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OSC Report: Hot Topics of Discussion Among PRC Internet Users, 2-8 July 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 2-8 July 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 8 July, 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, all of the top 10 hot postings for the period 2-8 July 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 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 8 July, as calculated by Renmin Wang Public Opinion

Monitoring Office:

- 1) A Tianya Shequ posting shared the author's experience in teaching part-time in a remote village in Guizhou. The author posted photographs of her students and wrote about their poor living conditions in hope of rousing public concern for the well-being of children in rural villages. Dated 1 July, this posting was viewed 700,689 times, generating 2,381 responses.
- 2) A Tianya Shequ posting about the confessions of a fried food shop owner regarding the various unhealthy food additives and chemicals in his recipes. The author noted that along with health issues associated with deep-fried food, poultry, fish and dairy products in China are also processed with chemicals detrimental to health. The majority of respondents bemoaned the lack of food safety in China. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 400,678 times, generating 1,660 responses.
- 3) A Tianya Shequ posting about neighbors complaining about three women running around naked in their own apartment. The author questioned the definition of privacy and accused the women's neighbors of peeping. Dated 2 July, this posting was unavailable on 8 July. According to the cached version provided by PRC search engine Baidu, this posting was viewed 406,026 times, and generated 1,349 responses before it was removed.
- 4) A Tianya Shequ posting that criticized the management of Nanjing Normal University for covering up the cause of death of a student who was allegedly electrocuted while taking a shower. According to school authorities, the body was cremated before exact cause of his death could be determined. The author of this posting wrote that "incidents of short circuiting causing electric shocks" occurred several times before the fatal accident and blasted school authorities for ignoring previous complaints. The author expressed skepticism with regard to the mass procurement of electric heaters in 2005. The majority of respondents criticized the university's corrupt practices and called for an independent, third-party investigation. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 284,802 times, generating 1,430 responses.
- 5) A Tianya Shequ posting lambasted PRC food safety authorities for lowering protein content requirements and the standard plate count for total bacteria in China-produced dairy products - despite the fact that the melamine-tainted milk scandal is still fresh in people's minds. The author suspected the food safety "backpedalling" was the result of "interest-scrambling between dairy industry tycoons and China's food safety authorities." The majority of respondents lamented that nothing is safe in China. Dated 1 July, this posting was viewed 404,206 times, generating 978 responses.
- 6) A Tianya Shequ posting that reposted a news report about the sudden death of Wang Yongqiang, president of Jiangxi Jian City Yongxin County People's Hospital, at the home of his 20-year-old female subordinate. Rumors contended that the 20-year-old nurse was Wang's mistress. Dated 6 July, this posting was viewed 525,358 times, generating 1,489 responses (ranking as published).
- 7) A Tianya Shequ posting complained about the moaning of the author's new neighbor. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 300,351 times, generating 1,255 responses.
- 8) A Tianya Shequ posting complained about a private boarding school that demanded its students dismantle, move, and reassemble their own furniture to make room for the school's renovation. Dated 5 July, this posting was viewed 102,091 times, generating 1,087 responses.
- 9) A Tianya Shequ posting that reposted the China Alcohol Evaluation Committee's response to a blog posting critical of Chinese white wine written by a Japanese residing in China. The majority of respondents criticized the "antagonistic" character of the Japanese nation towards China. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 203,025 times, generating 290 responses.

10) A Tianya Shequ posting accused a Guangxi village cadre of evicting Tianwan villagers by force and intentionally murdering a villager with a tractor on 26 June. The author uploaded photographs of the villagers crushed body on the bulletin board in a bid to seek justice. The majority of respondents lambasted the official's cruelty. Dated 4 July, this posting was viewed 58,841 times, generating 933 responses (ranking as published).

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

Following are the top five most-read postings on 8 July -- according to site metrics -- on Qiangguo Luntan [Strong Nation Forum], a BBS on Renmin Wang.

- 1) A posting contended that the execution of Wen Qiang, former director of the Chongqing Municipal Judicial Bureau convicted of corruption charges involving organized crime, was joyful news to Wen's collaborators. Many respondents said that Wen's superiors who accepted Wen's bribes can now feel relieved. Dated 7 July, this posting was viewed 65,182 times, generating 50 responses.
- 2) A posting accused the late Chinese painter Chan Zhongzhi's former caretaker of stealing Chan's works worth an estimated 100 million yuan. Dated 7 July, this posting was viewed 41,971 times, generating 3 responses.
- 3) A posting suspected Tang Jun -- former chief executive officer of Shanghai's leading online game company Shanda Interactive Entertainment Limited -- of fabricating his education qualifications. Listed as a doctorate degree holder in electrical engineering from the Pacific Western University in the United States and Nagoya University in Japan on the prospectus of Shanda, Tang disclosed during an interview that he never finished his doctoral thesis in Japan. Dated 8 July, this posting was viewed 36,527 times, generating 37 responses.
- 4) A posting responded to an interview by *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* -- newspaper of the Communist Youth League -- with Zhou Xiaoya, wife of Wen Qiang, former director of the Chongqing Municipal Judicial Bureau convicted of corruption charged and executed on 7 July. The author criticized Zhou as a materialistic woman who cared only about money. Dated 8 July, this posting was viewed 45,854 times, generating 57 responses.
- 5) A posting displayed a selection of internet users' comments about the PRC Government's determination to cool down the property market. The majority of users expressed dissatisfaction with the central government's measures to curb surging property prices. Dated 4 July, this posting was viewed 31,363 times, generating 74 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 8 July.

- 1) A posting reported Premier Wen Jiabao's inspection of flood-hit Hunan province on 1 July, during which time he diverged from his planned itinerary to follow residents of a local village to inspect sinkholes. The majority of respondents hailed Premier Wen and criticized the local leaders for not doing their jobs well. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 75,512 times, generating 111 responses.
- 2) A posting about a female bus driver going to work in Qipao. Dated 5 July, this posting was viewed 75,626 times, generating 27 responses.
- 3) A posting reposted a Xinhua Wang report about the execution of Wen Qiang, former director of the Chongqing Municipal Judicial Bureau and local ring leader. The majority of respondents said Wen deserved to be sentenced to death, with many wondering whether Wen was executed by lethal injection or by firing squad. Dated 7 July, this posting was viewed 77,666 times, generating 461 responses.
- 4) A posting shared an essay written by an internet user about trying to quit playing mahjong. Dated 7 July, this posting

was viewed 67,964 time, and none commented.

5) A posting reposted an article from Renmin Wang about the last words of 10 convicted corrupt officials. Some respondents suggested that Chinese TV stations produce their stories into TV dramas in order to deter incumbent officials from corruption. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 53,702 times, generating 15 responses.

Top Five Most-Read Postings on Popular Commercial Portals

Following are topics from the top five most-read postings on 8 July 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, 8 July).

- 1) A posting that shared photographs taken at Xian about a dating event participated by over 10,000 people. Dated 7 July, this posting was viewed 696,720 times, generating 557 responses.
- 2) A posting that shared photographs about people going swimming or seeking shelter in the hot summer. Dated 5 July, this posting was viewed 502,066 times, generating 410 responses.
- 3) A posting that analyzed the intention of a PLA military exercise in the East China Sea. The author said that the live-fire drill held by the PLA Navy is a response to the planned US-ROK joint naval exercise in the Yellow Sea in order to present a threat to the US military base in Japan. The author praised the naval exercise as a "wise" move to show China's staunch opposition against the planned US-ROK exercise in Yellow Sea. The majority of respondents expressed support for the PLA drill. Dated 5 July, this posting was viewed 56,142 times, generating 102 responses.
- 4) A posting that forwarded a survey determining whether internet users have benefitted from a salary raise or not. The majority of respondents said no. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 22,148 times, generating 244 responses.
- 5) A posting that reposted 18 jokes. Dated 8 July, this posting was viewed 20,600 times, generating 74 responses.

Following are the top five most-read postings on 8 July -- 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 (8 July).

- 1) A posting that reposted a series of photographs published on the official website of the US Navy, showing USS George Washington -- a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier likely to be deployed in a planned US-ROK exercise in response to the Ch'o'nan [Choenan] incident -- participating in a joint exercise with Japan in mid-June. The majority of respondents said China should be prepared for war. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 442,921 times, generating 269 responses.
- 2) A posting commented on the meeting between US President Obama and Russian President Medvedev, as well as China's position on the planned US-ROK military exercise. The author maintained that China does not need to get directly involved in any military dispute between the DPRK and the United States other than to provide anti-carrier missiles or technical support for North Korea. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 372,419 times, generating 125 responses.
- 3) A posting advertised a new mobile phone model. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 458,198 times, generating 252,676 responses.
- 4) A posting said that since 2001, China has bought and dismantled a number of retired Russian G-class submarines, a landing ship, supply ships, missile destroyers, and submarines. The majority of respondents saw the dismantling of retired vessels as a way to reverse engineer Russian military technology. Some, however, were puzzled by China

"buying trash" from Russia. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 355,698 times, generating 122 responses.

5) A posting criticized Chinese actress Bei Ling for visiting US soldiers in Iraq. Dated 2 July, this posting was viewed 352,723 times, generating 238 responses.

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