

[Dr Mahathir: Malaysia a 'half-past-six country with no guts' if ...](#)

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PUTRAJAYA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad returned from a two-week holiday in London yesterday as defiant as ever, refusing to cease disputing the Government's decision to scrap the Johor Strait bridge project.

He said as a citizen, he had a right to do so if the country's sovereignty was surrendered.

"If you surrender your sovereignty to Singapore ... I think this is a half-past-six country which has no guts," the former prime minister told reporters at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport on his return.

"I promised not to interfere in politics and I have not said anything about many things done which were wrong. But this is the limit — to surrender your sovereignty to Singapore as if you are scared of them. This does not speak well of your self-respect."

Asked to what extent he would pursue the matter, Dr Mahathir said:

"I cannot go to war ... I have no power."

He dismissed talk that Umno members were worried that his conflict with the present administration over the bridge issue would disunite Umno. The bridge issue, he said, had nothing to do with disunity and was about self-respect. Asked why he had not given his recent open letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi instead of distributing it to Umno members, Dr Mahathir said:

"I did not write the letter to him. What for? Even if I talk to you (the media), it won't see the light of day in the papers.

"Even if I were to give it to you to publish, you will not do it. Even if you do, Kalimullah will chop it," he said, referring to New Straits Times Press deputy chairman and editorial adviser Datuk Kalimullah Hassan. However, Dr Mahathir described his relationship with Abdullah as "very fine and very good".

"I am unhappy only when you kowtow. This is our country, yet we have to seek permission from another country to build a bridge on our side. Where is the sovereignty?"