

omm

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Was Supertyphoon Keith as bad as Supertyphoon Kim? That's a very difficult question! I don't have the statistics on comparative wind speed, closest point of approach, and how long each took to cross the CNM?

There's no doubt Kim caused more damage - that more homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed, that more people were left homeless. But that's not so much an indication of the strength of the storm as it is of the comparative strength of structures then and now. As the CNM's economy has improved over the last decade, more and more people have been able to afford concrete rather than tin houses - and obviously, concrete houses hold up better in such storms - thus significantly lowering the statistics on damage to physical structures.

There's no doubt that, due to the prolonged power outage, people suffered more from Kim. But again, that's not so much an indication of the strength of the storm as it is an indication of the condition of CUC and its power generation and distribution systems, then and now. CUC has made gigantic strides in the past decade, not only in improving the condition of the power plant itself, but also in upgrading the generation system, modernizing the distribution system, training its personnel. (It still seems miraculous to me that power is restored so quickly after so massive a storm!)

Yet the fact that apparently a considerable number of concrete homes suffered damage, that even the Nauru building - which had survived so many other typhoons without serious damage - had numerous windows blown, would seem proof that Keith was the stronger storm.

My impression is that there was also more damage to more trees than with Kim. Of course, many trees had already been felled by Supertyphoon Joan. If Joan had not hit, Keith could have taken credit for all those trees too. Would be interesting to know if anyone took a count of trees downed by Supertyphoon Kim.

In fact, one can't, really, separate Joan from Keith in comparing Keith with Kim. If Joan had not

occurred, all the other damage caused by Joan would, in all likelihood, have occurred with Keith as well.

We should all be grateful that there were no casualties.

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Is Jesse just being diplomatic, or does he really not know what made the voters decide to vote as they did, which is what he apparently told the media? Of course, there is no way to be sure, but it's not hard to come up with any number of explanations.

To begin with, any independent candidate takes on an uphill battle because, unless there is a strong, established, independent party, he/she will lack party support. Party support brings not only funding - a critical component of any campaign - but also man/womanpower, and access to all the resources of party members, from cars to supplies and food to media expertise.

Party support is important not only at campaign time, but also after taking office. How else to assure support for legislation, for policy changes, nominees to appointed offices? If one runs as independent, there is bound to be a question as to where such support will come from - how effective an independent can be in office without it.

Moreover, while candidates running as independent have, as this year's election results show, won election in the CNM? in recent years, it is still a very risky business. No doubt many people felt a lot was at stake in this election, and therefore weren't comfortable taking that risk.

Then, too, there is the illegal but nonetheless insidious - and often real - threat of loss of job for voting for the "wrong" candidate. Confidence in the privacy of one's vote is not, one suspects, all that high here.

But perhaps Jesse was just being diplomatic - in keeping with the general tenor of his campaign.

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I was sorry that the "Two Petes" - who also ran as independents - didn't fare better. I liked their "Burma-Shave" type ads, and thought their free "Fan" at least as clever. If their campaign was any indication, seemed like their incumbencies would have showed a lot of resourcefulness, creativity, and just plain good humor.