

Mahathir had no bad intentions: Syed Hamid

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FOREIGN Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar came to the defence of former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday when Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Ipoh Timur) tried to "attack" him on the cancelled bridge project issue.

Syed Hamid said what Mahathir had written in his open letter dated last Saturday and posted on Kelab Maya Umno's (Umno Virtual Club) website was only his opinion, and that he had no adverse intentions against anyone.

At the Dewan Rakyat

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On the other hand, Syed Hamid said, Lim appeared to have bad intentions against Mahathir when he asked whether the former prime minister could be "arrested, charged and jailed" for publishing

several supposedly classified letters.

"From the very beginning, I can sense that Lim has bad intentions. I don't think Mahathir had any intentions. That was his opinion.

All of us are entitled to our opinions," Syed Hamid said when winding up the debate on the Ninth Malaysia Plan for the ministry.

"Usually, Lim would be the one opposing the Official Secrets Act, but this time he asked for it (to be imposed)."

Lim had said Mahathir had posted on the website several letters of correspondence between Singapore and Wisma Putra, which were not included in Foreign Ministry ambassador-at-large Tan Sri Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak's statement to the press on Monday.

"Are Wisma Putra and the cabinet going to declassify all those documents so the public will know about them, or will action be taken against Mahathir - arrest, charge and jail him?" Lim asked.

Syed Hamid said it was unfair of Lim to make Mahathir a topic of debate or to attack him with "wild allegations" because he had contributed a great deal to the country and could not now defend himself in parliament.