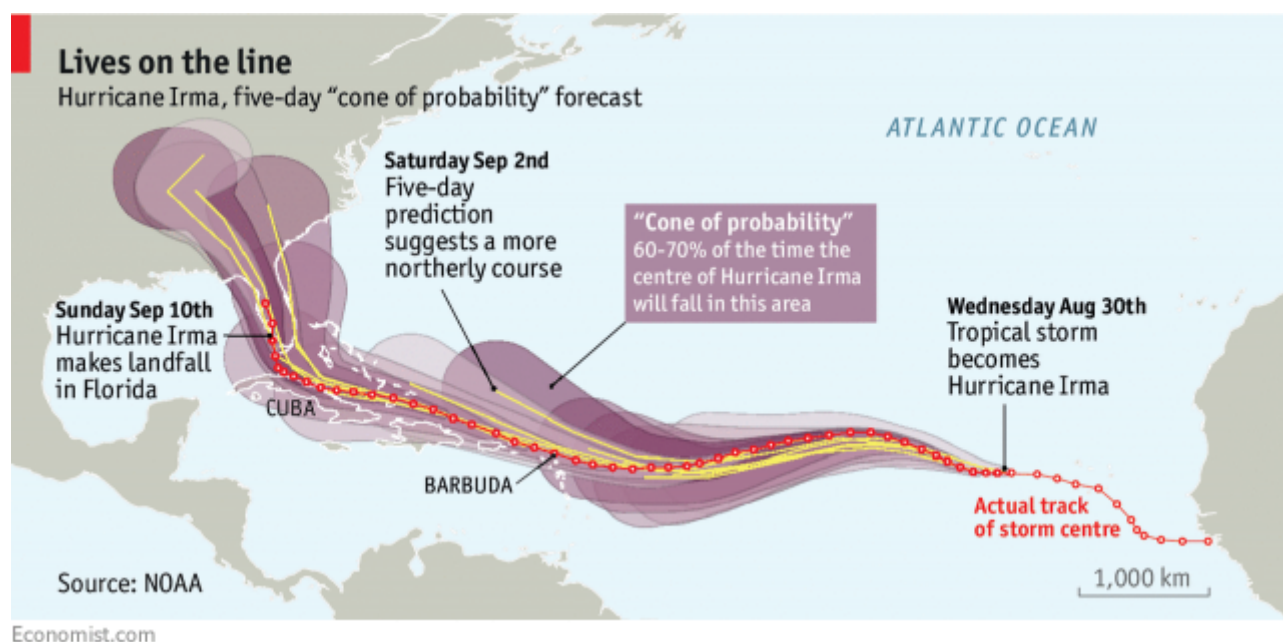


Daily chart

## Hurricanes in America have become less frequent

*But the most damaging storms now appear to be slightly more common*



HURRICANE IRMA tore through Florida on September 10th, causing widespread flooding and wind damage. Although the unusually large storm unleashed its fury on the entire peninsula, its centre moved up the state's west coast, striking the mainland with the greatest force when it made landfall at Marco Island, near the city of Naples. Preparations for Irma's arrival were unusually frantic, with Gulf Coast residents given just two days' warning that they would bear the brunt of the hurricane. It had previously been forec      hug Florida's Atlantic coast, and a

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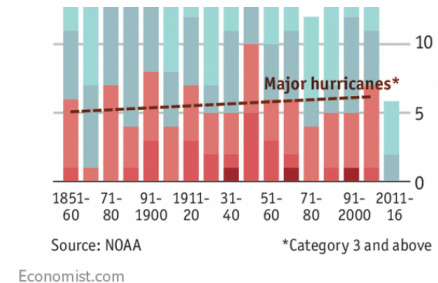
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by Irma  
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which deposited a whopping 33 trillion gallons of rain over four states, has sparked renewed interest in the relationship between climate change and extreme weather. Climate models predict that man-made global warming will not lead to a greater number of tropical cyclones overall, but will make those that do occur more intense (<http://www.gfdl.noaa.gov/global-warming-and-hurricanes>) . Tying such long-run trends to individual weather events is difficult, although the great amount of precipitation generated by Harvey may allow scientists to establish a direct link in its case. The average number of hurricanes making landfall in America per decade has actually fallen since 1850. And before Harvey's arrival, no Category 3 or stronger storm had done so since Hurricane Wilma in 2005, an unusually long 12-year drought. But with two major storms striking the United States so far this hurricane season, the evidence for a trend towards more potent cyclones seems to be building.

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