

19/06/1999

Proof Anwar, cronies cooperated with foreigners

THERE is now proof that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his associates had cooperated with foreigners and even contributed funds to them, Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said. He referred to the confession by a US-based Asia Pacific Policy Centre that it had collaborated with Anwar and benefited from donations from Anwar and his associates.

"It shows that there is cooperation between insiders and outsiders," Dr Mahathir said. He paused from the prepared text of his presidential speech at the 53rd Umno General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur yesterday to refer to a newspaper article.

Bernama reported from Washington that Centre president Douglas Paal made the confession at a Congressional Sub-Committee hearing on "Malaysia: Assessing the Mahathir Agenda" on Thursday.

The one-and-a-half hour hearing was poorly attended and described by one American observer as a "kangaroo court out to get Malaysia and Mahathir". Paal was one of three witnesses called to the hearing. The other two were Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Ralph Boyce and Dr Linda Lim, a Singaporean teaching at the University of Michigan Business School.

"All this while, the Asia and Pacific Policy Centre has been receiving donations from Anwar. But now, Paal cannot get financial assistance as his source (Anwar) is in jail.

"If anybody wants to give Paal money they can help him organise seminars on Malaysia," Dr Mahathir told the 2,034 Umno delegates attending the three-day assembly.

At the hearing in Washington, Paal, who is seeking sponsorship from another country to run his show, recommended to the US members of Congress that the US maintain a correct but cool relationship with Dr Mahathir's Government.

Dr Mahathir also took a swipe on the US for holding such an unfair hearing without hearing both sides. No representative from Malaysia was called to speak at the hearing.

"They say that our judiciary system is not good and claim that we do not give a fair trial to certain people. But in our country when we charge someone they have an opportunity to defend themselves," he added.

In another break from his prepared text, Dr Mahathir questioned author Datuk Shannon Ahmad's motive behind his political satire novel, "SHIT". In the book Shannon writes of a leader whose name is a Malay profanity, with the acronym PM.

"I don't know why Shannon is angry with me. I have never criticised Shannon or shown anger towards him. I only met him once, in Australia.

"Throughout the period I became Prime Minister, he has been given higher posts and increase in wages. He was appointed a professor and awarded the title of National Laureate. I never stopped his progress," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the situation was made worse when PAS, of which Shannon is a member, has come out in support of the novel and justified its use of profanity.

"As a party which claims to uphold the true Islamic teachings, PAS should not justify the choice of words used by Shannon, claiming that Islam allows profanity, and that even Allah has cursed and used swear words," he said.

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