

Ex-aide: Dr M 'happiest man' after Sheraton Move, but does not show it

Malaysiakini

07 September 2020

PARLIAMENT | Langkawi MP Dr Mahathir Mohamad's former political secretary Muhammad Zahid Md Arip has denied betraying his boss in the Sheraton Move and instead believes that the former prime minister is the happiest person after the coup.

"Whatever it is, I am sure Mahathir is the happiest person now.

"It is just that he does not express that joy. His goal of stopping (PKR president) Anwar Ibrahim from replacing him and to curb DAP's advance was successful," said Muhammad Zahid (above) in his address to the Dewan Negara.

He was appointed as a senator by the new Perikatan Nasional (PN) government that replaced the Pakatan Harapan government, which collapsed after the Sheraton Move.

The Sheraton Move refers to the gathering of MPs at Sheraton Hotel in Petaling

Jaya on the night of Feb 23, which preceded the collapse of the Harapan federal government.

The dinner function saw elected representatives from the opposition joined by Bersatu and PKR defectors gathering in anticipation of taking over as the new government, but the coup was delayed by more than a week after Mahathir refused to endorse the new coalition.

Mahathir, who adamantly refused to work with Umno, had claimed that Muhammad Zahid pressured him to pull Bersatu out of Harapan in party meetings preceding the Sheraton Move.

Mahathir resigned as prime minister after the Sheraton Move on grounds that he had lost majority support but later acknowledged it was a misstep, which paved the way for Bersatu president Muhyiddin Yassin to take over as prime minister under the new PN coalition.

Mahathir, who was the Bersatu chairperson, continued to oppose the new government. He and his allies were later expelled from the party.

Bersatu insiders later claimed Mahathir had indeed been working on a plan to stop Anwar from succeeding him, but the new political configuration, which

included Umno, was not what he had wanted.

Mahathir previously promised to make Anwar prime minister in exchange for PKR, Amanah, and DAP's endorsement for him to lead Harapan.

Muhammad Zahid, in his speech today, said he wanted to address "inaccurate" accusations against him.

"I was not the mastermind of the Sheraton Move. But I admit that a few friends and I were part of a move to block Anwar and DAP, which had the blessing of the seventh prime minister (Mahathir).

"The rest is history. Let me keep them out of respect for Mahathir, who is a great statesperson and who has contributed much to race and country," said Muhammad Zahid.

Former Bersatu Youth chief Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman had previously accused Muhammad Zahid of being a mastermind of the Sheraton Move.

"He (Muhammad Zahid) used Mahathir's name to convince Bersatu leaders to meet up at the hotel, but later claimed he didn't know about the meeting.

"The real traitor is Muhammad Zahid, who used Mahathir's name to gather as many Bersatu MPs to attend the gathering that night," Syed Saddiq said.

Syed Saddiq was among the MPs who had gathered at Sheraton Hotel. Mahathir was absent.

The Muar MP later stuck with Mahathir and refused to back the new coalition. He was later expelled from Bersatu, along with Mahathir.

Mahathir is now gathering his allies who have been expelled from Bersatu under a new Malay-based party called Pejuang.

However, Syed Saddiq is mulling setting up his own multi-racial youth-based platform.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/541608>