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**BEIJING RAPS TAIWAN PRESIDENT TSAI ING-WEN OVER CALL TO 'CONSTRAIN' CHINA**

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China lashed out Wednesday (June 27) at Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen after she urged the international community in an AFP interview to "constrain" China before it does irreparable damage to global democracy.

Her comments are "misleading and totally baseless", the spokesman for Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office told a regular press conference.

Tsai's "objective is to create emnity between compatriots across the straits", said Ma Xiao Guang, referring to Chinese separated by the Taiwan Strait.

She is "plotting to contain the great rejuvenation of the Chinese race", he said, adding that she "overestimates her own influence".

A transcript of Ma's remarks was published by the official Xinhua news agency.

In the interview on Monday, Tsai urged overseas nations to unite with Taiwan in defending themselves against China's expansionist aims and protecting shared liberal values.

"This is not just Taiwan's challenge, it is a challenge for the region and the world as a whole, because today it's Taiwan, but tomorrow it may be any other country that will have to face the expansion of China's influence," Tsai told AFP.

"Their democracy, freedom and freedom to do business will one day be affected by China," Tsai added.

Her comments follow a sustained period of pressure by China on Taiwan, which Beijing sees as part of its territory, to be reunified by force if necessary.

Self-ruling Taiwan is a democracy and sees itself as a sovereign country, although it has never formally declared independence from the mainland.

An increasingly hardline President Xi Jinping has made it clear that what he terms as threats to China's territorial integrity will not be tolerated.

China is deeply suspicious of Tsai since her Democratic Progressive Party is traditionally pro-independence.

Since she took office in 2016, Beijing has ramped up military drills near the island and has successfully pressured some major international companies to list Taiwan as part of China on their websites.

It has also exerted diplomatic pressure by ensuring Taiwan's exclusion from major international forums and wooing away some of its few remaining official allies.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/beijing-raps-taiwan-president-tsai-ing-wen-over-call-to-constrain-china>

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