

U.S.A. TO STEP UP THE SEARCH FOR ALIEN LIFE IN SPACE

According to various reports in the British press at the end of 1982, NASA have secured an unexpected blessing from the U.S. Congress. This means far more funds, and it is reported that they are now to forge ahead with a radio search programme for alien civilisations in Space which will be "millions of times more extensive than any such programme previously undertaken."

With a new annual budget of the equivalent of a thousand-million pounds sterling, the astronomers hope in the next few years to scan eight million radio frequencies in search of signals likely to be of artificial origin.

The search will be concentrated upon some 773 stars which lie within 80 light-years of Earth and whose age and stability would appear to be such that there might be inhabited planets in existence around them.

Giant telescopes, controlled by NASA and located in the USA (California), Australia, and Spain will also

assist in the programme and be linked up to a special computer.

The radio-frequencies that have been selected for scrutiny lie in or near the "water-hole", where there is the least loss in signal-strength as it traverses the vast tracts of interstellar Space. It includes the frequencies of hydrogen and hydroxyl, which combine to form water.

The Congress decision to agree to an expansion of NASA's Space Search effort resulted from a discussion between Professor Carl Sagan and Senator William Proxmire. The latter had previously always been one of the principal opponents of the idea of spending more cash on the search for alien life, saying that it was nothing but a stupendous waste, but apparently Sagan was able to convince him, not only that it would be cheap at the price, but also that it might be highly dangerous for mankind to remain ignorant of what there was in the Space around us.

UFOs OVER THE ANDES: OFFICIAL ARGENTINE GENDARMERÍA REPORTS REVEALED

Oscar Adolfo Uriondo (Buenos Aires)

South American Representative of STENDEK-CEI of Barcelona

(Translation from Spanish)

I AM in a position to furnish some important information deriving from the *Gendarmería* of Argentina, who are a military body charged with the duty of surveillance of the nation's frontiers. These reports came to me via the lawyer Antonio N. Baragiola, who, in turn, had got them directly from an officer of the *Gendarmería*. As many years (14) have elapsed since the events described herein, I am now venturing to make the reports public. The manner in which they are presented has been modified somewhat, but all the facts have been strictly respected.

I have already had the Spanish version of this article published in the journal STENDEK (No. 42, December 1980) under the title: *Misteriosos Fenómenos Luminosos en Neuquén (Argentina)*, and now forward it to you for publication in FSR.

* * * * *

During the year 1968 Argentina had one of the most important UFO waves ever experienced in the Southern Hemisphere. It reached its peak in the winter months (July-August). This exceptional degree of UFO activity was extremely widely reported in the press, so much so that at first it might well have been suspected that the unusual increase in the volume of reports was of purely sociological origin — that is to say, triggered off and then kept going by the media, and actually devoid of any factual reality. However, at that date it was still quite unknown to the public that, several months previously, right at the beginning of 1968, there had, in fact, been a veritable "minor wave" that was quite unknown to anybody outside certain small circles of the Military. The eyewitnesses who had observed this substantial series of sightings — none of which was ever made public — were all members of the Argentinian *Gendarmería Nacional*, and their reports, all official, and all directed to their own

service superiors, today constitute a highly valuable documentary source. The incidents covered in these reports all relate to the extreme far north-western districts of the Province of Neuquén, in a mountainous, Andean region, where the terrain is precipitous and in some parts totally inaccessible.

A Type — 1 Sighting at Pichi Neuquén

At 8.00 p.m. on December 28, 1967, something carrying a powerful white light flew over the Pichi Neuquén Gendarmería Section Headquarters and then landed on the central part of the mountain range at a spot some three or four kilometres distant, towards the south-west. Those present in the Gendarmería Headquarters at the time were Sub-Ensign Carlos Rodolfo Michaux, Sergeant-Adjutant Manuel José Ramos, Sergeant Oscar M. Aguilera, First Corporal Gualberto Ginez, Corporals Angel Gutiérrez and Antonio Lorenzatto, and Gendarme Gregorio Riquelme.

Throughout the next few days a similar luminous phenomenon occurred in the same area, its time of appearance varying between 10.00 p.m. and 10.55 p.m. On these occasions there were colour changes in the phenomenon, passing from a vivid red all the way to white.

Almost a month later, on January 23, 1968, at 10.30 p.m., the personnel of the same unit of the Gendarmería Nacional were once more witnesses of a phenomenon presenting very strange features. This time the eyewitnesses included Major Juan B. Farías, First Corporal Carlos B. Leguiza, and Gendarme Ramón N. Penros.

There is a fundamental agreement in the descriptions given: namely a light of unknown nature, described as a powerful glow, of great size and changing hues, stationary at the foot of the peak known as El Funicular, distant some 3,000 or 4,000 metres from the Gendarmería Section Barracks at Pichi Neuquén. When shots were fired into the air to see whether there would be any reaction from the phenomenon, the white light vanished, and in its place a reddish light appeared for a very brief time.

One of the eyewitnesses, Deputy-Sergeant Ramos, reported that on the following night there was a repetition of the phenomenon. He also stated that prior to that date, on some 15 to 20 occasions starting from December 1967, he had already seen bright glows above the same mountain peak and over several other peaks in the region.

On one particular night he saw an "incandescent red ball" flying low and very fast over the Gendarmería Barracks, blinding witnesses with its glare, and leaving a fiery trail behind it, after which it flew off and seemed to settle on the flank of the El Funicular Peak.

At the same time, namely at 00.45 a.m. on the same

day, January 23, 1968, at Las Termas de Copahue, a place some 140km further to the south from Pichi Neuquén, an unidentified luminous object was sighted by a group of witnesses who included a number of members of the Argentine Army.

The object settled on a peak near Las Termas de Copahue, and remained there for three hours, finally departing silently and at high speed. When, some time later, the landing site was inspected, it was found that bushes over an area of some 180 metres in diameter were burnt. A report of the matter was published in various Argentine newspapers, including *La Voz del Interior* (published in Córdoba), and *La Razón* of Buenos Aires.

These phenomena have occurred almost always at night. However, there have been a few that took place in the earliest hours, while it was still daylight. Thus, for example, on January 30, 1968, at 5.00 p.m., Top-Sergeant Juan de la Cruz Gomez, who was at the main entrance of the Pichi Neuquén Gendarmería Barracks, saw a strange circular, luminous, phenomenon of an orange-yellow colour and of an apparent diameter of a metre or so, sitting on the slopes of the Range about 3km distant *It was brighter than the light of the Sun.* This sighting lasted some 30 seconds. When the phenomenon vanished, it did so instantaneously.

UFOs at Chos Malal

During the following months, glowing objects continued to be seen in other areas of the Province of Neuquén, namely in the vicinity of Chos Malal.

On May 19, Top-Sergeant Félix Alberto Fernández of the Gendarmería Section based on El Cholar, looked out through a window of the Barracks, and saw a powerful light arising on the north-eastern horizon. It was travelling towards the west, and growing larger as it drew nearer to the witness, until its apparent diameter was some 30cm. It was a circular object emitting a vivid blue light, while from its rear part it gave out a glowing trail of the same colour. No sound from it was heard, and it was flying on a fairly regular course westward as indicated, finally vanishing behind the nearby peaks. The thing had happened so quickly that Sergeant Fernández had not the time to call the rest of the Headquarters staff to see the phenomenon.

In the night of July 17/18, 1968, at approximately 15 minutes after midnight, residents of Chos Malal saw three unidentified objects in a totally clear sky, and reported the matter to the Gendarmería authorities — in this case to Major Juan B. Farías.

A banker named Juan José Olivero Jr., his wife, Olga Isabel Schouabs de Olivero, and a businessman named Calisio Brizzi, were travelling by car along National Highway No. 40 from Zapala, and when crossing the bridge over the river Neuquén, at the outskirts of Chos Malal, they saw the three UFOs sta-

tionary towards the south-west, at an angle of 40° or 50° above the horizon. The three UFOs were in line horizontally, and each of them was a luminous disc of an apparent size equal to half that of the Full Moon, reddish in colour, with no variations or peripheral shadings. The eyewitnesses remained there observing it for twenty to thirty minutes, and then drove on, and during that period the three UFOs had not moved.

Then again in August 1968 there was another sighting, reported in detail by a Gendarmería Commission party who were returning at the time from the Las Ovejas Section to Chos Malal in the Gendarmería's jeep, registration number CN 1398. The sighting occurred close to the place known as Chacay Melehue, and the Gendarmería party consisted of Top-Sergeant Luis María Elizaincin, the driver, Corporal-Mechanic Dionisio García, and Gendarme Sixto F. Mendoza.

First to catch sight of the phenomenon was the driver, Corporal García, who pulled up and pointed the UFO out to his companions. The leader of the group, Top—Sergeant Elizaincin, ordered the jeep's lights to be turned off, and the party were accordingly able to see, at a distance of 800 to 1,000 metres or so, on the edge of one of the mountains, and against a clear sky full of stars, a glowing reddish light which was moving regularly from left to right and back again and also up and down, and several times they saw it dip below the rim of the ridge. Finally, it vanished at high speed towards the south-east.

The object in this case was egg-shaped, with a protuberance on the upper part, "like a Derby hat", and of the apparent approximate size of a quarter of the Full Moon. Its light was intensely vivid, of a reddish tinge, and the under-part of it was emitting flashes. The phenomenon was patently quite different from the stars so visible in the sky at that hour — different in respect of size, of colour, of movement, etc. The sighting, timed by watch, lasted from 0807 p.m. until 0815 p.m.

Probable Electromagnetic Effects

Among this series of sightings reported by the Argentine Gendarmería there are two that seem to involve effects of an electromagnetic nature. The first of these two cases was at fifteen minutes past midnight on July 16, 1968, at the place known as Los Menucos, on the Andacollo-Chos Malal section of Provincial Highway No. 101. A Gendarmería group were returning by jeep from Las Ovejas when they observed a luminous object which crossed the road at a distance of some 500 metres in front of them, and at an angular altitude of around 40°-45°. It was travelling extremely slowly, stopping at times, and then finally descending vertically and vanishing behind a feature in the terrain not far from the party of eyewitnesses. The

group consisted of Second Lt. Néstor Arturo Palacios, Sergeant David Acosta, Sergeant Heriberto Segundo Muñoz, First Corporal Ignacio Castillo, and the driver, Corporal-Mechanic Dionisio García.

The UFO was of an elongated shape, wider at the front, about two metres in length, and of a uniform crystalline, light blue shade. It had no halo around it, and left no trail as it passed by. At the moment of its appearance, the engine of the jeep lost power markedly and moved forward with difficulty in first gear up a slope that normally is taken in second gear with ease. The driver and all the rest of the party did not fail to notice this.

It was a period of considerable snow and rain at the time of this sighting. This fact, plus the ruggedness of the terrain around about and the poor visibility made it impossible for them to search for any traces that might very probably have been left there. The sighting lasted for some 20-40 seconds.

The last of these official UFO reports from the Neuquén region of Argentina is dated September 6, 1968. It refers to a sighting that had taken place early on the previous day, and it too contains a reference to electromagnetic effects.

At 0345 in the early hours of September 5, 1968, a gendarme named Jesús P. Videla was on duty at the main gate of the Barracks (No. 30 Squadron, Chos Malal) as commander of the guard, when he caught sight, above the peak of La Virgen, of a light of the apparent size of a star of the first magnitude and of a colour that was changing from red to orange and momentarily to silvery. Gendarme José María Ayola was with him at the time. They estimated the UFO was at a distance of about 5km. They watched it for 2¾ hours, in which period they noted a slight lateral movement from left to right and then back again. When it flashed it seemed to change its shape from round to ovoid. It finally vanished behind the mountain. One strange fact noticed by both these witnesses was that during the sighting the electricity supply in the Barracks showed a change of voltage several times.

I am much indebted to Licentiate-in-Law Antonio Baragiola, one of the most serious and most efficient ufological investigators in Argentina, and author of the first university thesis on UFOs ever presented in our country, who passed this series of reports to me several years ago. In view of the time that has elapsed since the events described, we think there is now no valid reason why these reports should not be published.

NOTE BY EDITOR (FSR)

Owing to lack of space we are unable to quote from the vast quantity of material which we published in 1968 and 1969 about the extraordinary UFO activity in Argentina.

ENTITIES REPORTED INSIDE A SHOP IN ARGENTINA

Jorge Eduardo Catoja

We are indebted to the Editorial Committee of our French companion-journal *Lumières Dans La Nuit*, from No. 198 of which (October 1980) we have translated this curious item. Though many will find the report hard to swallow we think it worth recording, because it seems to smack very strongly — as so many 'UFO stories' do — of the classical *poltergeist* phenomena familiar to us from the annals of psychical research.

It is admittedly difficult to recall any good 'poltergeist cases' in which the witnesses actually claimed to have seen the causative agency. Consequently, most parapsychological investigators nowadays tend to veer away from the idea that any external intelligent factor (i.e. other than the human subject or subjects present in the case) can be involved with poltergeists, and they prefer to seek other and less bizarre explanations. Note, however, that in the present case the two causative entities allegedly vanished temporarily from sight — a feature that sounds extremely 'poltergeistic.'

The author, Argentinian ufologist Jorge Eduardo Catoja, states that he visited the scene of the phenomena and personally interrogated the eyewitnesses.

EDITOR

(Translation from French)

AT approximately 4.40 p.m. on Sunday, September 10, 1978, in Las Salinas, a small town near San Miguel de Tucumán in northern Argentina, Miguel Angel Carbajal, aged 18, and his friend Miguel Ledesma, aged 23, were sitting in the home of the first-named, watching television, when the picture on the screen began to shrink, so they switched off the television set.

They then put a record on the record-player and switched on, but found the disc turning very slowly as though at 16 r.p.m. From this they perceived that there was clearly a marked drop in the mains electricity current.¹

Finally, they tried to use a portable transistor radio to listen to a local game of football, but were obliged to abandon this too, owing to interference.

The parents of Miguel Carbajal, absent from the house at the time, having gone to spend the afternoon with relatives in San Miguel de Tucumán, are the owners of a shop, and the shop adjoins the house. Both the young men are employed in the shop. Miguel Carbajal has had three years of primary school education, and one year of secondary. The extent of his daily reading does not go beyond the local newspaper, *La Gaceta*, and he is not a UFO buff or an addict of Science-Fiction. As for his companion, Miguel Ledesma, the latter is quite illiterate. There was nobody else in the house apart from one disabled member of the family.

Just as the two young men were abandoning their attempt to get the portable radio to work, they heard noises coming from the adjoining shop. Thinking that thieves had broken into the premises, the boys first got the disabled relative out of the house, and then they opened the connecting door which led directly

into the shop, where the first things to come to view were a smashed bottle of wine and some broken jars of mayonnaise strewn about on the floor.

Proceeding a little further into the shop, they came upon a pair of scales thrown down onto the floor, with the glass smashed, and they noted that the electronic till had been shifted some distance from its normal position.

Encounter with Entities

At this point they became aware of the presence in the shop, standing at a distance of about six metres from them, of two beings resembling humans in their general appearance.

In the words of Miguel Carbajal, as reproduced in the article published in the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Razón* (Sept. 12, 1978): "I was thoroughly scared... for I suddenly saw them. I was unable to speak... I thought they must be Martians, because I had read in *La Gaceta* that there had been UFO sightings in the district."

The two entities were about one metre in height, and 'dressed in bright blue one-piece suits like frogmen wear'. On their heads they had dark blue helmets. Their faces were brown, and the complexion freckled. The eyes of the entities were straight and level. Their noses, though the two witnesses could not describe these quite precisely, seemed to be 'flattish'. Their hands, arms, and legs all seemed 'normal' by human standards. As regards their sex, the witnesses were unable to judge for sure.

The clothing of the entities (see sketch) was, as already described, a one-piece garment, close-fitting, and a helmet. On their feet they had what seemed to be high-boots, bright blue in colour. On their arms they had shiny black gauntlets up to above the elbow.