

PM: Singapore overreacted

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'Visit by Johor MB to disputed waters not intentional'

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PETALING JAYA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says Singapore overreacted to the recent visit by the Johor Menteri Besar to the disputed waters between the two countries.

The Prime Minister said Singapore's reaction to Datuk Osman Sopian's visit was quite severe "as if they are going to war".

While he acknowledged that Osman's visit was without the federal government's approval, Dr Mahathir said the MB had thought it was Johor waters.

"Well, the MB went without our permission. He thought that it was Johor waters, that's why he went there.

"The reaction to him going there was quite severe as if you were going to war," he said in response to a question after delivering a talk at Oxford Union Society in London on Friday.

The talk and question-and-answer session was uploaded on Dr Mahathir's official Facebook page.

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It is not Singapore waters either. It is international waters and the MB can go into international waters without Singapore sending warships to chase him away.

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad



When the individual who asked the question pointed out that Osman was not in neutral waters but in waters which Malaysia had disputed last year, Dr Mahathir retorted that the area did not belong to Singapore either.

"It is not Singapore waters either. It is international waters and the MB can go into international waters without Singapore sending warships to chase him away," he said.

Asked whether Malaysia would

follow the move by several countries in banning Chinese telco giant Huawei from providing 5G equipment for fear of cyber espionage, he said a study would be conducted on the matter.

He said Huawei had not committed any wrongdoing in Malaysia.

"What Germany wants to do is for Germany to decide, and what Canada wants to do is also for them to decide.

"But Malaysia is not going to just follow what other people are doing.

"We have to study and find out whether there is a basis for the action that they took against this company," he said.

After the United States, Britain, Poland, Australia and New Zealand, Germany is the latest country to consider the ban over the worry that Huawei's devices could be used for spying by Chinese authorities.

Asked about the cancellation of several Chinese-linked projects in Malaysia as defiance against China's purported dominance in the region, Dr Mahathir said he did not necessarily agree with such talk.

"When I was in China, someone was talking about the Chinese wanting to dominate. I just pointed out that there are other forms of colonialism, including economic colonialism.

"That is my right to answer. I have to stand up and express my opinion, I cannot be saying nice things to everybody.

"Sometimes I say nasty things. They have a right to say nasty things to me," he said.