General Overview Of Colombia: Analytical Essay

Today, Colombia's regime type is a unitary presidential constitutional republic, a nation in which the president has all the power and control over all political matters; he is the head of state and government. Colombia's president today is Iván Duque Márquez.

Colombia's current government system, unitary presidential, was adopted in 1991. Before that, the country followed a strict one-term limit for presidents. Later, the country developed a two-term policy in 2004 due to the exhausting popularity of President Álvaro Uribe. During his candidate run as president, Álvaro Uribe ran as an independent liberal candidate. An independent liberal candidate is one that normally subscribes to liberal party principles and denotes party affiliation. Before his presidency, he was the Senator of Colombia and Governor of Antioquia. As a senator in 1986 - 1990, he supported laws specifically involving labor and social security, reformation of pensions, promotion, and increase of administrative careers, cooperative banking, women's rights, and protection, and black sugar. He soon became a senator for the second time from 1990 – 1994, being rewarded and identified as one of the 'best senators.' After his second term as a senator, Uribe served as Governor of Antioquia from 1995 – 1997. During his term, he introduced the model for a communitarian state. He believed as governor that citizens should be given the right to participate in the administrator's decision-making process. His governorship had been statistically reported to likely reduce bureaucracy, which soon created schools for children, strengthened infrastructure, and decreases the kidnapping rate. From Uribe's model, it was expected to help improve employment, education, administrative transparency, and public security. In addition to his model, Governor Uribe also openly supported a national program of licensed private security services, which soon became known as CONVIVIR. As president, he focused mainly on confronting FARC, Colombia's largest and the main rebel group. FARC was generally tied to communism in Colombia. Uribe also stood for changing national administration's expenses, seizing corruption, and forming a national referendum to fix some of the country's political and economic issues. President Álvaro Uribe was a very popular president who served two terms, between 2002 – 2010 and focused solely on the economic growth, development, and stability of Colombia. Later in 2015, the system was reverted to a one-tern presidency.

The United States of America could have been an influence on Colombia's regime transition. Between the years of 2004, while President Uribe was in his second year in office, and 2006, there is some linkage with the United States. The United States regime type at the time was also unitary, consisting of federalism, democracy, and constitutional laws. Before Uribe's term, there had been the previous linkage with the USA. In 1922, the USA paid Colombia $25 million for the loss of Panama, and in 1989, it supplied the government with military equipment to help seize Colombian drug dealers. In transitioning into a unitary government, there has always been some linkage between Colombia and the United States. In 2004, USA President, George W. Bush, visited the city of Cartagena de Indias. His motive was to discuss Colombia terrorism, drug trafficking, human rights, and U.S. aid. Two years after, Bush and Uribe discussed a U.S.-Colombia free-trade agreement. This agreement was signed by Deputy U.S. Trade Representative John Veroneau on November 22, 2006. It was not until 2007 that Congress approved the agreement and identified it as a protocol of amendment. In July 2008, Colombia was reviewed by its constitutional court, which they agreed and approved that the agreement

conforms to the country's constitution. Since then, the USA has been Colombia's leading trading partner, with 39% of exports going to the U.S. and 20% imports supplied by the U.S. Venezuela is Colombia's second most significant trading partner, who is responsible for only 7% of Colombia's imports and 10% of exports. Other trading countries include Mexico, Ecuador, Germany, and Brazil.

Today, Colombia has a high linkage and low leverage. The country is considered a top Latin American center for business and an increasingly popular tourist destination. Colombia functions as a free-market economy, with major commercial and investment ties to other countries around the world, especially the United States. Being the size of Texas and California combined, it is the only country on the continent with coastline on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. In between is a nation of rich biodiversity, including the Amazon rainforest and the Andes Mountains. As one of the world's most biologically diverse countries, the Colombian labor force is among the most skilled and competitive worldwide. Sharing a border with 5 countries including Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru, Colombia has been able to sustain linkage over leverage. Current forms of Colombia's linkage include trade with the US, as well as its five bordering countries. From the USA's military aid, Colombia was able to obtain the country's largest drug seizure in the nation's history. Nearly 27 tons of cocaine had been captured and buried along the Pacific coast. In addition to bordering five other countries, Colombia also shares maritime limits with Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. Colombia, classified as an upper-middle-income country according to the World Economic Forum (WEF) Enabling Trade Index (2012), the country ranked 89th out of 132.

Today, Colombia is progressing economically and politically. According to Colombia's gene coefficient, in 2018, the World Inequality Report identified an extreme decrease, but still being at an all-time high. In 2017, the country's Human Development Index or HDI was 0.747 in 2017 and between 1990 – 2017, their HDI increased from 0.592 to 0.747, which equals an increase of 26.2%. Economic growth accelerated to 3 percent in the first half of 2019 and projected to accelerate 3.3 percent in conclusion. It is expected to accelerate by 3.6 percent in 2020. The country has been working on restoring security, stability and advancing policies. For more than a century, Colombia has experienced peaceful changes of government and continues to maintain a solid macroeconomic framework. Futuristically, Colombia will continue to do good economically, but politically, the country struggles with human rights. With a freedom house score of 66/100, the country is only partly free. Both the country's political rights and civil liberties rank only 3/7. Civil liberties include 35/60 (+1) and have improved from 4 to 3. Nevertheless, the issue of human rights abuses has declined in recent years, as well as institutions becoming more effective in observing executive power. In 2016, the government and Colombia's main left-wing guerilla group agreed and signed a peace treaty, but the country continues to undergo vast challenges in strengthening peace and guaranteeing and enforcing political rights and civil liberties throughout the country. The only country influencing Colombia's future in regards to linkage and leverage is the country itself. Negatively affecting the country, the government has failed to successfully sustain equal political rights and electoral opportunities to the citizens, resulting in a very low freedom score. Despite that, there has been major progress in the country as a whole.

Looking at Colombia on the bright and positive side, it is predicted that the country will continue to strive as a republic. From the large land size, rich and valuable resources, trade-agreement, economic growth, Colombia has been able to function as one of the longest-standing

democracies. Emerging in the late 19th century, Colombia's democracy has undergone several changes. It was not until the first half of the twentieth century the country began to experience and undergo economic growth. Civil and political liberties began to emerge due to the 'first wave of democratization,' also identifying the country as one of the first in Latin America. Unfortunately, these developments failed to successfully contribute to a betterment of Colombia's social conditions and did not even protect the country from violent disputes, as proven by the 'Violencia' in the late 1940s and the 1950s, and the resulting disclosure of rebellious guerrilla groups. Economic growth has not led to a stronger democracy in Colombia. Given Colombia's long history of democratic tradition and changes and the fact that, although worsened to a certain extent, political institutions and the separation of powers have defied the decades' lasting dispute. Together, with the strong and progressive constitutional framework as an origin, there is a strong chance that liberal Colombian democracy can still occur, and can be achieved if commenced cautiously.