

20 JUN 1999

Umno-Windingup (Daim)

DAIM DENIES ALLEGATIONS BY ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, known as being reticent, today denied all allegations against him made by former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In windingup the debate on economic matters in the 53rd Umno general assembly here, he described Anwar as one who likes to "tell stories halfway but without any proof" and "to stab from behind".

One allegation was that Daim had taken out RM1 billion in a flight to Zurich.

The captain of the airplane was alleged to have informed Bank Negara Malaysia of the matter which then told Anwar about it and Anwar later conveyed it to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Daim denied the allegation, saying he had never seen such amount of money and that he prefers to use credit cards.

Daim said the allegation was less than convincing as such an amount of money would have needed several briefcases which also needed to be scanned at the airport and that it was impossible to escape detection.

Of the alleged flight, Daim said he did not stopover in Zurich but had instead gone to Budapest and Prague for speaking engagements before returning to Malaysia.

He said Anwar as the Finance Minister then should have checked with Bank Negara as to why such a huge amount had not been issued in a cheque.

Daim said Dr Mahathir himself had looked into the allegation and the captain of the airplane had confirmed in a letter to the Prime Minister that the allegation was false.

Another allegation concerned letters mentioned by Anwar in court which said Daim had taken money belonging to the party for himself.

Daim said when he wanted to retire as Umno treasurer in 1991, he had sought the permission of the Umno president to handover all letters pledging donations to Umno to the party president and his deputy.

"The letters were actually with him but he gave the impression that he had found them or somebody gave them to him...whereas I had handed them over to him. The letters were private and confidential and addressed to the Umno treasurer, not in my name," he said.

With this allegation, he said it was difficult to regain the trust of these donors.

"Now people are afraid to give donations. I think his (Anwar) idea was to make it difficult for Umno, to be without money when people no longer give donations.

"He only tells half-truths. And, when I wanted to retire as treasurer, I went to see him and he urged me to stay on, that I was the only one capable of doing the job. We believed him but he stabbed us in the back," he said.

Daim said Umno is now free of debts and the Putra World Trade Centre is now owned by Umno with the rentals received used to manage the party and its activities.

Daim also denied allegations that the Prime Minister has no intention to step down. He said Dr Mahathir had often repeated his intention to do so in 1998.

"In fact, before nomination day in the 1995 general election, many people knew that the Prime Minister wanted to retire," he said.

Anwar, who was then campaigning in Pulau Pinang, had met Daim in Sungai

Petani and they went together to persuade Dr Mahathir not to step down.

"Then in 1996, he requested me to ask the party president when he wanted to step down. Now he says he had never heard of the PM wanting to retire," said Daim.

He said when the Prime Minister wanted to step down in 1998, Anwar had proposed a motion that the posts of party president and deputy president should not be contested.

Daim said he and Anwar had in 1997 again persuaded the Prime Minister not to step down as the economy was then facing a crisis.

On allegations that he (Daim) had issued gaming licences in Sabah, he said this happened in 1996 when he (Daim) was not the Finance Minister.

Daim said Anwar had also mentioned that many ministers were against the Anti-Corruption Act.

He said the allegation was baseless as if it were true, the Act would not have been approved by the Cabinet.

-- BERNAMA
SHO MAI THG