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Disclosure-Paal

ANWAR'S FRIEND IN WASHINGTON MOVES UP

By: Salmly Hashim

WASHINGTON, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Douglas H. Paal, head of the Asia Pacific Policy Center (APPC), here in Washington DC, is moving up and moving on.

He has moved from a nondescript building on the fringe of the capital city to a marbled-glazed structure in the middle of Washington's power corridor.

The man who allegedly received US\$10 million from former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, has not forgotten his benefactor.

He was present at the recent Asia Society talk on Malaysia where he rose to the defence of his former client, whom he often described as a "good friend."

Although the APPC now occupies a deluxe suite, the organisation seems to be staffed only by Mr Paal.

No one was available for comments and calls to Paal's new office were taken by an answering machine.

Former Bank Negara assistant governor Datuk Abdul Murad Khalid has alleged that he was instructed by Anwar to arrange payments of US\$10 million in contributions to APPC and Paal, and an additional annual payment of US\$3 million for running the centre in Washington.

Paal, in a statement, disputed the amount cited by Murad claiming that the sum he had received from Anwar and friends was far less than US\$10 million.

Paal, a former analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), had served as special assistant for national security affairs under the Bush and Reagan administrations, and as senior director for Asian Affairs on the National Security Council.

Established by Paal in 1993 as a non-profit think-tank, APPC was created to promote closer ties between business and political leaders in the US and in the Asia Pacific.

Under Anwar's patronage, the centre organised four Pacific Dialogues in Malaysia between 1994 and 1998 where senior cabinet ministers from the Asia Pacific, and US Congressmen, including former senator Sam Nunn and then senator William Cohen, built relations and exchanged ideas on economic, political and security issues.

Dave Brown, who left APPC six months ago, said that he never attended the dialogue in Malaysia because "there was no room for bag carriers" in the "by-invitation only" meetings.

Now a researcher at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at the Johns Hopkins University, Brown said the centre did receive money from Malaysian and American donors.

"I don't know the exact financial arrangement, but I know that we never received 10 million dollars - otherwise, we'd all be fat cats by now," Brown said.

James Clad, a one-time associate of Paal, said over the telephone that he did not know if the allegations were true because he merely wrote articles on Thailand, Indonesia, India and the Philippines in the brief period he was at APPC.

Clad, who teaches South East Asian Studies at Georgetown University left APPC in 1995 and said that he never attended any of the Pacific Dialogues in Malaysia.

"I have nothing to hide but I really don't know how the centre was

funded," said Clad who was an analyst at the centre for six months.

Murad, in his statutory declaration alleged, "APPC and Douglas H. Paal are one of the main vehicles used by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to promote his image in the Western countries, mainly in Washington, the United Kingdom and other European countries.

Murad further claimed that APPC lobbied strongly for Anwar with the international media.

Paal openly sympathises with Anwar and at a hearing on "Malaysia: Assessing the Mahathir Agenda" on Capitol Hill on June 16, said: "My interest [in Malaysia] was deepened further by the magnetic personality of former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, now jailed and undergoing further trial on lurid charges in a courtroom in Kuala Lumpur.

"Anwar became a good friend, as well as a benign face for Malaysia to the outside world, during his term in office," he said in his testimony before the House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

While Paal blasted Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his "harsh tongue lashings" against the West, he complimented Anwar and said, "One of the charms of former deputy prime minister Anwar was that he did not naturally indulge himself in this posturing. With Mahathir we have come to expect it."

Paal recommended to the subcommittee that the US maintain "a correct, but cool relationship with the Mahathir government."

-- BERNAMA

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