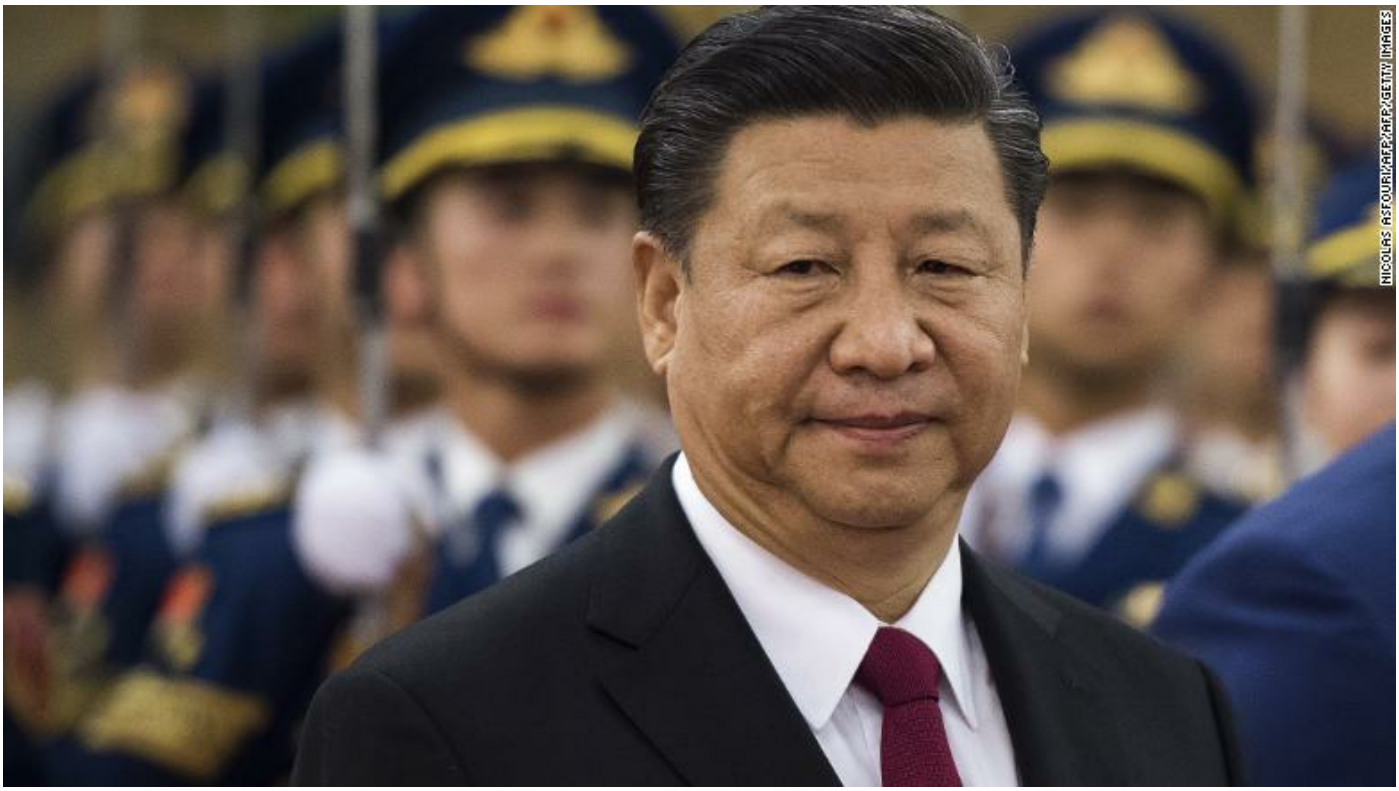
Why is the world silent about Xi Jinping's power grab?

By Kerry Brown

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China to drop presidential term limits 01:37

Editor's Note: *Kerry Brown is a professor of Chinese studies at King's College London and director of the Lau China Institute. The views expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.*

(CNN) — Leaders in the West have been suspiciously quiet about the expected changes to the Chinese constitution that would remove the two-term limit on the presidency -- which would allow President Xi Jinping to rule the country unchallenged for decades to come. Why the silence?

Firstly, most countries that deal with China will have assumed that Xi was here to stay anyway.

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They know China is a one-party state, and that the Communist Party holds sway over everything. So unilaterally changing the rules its gives itself would not harm anyone. Most international observers will have been baffled the restriction was ever there in the first place.

But there is also a more pragmatic reason for silence. For all the Western complaints about the parlous state of human rights, in their hearts they know they need a country which is stable and predictable -- even if it is a stable and predictable autocracy.

A China that contributed to uncertainty in a world where Donald Trump is US president, the UK is trying to leave the EU, where the Middle East looks like it is perpetually inflamed by unrest, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo seems to

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