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Allegations made to arouse anger

THIS is an extract of the Special Interview with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the military weapons robbery committed by the Al-Ma'unah group, and the killing of two hostages. The interview was aired over RTM and TV3 last night. It was moderated by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) Universiti Malaya Prof Datuk Firdaus Abdullah while the panellists were the Editor-in-Chief of the Utusan Melayu Group Khalid Mohd and TV3 Senior General Manager (News and Current Affairs) Chamil Wariya.

Q: The main subject of this discussion will be the arms robbery incident at Camp 304, Territorial Army Battalion, Grik, and the brutality of the robbers at Bukit Jenalek, Sauk, two weeks ago.

Eventhough all the robbers have been arrested, their irrational action countered and the situation has become peaceful and normal once more, the incident at the military camp at Grik and Bukit Jenalek, Sauk, was stunning, worrying and also bewildering.

We still have a feeling of disbelief and wonder why in this modern and sophisticated era of science and technology, there are still groups which are so easily misled by deviationist teachings and resort to irrational action.

These are among the questions which we will pose to Datuk Seri. Permit me to begin by asking the initial reaction of Datuk Seri on being told of the incident.

A: Firstly when I got this telephone call from (Defence Minister) Datuk Seri Najib (Tun Razak) telling me that a group of more or less 15 people had committed robbery and had taken away a large quantity of weapons from our (military) camp in Grik, I was shocked as this is something which normally does not occur in our country.

I was worried as to whether this was the beginning of something bigger such as a planned rebellion in our country that would probably lead to many deaths, killings and so on. I was really shocked as this normally does not happen in our country.