, and so forth. That is the second biggest corridor. The Cotabato corridor composed of the provinces of Cotabato, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, and the new provinces of Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat, consists of about 1.2 million voters. Then, when you talk of the Solid North, you have 2.2 million. (When you speak of Northern Luzon, we exclude Pangasinan because the Pangalatoks, as they are referred to, have a different socio-cultural orientation from the Ilocanos. Even when they are part of the North, they are not quite part of it. At least they want to believe so, think so, and act so.)

Then we move on to Northern Mindanao as another corridor. Then to the corridor of Rep. Daza, the Samar-Leyte corridor, composed of Samar, Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Leyte, and Southern Leyte. This has another 1.48 million votes. Then we have the Panay island corridor, 1.4 million votes; the Negros corridor, 1.36 million votes; the Bicol corridor, 1.31 million votes; the Zamboanga peninsula corridor, 1.27 million votes; and the Cebu island corridor, more than 1.5 million votes.

Given all these political corridors, a planner in a political battle may have alternative combinations in terms of marketing strategy. Given the present multiplicity of presidential candidates, perhaps a tactician may be encouraged to look at 1992 in marketing terms, as some kind of a needs marketing. One of the principles in electoral politics is that you can become stronger in an area where you are already strong. It is more difficult to make yourself stronger in an area where you are relatively weaker, and therefore this is what I refer to as calling for some kind of a needs marketing. But given

the ethnic and regional considerations of these different corridors, let us look at our candidate Ramon Villarosa Mitra.

Mitra comes from Palawan. What makes Palawan unique as a place of domicile or residence of a presidential candidate is that 1) Palawan is part of Region IV, the Southern Tagalog region composed of Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Quezon, the two Mindoros, Aurora, etc. So he is part of the Southern Tagalog region, a favorite son of Southern Tagalog. But Palawan is also a part of Minsupala (Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan). When Congress proposed the creation of the regional Muslim autonomous region, Palawan had to participate in the plebiscite because Palawan has been treated as part of Minsupala. So, Mitra also has geographical and ethnic links to Mindanao.

The father of Mitra, in fact, is from Batangas but he had his political career in the Cordilleras. That is why Speaker Mitra speaks Ilocano very fluently. His father had been a congressman six times over in the mountain provinces before the so-called mountain provinces were divided into Ifugao, Kalinga Apayao, and Benguet, with a separate constituency in Baguio City.

So, if you look at politics as geography, you already begin to understand some of the inherent and distinct advantages of a particular personality coming from a particular political tribal community. That is why, tactically, when Speaker Mitra was nominated as the official candidate of the LDP, our first priority was to get a vice president coming from another tribal political community, that of the Cebuanos. That is why we zeroed in on Marcelo Fernan as the vice presidential teammate of Speaker Ramon Mitra. The registered voters in Cebu island only will already be reaching about 1.5 million or more voters, but the Cebuanos have migrated to many parts of Mindanao and Western Visayas, and reached out to Masbate which is part of the Bicol region. So it is a major regional block. So, looking again at politics as geography, this combination, we believe, has a very good starting point as a team.

Now, we move to the politics of local elections. I saw a comment in one of the bulletin boards as I was coming here. A UP student described the present political realignments as a "lambada of political families." There is a lot of alignments, re-alignments, polarizations, of moving from one direction to the other. What is the reason for that? It is simply that the May 11, 1992 electoral politics is a politics of local elections less of a national elections. The reason why Edilberto Amante has gone for Ramos, more than anything else, is that his number one political enemy in his province is Gov. Rama. With Joe de Venecia, the reason why he has gone for Ramos is the same. He is not an Estrella or Agbayani ally. So, that kind of factor is very important in the re-alignment of forces. A candidate will move to another side simply because his local enemy is on the other side. That is the practical aspect of what I refer to as 1992 being more characterized in terms of local politics than national politics.

I refer to the politics of political bigwigs. Like it or not, hate it or not, there are just leaders who have a very strong hold on their constituencies for one reason or the other. And if you look at the alignments, that phenomenon is important. Examples of these are the Singsons of Ilocos Sur or the Faustino-Dizons of Nueva Vizcaya or the Remullas of Cavite. Like them, hate them, they are able to tantalize their own people into a definite direction whereupon they are able to carry the votes for particular candidates they support. That is reality, not just perception. You may not like that reality but it exists.

What has emerged also is what we describe as the politics of the POs, the NGOs, and the PVOs. They have been very assertive and now they want to assert their own views in these elections. They have been mobilizing on their own so that they will have their own political clout. So in evaluating one's strategic considerations, one must sort of differentiate the types of POs, NGOs, and PVOs. There are those who are more affiliated with the left of center, right of center, or the center. There are those that have been promoted by the politicians themselves as there are those that are dependent, ironically, on the patronage of the Cory government rather than on the funding that they may generate themselves on a voluntary basis.

Then we move to the politics of ideas and ideals. Issues are more important to some people. Anywhere else in the world, when we look at the literature of politics from the tacticians' standpoint and at all the books that I have read regarding this matter, whether written by an American, a German, or a Japanese, when they look at politics in statistical terms, in terms of classifications, they always refer to three types of voters. Anywhere else in the world where there is some kind of a democratic electoral exercise, they describe a voter as either being 1) a captive voter of a political machine, 2) an objective or independent voter who evaluates the issues and programs as they are articulated, or 3) an indifferent voter who could not care less about who gets elected. The last kind are the voters who can be carried by a bandwagon. They like to vote for the one whom they perceive to be a winner. These are the type of voters who can be induced by certain patrons.

The moment we begin to look at the so-called independent and objective voter, we agree that a special campaign plan must be formulated precisely to tackle that segment of the electorate. That is why when we move on to the politics of ideas and ideals, we try to persuade and focus on people who are more interested on what is being said, on what is being articulated as substantive issues and programs of government that they can depend on.

But a couple of caveats:

1) Like it or not, most voters everywhere in the world vote more against a person or against something than they vote for something or for a person. In the snap presidential elections of 1986, I dare say at this late date that

people cast their votes in favor of Cory Aquino because they were more against Marcos than for Cory Aquino. I think that is a classic example of the tenet that in politics, people vote more against somebody or against something that person has done rather than for what they believe they stand for or what that person really is all about. I am generalizing here. I am saying that it is a rule. There are always exceptions to the rules. When you look at the objective and independent voter, they are the types we must convince. But the other types of voter will vote against rather than for. I think that is a principle to consider in the preparation of strategies.

2) People like to listen more to what they themselves are saying. People are not looking for something that is new. Believe it or not, when a candidate stands up on a platform and says something that most people are already saying, they will say, "Ang galing niya. Sabi ko na nga ba, magaling talaga!" (He is very good. I told you so, he is really good!) Why? Because what he is saying is what his listeners are also saying. And that is important as part of a political campaign strategy.

Maybe I am saying more than what I should be saying. I may be giving myself away, but I am just giving you some parameters for planning. I cannot go into too many details but I am just giving you the parameters of planning because our strategic plans are classified according to the seven principles: the politics of geography, the politics of demography, the politics of local elections, the politics of political bigwigs, the politics of POs, NGOs, PVOs, the politics of ideas and ideals, and lastly, the one aspect that you hate most, the politics of the machine. But that is reality again. I think the disadvantage of many of the presidential candidates is that they have not organized their machinery.

Raul Daza here mentioned about what he perceives to be a winning arithmetic. Their calculations in the LP side allege that anywhere from 8 to 8.5 million would be the winning number of votes. And if Salonga is perceived to get 8.1 million, as Rep. Daza calculated, he could win. I disagree with that. The winning arithmetic would not reveal 8 to 8.5 million. It has to be 9 to 9.5 million in our own arithmetic. So Raul, work harder. Your candidate is running behind with your version of a winning arithmetic.

Now, how do we get organized for that winning arithmetic? There are many dimensions, factors, and forces that are involved and we have to be attentive to them as part of this campaign. But I think it is very important that we look first at what is that winning arithmetic because that is our goal, that is our target. And where do we get that? From the many corridors that I have mentioned. This is where we should underscore our campaign and highlight some of the issues and articulate the programs that will have an appeal depending upon the political corridor that is concerned.

In our case, we pride ourselves in having the better and more efficiently organized political party in the country today. As of October 30, 1991, after almost two years of work, we have been able to organize to an equivalent of 165,000 precincts, with twenty minimum members of good standing in each precinct. This is the actual and imputed number of precincts because there will be an increase in the number of precincts. The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) would like to lower the number of voters in every precinct to not more than 200. In fact, the total number of precincts may go up to 175,000. According to our computers, we have a total nationwide membership roll of 3,300,000 LDP members of good standing which is the core group upon which we will begin building up.

But why did we organize on the basis of the minimum of twenty members per precinct? It is very tedious, time-consuming, and very expensive. Reaching 42,000 baranggays throughout the country is in itself a formidable task. We had to have twenty members per precinct because given the average number of members of the family in the Philippines, there will be at least two members of the family that can be added to our membership. Now, if you look at 3.3 million individual members and take these as pertaining to a family, it is quite easy to accomplish a target that every member must persuade and capture at least two or more voters to vote for our candidates. And if 3.3 million members nationwide can convince two other voters, that would give us 6.6 million additional votes. If you add the original 3.3 million to 6.6 million, that is 9.9 million. And given our calculation of the winning arithmetic as one between 9 to 9.5 million, and given that we can easily garner 9.9 million because of our organizational structure and number of members, Raul, the ballgame is over. Now, take that as propaganda or otherwise, but that is how we look at the nuts and bolts of organizing and mobilizing for, and undertaking this campaign.

Because there is a multiplicity of candidates, and because for the first time in history we will have synchronized or simultaneous elections where something like 17,000 elective positions are being contested, the May 11, 1992 elections creates its own complexities and peculiarities. The relative strength and weaknesses of the contending political parties in the country today can be evaluated offhand by just looking at the standing of their senatorial line-up. Many of the contenders cannot even complete a twenty four-man slate. Any presidential aspirant who cannot even convince twenty four persons to complete his slate is a goner as far as we are concerned. They are supposed to convince a total number of voters expected to cast their ballots. Out of 30 to 31 million registered voters, we expect about 24 million to cast their ballots on May 11. If a presidential candidate cannot even convince one in a million to run with him in a twenty four-man senatorial ticket, how can he expect to even have a winning chance? There is no outside chance for that candidate to win. One of the presidential candidates is using her staff assistant as her vice presidential candidate. This candidate

cannot even convince a single individual to be her vice presidential teammate this late hour of the political game of 1992. So, I say that if you look at the line-ups, anybody who has not completed his ticket is saying that he is in trouble. They cannot even convince one person in every million voters to become a candidate for the Senate under their party. That is a danger signal.

Now, because this is an unprecedented simultaneous elections, any presidential contender who cannot complete not only the 24-man slate for the Senate but also the 75 gubernatorial slots, the 200 congressional seats, the 60 cities mayoral positions, the 1,590 municipal mayoral slots, and the hundreds and thousands of positions for provincial board member, city and municipal councilor stands a very undue disadvantage in this race. This, in a sense, is part of the strategic conditions of this presidential battle of 1992.

Since the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacies for national positions last midnight of February 7, our technical people have been analyzing who among the presidential contenders have been able to complete a twenty-four man slate and who were not and who among them cannot conceivably complete their local line-ups within the short time available before the March 23 deadline. By the time we get to mid-March, those with a lot of "political holes" in many constituencies will begin to falter and flounder and will be relegated to the background and will no longer become frontrunners. In elections, the political brokerage or intermediaries must reach to the precinct level. Any candidate who cannot even conceivably put up candidates in all the constituencies will have extreme difficulty.

After the revision of ballots and the reduction of registered voters per precinct to not more than 200, if we end up with 175,000 precincts, we conclude that the manpower alone that needs to be mobilized on election day is tremendous. Voting will begin at 7 a.m. and will end at 3 p.m. Canvassing will probably begin 30 minutes after closing but will end up almost the following morning. Why? It will take longer to count the ballots than for the voters to vote. Why? Because the counting is manual and verbalized. So, even if you have "Mr. Racuyal for president, zero," it still takes time. No matter if it is zero, it must be called. That is the procedure.

If you translate all this in manpower requirements, from the watchers and alternates manning the precinct to those who are outside distributing sample ballots and herding the voters to vote early to meet the deadline in the afternoon, every precinct must be manned by at least five party members. That will already require 875,000 in manpower requirements alone. And if a presidential candidate does not even have a municipal mayoral candidate, how could he expect to identify his precinct watchers in all the 175,000 precincts?

We are not using computers as in some parts of the United States or Europe. We have precincts in the hinterlands and in the coastal areas where

transport and communications is difficult. Therefore, the organization and the manpower complement that will compose that organization as watchdog for the campaign is crucial. That is what I mean by the politics of the machine as an important tactical consideration.

Let me also discuss the politics of machinery in the context of my home province in Camarines Sur where I am the governor. As of this late date, the Liberal Party-PDP-Laban of Raul Daza has not found a candidate for governor in Camarines Sur. That puts them in a tremendous disadvantage because if you cannot find a gubernatorial candidate who is of significance, then how can you organize your provincial ticket? In the province of Camarines Sur, the LP-PDP-Laban has only prospective candidates in two out of the four congressional districts. And Raul, please find two other candidates to complete your ticket because Salonga would be gravely prejudiced if you cannot put up those tickets.

There are thirty five towns and two cities in Camarines Sur. So what is happening now is that in some areas there is a Nacionalista, in other areas there is a Liberal but there is no Nacionalista, or vice versa. Miriam Santiago and Erap Estrada simply do not have candidates anywhere else. Vice President Salvador Laurel, as far as we know, does not have a candidate in the province of Camarines Sur. So, if there are many unfilled positions in the playing field, who will carry the ball for your team?

You must remember how many people each one of us will be electing to position: president, vice president, 24 senators, 1 congressman, 1 governor, 1 vice-governor, 2 provincial board members whose election is now by district, a mayor, a vice mayor, and 8 municipal councilors. So we have a total of forty-one. That is one long ballot. Historically, indifferent voters no longer want to write by the time they get to write the names of five senatorial candidates. They do not finish filling up their ballots. They already get lazy. So now, in this peculiar synchronized elections, we are lucky if they still go on after the tenth name. I am talking of the majority. There are those who complete their ballots, like those of us here, unless you are for "NOTA" (none of the above). So the senatorial candidates will have a hard time. Therefore, the machinery is a very important consideration in guaranteeing that votes are not wasted by those not determined enough to complete their ballots.

Given that set-up, I regret to say -- even in the presence of the representatives of the other candidates -- that in another ten days the others will be left behind. And maybe, three will begin to lead the pack. As we go to April, I think the electorate will focus on two major presidential candidates out of the eight that are presently contending.

So those, in essence, are the parameters of the presidential battle for ballots. I cannot elaborate in very specific terms on some of these strategic

elements that I have described because we will be unnecessarily disclosing our hand. But given the winning arithmetic and our organizational strategy and set-up, I think we will win the battle of May 11, 1992, Joe de Venecia and Raul Daza notwithstanding.

Dr. Legasto: Thank you very much, Gov. Villafuerte. Before we continue, there is a request from Rep. Raul Daza to let him react quickly to some of the points of Gov. Villafuerte because he would be leaving already at this point of the forum.

Rep. Daza: I intend to be here only for an hour because I have an engagement but I would just like to react to a few points raised by Luis when he specifically directed some remarks towards the LP-PDP-Laban-Akbayan coalition.

There is no question about the fact that apart from the formidable tone of the voice of Luis, the LDP is a formidable machine. It is in fact the embodiment of machine politics. But then, there are certain matters that have to be discounted in terms of what the LDP is. At its height in 1989, it had about 160 congressmen. Since then, about fifty of them have left the party. You will have to recall that the LDP was essentially a party of congressmen. The dominant are the congressmen. One might begin to question whether indeed it is still a solid national party with what they believe to be twenty trusted hardcore members for every precinct. This is best exemplified by the situation of the LDP in my region.

Emil Ong was supposed to be the frontman of the LDP. He was the original chairman of Region VIII of the LDP. But in the Nov. 30, 1991 convention, he campaigned all out for Fidel Ramos. He is now with the LDP again. His brother, Congressman Ong of the second district, is explicitly a Lakas Edsa-NUCD campaigner. So Emil Ong is straddling on both parties. Up to this time, in Northern Samar, there is no clear LDP candidate for governor. In Eastern Samar, where Congressman Joe Ramirez holds sway, there is still no LDP candidate for governor to go against our PDP-Laban incumbent because the congressman is also straddling on the two parties.

To Gov. Villafuerte's "political holes" argument I counter with what is not a new statement with regard to the winnability of candidates. In 1971, when we ran a senatorial slate of eight candidates at the height of Marcos's power, one of our senatorial candidates was a Nacionalista -- that was Eva Estrada-Kalaw. They counted us out by saying "how can you expect to win the senatorial elections when already, you have your dent?" But everybody knows that in our slate, six of the eight won in that elections. And in spite of the fact that, in 1971, we had no mayoralty candidates in one-third of the municipal or local positions, both the local and national elections were won by the LP.

There is no question to the fact that the LDP has the best machinery. It has come out with the best press and the best propaganda. What its candidates have been saying, according to Luis, is what a lot of people are saying because they are simply mouthing what they feel most Filipinos are mouthing. They simply have to do that. But even in the process of mouthing, it is not what is mouthed that is important but who mouths it. Notwithstanding the fact that the LDP in the past two years has dominated the media, polls up to late show the disproportion between the expenses incurred by the LDP for propaganda and the popularity of its candidate. My friend, Monching Mitra, does not seem to have risen in the surveys as fast as the expenses for propaganda of the LDP. It is because just like in marketing, no matter how you package the product, if the product is not good...

Gov. Villafuerte: I think Raul has misunderstood the principle that I laid. When I mention "political holes," I am not saying that you always have to have an incumbent. What I am saying is that in this battle, a party must be able to field somebody no matter how weak. If they cannot find a candidate, no matter how weak he is, that could be disadvantageous. We are talking here of strategy. Our point of discussion is strategy.

Incidentally, you said that in Northern Samar we have not found a candidate. We already have a candidate, even against you, Raul.

Rep. Daza: We also have a candidate against Luis and he will be surprised to know who he is. Well, thank you very much. I am sorry I have to leave.

Dr. Legasto: We now ask Mr. Tomas Achacoso, the campaign manager of the Nationalist People's Coalition to give us their campaign strategies.

Mr. Tomas Achacoso: I believe the arithmetic of Raul has said a lot. You all know that the bottomline of this exercise is that it is a numbers game. The academic edification that has been provided for by Gov. Villafuerte has been very interesting. Any serious contender will have to go through what Gov. Villafuerte has expounded before us. You cannot forego on the politics of geography, demographics, local elections, organizations, things like these. These are standard fare in any political exercise.

But I would like to emphasize some points that I believe will be significant as far as we are concerned. First and foremost is the fact that as of six months ago, Danding Cojuangco, who is the standard bearer of the Nationalist People's Coalition, has been trailing in the surveys. Suddenly, yesterday, we have the CNS survey showing him third, with Miriam still at the top, and Erap Estrada second. And of course, most of you who read the papers read about some moves undertaken by Malacanang on the prospect of Danding winning. That is why there was some brouhaha in the press regarding what was perceived to be attempts by the Cory administration to

try to stop the upsurge that was being demonstrated by the campaign of Danding Cojuangco. Let me expound on this.

I tend to agree with Gov. Villafuerte that people tend to vote more against issues or against people rather than what they stand for. And I am sure a lot of you here are very familiar with the issues raised against Danding Cojuangco: "Pacman," monopolist, crony, things like these. But I think there is one thing changing in Philippine society that has accounted for the rise of Cojuangco from the bottom to the top three of the surveys in less than six months. This change is the rise of the intellectual voter.

Elections in the Philippines are very emotional exercises, as has been in the past. Normally, the electorate really would not take issues too much into account. But I think this is why we, as strategists and tacticians in the Cojuangco camp, believe that there is this new and emerging sector in our society that is getting to be known as the intellectual voter. And I think these past six months has shown that a lot of people have suddenly become less emotional about issues attributed or alleged against Cojuangco. And having been exposed to facts and realities, they suddenly decided to look at things in a less emotional manner as compared to the usual rah-rah kind we find in the old style politics.

This is why we think our candidate, Mr. Cojuangco -- much as there are a lot of emotional issues that he himself could harp on -- has decided to launch a campaign that is based on issues. He desists from character assassination and black propaganda. He tries to raise the level of his campaign to a level that we have never experienced before. At this early stage, it is beginning to show. I think the surveys are beginning to reflect the fact that despite all the very serious charges being raised against Danding Cojuangco, he slowly but surely is being able to reach out to these intellectual voters, most of whom are the young. He approaches them on an argument per argument basis and does not hide behind the skirts of generalities and political rhetoric. He confronts issues head-on. This is how he intends to conduct his campaign.

(The other part of the presentation of Mr. Achacoso and the whole presentation of Rep. Jose de Venecia unfortunately cannot be reproduced due to technical reasons. -- Eds.)

Mr. Reli German: Let me start by saying that Senator Joseph Estrada is running a campaign without senators in his line-up. He also has no incumbent congressman except for his running mate, Vicente Rivera. We have only a handful of incumbent local officials in our party, the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP). And Sen. Estrada does not have any linkages, direct or indirect, with any political, civic, or any kind of sectoral organization based in Europe, in America, or Asia, unlike the christian democrat connection of

Lakas EDSA-NUCD. What we have though is the full support of ten million Filipinos.

What is the strategy of the PMP? As early as seven to eight months ago, Sen. Estrada has already travelled all over the country and what he did in these sorties was that he went directly to the masses. This is because the PMP has no members who are incumbent local officials. So he had to go directly to the masses. This is the opposite of traditional politics. A campaign has never been done before solely on this level. Why? Let us be logical about it. Where is the strength of Erap? Is it not found in the masses, in the people? It is not found in the local officials. It is the masses which put him in the Senate. When he ran for the Senate, no local official backed him up. So now he returns to the people. We go straight to the masses.

And the tactic behind this is that we let their forces pressure the local officials. "We are for Erap," they would say. "We number about three thousand in this barrio. Three thousand of us will vote for Erap. Are you for Erap or not? If you are not for him then you just lost the elections." With that, did we have local officials rushing to join the PMP? No, because we do not have money, and these local officials are looking for money to finance their own campaigns. They come to us asking for money but we tell them that we have no money, what we have are voters. So in the places where we have people who recognize that we do not have money but still support us, we put up candidates. In places where there are candidates belonging to other parties and where we do not have candidates to challenge them, we are realistic. We will have them as guest candidates. But on a national level, our strategy is to get the masses to support our candidates and then let them also pressure local officials to join the PMP. If they refuse to join, they lose the vote of the 10 million guaranteed to vote for Erap.

Why do I say guaranteed? I came up with what I call "Erapmetik," the arithmetic of how we will win. In the first place, in 1987, when Erap ran for the Senate, he garnered 10 million votes. Assuming that 10% changed loyalties, that still leaves us with 9 million. But we are sure that during this time, Erap has gained new adherents. So the 1 million which was lost has been replaced. Many are now believing in us as Erap explains our program.

While our contenders have not gone beyond motherhood statements, we concentrate on expounding our program which is so simple. It is as simple as our strategy. It is radical but can be achieved. It is not composed of motherhood statements. What we are proposing is a program of government that is aimed at solving the problem of poverty. That is why our slogan is "Erap para sa Mahihirap" ("Erap for the Poor"). Why are our people poor? Because there is a scarcity of jobs. There are more people unemployed than employed. How does Erap propose to solve this? It is very simple. The other parties can copy it. We did not copyright it. But please acknowledge Erap as the author.

First, we must establish labor-intensive industries which will absorb the majority who are unemployed. Past administrations have concentrated on capital-intensive industries but why should we when we have no money? Second, we have to move to the countryside to develop the rural areas. If more jobs are available in the provinces, then the people who are congesting the urban centers will start moving out to the provinces. This is how we propose to solve the problem of poverty and we are gaining adherents by expounding on this in our campaign sorties.

Dr. Legasto: Thank you very much, Mr. German. We will have discussions from two professors of the UP Department of Political Science. First, we will have Prof. Miranda who is also from the Social Weather Stations, Inc. (SWS).

Prof. Felipe Miranda: We have heard a lot of basic arithmetic, much of political strategies, and also enough political campaign speeches this afternoon. There are just a few things I would like to note to our academic audience here.

Political arithmetic is quite different from the arithmetic we are taught in schools. It is basically an exercise in relativism. Relativity theory would control here, it depends heavily on who you are trying to sell. And there is an appropriate arithmetic that you could develop for any kind of audience.

I am struck by the figures that have been provided by Gov. Villafuerte and Rep. Daza regarding what figure would make a presidential win in the coming elections. Eight and a half million says one. Nine and a half million says the other. Actually, you could design a scenario where you get down to three frontrunners, and assuming that 10% of the vote will be accounted for by the other five, you would even have as small a winning figure as 5 to 6 million votes.

But it would be good if you feel confident to raise the ante and get people to work so much harder. I think that is a basic campaign strategy and if you are a frontrunner, it is good to whip your party members and campaigners in line, and if you are behind, it is a desperate effort that must be exerted. Therefore, like good campaigners, Gov. Villafuerte and Rep. Daza will have to emphasize 8.5 or 9 million votes as targets for their respective campaigns.

But when you speak of statistics, you are speaking not only of voters' statistics. You are speaking of statistics in the sense of the votes and the voters, the machineries, the parties, the network. I think three of our speakers made quite a bit of contribution to clarifying these dimensions to us, but there was not enough statistics provided regarding other dimensions. The basic dimension, for instance, of pesos and dollars. How much are the parties planning to spend without even violating legal specifications? I think it is an open secret that we need arms. I do not mean necessarily armies but

arms, even warm bodies. Perhaps, to some extent, Gov. Villafuerte tried to impress on us the idea that you should have enough of these people. But how many of these people will really be able to work in the field and when they work, what kind of arms will they carry? Now, I include not only the physical extensions of their bodies but the extensions of the physical extensions of their bodies. There is nothing that is said about this in the discussion.

I also keep wondering, when you talk about statistics and strategies for the coming elections, whether it would be possible for a political party or presidential candidate to lose the elections and yet win the electorate. I do not mean this in the sense of being cheated. We know that happens very regularly. I mean the act of the candidate where even knowing that he probably would lose, he tries to contribute to the elevation of the electoral process in a country that presumes to refer to itself as a democratizing society. There is that kind of contribution. After all, there is no way wherein all of our seven or eight candidates will win. Only one will win, even if the elections were a successful elections. I think of strategies and statistics along these lines.

I would like to share with you some of the concerns that have been expressed by our people as reflected in the various SWS surveys. There must be a strategy, an appropriate set of statistics for inspiring the people politically. The phenomenon called "NOTA" is very much with us and it strikes every man. It strikes Speaker Mitra, as well as Sec. Ramos, all the way to Mr. Cojuangco. What I mean by this is that roughly 60% of our people may choose not to register themselves either for or against any specific pairing of these candidates. The strategy of political inspiration is called for. You have to get so many of these people to participate so that you are able to speak of a democratic exercise having taken place, whether you have a minority or a plurality presidency. You have to contribute an orientation that says you vote for, rather than against someone or something, as was a problem properly situated by Gov. Villafuerte and Rep. Daza. The democratization strategy has to be put in place by all our political parties or presidentiables.

We speak of machineries. We speak of people committed to these machineries. When you do not dangle anything really materially specific by way of incentives, less than 5% of our people will identify themselves with a political party at this point in time. We are talking about 95% who -- left to themselves, without material incentives and the presence of Gov. Villafuerte, Rep. Daza, or Cong. de Venecia -- when asked which political party they most identify themselves with, will answer "I'd rather not." And another statistic in this area is the amount of distrust that is expressed invariably by Filipinos towards political parties.

These are statistics that matter. These are not just statistics that will allow candidates to win the elections. And even if we pride ourselves to be hard-

nosed, pragmatic, and successful tacticians as well as strategists, I think that ultimately, the kinds of problems that afflict this country will have to be resolved by paying attention to the kind of statistics and strategies that I am speaking of generally.

I have one more item here and I am glad that Reli German made allusions to it already. I was afraid that nobody would touch on the question of the external dimension of factors of Philippine elections. I think that this is one more thing that we have to provide with the right statistics. We have to find out how much interest foreigners would have in our system and how much in terms of hard cash they would be willing to put into our process by way of showing that their money is precisely where their mouth is. This is again another open secret. All we need to do is check out materials that could be very popular public reading and we would understand that in Philippine elections, the rule is that there have been American money -- as well as other -- involved rather than none.

Dr. Legasto: Thank you, Prof. Miranda. Now, let us hear from Prof. Alex Magno.

Prof. Alexander Magno: I shall limit my remarks to an enumeration of a few points, many of which I have already written about in my column in *The Manila Chronicle* and which are pertinent to this discussion.

The first point I would like to make is that the May elections, in terms of its qualitative characteristics -- beyond statistics -- is characterized largely by the absence of intense ideological or emotional issues. It would be a contest that will be won largely by the group that is able to assemble the largest number of single-issue constituencies and geographic constituencies. Thus, I would tend to agree with Gov. Villafuerte who has indicated that the politics of geography as well as the politics of machine competition will tend to dictate the development and outcome of this contest.

The second point which he raised and which I think was particularly insightful is that the May 11 elections will be, in the main, characterized by the dynamics of local electoral competitions so that the national level candidates -- candidates for the presidency, the vice presidency, and the Senate -- will play largely a secondary role in the voter decision-making after March 23, the deadline for the filing of candidacies for local positions. So March 23 will more or less be a cut-off point in the campaign. And after March 23, the alignments at the local level will basically force this elections to be -- largely and substantially -- a two-candidate contest. The two main competitors at the national level will be those that have asserted the best presence at the local electoral alignments.

The third point I want to raise was touched on briefly by Prof. Miranda, and this is a very crucial statistics that has been treated in complete silence

this afternoon. And that is the statistics of campaign costing. As Gov. Villafuerte says, a party must mobilize about 800,000 warm bodies on election day. How much does that translate into party cost? Having estimated party cost, it is probably of great interest to many of us to have an indication of where the financing comes to cover this cost. Or to sum up that entire point briefly, how much will it take to produce a winning presidential candidate?

OPEN FORUM

Gov. Villafuerte: I would just like to point out a grave error in the strategic considerations of Rep. Daza and Mr. German, and that is their use as statistical base for their winning arithmetic the number of voters who voted for their respective presidentiables in the 1987 senatorial elections. On Mr. German's so-called "Erapmetik," I say that in my statistics a 10 million vote for a senatorial candidate is equivalent to roughly 2 million for a presidential candidate. Remember that when a voter votes for a senator, that name of the senator could always be in a list of anywhere from five to twenty-four because there is a multiple vote. But when you vote for a president, once you vote for X, you do not vote for Y anymore. When you vote for a senator, you can vote for X and Y.

Therefore, any senatorial winner in the past elections who may have obtained 10 million votes should equate this only to 2 million votes in a presidential contest. A councilor, for example, should always get more votes than a mayor, or a provincial board member more than the governor, as a senator more than a president. I think that is a very important and relevant statistics for planning purposes.

Two further comments. One, on the remark of Prof. Miranda. True enough it is beneficial to have candidates who are not necessarily intending to win and they know in their heart they would not. But these are positive developments in our country. Positive in terms not only of the kind of political environment that we shall have -- having democratic space and all that -- but also even positive from our point of view. We were hoping all along that the likes of Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Erap Estrada will indeed go for the presidency because their candidacies would help Mitra. We encouraged and prodded them to run. Why do I say that? Because, from the pragmatic standpoint, the kind of voters that will go for them will not go for us, so they might as well divide the votes between the two of them so we will be on top of the situation. That is their positive contribution to our side.

In reaction to the comments of Prof. Magno, I think he is very correct in his assessment that by mid-March -- and this is our belief -- this will be just a contest between two presidential contenders. That is why as a premise in

our tactics we consider it a given that Salonga is already out of the race. In our assessment he is out of the race. We are trying to finish off Ramos. And he has already committed two important tactical errors.

We are now describing the Lakas Edsa-NUCD as the Lakas ng Epifanio de los Santos Avenue corner Zurich. We are now saying that you only go to Zurich to buy chocolates for a special Valentine or to withdraw from a bank account. You cannot expand trade through Zurich. I have been in the international banking business for fifteen years. You cannot sell handicrafts through Zurich. So Ramos's trip must have been about something else. And we will exploit this, to their liking or disliking, we will do it.

Number two tactical error of Sec. Ramos -- and I hope Joe de Venecia will tell him when he goes back to headquarters: he advocated in his speech at the Centro Escolar University that he will junk the free public high school education program. That is very serious. There are 3.5 million students in public high schools in the country. Ramos just lost the other week a potential ten million votes as we are now conveying this information to all parents-teachers associations throughout the country. In about two more weeks, Ramos will be out of the race. Then we will concentrate on Danding.

Mr. German: That means Mitra and Erap would be the only two left to play the game. We welcome such a contest because, as he said, those who will vote for Mitra are not of the kind who will vote for Erap. In our opinion, more will vote for Erap because those who will vote for Erap are the enlightened, non-traditional voters who will vote for non-traditional politicians.

Rep. Jose de Venecia: Regarding the comments of Gov. Villafuerte that they are knocking out the other candidates, I wish to state that Speaker Mitra is trailing in the surveys. He should withdraw because of this. He will be the one knocked out. Ramos has topped surveys. If not him, then it is Santiago or Estrada. He is always in the top three in surveys including those that are conducted by the SWS.

I also would like to state that Ramos never objected to free public high school education. This is another instance of disinformation! No candidate is crazy enough to say that. Let us be fair. Let us campaign on a high ethical plane. Let us tell the truth. Ramos said that he welcomes free public high school education. In addition, he calls for an improvement of the quality of Philippine education, that we should put more money into it especially in the provinces. That is what Ramos said. What Gov. Villafuerte said is incorrect.

Gov. Villafuerte: Before the convention of Nov. 30, 1991 of the LDP, Sec. Ramos approached me. He said "Stick with me, I am the one doing well in the surveys." I asked if he believes in surveys and he said, "Yes, because

I am leading." I said it is Miriam and Erap who are leading the surveys. He said that is what worries him. I said, "If you believe in surveys, you already lost because it is Miriam or Erap who will win."

A survey has many purposes. It must always be understood in the context in which it is made. For example, those mass awareness surveys show that the people are still thinking and shifting positions. And what is the total profile of the survey? If you have 300 respondents in Metro Manila, assuming that to be accurate, people should not construe that as a reflection of the opinion of the total electorate of the country. That's a very crucial point. Secondly, as you go ahead with this campaign, surveys change. As we said, if we believed early on in the presidential surveys in the United States, the president of the US now would be Michael Dukakis. He was 20% ahead in the surveys. So as we are narrowing the contest -- specially now that others are faltering -- surveys would change.

We haven't tried to smear Ramos with black propaganda or dirty tricks. He has a lot to explain about that Zurich trip of his. Particularly, he said he has the support of the christian democrats. The mortal enemy of the christian democrats in all of Europe is the Socialist Party. The Christian Democratic International and the Socialist International cannot see eye to eye. Now, here in the Philippines you are allied with the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP- Democratic Socialist Party of the Philippines). If the christian democrats get to know about this you will be accused of concocting a "chopsuey ideology."

Regarding the charge about free public high school education, we have a copy of the speech which contains the particular statement of Mr. Ramos. It is difficult to lie. He said that the country should concentrate on basic elementary education, and that the reason why we cannot provide adequate elementary education is because we spend so much on free public high school education. Mr. Ramos forgets that there is a mandate in the new constitution providing for free public high school education. Whether we like it or not, whether it is costly or not, we must have it. Now that he made a mistake, it is good for Joe de Venecia to disclaim the statement. Of course, when one makes a mistake, one should retreat and cover-up. Just like what they did about the trip to Zurich. They said he actually went to Belgium to catch some cool air. They even said he went to Rome to seek an audience with the pope. Joe, your approach is right, you must deny.

Prof. Miranda: This is an academic group that we have here and, therefore, it is important that we have a right idea about surveys. Surveys are only of two kinds, the one that is properly done and the one that is not properly done. Only two or three groups in this country can conduct surveys which will pass academic standards. It so happens that we have politicians, including the brightest and smartest, who are fed information that are not quite right.

For instance, one says that if we believe in surveys, the president of the US now should be Michael Dukakis. Whoever fed Speaker Mitra with that information did not study the history of surveys during this time. So, I would request Gov. Villafuerte that in the future, when he speaks of surveys critically, positively or negatively, he should keep in mind that the Dukakis example must not be alluded to because invariably somebody who knows the real facts would stand up and say that is not what happened. The truth is that most of the polls in the US were correct in who will win in the US presidential elections and how he will win. What I do not know is who fed Speaker Mitra that kind of information.

Secondly, I think Gov. Villafuerte's attitude is correct. If you are ahead, then you feel good as the Ramos people feel now. If you are behind, then you need not feel bad. It is not necessarily a question of feeling bad. From analyzing surveys you will know your homework, where you have to do better.

Without speaking of actual figures, I can tell you that all of the three presidential candidates' campaigners here would find the results of these surveys very much to their liking even if they are ahead, in the middle, or at the bottom. Because they are here, academic analysis of the survey data would yield to them significant opportunities for scoring precisely because the survey was still last February or January and, therefore, there is still so much time to make up, that is if you believe in the will of the people as reflected in the surveys in the first place. If you do not, then you can always take to guns, goons, and gold.

Gov. Villafuerte: Let me just put my remarks in context. True enough, at the beginning of the campaign or even during the start of the primaries in America, Dukakis was very well ahead in the surveys but as they moved along, he was falling behind so that when the final week came, Bush was already ahead.

Prof. Miranda: And the surveys actually monitored this movement.

Gov. Villafuerte: This is what we are saying in the Filipino context. We in the Mitra camp also make our own surveys while studying the other surveys. To me there are three kinds of surveys that are being conducted in this country now. The more reputable one is the Ateneo Weather Station-conducted survey.

Prof. Miranda: We are not of Ateneo. We are an independent group.

Gov. Villafuerte: Whatever it is. But there are surveys being published which are contracted and I think you will agree with me. For example, those that come from the Ramos camp like the Pulso ng Bayan (Pulse of the People) which is led by Tony Carpio. I know that guy. We used to work together.

Rep. de Venecia: But the survey we are referring to is the SWS survey.

Gov. Villafuerte: What I'm talking about is the second kind. The third kind are the ones that are being used by the candidates not for publication but for tactical considerations. It is very important for the campaign managers to know where their relative strengths and weaknesses are so that their campaign will concentrate on those areas where they are weak. We do make the surveys and we have been making the surveys. And the recent ones show that the three who are rising in the surveys are the ones represented here [referring to Mitra, Ramos, and Cojuangco]. And without trying to downgrade the others, those who would be left in the race are the three presidentiables whose representatives are here. But the one whose representative is to my right [referring to Fidel Ramos] will be the first one to fall from the race.

Question: How would you characterize your party platforms and programs in terms of strategy?

Gov. Villafuerte: Because of the tendency of many political candidates to generalize, I would like to inform everybody that in the statement of platforms we do not say anything that would not meet the acronym SMART. SMART means that the program has to be specific, measurable, attainable, result-oriented, and time-bound. We would not make the statement that we will become a newly-industrialized country by the end of the century. That is too general. That is a motherhood statement. That is not specific enough. That is not measurable enough. That may not even be attainable in this decade and it is not necessarily result-oriented in the context of a new development norm that we must adopt. You cannot copy anymore the directions of what came about in Japan, Korea, or Taiwan. There is a new dimension in economic development particularly that consideration that any development project must be ecologically sustainable. This is a very important consideration in development planning. And number five, it has to be time-bound. It is not something that we hope to attain based on expectancies, but it has to be specific in terms of the time or period in which it is to be accomplished.

Rep. de Venecia: When we make a statement that we feel it our solemn duty and major commitment to turn around the Philippine economy before the turn of the century, we are deadly serious about it! We have to solve the problems of many Filipinos. We have constructed a 22-point plan on how exactly we will achieve the program of abolishing Philippine poverty and employing a great number of our unemployed. Our 22-point plan is credible, concrete, realistic, and attainable.

Prof. Miranda: Just one more question. I am wary of the Lucena-Dagupan corridor analysis. I think that is a rather emasculated way of looking at vote-delivering systems because you are saying that the votes are simply there. But to get them to be translated to people that you could

activate to go to the polls to vote for your candidate, you have to do something for them. You have situated them but what is it that will get them to vote for your candidates? So I am more prone to speak of sectors of the population.

How do you perceive the young adults, aged 30 to 44, to be significantly different from the very young? If I were going to be really cold-bloodedly political about it, I would ask: why waste time campaigning among people who are aged 45 or above? If you take a look at the basic data, you have roughly 72% of your voting population concentrated in the 18 to 44 age. You are already accounting for 74%. If we target this people -- basically guided by the indicator age -- I would like to see how our guests orient their strategies into getting the votes coming from this age group.

How about the very, very young people, aged 18 to 29? This will comprise 41% of your voting population. How do you see the very, very young? What are the things that may appeal to them? What binds them together?

And as I said, perhaps out of cold-blooded political considerations, you may not even pay attention to people like me who would belong to the 45 to 64 age group. You may even just completely ignore those aged 65 and above. So you may just address your strategies to the 18 to 29 and 30 to 44 age groups. What kind of people are they from your point of view? What may you offer them so that they will be warm bodies for your respective presidential candidates?

Comment: The objective of machine politics is to organize the poor, because the poor are the most vulnerable to machine politics. I am using machine politics in the traditional sense, not in the sense in which Gov. Villafuerte uses it. It does not pertain only to an organization. I am really talking of the way of organizing and delivering the votes of these people.

That is just one reason why we ask with regard to UP, what kind of vote do we constitute? We do not threaten any candidate with a collective vote. Let us say that the whole of UP is for a certain candidate. That is just bad luck for that candidate. Most probably he would lose. We never supported a winning candidate.

So, let us not kid ourselves. The fight concerns warm bodies because we are talking of votes and the most numerous votes are those coming from the poor. So, more than the young, we are talking of the poor. The poor are easier to organize. They are easier to commit to certain politicians. They are easier to bring to the precincts. This is why politics is the reason why we cannot solve our problems. For example, we cannot remove squatters from the land they are occupying because these are the captive voters of mayors.

Prof. Miranda: Let me just intervene with a piece of information that you might find useful. When you ask people how long it was before election time that they make up their mind, almost eight out of ten of the poor say they made up their mind either on the day or the day immediately before the elections. I do not want to be interpreted as looking down on the poor, but that kind of thinking suggests something. Why should they wait until the last day of elections to make up their mind on which candidate to vote for? I think the answer should be obvious. I am ruling that out in my own question. I do not really want to focus on vote-buying.

I want to focus more on what our presidential candidates and their campaign managers would attempt to do by way of delivering warm bodies but not by necessarily emphasizing the monetary component of it. As I said, I am not even asking for specific strategies, just their way of looking at the specific sectors of our population.

Mr. Achacoso: First of all, Mr. Cojuangco has a very basic platform and that is centered on economics. As far as the 18 to 30 age bracket is concerned – those who have just graduated and joined the labor force – what would their priorities be? One, a job. Two, a job. Three, a job. Considering the current situation in the country, obviously it boils down to the economic situation. And this is why his basic platform is premised really on his economic program. Number two, as far as this sector is concerned, he looks at them as the idealists, the young and upcoming and full of hope. So part of his program emphasizes on education. His were the right strategies, and one of those was a heavy emphasis on scholarship. I think you would recall that practically every year, thousands and thousands were granted scholarships under the Cocobank or the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) scheme.

As far as the 30-44 age sector is concerned, once again, the emphasis is on economics because once we have families, we start focusing on the basics, we start tending the basic needs, food, shelter, clothing. And basically again, we talk of economics. The same thing with poverty and peace and order. We say that our crime rate is high because people are hungry. So all of this has something to do with economics and that is where we are focusing our campaign.

Gov. Villafuerte: Let me just say, Prof. Miranda, that this particular method of yours is in fact my assignment as campaign manager. We have divided our campaign plans into five major areas. I wish you will ask me that question in the absence of my competitors because I would lay out to you how we plan to tackle this particular segment of the electorate, particularly the 18-29 age group. It requires a very special approach. Very subtle, but persuasive. But I must also tell you that we are concerned with your age bracket. In my estimate, the 45 yrs. old and above comprise 6.48 million votes. And that is big enough given eight presidential candidates.

Prof. Miranda: Are you saying that 90% of the people belonging to the 45 and above age group will vote for LDP?

Gov. Villafuerte: No. I am saying that there are enough voters belonging to that age bracket to give it importance.

Rep. de Venecia: How do we intend to mobilize the poor? Our party is the only one with a special program on how to mobilize the poor. For example, we have mobilized 2,000 POs and NGOs headed by Norberto Gonzales. He is highly respected in the NGO community. We did this to address the problems of the poor because in addition to the party apparatus we really have to work with people's cooperatives and private foundations. So we have now organized 2,000 cooperatives and foundations throughout the Philippines to address the problems of and mobilize the poor.

Secondly, with the problems of the youth, how can we move them into action? After this election, the Philippine crisis will continue. Why? Because we have to employ 901,000 to one million graduates or young people. The only way we can address this problem is by putting up small and medium-size factories for the export and local markets. But the problem that is not being addressed is that this factories must be able to compete in the export market. Unless we are able to penetrate the markets of Japan, Europe, and America, which is the problem of many countries, we will just be building factories, like in Russia, that go bankrupt because they do not export to Europe and America. We have to do this for the youth.

Question: Gov. Villafuerte expounded so much on machine politics and I am rather impressed with his figures. What I would like to know is how do you sustain the party. It is easy to talk about power but it is another thing to say how that power can be sustained.

Gov. Villafuerte: I joined the LDP only ten months ago. For many years, since I was elected in 1988, I refused to join any of the political parties. When I got into the LDP, I began to look at its organization and the operative principles under which it works. And having been given the assignment of campaign manager, I began to rework and reshape what looked to me from an organizational standpoint as a very messy situation, and that is the fact that we are supporting a president who refuses to join any party. There were so many elements I did not like that got into the party. But the party has been reshaped into what I consider to be a fighting form.

If you look at our campaign -- and I would like people to watch this, particularly our competitors -- it is trying to convert the membership of 3.3 million into 9.9 million votes. That is why if you look at our campaigns very carefully, from mornings to early afternoons, all our candidates go to what we call a party caucus. For example, when they go to Camarines Sur, there will be two party caucuses where one will be attended by 1,000 political

leaders in one district. The other is 8,000 to cover the other three districts. It is something like that. It is only in the evenings when they begin to go into the rallies, but there are always caucuses trying to sustain and preserve the membership and convert it into a larger voting constituency.

Machine, as referred to in politics, is a very dirty word, but I use it because that is what it is known for. But it is no more than any organization whether it is in business, in a school, or anything else. We need an organization as an institutional vehicle to carry out things.

Question: What are your positions with regard to the COMELEC's decision to deputize the Citizens Armed Forces' Geographical Units (CAFGU) in the coming elections?

Gov. Villafuerte: We in the LDP are really worried about that. The CAFGU might be used by candidates who have connections in the military. And we in the LDP are in a very compromising position. We were not anointed by Tita (President Aquino). Therefore, I do not think the CAFGU should be deputized for electoral purposes.

The Congress created the CAFGU acting upon the petition of a general [referring to Secretary Ramos] and we are worried about that. We are studying that very carefully and we may even file our complaint with the COMELEC.

Rep. de Venecia: It is correct that the CAFGU should not meddle in the elections. I agree with Gov. Villafuerte that they should not be deputized. But I would just like to make it clear that even while Gov. Villafuerte complains, I must remind him that it is under Speaker Mitra's leadership when the law creating the CAFGU was passed in the House of Representatives. I am just saying this to counter any more disinformation.

Prof. Legasto: That would be the last question as we are out of time. In behalf of the Third World Studies Center, I would like to thank the speakers. This was an enlightening session on the strategies and statistics of the presidential battle for ballots, and the icing on the cake is that it was entertaining as well.