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OSC Report: Hot Topics of Discussion Among PRC Internet Users, 30 Jul - 05 Aug 2010

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The following report covers the top most-read or most-discussed news stories or bulletin board (BBS) postings -- based in most cases on the sites' own metrics -- on selected PRC websites from the period 30 July-5 August 2010.

Source Note: The following report provides a sampling of comments observed by OSC on a selected set of websites frequented by Chinese-language users. The views detailed in this report should not be considered representative of public opinion in China generally or of Chinese internet users in particular. OSC is generally unable to verify the identity or location of posters or readers of these online comments. Furthermore, OSC is unable to verify the extent of censorship or manipulation of this online discussion, including potential efforts to shape public opinion by commentators acting on behalf of party, government, or other organizations. Users based in the PRC may need to use circumvention tools to access blocked websites outside the PRC. Information is user-provided and may be false or incorrect.

The websites cited below were selected because they all provide convenient metrics indicating their most popular postings. Renmin Wang and Xinhua Wang are included as representatives of major state- or party-affiliated portals, while Tencent (QQ) and Sina are two of China's most popular commercial, for-profit websites. The Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office's top ten hot postings are also included because they are issued by an official source and purport to measure the most popular postings on the Chinese internet as a whole.

Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office Top 10 PRC Internet Postings

On 5 August, according to the website of the Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office (<http://yq.people.com.cn>), also known as the *Renmin Ribao* Internet Center Public Opinion Monitoring Office. The Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office is a public opinion research institute that cooperates with experts from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences [CASS], Beijing University [Peking University], and Qinghua University [Tsinghua University], and conducts round-the-clock monitoring of internet media such as online versions of traditional news media, internet news portals, BBS, microblogs, and influential bloggers. Renmin Wang (www.people.com.cn) is a portal affiliated with *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Following are the top 10 articles or postings -- based on the number of written responses to the original item, not on the number of page views -- across the PRC internet as a whole on 5 August, as calculated by Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office:

- 1) A posting on the BBS of Feng Huang Wang, website of Hong Kong-based Phoenix TV, about the author seeking advice on whether or not she should pay her parents' expensive medical bill. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 135,295 times, generating 167 responses.
- 2) A posting on BBS of Feng Huang Wang about an 82-year-old man who asked for a television interview after saving a drowning woman. The author explained that the old man asked for higher media exposure because he wishes to be a role model for the younger generation as many young onlookers at the scene refused to offer assistance. Dated 1 August, this posting was viewed 173,858 times, generating 337 responses (ranking as published).
- 3) A posting on the BBS of Xinhua Wang, website of China's official news agency Xinhua, which conducted an online survey about the beating of an entertainment news reporter who allegedly trespassed onto the property or into the home [it is unclear which] of actor Guo Degang. Dated 4 August, this posting was viewed 49,709 times, generating 347 responses.
- 4) A Feng Huang Wang BBS posting about a PRC comedian "Little Shenyang" being selected by US *Newsweek* as "the dirtiest man in China." Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 594,738 times, generating 358 responses (ranking as published).
- 5) A Xinhua BBS posting that commemorated the death of renowned PRC scientist Qian Weichang. Dated 1 August, this posting was viewed 71,532 times, generating 173 responses.
- 6) A Feng Huang Wang BBS posting that criticized the majority of teachers at PRC universities as "irresponsible." Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 238,369 times, generating 160 responses.
- 7) A posting on the BBS of Huasheng Zaixian, a Hunan-based commercial portal for "grassroots" users, which ridiculed a Beijing court ruling against a man who "picked up a diamond ring and threw it away assuming the ring was a counterfeit product." The court ruled that the man should compensate the ring's owner. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 83,612 times, generating 129 responses.
- 8) A Xinhua Wang BBS posting cited a report on Zhongguo Xinwen She, China's official news service for overseas Chinese, regarding an old man who sat on the lap of a young girl who refused to give up her seat on a bus. Dated 4 August, this posting was viewed 39,178 times, generating 353 responses.
- 9) A Xinhua Wang BBS posting cited a news report about Hunan police identifying a suspect allegedly responsible for blowing up a tax office in Changsha. Even though the report claimed that the suspect's aim was to kill the son of a local bank governor, many users urged the police to investigate the case further "to determine if corruption was involved." Dated 1 August, this posting was viewed 43,883 times, generating 205 responses.
- 10) A Xinhua Wang BBS posting that reposted a news report about recent personnel reshuffles in 10 localities and noted four characteristics of this round of appointments, namely: there were more young cadres, more woman cadres, more cadres with high educational backgrounds, and more cadres affiliated with the Communist Youth League. Some users saw it as a routine reshuffle that did not merit much attention, while others said that it reflected improving selection criteria for cadre appointments. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 97,683 times, generating 85 responses.

Top Five Most-Read Postings on Official Media-Affiliated BBS

Following are the top five most-read postings on 5 August -- according to site metrics -- on Qiangguo Luntan [Strong Nation Forum], a BBS on Renmin Wang.

- 1) A posting that commented on the recruitment of "mistresses" for the Beijing nightclub "Tiansheng Renjian" [Passion

Club], which was closed earlier this year during a high-profile crackdown on vice. The author argued that law enforcers should give priority to cracking down on corruption, instead of vice establishments. Dated 3 August, this posting was viewed 133,027 times, generating 95 responses.

2) A posting that commented on a medical scandal in Shenzhen where a woman's anus was "sewn up" by a nurse after giving birth. It was reported that the nurse was angry because the victim had not tipped her well and refused to give more money. The author lambasted the nurse as well as her colleagues and doctors for "misleading" the public in a bid to protect vested interests of the hospital staff. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 94,679 times, generating 257 responses (ranking as published).

3) A posting that rebuked the suggestion for an investigation and study group under the Beijing Municipal People's Congress to oust a group of low-end industries hiring poor migrant workers from other provinces. The author slammed Beijing's residential policy for discriminating against migrant workers and depriving them of their voting rights. The majority of respondents criticized the municipal government for turning Beijing into a club for the rich. Dated 4 August, this posting was viewed 94,881 times, generating 94 responses.

4) A posting that cited a new report about a recent policy to offer migrant workers cheap lodging for one yuan per day in Shandong's Linyi city. The author praised the Shandong policymaker's conscience and chastized leaders from other localities for their "indifference" to people's housing problems. Dated 4 August, this posting was viewed 78,008 times, generating 54 responses.

5) A posting that cited a *Renmin Ribao* report dated 28 July about a new civil servant recruitment policy in Dongsheng district, Ordos city, Inner Mongolia, which stipulated that children of current or retired civil servants are eligible for "a 10-point raise for their written test." The author condemned the policy as "shameless." The majority of respondents disapproved of the policy and demanded a fair and just society. Dated 2 August, this posting was viewed 73,798 times, generating 151 responses.

Following are the top five most-read postings -- per site metrics -- observed on the BBS of Xinhua Wang (www.xinhuanet.com), the web portal of China's state press agency Xinhua, on 5 August.

1) A posting identical to item 10 above of the top postings as calculated by Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office. The posting reposted a news report about the recent personnel reshuffles in 10 localities and noted four characteristics of the current round of appointments. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 97,683 times, generating 85 responses.

2) A posting that reposted a 1 August report on Chengdu-based *Huaxi Dushi Bao*, regarding the promotion of Mao Xinyu, the grandson of Chinese leader Mao Zedong, to the rank of major general. The majority of respondents congratulated Mao. Dated 1 August, this posting was viewed 85,097 times, generating 55 responses.

3) A posting identical to above item 5 of the top postings as calculated by Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office. The posting commemorated the death of renowned PRC scientist Qian Weichang. Dated 1 August, this posting was viewed 71,532 times, generating 173 responses.

4) A posting that reposted a 30 July report on Kunming-based *Yunnan Xinxi Bao*, about a police operation to crack down a local nightclub. A man found on the premises who claimed to be a deputy for the Sichuan Provincial People's Congress criticized the police for "disrupting his business talks" and smashed the camera of a reporter. Some respondents said they were not surprised by the alleged Sichuan leader's "arrogance." Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 64,725 times, generating 47 responses.

5) A posting suggested that the Chinese Government help prostitutes find employment in legitimate jobs -- and crack down on the criminal syndicates which facilitate prostitution in order to seek a lasting result with regard to anti-vice operations. Dated 3 August, this posting was viewed 64,735 times, generating 45 responses.

Top Five Most-Read Postings on Popular Commercial Portals

Following are topics from the top five most-read postings on 5 August as calculated by the "news" section of the BBS of popular PRC commercial web portal Tencent (Tengxun Wang; QQ; www.qq.com). Tencent is the second most popular website in China -- after search engine Baidu (www.baidu.com) -- according to international web rating company Alexa (www.alexa.com, 5 August).

- 1) A posting about a growing trend on the campus of Chinese universities -- that is, for students to find a "study companion" of the opposite sex by posting the request on bulletin boards, or school notice boards. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 824,811 times, generating 1,051 responses.
- 2) A posting that showed photos depicting the life of hawkers. Dated 4 August, this posting was viewed 1,428,800 times, generating 1,613 responses (ranking as published).
- 3) A posting that showed photos of models at a game expo held in Shanghai. Dated 1 August, this posting was viewed 394,364 times, generating 399 responses.
- 4) A posting that showed pictures of China's Xiaolong fighter jets and roughly quoted the remarks of US Secretary of Defense Gates made at a Singapore defense conference that the "Xiaolong gave most troubles to the United States." Some respondents debated whether the less sophisticated PRC fighter would be any match for US military jets. Dated 4 August, this posting was viewed 95,200 times, generating 65 responses.
- 5) A posting that responded to a Renmin Wang report dated 30 July, about Sichuan's Jiange county, one of the poorest counties in China, having 14 deputy heads "in strict accordance with the country's policy." The author criticized the much touted policy to streamline government structure and reduce the number of redundant cadres as "empty talk." The majority of respondents were critical of the government. Dated 29 July, this posting was viewed 40,458 times, generating 253 responses.

Following are the top five most-read postings on 5 August -- per site metrics -- on the BBS of popular PRC commercial web portal Sina (Xinlang Wang; www.sina.com.cn). Sina is the fourth most popular web domain in mainland China, following Baidu, Tencent, and trade website Taobao (www.taobao.com), according to Alexa (5 August).

- 1) A posting that analyzed the so-called "post-military exercise" period and suggested that the Chinese Government abandon its previous policy of "hiding one's capabilities and biding one's time," and start seizing the initiative over Sino-US relations by "taking the opposite stance on all US policies on issues of mutual interest" as a form of protest against the US meddling in South China Sea issues. The majority of respondents expressed agreement with the author. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 449,874 times, generating 359 responses.
- 2) A posting cited sources saying that the engine and electrical hardware on the former Russian aircraft carrier Varyag have already been updated at China's Dalian port, adding that the Varyag will be used in future PLA military exercises. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 395,472 times, generating 98 responses.
- 3) A posting cited an Associated Press report about a photo of the iconic CPC Chairman Mao Zedong -- which was hung on the wall of a room inside the USS George Washington aircraft carrier -- and lauded the late chairman as a great leader respected throughout the world. The author slammed "traitor" Li Rui and his ilk "for throwing mud at Mao." The majority of respondents also praised Mao. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 372,510 times, generating 1,368 responses.

4) A posting that posted the author's "declaration" to boycott women who refused to marry men who didn't own property. Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 339,569 times, generating 163 responses.

5) A posting that cited a 27 July signed article in official English newspaper *China Daily*, and another article in *Huanqiu Shibao*, a newspaper sponsored by the official party newspaper *Renmin Ribao*, to indicate that the Chinese Government was "genuinely annoyed" by perceived US infringement on Chinese sovereignty in the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea during recent US-ROK joint military exercises. The majority of postings expressed a sense of hostility towards the United States. One of the respondents was bitterly criticized by fellow users as a "traitor" for arguing that the CPC has been indoctrinating young people to support one-party rule under the guise of nationalism, Dated 30 July, this posting was viewed 334,886 times, generating 301 responses.

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