**IX Questions**

1. Will FARC’s new political party survive over the next four years?
2. What changes should Mexico make to its policy of deporting migrants back to Central America?
3. What steps should Colombia take in response to the influx of Venezuelan refugees?
4. Are Cuba’s proposed constitutional changes sufficient enough to ensure a democratic transition?
5. How will the #Cuentalo movement impact how Spain’s judiciary deals with sexual assault cases?
6. What is the biggest challenge that Ivan Duque faces as Colombia’s new President?
7. Will Michelle Bachelet succeed as the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights?
8. Will Daniel Ortega’s consolidation of power in Nicaragua turn the country into the “next Venezuela”?
9. Should Northern Triangle countries increase their cooperation with the US in light of Trump’s Administration recent actions?
10. What steps can AMLO take to reduce the high rate of violence in Mexico without alienating his base?

**IX Topic Analysis:**

*Topic: FARC’s Political Party*

*Summary:* For over 50 years, the Colombian government was at war with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, better known by its Spanish acronym, FARC. After three failed peace attempts, outgoing President Juan Manuel Santos went through strenuous negotiations with FARC and secured a peace deal in late 2016. Alongside promises to rebuild rural communities, the peace deal mandated FARC disarm and reintegrate fighters into politics by creating a political party: The Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC). However, most Colombians distrust FARC and want them to be held accountable instead of given political influence. This helps explain why FARC only received 0.5% of votes in March’s general elections, but the peace deal still awarded them five seats in each chamber of Colombia’s legislature. Along with little influence, FARC also has to deal with a hostile president who is threatening to put the peace deal at risk.

*Source:* Peace deal background <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/colombias-civil-conflict>

*Source:* Political party background

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/colombia-farc-transforms-political-party-170902005950448.html>

*Source:* General elections background <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-43367222>

*Topic: Cuba’s New President and Reforms*

*Summary:* For 60 years, Cuba was ruled by the late Fidel Castro and then his brother, Raul. The new president, Miguel Diaz-Canel, kicked off his presidency by announcing he wants to reform Cuba’s constitution. Although these measures have been in the works since 2014, the new face of the Cuban presidency lends additional credibility to the idea of a more open Cuba. Of the 87 proposed constitutional changes, President Diaz-Canel’s most notable proposals include the creation of a prime minister position, the establishment of provincial governorships, and implementation of presidential term limits. That being said, Cuban activists are cautiously optimistic. On one hand, it’s telling that Diaz-Canel is taking steps that weaken his own power. On the other, Diaz-Canel may have too much power once he assumes the role of Communist Party chair in 2021, which is also concerning given it’s unclear how the Prime Minister will be selected.

*Source:* Constitutional reforms

<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article215095345.html>

*Source:* Constitutional changes and economic reforms <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/cuba-new-president-new-economy>

*Source:*

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/22/cuba-ditches-aim-of-building-communism-from-draft-constitution>

*Topic: Mexico’s Deportations to Central America*

*Summary:* To get to the United States, Central American migrants must first cross through Mexico. For this reason, since 2014, the United States has funded Mexico’s deportation forces on their Southern border to combat illegal border crossings. Since the program’s foundation, Mexico has deported over half a million Central American migrants, and in many years, has deportation numbers that double those of the United States. Quite literally, every human rights concern at America’s Southern border is amplified at Mexico’s - brutality, violations of due process, and corruption. Much like the United States, Mexico’s immigration policies fail to combat the factors that cause outward migration, such as marginalization, threats to public safety, organized crime, and a lack of employment opportunities.

*Source:*

<https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/05/07/607700928/mexico-deploys-a-formidable-deportation-force-near-its-own-southern-border>

*Source:*

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/migrants-deported-united-states-and-mexico-northern-triangle-statistical-and-socioeconomic>

*Source:* <https://www.lawfareblog.com/dispatches-mexicos-southern-border-mexicos-migrants>

*Topic: Spain’s #Cuentalo Movement.*

*Summary:* People throughout Spain took to the streets to protest the acquittal of five men who gang-raped an 18 year old at a bull running festival in Pamplona. The anger at the justice system sparked another conversation about how Spain handles sexual assault cases. This comes off the heels of the #MeToo movement, where thousands of women and men are describing their experience with sexual assault. In Spain, the #MeToo has transitioned into #Cuentalo - which translates to ‘tell it’. Those who started the protest hope that #Cuentalo will have the same effect in Spain that #MeToo had on the US.

*Source:*

<https://www.thelocal.es/20180430/cuentalo-spanish-women-launch-their-own-metoo-movement>

*Source:*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/29/world/europe/spain-pamplona-rape-case-protest.html>

*Source:* <https://www.liberties.eu/en/news/a-portrait-justice-spain/14920>

*Topic: Daniel Ortega’s Nicaragua*

*Summary:* Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega has ruled the country since 2007. Ortega has continued to consolidate power in the name of the Nicaraguan people. Unfortunately, his revolutionary rhetoric has not helped Nicaragua as economic growth has significantly slowed. To alleviate the alarming economic situation, Ortega decided to cut pension benefits. This sparked violent protests as a result. All of these events are a possible parallel of what has happened in Venezuela over the last 20 years: A strongman consolidates power, inept economic policy, violent protests and the apathy of the international community in taking definitive action.

*Source:*

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-17/nicaragua-economic-growth-hit-hard-as-cash-flees-banking-sector>

*Source:*

<https://www.wola.org/2018/04/nicaragua-government-must-uphold-citzens-right-protest/>

*Topic: Venezuelan refugees*

*Summary:* Colombia has been bracing itself since the IMF warned that Venezuela could reach a one million percent inflation rate at the end of 2018. For the past 2 years, Colombian authorities have dealt with an influx of Venezuelans coming in. Just last month Former President Juan Manuel Santos granted 440,000 refugees two-year permits--which would help refugees get access to public healthcare and education. With the number of refugees expected to increase and neighboring countries starting to close their borders, Colombian officials fear that there are not enough resources to deal with this crisis.

*Source:*

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/08/23/venezuelas-refugee-exodus-is-biggest-crisis-hemisphere/?utm_term=.95b9f9e185af>

*Source:*

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2018/04/23/venezuelas-refugee-crisis-views-from-the-border/>

*Source:* <https://www.cfr.org/report/venezuelan-refugee-crisis>

*Topic: Ivan Duque*

*Summary:* On August 7, Ivan Duque was sworn-in as the 33rd President of Colombia. The 42-year-old comes into office with as full of an agenda as any president in the country’s history. Duque faces immense challenges: The implementation of a fragile peace deal, the highest levels of cocaine production in decades, growing income disparities among ordinary Colombians, and an increasing influx of refugees coming from Venezuela. Each issue poses difficulties for him to establish himself as a legitimate leader. Clearly, he cannot do it all.

*Source:* <http://time.com/5342766/ivan-duque-colombia/>

*Source:* <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/17/world/americas/colombia-election-ivan-duque.html>

*Source:*

<https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2018/08/11/ivan-duque-takes-charge-in-colombia>

*Topic: Michelle Bachelet*

*Summary:* United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres announced that former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet will be the new High Commissioner for Human Rights. Bachelet ruled Chile from 2006-2010 and from 2014-2018. In 1973, the right-wing dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet imprisoned and tortured Bachelet. After six years of exile, Bachelet was a pediatrician and a public rights advocate who specialized in treating traumatized children of political violence. She then went on to serve as Ministers of Health and Defense before becoming Chile’s first woman president. In the four years between her two terms as Presidential, Bachelet also served as an Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and the first Executive Director of UN Women. *Source:*

[https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/08/world/americas/michelle-bachelet-united-nations-human-ri ghts.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/08/world/americas/michelle-bachelet-united-nations-human-ri%20ghts.html)

*Topic: Northern Triangle*

*Summary:* The Northern Triangle is the area in Central America composed of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. The deteriorating economic situation in the Northern Triangle has caused a massive influx of immigrants fleeing to the US illegally over the last few years. To combat illegal crossings, the US government has historically provided economic and political support to Northern Triangle countries. However, the Trump administration has made it clear they have other plans. Just this past May, the Department of Homeland Security ended the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) of 90,000 people who are primarily from the Northern Triangle countries.

*Source:* <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/central-americas-violent-northern-triangle>

*Source:*

[https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/06/26/violence-drives-immigration-fro m-central-america/](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/06/26/violence-drives-immigration-fro%20m-central-america/)

*Source:* <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/central-america/el-salvador/undocumented-migration-northern-triangle-central-america>

*Topic: Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO)*

*Summary:* Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador was elected as Mexico’s new President this last July. AMLO, as he is commonly known, ran on a populist agenda that promised to fix all of Mexico’s problems. Mexico’s high violent rate, for instance, was one of the main concerns of voters. The growing violence among cartels and security forces has claimed the lives of over 25,430 people in 2017. Government officials fear that the number could surpass to 30,000 in 2018. AMLO’s plan is to offer amnesty to a “vaguely defined cohort of criminals.” However, experts fear that ambiguous amnesty will not reduce the murder rate and that sooner rather than later, AMLO will have to use force to establish rule of law.

*Source:*

<https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2018/05/09/why-mexicos-murder-rate-is-soaring>

*Source:*

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/07/03/andres-manuel-lopez-obrador-and-a-new-era-of-politics-in-mexico/>

*Source:* <https://www.thenation.com/article/social-movements-propel-lopez-obrador-victory/>