



DR MAHATHIR: I'm not asking for an apology.

Dr M: I'm not interfering

Former PM just wants the facts and figures

SINGAPORE, Thurs. — Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has dismissed notions he is still "pulling the strings" of the current administration, saying he had to come out in the open when he was drawn into an issue.

"I'm a retired person," he said on Channel News Asia's *One On One* programme.

"I made a resolution on stepping down that I would not bother the Gov-

ernment, unless, of course, like the at Proton issue, I am drawn into it," he said in the interview aired last night.

Elaborating on the controversy, Dr Mahathir, who is the Proton adviser, said he was protective of the national car as it was facing unfair competition.

Dr Mahathir had alleged that the uncontrolled issuance of Approved Permits (APs) to import cars by the In-

ternational Trade and Industry Ministry had caused the entry of relatively cheap foreign-made vehicles into the country, as well as the malpractice of under-declaration, which jeopardised the sales of the national car.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz has faced a barrage of criticism over the issue, including calls for her to apologise to Dr Mahathir

and more recently, for her to resign.

Asked about the seriousness of his exchange with Rafidah, Dr Mahathir said: "Not serious. I only wanted the facts to be known.

"I'm not asking for an apology.

"All I'm asking for are the facts and figures."

Dr Mahathir said on a level playing field, Proton would be able to compete with foreign-made cars. — Bernama

' I made a resolution that I would not bother the Government... unless, of course, I was drawn into it'

Dr Mahathir