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OSC Report: Hot Topics of Discussion Among PRC Internet Users, 13-19 August 2010

CPP20100820715021 *China* -- OSC Report in English, Chinese 13 Aug 10 - 19 Aug 10

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 13 - 19 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 19 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, 9 of the top 10 hot postings for the period 13 -19 August originated on popular commercial BBS Tianya Shequ (www.tianya.cn). 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 including 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 19 August, as calculated by Renmin Wang Public Opinion

Monitoring Office:

- 1) A Tianya Shequ posting by a mother who complained that her 18-month-old daughter was showing signs of breast growth after drinking baby formula produced by Synutra [Shengyuan]. Dated 12 August, this posting was inaccessible as of 19 August. Its cache version on PRC search engine Baidu showed that some respondents criticized the Shengyuan milk producer and experts from the Ministry of Health who denied that the milk powder caused sexual pre-maturity. The posting was viewed 410,854 times, generating 3,585 responses.
- 2) A Tianya Shequ posting that ridiculed the Synutra [Shengyuan] milk company for claiming that their baby formula is made of imported milk. The author also suggested that the minimum protein level required for raw milk should be raised. Dated 12 August, this posting was viewed 263,328 times, generating 2,269 responses.
- 3) A Tianya Shequ posting that expressed support for an earlier posting from 5 August by a mother who worried that her daughter may be exposed to radiation by taking the "C14 urea breath test," which was the most-commented-on article for the week of 6 - 12 August [CPP20100813715035]. Dated 13 August, this posting was viewed 402,885 times, generating 1,085 responses.
- 4) A Tianya Shequ posting that stressed the "C14 urea breath test" is "absolutely harmful to human bodies." Dated 12 August, this posting was viewed 381,561 times, generating 903 responses.
- 5) A Tianya Shequ posting about a lucky draw for tickets to the Shanghai World Expo organized by the Michelin tire manufacturer. Dated 13 August, this posting was viewed 1,796,560 times, generating 4,033 responses (ranking as published).
- 6) A Tianya Shequ posting by an author who, noting the low quality of Chinese domestic products, claimed to regret that for the past 20 years he has been encouraging his friends to use China-made goods. Dated 14 August, the posting was viewed 104,798 times, generating 1,374 responses (ranking as published).
- 7) A Tianya Shequ posting by an author who reminded readers that 15 August -- the government-launched national day of mourning for the victims of mudslides in Gansu Province -- was also the anniversary of VJ Day, the day the Second World War ended. Dated 15 August, the posting was viewed 104,443 times, generating 1,805 responses (ranking as published).
- 8) A Tianya Shequ posting that criticized the findings by the Ministry of Health which cleared Synutra milk powder of causing pre-mature puberty in baby girls. The author argued that the statement of the Ministry of Health was "not convincing at all." While Synutra appears to be the winner, the author claimed that the Ministry of Health is the loser because the public has lost confidence in it. Many respondents agreed with the author and claimed that they will never buy Synutra milk products again. Dated 16 August, the posting was viewed 225,011 times, generating 481 responses.
- 9) A posting on the BBS of Feng Huang Wang, website of Hong Kong-based Phoenix TV, about the death of Li Shengxi, former director of the Zhangjiajie City Commerce and Industry Administration Bureau. While official media have yet to report on the cause of his death, the author cited rumors that he died naked in the home of a young female subordinate. Dated 13 August, the posting was viewed 1,097,513 times, generating 311 responses.
- 10) A Tianya Shequ posting that reposted a *Jiefangjun Bao* article by PLA Major General Luo Yuan which rebuked US "hegemony, gunboat diplomacy, and unilateralism." While some respondents agreed with Luo and criticized the United States as "a nation of pirates," others lamented that China can "never take any concrete action" and "beat the United States." Dated 12 August, the posting was viewed 66,478 times, generating 383 responses (ranking as published).

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

Following are the top five most-read postings on 19 August -- according to site metrics -- on Qiangguo Luntan [Strong Nation Forum], a BBS on Renmin Wang.

- 1) A posting that criticized 13 female university students for taking off their trousers in a subway in Shenzhen in an effort to promote low-carbon life and environmental protection. Describing the students as "immoral," the author added that deceased Zhangjiajie official Li Shengxi, who was rumored to be found dead naked in the home of a young female, has "corrupted public morals." Dated 16 August, this posting was viewed 166,705 times, generating 73 responses.
- 2) A posting that cited a Jinghua Shibao report on a prostitute offering free sex as bribes to a people's armed police officer in Hebei province. Dated 17 August, this posting was viewed 159,520 times, generating 57 responses.
- 3) A posting that cited a Jinghua Shibao report on a sex syndicate offering free sex services to people's armed police in an attempt to bribe them in Hebei province. Dated 17 August, this posting was viewed 133,926 times, generating 66 responses.
- 4) A posting that cited noted PRC economist Wei Jie, a professor at Qinghua University, cautioning against a big slump in the Chinese property market. Wei was quoted saying that "an 80 percent drop in property prices would do all of us in." Dated 13 August, this posting was viewed 128,886 times, generating 375 responses.
- 5) A posting that excerpted a Chinese translation of a 13 August BBC report entitled "China Strongly Condemns the United States in the Army Newspaper Multi-modal Speech." The BBC report quoted PLA Major General Luo Yuan citing former Chinese leader Ma Zedong's famous quote "We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack." Some respondents agreed with Luo and maintained that Mao's quote is "the best way to counter US imperialism." Some respondents claimed that the United States "bullies" China because Beijing has placed too much emphasis on peace and construction in recent years. Dated 13 August, this posting was viewed 81,936 times, generating 207 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 19 August.

- 1) A posting about the rumors surrounding the death of Li Shengxi, former director of Zhangjiajie City Commerce and Industry Administration Bureau. The author noted that it is not the first time for an official to be found dead in the home of their "female friends." Dated 14 August, the posting was viewed 351,993 times, generating 415 responses.
- 2) A posting that discussed a report that 60 percent of the patrons of a 7-star hotel in Dubai are Chinese. Dated 15 August, the posting was viewed 118,837 times, generating 15 responses.
- 3) A posting about the persecution of Liu Linxiang, head of the budget office under the Finance and Accounting Department of the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives, for misappropriating RMB 396 million between 2001 and 2004. Dated 15 August, the posting was viewed 110,498 times, generating 14 responses.
- 4) A posting about the problem of high vacancy rates in the commercial housing market in China. Dated 11 August, the posting was viewed 93,876 times, generating 183 responses.
- 5) A posting that reposted a Zhongguo Tongxun She article which rounded up two *Jiefangjun Bao* articles by PLA Major General Luo Yuan and Yang Yi, former head of strategic studies at the PLA National Defense University, on US "gunboat diplomacy" [CPP20100813196002]. The posting highlighted Luo Yuan's remark that "We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack." While some respondents expressed support for China to fight a war with the United States if provoked, others doubted the possibility of the outbreak of such a war. In the meantime, some respondents criticized the United States for "stirring up trouble" by conducting military exercises in the

Yellow Sea. Dated 14 August, the posting was viewed 77,425 times, generating 721 responses.

Top Five Most-Read Postings on Popular Commercial Portals

Following are topics from the top five most-read postings on 19 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, 19 August).

- 1) A posting about the mysteries surrounding the death of Zhangjiajie official Li Shengxi, who was rumored to be found dead naked in the home of a young woman. Dated 13 August, the posting was viewed 195,830 times, generating 1,737 responses.
- 2) A posting that reported on the alleged illegal occupation of public green space by Guo Degang, China's most famous stand-up comedian. Dated 12 August, the posting was viewed 88,342 times, generating 368 responses.
- 3) A posting that reposted media reports on the presence of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington near Xisha islands. Some respondents accused the United States of "hegemonism" while others noted that there is no need to be scared by the US aircraft carrier and described the United States as a "mere paper tiger." A few respondents also criticized Vietnam for turning itself into a "dog" of the United States. Dated 16 August, the posting was viewed 73,040 times, generating 129 responses.
- 4) A posting that showed pictures of a young girl who keeps a watermelon stall in Hefei city at a temperature of 50 degrees Celsius. Dated 13 August, the posting was viewed 69,278 times, generating 157 responses.
- 5) A posting that conjectured the reason for the death of former Zhangjiajie official Li Shengxi, who was rumored to be found dead naked in the home of a young woman. Dated 13 August, the posting was viewed 61,047 times, generating 286 responses.

Following are the top five most-read postings on 19 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 (19 August).

- 1) A posting that carried a video showing China's car model Shou Shou, who became famous after her sex video was posted on the internet, walking out of a television interview when she was asked by host Wen Ya about the social impact of her sex video. Dated 14 August, the posting was viewed 274,629 times, generating 128 responses.
- 2) A posting that carried a television interview with television host Wen Ya about her thoughts after model Shou Shou walked out of her interview. Dated 17 August, the posting was viewed 255,336 times, generating 143 responses.
- 3) A posting about a 16-year-old girl becoming a prostitute to feed her 35-year-old married boyfriend. Dated 16 August, the posting was viewed 149,216 times, generating 80 responses.
- 4) A posting about a woman who was sexually assaulted by a taxi driver when she took a taxi. Dated 16 August, the posting was viewed 149,216 times, generating 80 responses.
- 5) A posting by a woman who discovered that her trusted husband was cheating on her. Dated 15 August, the posting was viewed 149,216 times, generating 80 responses.

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