

DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**

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ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
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I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Chinese actor who visited Japanese shrines boycotted:** In continuation to our previous social media chatter reportage, it is now trending on Weibo how Chinese actor Zhang Zhehan's personal and studio accounts have been temporarily banned on the platform post pictures surfaced of the actor visiting the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in Japan. Per regulations, China Association of Performing Arts is now requiring its members to boycott the actor. As with the Olympics, we notice a key trend of growing anti-Japan sentiment in China; even though the country has been historically sensitive to the Japanese shrines, this boycott of one of the country's most beloved and powerful actors shows the extent to which how negative present day public perception of Japan is.
- **Air Force "Double Ace" pilot Qiu Linhui trends:** With Yangguang Military listed as the source, Chinese social media has shared articles published by local newspapers of Qiu's interview wherein the decorated pilot has spoken of his absolute dedication to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as well as important drills he has been a part of.

II. News in China

- China's CCTV News has carried a piece sourced from People's Daily Overseas Edition stating that "black hands" by/of the US have been responsible for unrest in regions across the world due to their interference. The piece makes the statement that "wherever there is chaos, there must be the United States".
- On 14.8.21, CCTV News reported about the high number of Afghan refugees entering Kabul (which was still under government control at the time) and carried Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's statement wherein he "vowed to prevent further bloodshed in Afghanistan".
- Post Taliban's takeover of Kabul and Ghani leaving the country, China is yet to give an official statement on the situation in Afghanistan. As regular press conferences of the Foreign Ministry of China have been on recess from Monday, August 2 to Friday, August 13, we can expect a statement by Beijing once the conferences resume on Monday, August 16.
- Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Nong Rong, has called on Prime Minister Imran Khan to convey the message that China hopes Pakistan will "find out the truth of the Dasu terrorist attack as soon as possible and severely punish the real perpetrators".

III. India Watch

- As stated in our report on 13.8.21, sources had stated that China was preparing to recognize the Taliban should Kabul fall. While the outcome of the fall of the Ghani government --and certainly the speed with which it took place --is not ideally what China wanted as Beijing did support the negotiation process between Ghani-Taliban). Yet, Beijing is still the best placed major power to coordinate with the Taliban considering its deep ties with the group. While Beijing is yet to formally acknowledge the Taliban, it may do so soon, albiet it will continue to push Taliban to move away from terrorist activities and instead become more political, as it conveyed to the Taliban delegation China welcomed in Tianjin this month.
- India's absence from the decision making table in Kabul --especially as Pakistan and China's presence remains extremely strong-- is a major diplomatic setback for New Delhi. India could still sway the rhetoric in its favor; the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) which is under India's Presidency at present, is set to convene 16.8.21 onwards to discuss the situation in Kabul. It will be interesting to see how New Delhi will tackle the Kabul-debate while looking to present itself as a strong international leader at a time of regional turmoil in Asia. Success at this should shape positively both its UNSC permanent membership bid as well as its power-position in one of the key geo-political and security turmoil situations in its strategic neighbourhood wherein India is a 'net security provider'.
- Qui Linhui's interview provides insight into domestic drills Chinese Air Force conducts; he has been termed the "double trump card" of the "golden helmet" and "golden darts" exercises, and was named "the [most] advanced individual in military training of the whole army". In 2018, Qiu Linhui served as the person in charge of a specific course in the modification of the new J-16 aircraft while stating that he trains troops according to his ideology of "offense is the best defense". The interview provides important insight about China's "Golden Helmet" exercise. With his skill and rank in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), it is extremely likely that a soldier like Qui Linhui would lead the charge in a potential China offensive into Taiwan.
- Xi Jinping has in a virtual summit exchanges messages with the President of Iran; this marks Xi's first appearance post Lhasa wherein he has not sent a written statement, indicating that the Beidaihe Meeting may have concluded. Nonetheless, it is still not a physical appearance; but as the FMPRC was also on recess from July 30-August 16, the timing for Beidaihe would have been now.