

Anwar: I did not appoint Reza
Malaysiakini.com
May 21, 2007

Former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim has refuted Umno Youth's allegation that he was involved in the appointment Shaha Ali Reza, the girlfriend of World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz to the Foundation of the Future.

"I did not appoint Reza to the foundation. She was first assigned by the World Bank through the US State Department to the foundation in late 2005 before I became chair(person)," Anwar said in a statement today.

"The executive committee of the foundation then decided in mid-2006 to regularise the appointment so that she (Reza) advises directly from the World Bank and not the US State Department."

Anwar was responding to Umno Youth which had highlighted reports of his alleged involvement in the appointment process.

Anwar, the foundation chairperson, was alleged to have written to Robin Cleveland, Wolfowitz's counselor at the World Bank, requesting Reza's transfer.

Wolfowitz is said to have arranged for the transfer which raised Reza's salary by 36 percent, from US\$133,000 (RM452,000) to US\$193,590 (RM659,000).

Umno Youth deputy head Khairy Jamaluddin had urged Anwar to clarify his relationship with Wolfowitz, as well as to explain his motive in helming the foundation.

Elected last year

According to Anwar, the proposal for the foundation was announced in Bahrain in November 2005 by foreign and development ministers of the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and the US.

The foundation, an independent body, involves government and civil society participation in supporting civil society organisations that foster democracy and freedom in the Middle East and North Africa.

"From the onset, the foundation obtained pledges of US\$56 million, and thus far only received funds from Turkey, UK and Jordan, while the US has not disbursed any funds to the foundation," said Anwar.

He explained he had been invited to join in the middle of last year, together with representatives from Morocco, Kuwait, Iraq, Spain, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, US, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Switzerland and Qatar.

At the first board meeting in Doha, Qatar, which Anwar attended at the invitation of then Qatar foreign minister and current premier Sheikh Hamad Jassim Jabr Al-Thani, he was unanimously elected as the first honorary chairperson.

He said the board would issue a full statement regarding the matter after its meeting in

Bahrain from May 29-30.

"However, due to the incessant propaganda from the Umno-controlled media, I have decided to issue this statement," said Anwar.

"If there is no clarification by the media on the matter, the foundation will not hesitate to institute legal action against the relevant parties."

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/67490>