

Q and A of the Week 你问我答

Prime minister or president? 首相还是总统?



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Neil: Hello and welcome to Question and Answer of the Week, I'm Neil and I'm joined for this programme by Li. Hi Li.

Li: Hello Neil, you will like this question. 今天我们的问题是如何区分英语中对国家首脑的各种称呼。

Neil: Here's the question we've been sent: 'I am confused about the title of leaders. For example, sometimes we call the top leader of a country "president" or "prime minister". While sometimes I have heard "chancellor" or some other titles.

Li: That's a good one. 提问者不清楚对国家首脑的称呼为什么有时是“总统”有时是“首相”有时又是“总理”，这有些令人费解。

Neil: It's true there are different ways of describing the political leader of a country. Here in the United Kingdom, we have a prime minister, but in the USA they have a president.

Li: 众所周知，英国的首相是 a prime minister 不过美国的对等称呼是总统 a president. 两者之间有什么区别？

Neil: An important expression here is head of state.

Li: 国家首脑 head of state.

Neil: In the UK our head of state is the Queen. However, her role is largely symbolic.

Li: 英国女王作为国家首脑的角色主要是一种象征意义的 symbolic.

Neil: The real power lies with the prime minister. The prime minister is the leader of the majority party in parliament and therefore the head of the government.

Li: 真正有实权的政府首脑是英国首相。这是因为首相是议会多数或执政党的领袖。 **But what about the Queen's Speech?** 因为每年英国议会开幕大典上，女王不都是要发表主旨讲话，宣布政府在未来一年里的执政方针吗？

Neil: Yes, but the speech is written by the government. The Queen doesn't have the power to decide what goes into the Queen's Speech!

Insert

Man: *Did you hear the Queen's Speech on the TV yesterday?*

Woman: *Yeah, the government is going to increase taxes and cut spending.*

Man: *It sounds like it'll be a tough year.*

Neil: OK, so the person called the 'prime minister' is usually the head of the government, but not the head of state – even if they have the most political power in the country.

Li: Yes, that's right. 首相是政府的最高领导人，虽然他拥有最大的政治权力但他并不是英国的国家首脑。
So, let's move onto 'president'.

Neil: When a country has a president, that person is usually the head of state. And often, they have a large amount of political power as well. This is the case with the USA, France and Russia, for example. These countries are republics, meaning they do not have a monarchy.

Li: Republic 共和国。 Monarchy 就是君主政体或君主立宪制。当然有些国家的总统 president 即是国家首脑也是最高政治领导人。

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Woman: *So France has a new President.*

Man: *Yes, it sounds like he's going to make loads of changes.*

Woman: *Yeah, the changes he wants to make could have a massive impact on the Eurozone.*

Li: 从刚才的例句可以听出来法国刚刚选出一位新总统。作为最高政治领导人他有权力来行使政治改革，同时他也是法国的国家元首。

Neil: But then there are other countries which have both a president and a prime minister!

Li: Argh this is getting confusing now! 什么有些国家既有总统 a president 也有首相 a prime minister!

Neil: In some cases, such as Germany and Italy, the president is similar to the British Queen – mainly a symbolic head of state – with the prime minister holding the real power.

Li: 有些国家，比如德国和意大利， president 类似英国女王的象征性的角色，而实权却在首相手中 prime minister.

- Neil:** But...
- Li:** I know what you're going to say. 在另外一些国家，也就是那些既有总统又有首相 prime minister 的国家里，拥有实权的是总统，对吧？
- Neil:** And just one more thing to explain...
- Li:** The chancellor. 这 'chancellor' 到底是什么含义呢？
- Neil:** It's simply the German word for the position of prime minister.
- Li:** 这么说 chancellor 这个词就是德语中的表示总理或首相概念的对应词语。
- Neil:** We hope that answered your question.
- Li:** 如果其他同学也有英语学习或有关英国文化方面的问题请随时给我们发电子邮件，我们的邮箱是 questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk.
- Li:** So Neil, what would you do if you were president?
- Neil:** Don't you mean prime minister, as we're in the UK?
- Li:** No, I mean president of the United States.
- Neil:** Can I be president of France instead?
- Li:** No you can be prime minister of France if you like.
- Neil:** How about the chancellor of Germany? (to fade)