

Closely following China's presidential term limit move: US

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File pic of Xi Jinping

Washington: The US today said it was closely watching China's ruling Communist Party's plans to abolish presidential term limits and asserted that strong institutions were more important than individual leaders, days after it emerged that President Xi Jinping could rule for life.

"We have been following very closely what has happened in China and the response to Communist Party seeking to abolish term limits there," State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert told reporters at her daily news conference.

"Strong institutions -- and this is another fundamental freedom of the US -- we believe that strong institutions are more important than individual leaders," she said.

The Communist Party of China, which is in power since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, had proposed on Sunday to amend the country's Constitution to remove the two term limits for the President and Vice President, potentially allowing Xi to rule for life.

Nauert said promoting human rights and democratic governance was a core element of the US foreign policy.

"Its an essential foundation of a stable, secure and functioning society," she said, adding that the United States remains "unwavering" in its commitment to advance personal liberty, human dignity and prosperity globally.

China's rubber stamp Parliament, the National People's Congress, is set to pass the constitutional amendment when it meets for its annual session early next month, at which it will grant Xi a second five-year term and appoint new ministers and other government officials.

Xi, already China's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong appears to want an indefinite term to see through his agenda of fighting corruption, eliminating poverty and transforming China into a modern leading nation by mid-century, analysts say.

Asked to comment on the CPC's surprise move, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang yesterday said that the proposal "was made in accordance with new situation and the practice of upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era."

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