

# Dr M: Govt to make own stand on China.

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government would make its independent decisions on China despite Western suspicions of Beijing's cyberespionage involvement, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

In an interview with *South China Morning Post* published yesterday, he said fear would not sway both countries' longstanding relations but instead the end-goal was to work together with China, Malaysia's largest trading partner.

"Whatever may be our attitude towards China, we have to admit that China is a big power. It is a regional power and we need to deal with them.

"We need to understand their policies and strategies, and we have to make adjustments so that we can gain some benefit from China's policies," Dr Mahathir said in the interview in Manila, where he was on a three-day visit.

He said the Asean region must have a "common stand" on China and collectively deal with the superpower.

He added that Malaysia had yet to find Chinese telecommunications firm Huawei to be a threat to Malaysia's national security, but the government was "watching closely".

On the debt-trap accusation against China, Dr Mahathir said the Chinese, who were naturally good business people, would "see opportunities and with their capital they want to penetrate areas where before they had no representation or little representation".

But he said every sovereign state could decide if it should take on foreign loans.

"You make that decision, knowing that capital flowing into the country exerts some influence over the country.

"So it is up to the countries concerned to make sure that the money flowing into their country is not borrowed money, is not money for infrastructure, but may be limited to money for investment in productive processes." **Bernama**