

Donald Trump suggested selling Puerto Rico after hurricane devastated U.S. colony



Washington, July 12 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump suggested "selling" Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, which pummeled the U.S. colony in 2017, according to former acting homeland security secretary Elaine Duke.

Duke, who served almost a year in the Trump administration after replacing John Kelly in an acting capacity in July 2017, told the New York Times that she was shocked when the president raised the issue at a meeting on the devastation in Puerto Rico.

Trump's first reaction to the hurricane was to suggest that the United States should either sell or divest from the island, she said in the interview which was published on Saturday. "The president's initial ideas were more of as a businessman, you know," she recalled. "Can we outsource the electricity? Can we sell the island? You know, or divest of that asset?"

Duke is the latest former Trump cabinet member to speak out against the president, claiming her former boss cares little about policy and often resorts to "hate-filled, angry and divisive" language instead.

"There is a singular view that strength is mean, that any kind of ability to collaborate, or not be angry is a

weakness," she said of her experience in the Trump administration.

Puerto Rico has been a frequent target of Trump's rage since Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz criticized the slow and inadequate federal response to the hurricane, which killed an estimated 2,975 people and left much of the island without running water and electricity for months.

Puerto Rico residents describe relief efforts by Trump administration as a "disaster." In a series of tweets alleging corruption in the U.S. territory at the time, Trump attacked Cruz as "incompetent" and declared himself "the best thing that's ever happened to Puerto Rico!"

Elsewhere in the interview, Duke also told the Times that she was "ambushed" by Trump and his aides at a White House meeting to get her to sign off on ending DACA, an Obama-era program that protected children of undocumented immigrants from deportation.

The lifelong Republican did add that she agreed the program was illegal, but was not ready to sign off on its closure. In a 5-4 ruling last month, the US Supreme Court blocked the Trump administration's bid to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

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