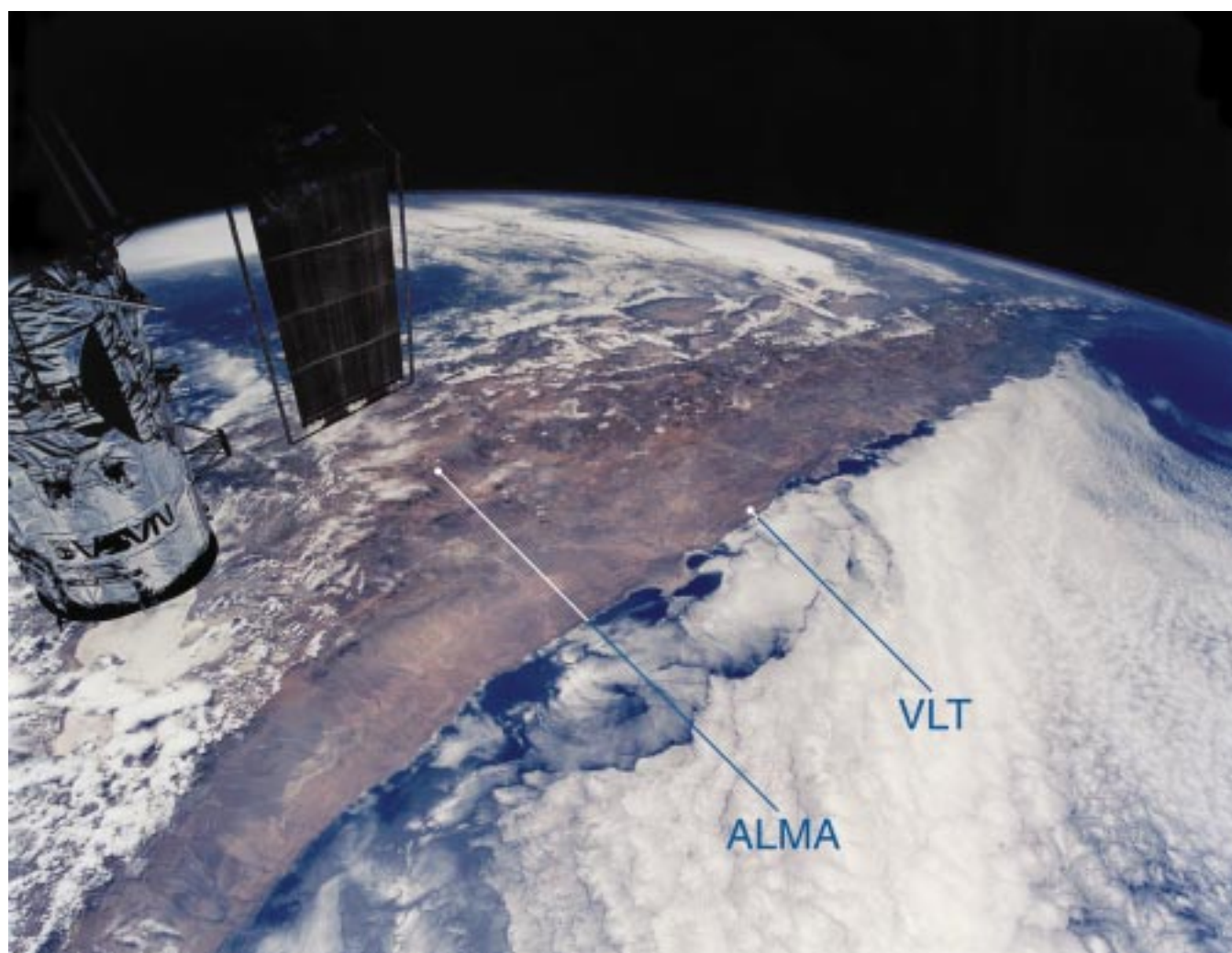


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View of Northern Chile, as seen from the NASA Space Shuttle during a servicing mission to the Hubble Space Telescope (partly visible to the left). The Atacama Desert, site of the ESO VLT at Paranal Observatory and the proposed location for ALMA at Chajnantor (see article on page 7 in this issue of *The Messenger*), is seen from North (foreground) to South. The two sites are only a few hundred km distant from each other. Few clouds are seen in this extremely dry area, due to the influence of the cold Humboldt Stream along the Chilean Pacific coast (right) and the high Andes mountains (left) that act as a barrier. Photo courtesy ESA astronaut Claude Nicollier.