

Congressmen ignorant of law: PM

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It is pointless to respond to their resolution officially, says Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri: The resolution filed by seven US congressmen asking for a retrial of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's court hearing shows ignorance of the law, and Malaysia could not be bothered to respond officially.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the congressmen "don't understand the rule of law ... it doesn't permit the prime minister or the government to order a retrial.

"If they want a retrial, they can go and read the law books and find out in what cases a retrial is permitted."

Mahathir also said that to call for a retrial would show a lack of confidence in the judiciary, which would mean that the judges should be removed.

"How did they get to be congressmen if they don't know the law? Actually these people should not become congressmen.

"They are not fit to become congressmen of the most powerful country in the world. If that is the kind of congressman they have, then I am sorry for them."

Mahathir spoke to reporters after launching Mara's Golden Jubilee cele-

brations.

He said the US Congress can make any resolution but it cannot do anything to Malaysia, and added that he could not be bothered to make an official protest about the resolution.

The resolution, filed by the congressmen on Oct 7, called for the Malaysian government to provide Anwar with a new trial under fair and transparent procedures or dismiss all the charges against him.

Mahathir said what is more embarrassing than the congressmen's action is that it was prompted by several Malaysians.

"This is something that is treasonable ... it's treachery. You go to other people and ask them to attack our country. Whatever way that is, it is wrong," he said.

He advised those who are dissatisfied to use the proper channels, such as during elections, to air their grouses.

Meanwhile, Mahathir commented that it may be difficult to maintain a good relationship with the United States if Al Gore is elected president in the elections on Nov 7.

"We know Al Gore. He is the only man who can go to a country and tell the people to riot against the government, in front of the government. I think that is bad manners to the extreme. He needs to be taught some good manners."