

State Dept. Says Cult Withdrew Authorization for Visit by Ryan

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 15 — The People's Temple withdrew permission it had given Representative Leo J. Ryan to visit its Jonestown settlement in Guyana when it learned that reporters and relatives of members of the cult would accompany him on his investigation of the cult last month, the State Department said today.

This information was included in a 6,400-word report by Douglas J. Bennet Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, to Representative Clement J. Zablocki, Democrat of Wisconsin.

Mr. Zablocki, who is chairman of the House International Relations Committee, had sent 13 questions to Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance about the State Department's handling of the Jonestown matter, in which more than 900 cult members were killed or committed suicide after Mr. Ryan, a California Democrat, and four others were killed at an airstrip near the cult's settlement.

After People's Temple representatives informed officials of the United States Embassy in Georgetown, the capital of Guyana, that Mr. Ryan's party would not be received if it included reporters and relatives, the embassy and the Guyanese Government asked the sect's leaders to change their mind and permit the visit, Mr. Bennet said.

"The Temple then agreed to the visit on the conditions that the delegation include people sympathetic to the Temple, that there be no media coverage associated with the visit to Jonestown, and that the Temple's attorney, Mark Lane, accompany the delegation to Jonestown," Mr. Bennet told Mr. Zablocki.

Newsmen in Ryan Party

"Congressman Ryan's party, including newsmen and some concerned relatives, left for Jonestown at midday on Nov. 17," he said. "At that time, permission had not been received from the People's Temple for the visit."

The only report the embassy received thereafter from the Ryan party came that afternoon, when an embassy officer used the People's Temple radio to speak to Richard Dwyer, the embassy's deputy chief, who had accompanied the

Ryan party to Jonestown. Mr. Dwyer reported that the Ryan party had been admitted to Jonestown "and that all was going well."

The next afternoon John R. Burke, the United States Ambassador to Guyana, received an urgent message from Forbes Burnham, the Guyanese Prime Minister, reporting that shots had been fired at an airstrip about six miles from Jonestown and that Mr. Ryan and others with him might have been killed, Mr. Bennet said.

He also said the State Department had not warned Mr. Ryan of the possibility of physical danger in connection with the Jonestown visit because "there was no prior instance, known or alleged, of the use of physical violence against a visitor," and added that "we did not anticipate violence."

Discussion With 2 Defectors

State Department officials had discussed the existence of weapons in Jonestown with Mr. Ryan and two defectors from the People's Temple on Nov. 13, Mr. Bennet said.

At that meeting, Deborah Layton Blakey, who had warned the State Department last May of the existence of the Rev. Jim Jones's mass suicide plan, "noted that there was a squad of security guards at Jonestown who often carried pistols," Mr. Bennet said.

"A department representative asked Mrs. Blakey whether the guards had ever drawn their weapons to injure or intimidate people," he continued. "Mrs. Blakey responded in the negative."

Mr. Bennet said that a search of State Department records after the mass deaths at Jonestown turned up an interim report by the United States Customs Service last year on an investigation it had carried out between February and August of 1977 concerning "the possible illegal export of up to 170 guns from California to Jonestown."

"The department apparently received no further reports of this investigation," he said, adding that the Customs Service had reported that subsequent investigations resulted in one search of a shipment bound for Guyana "but that no contraband was discovered."