

Tun Razak's Former Bodyguard Shares Najib's Political History

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 21 (Bernama) -- "As a subordinate, you must be loyal to the leader, just like Tun Razak's loyalty to Tunku Abdul Rahman," said Datuk Idris Shaari Mat Aris, the former bodyguard of Tun Razak.

Idris Shaari gave this advice to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak in 1999 when the latter was the minister of defence.

He advised Najib to emulate his father Tun Razak who remained loyal to Tunku Abdul Rahman during the race riots which erupted on May 13, 1969.

Then, Najib's father, Tun Razak Hussein was the deputy prime minister, while Tunku Abdul Rahman was the prime minister.

"After the May 13 tragedy, many parties demanded that Tunku Abdul Rahman resign as prime minister and be replaced by Tun Razak.

"However, Tun Razak continued to be loyal to Tunku until he resigned as prime minister," said Idris Shaari when interviewed in conjunction with Najib's 40-year involvement in politics, here recently.

Idris Shaari, 73, who is the private secretary to Najib's mother, Tun Rahah Mohamad Noah is very close to the prime minister.

He began as a bodyguard to Tun Razak on May 1, 1965, when Najib was only 12 years old.

After Tun Razak died on Jan 14, 1976, Idris Shaari was appointed as the private secretary to Tun Rahah and was responsible for family matters.

He witnessed Najib's early involvement in politics until he became the prime minister and taught him how to interact and shake hands with the people.

Ever since childhood, Najib was always open to receiving advice and this made him well liked by the people.

After returning from London, Najib could not speak Malay fluently but he managed to become a good orator and was convincing when delivering his speech.

"He (Najib) was urged to speak soon after being elected the Pekan Member of Parliament. I ran into the car as I could not bear to hear it," said Idris Shaari laughing.

Asked whether Najib had a mentor in politics after his father's death, Idris Shaari said he was a

self-taught person who did not reject advice.

"He is very open, always trying to increase knowledge and improve. I am impressed with the many changes."

He also revealed how Najib helped Tun Mahathir Mohamad to remain as the UMNO president after the party's leadership crisis in 1987.

The crisis divided UMNO into Team A led by Tun Mahathir and Team B led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Idris Shaari claimed that based on his actions, Najib was in favour of Team B led by Tengku Razaliagh.

"As Pahang UMNO Youth chief, he had strong influence on the Pahang delegates. After much persuasion by his mother, Najib backed Tun Mahathir who was elected as the UMNO president."

Idris Shaari said Najib has remained calm despite the many challenges such as the slander thrown at him.

He once asked Najib about the slander and he (Najib) said "Deris (Idris), what do you think?."

"If I did it, it will not only smear my name, but the name of Tun Razak and the Tun Razak family. I cannot do this."

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