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NDFP

Filipino people were the ultimate losers in the 2010 automated elections

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The National Democratic Front of the Philippines in Mindanao (NDFP-Mindanao) believes that the Filipino people were the ultimate losers in this year's national elections, which yielded dubious results that strengthen and expand the power of big landlords, old rich families, big bureaucrats, warlords, and worse, druglords.

Sen. Noynoy Aquino will assume the presidency come June 30. He hails from the big landlord Cojuangco-Aquino family, and whose mother, Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, was the President responsible for the massacre of 13 peasants at Mendiola in 1987.

Sixteen years after the Mendiola carnage, the murder of protesting peasants at Hacienda Luisita happened. Noynoy Aquino, then congressman of Tarlac, blamed the peasant and farm-worker demonstrators for the death of 8 of their comrades massacred by the military and police summoned by the Hacienda Luisita management.

In the next six years, we saw no justice for the victims of these two horrific massacres, as well to the millions of landless peasants in the country who cannot hope for genuine agrarian reform to materialize under a US-backed Aquino government.

The Marcoses have also benefitted from the automated elections. Imelda Marcos and Imee Marcos have been elected as congressman and governor of Ilocos respectively, while Bongbong Marcos, as senator.

The result of the first automated elections virtually erased the history of plunder and fascist rule under the Marcos years. Alongside the Marcoses, other traditional politicians, like Enrile, Estrada, Revilla, Lapid, Piñeda of Pampanga, and Dy of Isabela, have been reinstalled.

The Ampatuan warlord clan continue to hold power in Maguindanao by winning most of the seats in the province. Known druglords in Mindanao are also back in power: Jalosjos in Zamboanga del Norte, the Parojinogs in Ozamis, Misamis Occidental, and the Romarates in Surigao del Norte.

As the automated election entrenched the most reactionary of the ruling class, it made sure the legal left and progressive groups were relegated to the back seat, including consequently politicians who have alliances with them.

The automation hype could not conceal the old forms of cheating, which by no small measure has plagued the 2010 elections. Still rampant were vote buying, disenfranchisement, direct intimidation, coercion and many other forms. The automation by way of the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines may have introduced a faster way of conducting the elections, but it also ushered in a more sophisticated and discreet manner of cheating.

Of late, the post-election euphoria that swept the country on account of the "success" of the much-vaunted first-ever automated elections in the Philippines is rapidly dissolving into pockets of post-election protests that may explode into a nationwide indignation.

The possibility for the PCOS machines to have been pre-configured to favor select candidates for a price, has cast serious doubts on the veracity of the electronically-processed results of the May 10 elections. With this, Sen. Noynoy Aquino, the president-elect thanks to the national media hype, including the cover story in TIME magazine, and the automation, it appears, has the mandate, not of the people, but of a pre-programmed machine.

Kudos to the Comelec, who, despite fears of a possible massive mechanical breakdown that could cause failure of elections, vindicated themselves by almost seamlessly handling the electoral process. Before May 10, we were of the impression that the so-called automated election was designed to fail, given these factors: 1) machines were of dubious quality, 2) teachers and technicians handling the electoral proceedings were generally poorly trained and shabbily paid, and 3) the Filipino electorate was

unprepared. Overarching these was of course the intent of the US-Arroyo regime to aintain, in desperation, its hold on power.

However, given how the power-play stands now, the automated mode of elections was meant in the first place to succeed because not only results came out faster, cheating and fraud, now on an electronic level, came more discreet, sophisticated, and virtually invisible to public scrutiny. The machines could not guarantee that the recently concluded elections were completely divorced from fraud. There was 'electronic hocus-PCOS': the machine indicated that your vote has been registered, but it did not exactly reveal to which candidate it actually went.

As the cheating unfolds, apologists are also busy in plugging the leak and, in this sense, there is urgency for a people's movement to investigate further and deeper into this highly sophisticated form of cheating, and eventually demand for justice.

The NDFP-Mindanao reiterates its position that bourgeois and reactionary elections do not and will not guarantee the nation fundamental emancipation from the semi-feudal, semi-colonial character of Philippine society. With results that handed victory to some of the most vicious families from the ruling class, the Filipino people have once again lost. Let not the election euphoria blind us; let us unite and truly work for the people's victory!