

FURTHER REPORTS OF UFO BASES

Gordon Creighton

MENTION has been made in FLYING SAUCER REVIEW from time to time¹ of the belief, apparently widely held in some parts of South America, that the operators of the UFOs possess bases or landing sites of predilection, be it beneath the sea along the Atlantic coastline of Brazil and Argentina, or in the uninhabited uplands, the *puno*, of the vast Andean Cordillera.

During the great wave of 1965, for example, there were reports that a mysterious ravine in a certain extremely secluded valley, some 60 kilometres to the south-west of Córdoba, in North-Central Argentina, might be serving as one of these bases.

Loretani valley incidents

On September 7, 1965, the Buenos Aires publication *Así* carried the following report about it:

"A flying saucer base exists at a spot some 60 km. SW of Córdoba. Some 50 farm workers, three lawyers, a hotelkeeper, a rancher, members of the Rosario Meteorological Service, and even a captain of the Navy, have been witnesses to the flights of many saucers which seem to have taken the Valley of Loretani as the centre for their operations, and a nearby ravine as their special base and hiding place.

"It all started on July 15, 1965, in an idyllic spot. The Loretani Valley, so named in memory of the grandfather of the present owners, is in the foothills of the Sierra Grande, some twenty kilometres from the dam at Los Molinos. Leaving the Alta Gracia—Rio Tercero road, a dirt track winds off through the mountains to the spot. Around about are pine tree nurseries and plantations, some of the trees just sprouting, others now over 3ft. These are lands that are fertile even if not under cultivation, and a forestry concern, the COFINCO, has bought about 7,000 hectares here and is gradually putting it all under trees. In charge of these plantations is Sr. Rubén Busquets, who lives in the valley with his wife Diana Loretani, a descendant of the original owners. They have a fifteen-year-old daughter Marcela, a woman to help in the house, and her twelve-year-old daughter, and about

fifty hired hands who work on the tree plantations. There are few other settlers in the area, apart from one or two cattle and sheep farms. There are a couple of inns, and near the road leading off to the Valley of Loretani stands the modern Hotel de la Entrada, which serves as the social centre for the population gradually developing around here in what is called Villa Ciudad de America.

"Such then is the setting for one of the most extraordinary stories that it has ever fallen to us to report.

"It all started on July 15, and the Busquets family themselves were the first to see the saucers that are now throwing this whole region into an uproar. Sr. Busquets told us: 'I had been up to the bar of the Hotel de la Entrada with my wife and daughter Marcela, to collect the mail, as we usually do two or three times a week. Besides getting our mail we also do any telephoning that is necessary, as it is the only place in the region with a telephone.

"It was about 8.00 p.m., and we were returning to our home in the Valley. Marcela had got out to open the gate. And then we saw it.

"The gate in question is on the top of a hill. From there, across to the East, we could see the profile of the Sierras Grandes, towards the North and West other hills also, and, away towards the South-West, the waters of the Los Molinos Dam.

"The object was big and very luminous, of a bluish colour, but varying from moment to moment, sometimes to orangish-red. Its shape was that of a truncated cone, though we were unable to see clearly where the upper part of it ended owing to the beam of light directed upwards out of the object. The lower part was circular and convex. Taking the nearby hills as my gauge, I reckon that it was some ten to fifteen metres in diameter. It was motionless and made no sound. At one moment it shone a beam of light on to us. At that moment we became certain that it was something out of the ordinary. There are no houses and no roads over in that direction. It could not be any powerful light or any illusion caused by car headlights. It was "something" which was above and also behind the hill. After a long pause, it dropped down vertically, and the terrain hid it from us, but we could still see the glow

from it. Then finally the glow went out.

"We went on up to the house, but before we reached it we met one of our *peones* who was lying on the ground, having been thrown by his horse. He was pretty dazed, and covered with mud and dried grass. As a *mestizo* can never accept that a horse has thrown him, he told us that the horse 'had thrown itself belly-upwards, *so as to see them better!*' From which we realized that we were not the only ones to have seen that light in the sky; this peasant had seen it too, and his horse had been so terrified by it that it had thrown him."

Frequent visitations

But what had at first seemed exceptional became a regular occurrence later, for the Busquets saw the objects daily. It became a common thing for them to observe a UFO flying about over the Valley and dropping down into the ravine. One day a circular mark, some 7 metres wide, was found at a spot where evidently a craft had landed momentarily, and on another occasion Señora Busquets was able to see clearly windows on one of the craft. By now the hired hands were seeing them every night and had come to regard the situation as something quite normal.

One day, Señor Busquets was sitting in his car beneath some power-lines, and was watching one of the UFOs. He received a severe shock. Bethinking himself of the danger that the UFO might bring the power-lines down on top of him, he started the engine and moved the car away from there. The UFO, which he estimated to be at a distance of some 300 metres from him, promptly turned off its own light, leaving only a reddish glow, which seemed to revolve around it for a while and then this glow also faded.

On the night of July 24, 1965, the Busquets were again over at the Hotel de la Entrada, and were telling their friends about these happenings. A group of strangers who were present thought it all a



KEY

1. Córdoba, Argentina. 2. Loretani Valley.
3. Approx. position of Lakes Yanacocha and Pumacocha in Peru. 4. Lake Titicaca.
5. Approx. position of Chumo, Peru.

huge joke, so the Busquets invited them there and then to come home with them and see for themselves, which they did.

Landing witnessed by sceptics

Arriving at the Busquets' homestead, the party beheld an object described as "like a shining cigar with a black band around it, the apparent size of the cigar being twice the diameter of a full moon". For about 10 seconds this object remained stationary above the horizon. Then it descended for 3 seconds, rose up again for 4 seconds, and finally plunged down into the Ravine. After that a glow was seen emanating from the ravine for a while, and then total darkness. The visitors, who had said that UFOs were all a big joke but had now seen this astonishing phenomenon with their own eyes, were a Dr. Felix Cochero (lawyer) from La Plata; a Dr. Fortunato Colomba (also a lawyer), and Señor Miguel Carlos Cuesta, manager of the COFINCO Enterprises.

When Señor Busquets was interviewed to get this story, he was found to be very unwilling to discuss the matter. He did not like publicity, and did not want to be taken for a madman. Dr. Cochero

subsequently told the story to a journalist in Rosario, and in due course the affair was causing a sensation throughout the Buenos Aires press.

Sightings virtually to order

The manager of the Hotel de la Entrada and his wife, Sr. and Sra. Obregón, recall that a Belgian guest who was at the hotel recently was highly sceptical about UFOs. But he was awakened by one at midnight, and stood there in his dressing-gown at the window, watching it move above the nearby Sierras. Sr. Obregón said the man had not laughed about UFOs after that.

On Saturday, September 5, the Argentine naval officer, Captain Pagani,² who has seen three UFOs, was at the Loretani Valley to see the phenomenon for himself. He returned in a hurry to Buenos Aires to fetch a whole team of observers.

Señora Busquets claims to have seen a whole flotilla of five of the smaller saucers. Two members of CODOVNI, the UFO investigation group in Buenos Aires, also had a strange experience. They are Sr. Jorge Barquero and Sr. Alberto Schuster, and both are meteorologists. They were in the Loretani Valley at the same time as Captain Pagani. They had a UFO in sight, and had a telescope trained on it. Suddenly, the UFO approached them, dazzled them, blocking out the whole area of vision of the telescope, and then vanished.

Later reports of bases

An EFE report of July 31, 1968, from Urcos, Peru, appeared in the Spanish newspaper *Sur* for August 1. The report stated that the rural populace in the Peruvian Andes were now so terrified by the "flying saucer apparitions" that the authorities of the district of Huaró had despatched a commission to investigate reports that the saucers were using as a base a particular area close to Lake Yanacocha, in the central part of Peru.

The farmers of the area in question claim to have seen luminous objects shooting downwards at great speed, as though to land, and a group of the principal personalities in several of the nearby towns

and villages have called upon the competent authorities and have testified that the UFOs are using as a landing area an extensive plain lying between Lake Yanacocha and Lake Pumacocha. Twice weekly, so it was claimed, the saucers were appearing there in broad daylight, and then vanishing at great speed leaving behind marks on the ground. The rural populace were in an uproar, fearing lest their crops and herds might suffer damage from the apparitions. Hence the decision of the authorities to send the Commission, which would also be accompanied by armed police.

Further press reports from Lima dated September 27 and 29, 1968, also appeared in the Spanish press. They stated that according to an announcement made by Sr. Carlos Paz, President of the Peruvian Institute for Interplanetary Relations (IPRI), in an exclusive interview in the Peruvian daily *Expreso* of Lima, a "saucerdrome" (*platillo-dromo* in Spanish) had been found at Chumo, a place two days distant from Cerro de Santa Bárbara, in the Sicuani area. This region lies in the Departamento of Cuzco, in the southern part of Peru, and therefore right in the Peruvian Andes.

The report stated that the discovery of the landing area had been made by Sr. Antonio Ponce de León, an engineer who is the president of the IPRI branch in Cuzco. He had come to Chumo to investigate in view of the numerous reports received from the inhabitants of that district, all of whom are South American Indians.

A base beneath the waters of Lake Titicaca?

According to an Agence France-Presse despatch³ of November 11, 1968, from Buenos Aires, published in Spanish newspapers that same month, a report had been received from Lima, capital of Peru, to the effect that the flying saucers seen so frequently over South America had a base in the depths of Lake Titicaca. People living near the shores of this large Andean lake between Peru and Bolivia had reported that saucers were constantly seen heading towards the lake and vanishing there.

(continued on page 19)