

Rep. Ryan, Mark Lane in Gun Attack

(Lead Story)

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WASHINGTON — The State Department said late Saturday it has been told U.S. Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.), and a number of reporters have been shot and killed after an attack on the congressman's fact-finding mission at the airport in Port Kaituma, Guyana.

Ryan was leading a 13-person delegation investigating a controversial American religious settlement at Jonestown in the South American country.

State Department spokesman Tom Reston said the report reached Washington by a flash message from the U.S. embassy in Guyana, formerly a British Colony. Reston said the shooting and Ryan's death have not been confirmed.

Reston said the report was relayed by a pilot who was flying Ryan, a group of reporters and a Ryan staff worker, to the People's Temple, a settlement of about 1200 Americans established in Guyana a year ago by Jim Jones, a former San Francisco city official.

The pilot escaped by flying away from the attackers in one of two planes

on the landing strip near the settlement.

Police in Georgetown, Guyana, quoted police in Port Kaituma, about 150 miles northwest of the capital, as confirming "about 20 people" were killed in the gun attack.

Jeff Dieterich, of the State Department's Latin American desk, said the pilot, who has not been identified by name or nationality, reported it appeared an entire NBC-TV crew headed by correspondent Don Harris, was shot along with Ryan. It was unclear about the crew's condition, Dieterich said. Also left behind after the shooting was Mark Lane, the lawyer representing James Earl Ray, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s convicted assassin. Lane was along as counsel for Jones.

Dieterich said reports from the U.S. mission showed that two planes had flown to Jonestown and were preparing to leave when the shooting broke out.

He said some nine members of the controversial settlement were leaving with Ryan and had boarded one of the

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planes when one of the nine pulled a gun and began shooting. He said the shots apparently were a signal for attack by a group of armed men on a nearby tractor-trailer.

The pilot and crew members from the plane that was to carry the departing sect members jumped from the plane, Dieterich said, ran to a second plane and flew from the remote Port Kaituma strip.

The pilot reported general panic with Ryan and the NBC crew lying as if dead, others still moving but wounded and still others running for cover.

Dieterich said the Port Kaituma strip is not lighted and is blocked by the damaged plane. He said Guyana officials were flying soldiers and police to a nearby, lighted airport. He said confirmation of the shootings probably would not be available before first light Sunday morning.