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CHARGE CHAPLIN

8/3/76

LEGATT ROBERT W. SCHERRER

~~5/3/01 39063 ECU/BCE/ylb
C.D. 1/6
Argentine Project~~

ERP

On 8/3/76, an official of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police (BAPP) Intelligence Service provided the following information:

Approximately one week to ten days prior to the discovery of the location of ERP leader, MARIO ROBERTO SANTUCHO, elements of the BAPP Intelligence Service and the Argentine Army Intelligence Service (SIE) apprehended ranking ERP leader, DOMINGO MENA, near Tigre, Buenos Aires Province. SANTUCHO was almost caught at the same time; however, he managed to escape. (S) (U)

MENA, after initial resistance, cooperated with SIE in providing locations of ERP safe houses and the identities of ERP support personnel. For example, MENA identified one of his lieutenants, who was subsequently apprehended on 7/28/76, from whom information was secured by the SIE with regard to the ERP interest in members of the U. S. Milgrp in Argentina. Additionally, MENA told the SIE about the location of an ERP safe house located in Villa Martelli, Buenos Aires Province, which was occupied by a female identified only as "La Gringa." Accordingly, one BAPP Intelligence Agent, two SIE Agents, and a SIE Captain, were dispatched to this apartment to pick up "La Gringa." Prior to entering the apartment, the BAPP Intelligence Agent discovered that his weapon had no ammunition since he had forgotten to load the clip after discharging all of the rounds on the preceding day; however, expecting no trouble from the lone female occupant of the apartment, the group of four security officers knocked on the door, which was opened by the female. The BAPP Intelligence Agent pushed his way into the small foyer of the apartment, searched the female, found she was unarmed and beckoned his SIE companions into the apartment. Immediately after entering the apartment, two unidentified male individuals were observed sitting in an extremely small kitchen of the apartment. The SIE Captain, armed with a 9 mm. machine gun, commanded the two unidentified male individuals to stand up from the table and put themselves on the floor of the kitchen. In the process of placing themselves on the floor, an indi- (S) (U)

- 1 - Addressee
- 1 - POL/R
- 1 - DAO
- 1 - SY

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- 2 - Buenos Aires
 - (1 - 109-38)
 - (1 - 80-De Baldrich)
- RWS:jn
- (6)

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vidual, subsequently identified as ERP leader JORGE BENITO URTEAGA, managed to execute an abrupt maneuver, kicking the machine gun out of the SIE Army Captain's hands. After clattering to the floor, the machine gun was recovered by the other male individual subsequently identified as MARIO ROBERTO SANTUCHO. SANTUCHO fired the machine gun at point blank range at the SIE Army Captain and two rounds were discharged striking the Captain in the chest and arms before the machine gun jammed. URTEAGA and SANTUCHO had no other weapons available to them and were gunned down by two SIE Agents. The SIE Army Captain died enroute to a hospital in Vicente Lopez, Buenos Aires Province, Buenos Aires. If the machine gun had not jammed on SANTUCHO, it is more than likely that both he and URTEAGA would have been able to eliminate the two SIE Agents and the BAPP Intelligence Agent and escape. ~~(S)~~ (U)

The entire episode as narrated above demonstrates the general modus operandi of Argentine security forces in running down leads secured from captioned ERP prisoners and/or documentation without first conducting basic checks of the information. As has occurred in previous instances, faulty equipment available to the security forces has resulted in disaster and in this instance almost allowed SANTUCHO to escape. ~~(S)~~ (U)

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