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Abdul Aziz cannot fathom Anwar's hatred for him

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Prime Minister's political secretary Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin said today he had no idea why Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim harboured hatred towards him.

He said he never had any ill-intentions towards the former Deputy Prime Minister.

"There is no case (of disagreement with Anwar) because I have not done anything to him."

He was speaking after being sworn in as Senator before Dewan Negara president Tan Sri Mohamed Yaacob in Parliament House.

Abdul Aziz, 62, will serve a three-year term beginning Nov 2.

Asked if he had received threats from any party after Anwar's sacking, Abdul Aziz said: "There was no threat and if there is I am not afraid ... I will refer it to the Prime Minister."

He said he was not so clever to become the "mastermind" behind the alleged conspiracy to topple Anwar and the alleged arsenic poisoning of Anwar as claimed by the latter and Opposition parties.

"These accusations that I am the mastermind are baseless. I heard that whatever happened to Anwar, Aziz Shamsuddin had a hand in it."

He said to his understanding, a conspiracy involved those below trying to topple those above them.

"Those above do not have to do anything to topple those below. In the case of Dr Mahathir (Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad), it is his prerogative to remove anyone. But there are efforts to topple Dr Mahathir."

Abdul Aziz and Anwar's paths crossed in 1975 when the former was asked by Dr Mahathir, who was then Education Minister, to defuse demonstrations in University Malaya that involved Anwar.

He was then president of UM's Bahasa Melayu Association.

"I was introduced by Pak Lah (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) to Dr Mahathir to find a way to make students understand the importance of being responsible.

"At that time, the starvation issue in Baling was the students' agenda even though in reality there was no such issue."

Abdul Aziz has been Dr Mahathir's political secretary for 18 years beginning 1981.

Prior to that, he was Dr Mahathir's special officer when Dr Mahathir was Education Minister.

He had secured the job immediately after graduating from UM with a bachelor's degree in International Relations History in 1975.

Asked about his future plans, Abdul Aziz said he would continue to serve the Prime Minister.

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