

BRIEFING

# North Korea, Puerto Rico, Mexico: Your Thursday Evening Briefing

By KAREN ZRAICK and HEATHER CASEY SEPT. 21, 2017

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*Good evening. Here's the latest.*

**1. “Irma gave us a break, but Maria destroyed us.”**

That was one resident after Hurricane Maria pummeled Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. All of Puerto Rico is without power, and flash-flood warnings persist. It could take months to restore electricity, an effort complicated by the island's bankruptcy crisis and the strain on FEMA from successive storms. Above, a scene in Guayama.

President Trump declared Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands disaster zones. He said he would visit, but gave no details on timing. The storm's projected path is northeast, away from land, as it diminishes.

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**2. The death toll** from the earthquake that devastated Mexico City and surrounding regions rose to least 230, as hopes faded of finding more survivors.

These photographs show disaster zones that are battered, but not broken. And this 360-video shows the huge efforts of citizens helping to clear rubble in Mexico City.

Here's where to donate to help people affected by the earthquake. Above, a funeral in Atzala, a town in Puebla. Y tenemos toda nuestra cobertura en español aquí.

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**3. President Trump** widened U.S. sanctions against trade with North Korea and presented a united front against its nuclear program with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, above left, and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea. They had lunch on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly.

Meanwhile, the North's foreign minister compared Mr. Trump's warnings at the U.N. to "the noise of a dog barking."

More details emerged about how Mr. Trump intends to handle the Iran nuclear deal, which some say is an important signal to North Korea. Administration officials say he will seek to toughen its terms rather than scrap it right away.

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**4. Facebook** said it was submitting 3,000 Russia-linked ads to the congressional committees investigating election interference.

Twitter, which has kept a low profile since Facebook's disclosure, said it would brief the Senate Intelligence Committee on Wednesday behind closed doors.

Both platforms are now also entangled in the investigation by Robert Mueller, the special counsel, and facing the possibility of future regulation of political advertising. Above, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook.

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**5. Aaron Hernandez**, the former New England Patriots tight end who committed suicide in April while serving a life sentence for murder, had a severe form of C.T.E., the degenerative brain disease linked to head trauma.

Researchers said it was “the most severe case they had ever seen in someone of Aaron’s age,” according to his lawyer. He was 27. The disease has been found in more than 100 former N.F.L. players.

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**6. A sense of euphoria** has swept Iraqi Kurdistan ahead of a referendum set for Monday on independence from Iraq.

But Iraq’s central government, the U.S. and various other regional power brokers — even the U.N. — want it canceled, warning that it could unleash ethnic violence, tear Iraq apart and fracture the coalition fighting the Islamic state.

The Kurdish leadership insists the vote will proceed. And we learned that they even hired Paul Manafort, the former Trump campaign manager at the center of the Russia investigation, to help pull it off.

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**7. Good news:** Sea turtles appear to be bouncing back worldwide.

One of the authors of a new study on the creatures says conservation efforts dating to the 1950s have paid off, a tale of “cautionary optimism.”

The researchers found that even small populations are capable of growing if they’re protected.

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**8. Our critic** loved the new art show “Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA” — so much so that he was moved to proclaim, “I guess there’s a God.”

The sprawling exhibition, at 70 institutions throughout Southern California, focuses on the cultural exchange between Latin America and Los Angeles.

“During one of the meanest passages in American national politics within living memory, we’re getting a huge, historically corrective, morale-raising cultural event,” he wrote. “It’s a gift, worth a trip to puzzle over and savor.”

Above, a photograph by Livia Corona Benjamin, showing low-income housing in rural Mexico, on view at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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**9. Liliane Bettencourt**, the L'Oréal heiress ranked by Forbes this year as the richest woman in the world, died at 94.

The jet-setting socialite's later years were marked by a scandal that captivated France. It began in 2007, when Mrs. Bettencourt's daughter accused a younger man of bamboozling her aging mother for cash, fine art and an island in the Seychelles.

The probe expanded to the political sphere, and the authorities even investigated charges that former President Nicolas Sarkozy had manipulated her into financing his 2007 campaign. (The inquiry was later dropped.)

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**10. Finally**, how do families around the world spend their vacation?

This week's Times Magazine is the "Voyages" issue, which takes you around the globe with a handful of families vacationing in their own countries.

There was a Caribbean-themed water park in China, an Eid al-Adha celebration in Guinea, and a hike through former FARC territory in Colombia. Above, a festival in Japan. Should be ample inspiration to start dreaming about your next trip.

Have a great night.

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