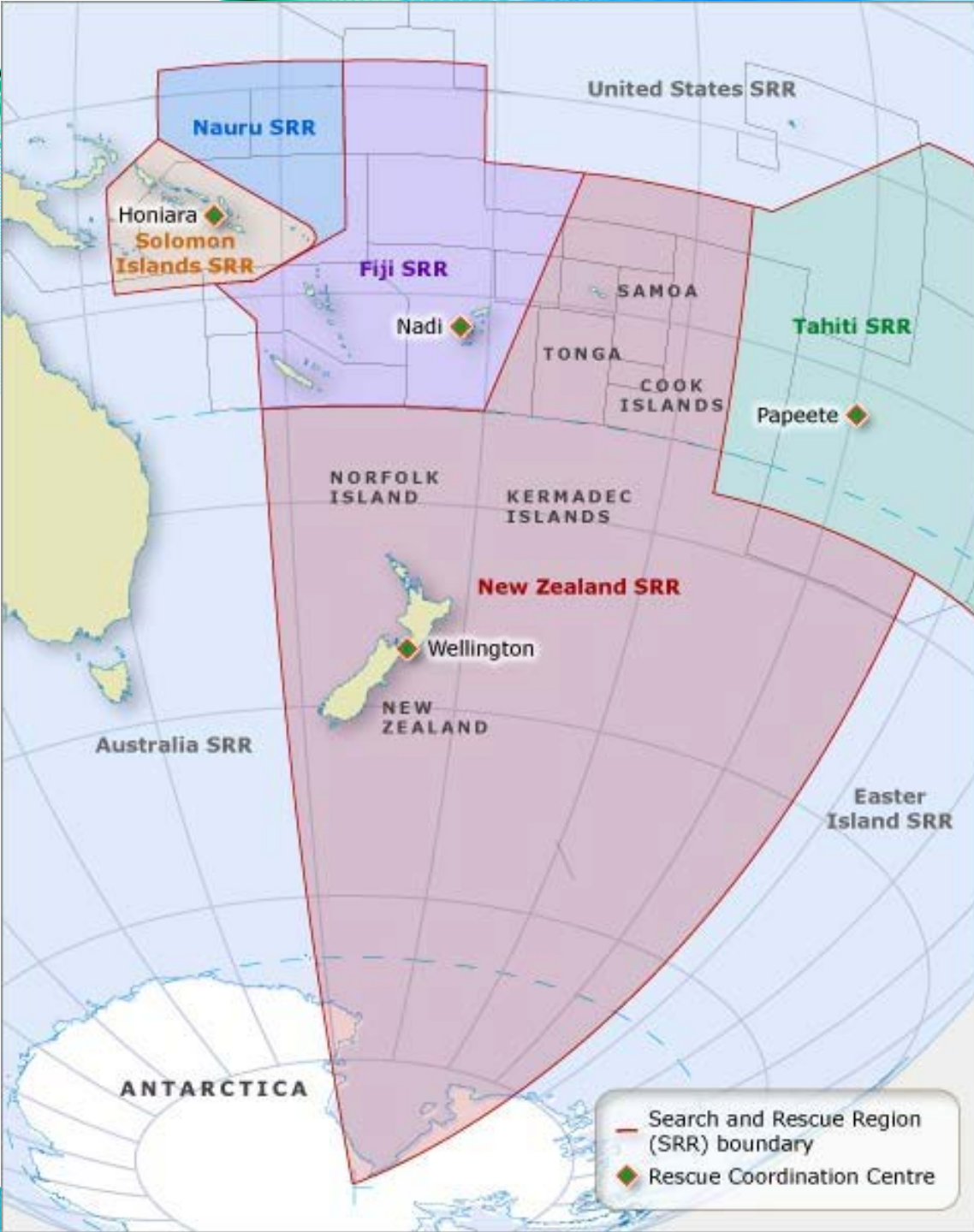


# Case Study: Flight ARG01

17 Nov 2014



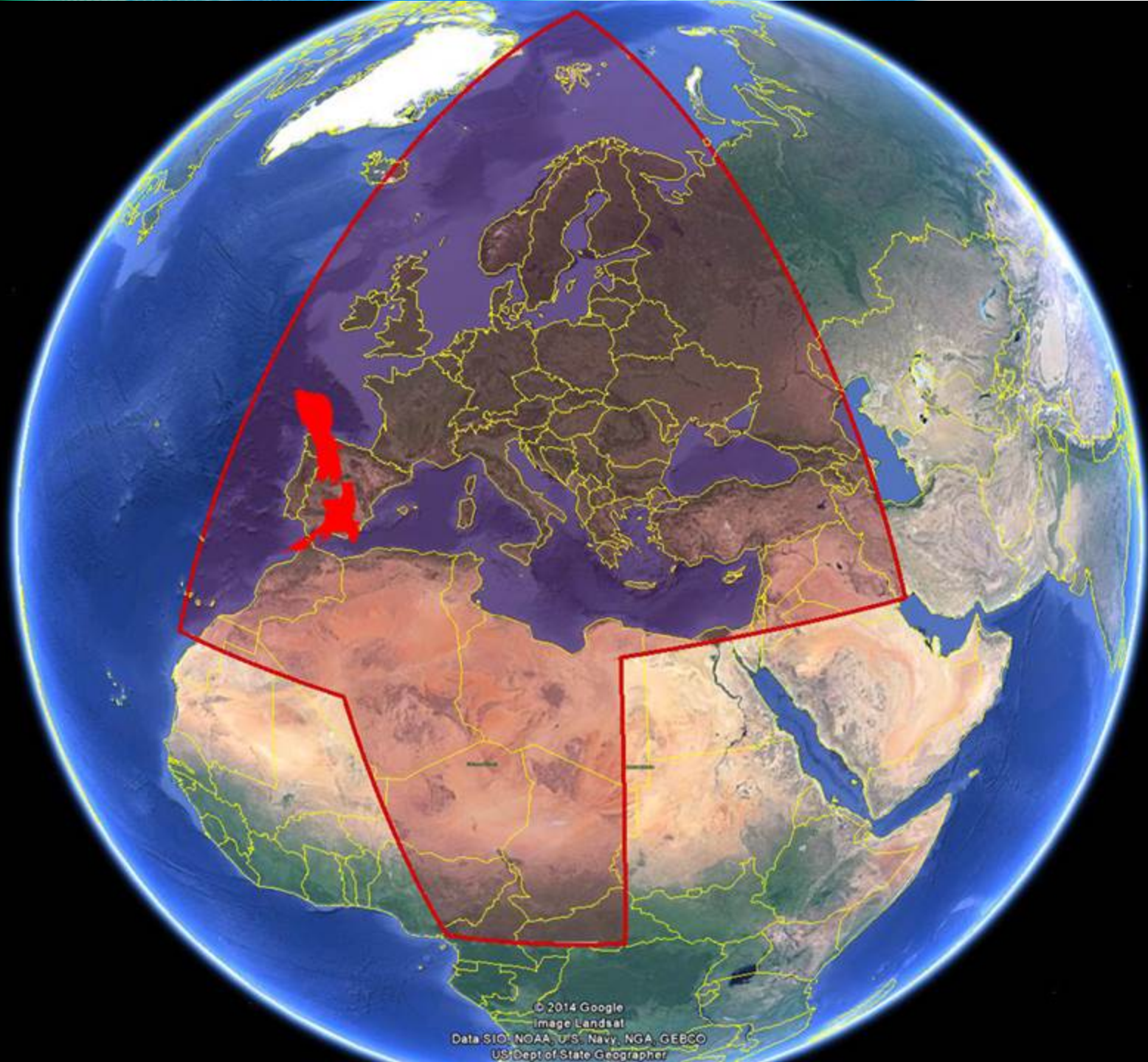
**Third largest SRR**

**5 degrees south of the equator to the South Pole;**

**half way to Australia;  
and**

**half way to Chile.....**

**Approx 30 million square kilometres,  
mainly ocean!**





## Incident Summary

At 161143 UTC Nov 2014 ARG01, a Dassault Falcon 7X, was flying NZCH (Christchurch) to SAWG (Rio Gallegos), Argentina and lost communications with NZZO (NZ Auckland Oceanic Air Traffic Control). Communication was eventually regained and the incident was closed.

**Dealing with this incident should have been straight forward but mistakes were made.**



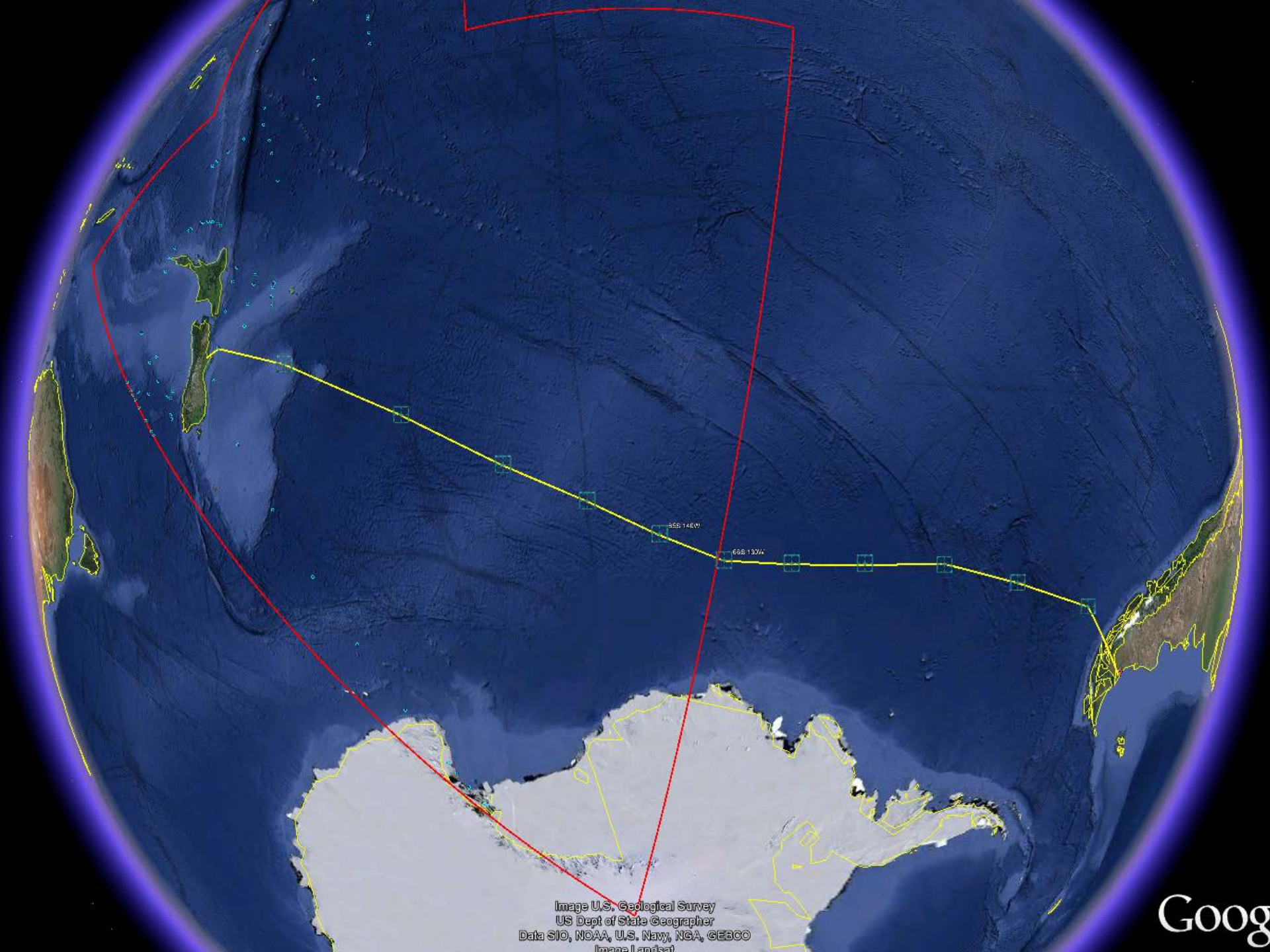


Image U.S. Geological Survey  
US Dept of State Geographer  
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO  
Image Landsat

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# Timeline

15:05 utc: INCERFA declared:

- Last communication was at 13:57 utc at FL390;
- ARG01 failed to report at 14:34 utc.

15:26 utc: NZZO tried calling the a/c opr but the call was unanswered.

- NZZO commented that they considered the a/c was safe and would be in Sth American airspace in 50 minutes.

- 16:14 utc: - NZZO advise the a/c is leaving the NZ FIR;
- NZZO asked the receiving Santiago Controller to advise when they have the a/c;
  - Receiving Controller reported they have the a/c on their software;
  - NZ Controller advised he had a high confidence the a/c was flying and asked about cancelling the INCERFA.

At this time there had been no comms with the a/c for  
2 hours 17 mins

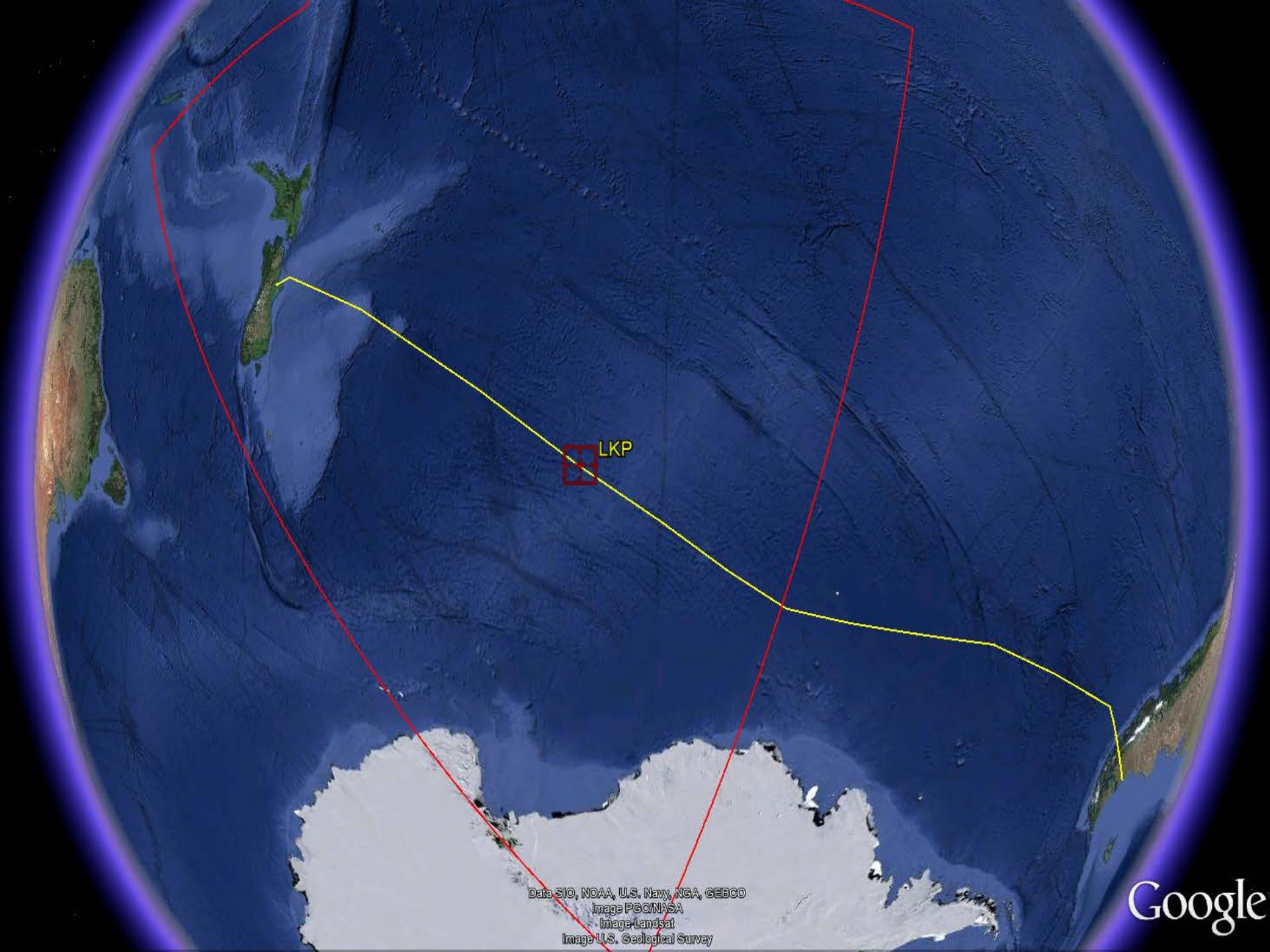


18:21 utc: Chile ATC upgrade to ALERFA;

18:22 utc: NZ ACC Supervisor asks RCCNZ who has coordination of the incident. RCCNZ advises that Santiago has coordination.

18:30 utc: NZZO informed RCCNZ that it had sent a message to the a/c opr in Switzerland.

RCCNZ told NZZO that it had reconsidered and NZ would be responsible for incident coordination.



LKP

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO  
Image PGC/NASA  
Image Landsat  
Image U.S. Geological Survey

Google

- 18:58 utc: NZZO advise Santiago OCA had made contact with the a/c via sat phone at 17:10 utc;
- 1910 & 1912 utc: RCCNZ attempted to contact Santiago OCA without success;
- 19:30 utc: RCCNZ called Santiago OCA again and was told that the a/c opr had contacted the a/c at 17:10 utc;
- 19:39 utc: NZZO advised RCCNZ that Santiago OCA had the a/c on radar and had VHF comms.

ALERFA was cancelled 5.5 hours after INCERFA was declared and 2 hours 20 mins after contact was made via sat phone.

RCCNZ was informed the ALERFA had been cancelled 2 hours after the event.

## What didn't go well

- During the initial call from NZZO, RCCNZ did not ask for the LKP nor the reporting point the a/c failed to report at;
- RCCNZ did not make it clear to ATC that it accepted coordination of the incident;
- RCCNZ did not communicate with ARCC Chile until it was confirmed the a/c was safe.
- RCCNZ did not communicate with ARCC Tahiti to inform them of the overdue a/c.

- Although the a/c could be heard calling initially, there were no further communications heard thereafter and it was assumed the a/c was still flying;
- RCCNZ did not attempt to contact the a/c opr to see if there was a sat. phone on board ARG01;
- RCCNZ was not notified that contact had been established with ARG01 via sat. phone until 2 hours 20 minutes after the contact;
- RCCNZ was not aware at any time during the incident of how many POB on the a/c;
- RCCNZ did not consider upgrading the incident phase;

- Chile authorities upgraded the incident to ALERFA when they did not have coordination of the incident;
- Because ARG01 was in a known area of communication blackouts, the incident was treated with complacency.

## Key Learnings

- All declared emergencies must be treated seriously and although an a/c may be in an area of known communication blackouts, SOPs should be followed in full;
- Ensure all agencies that are informed of an incident are notified when an INCERFA/ALERFA/DETRESSFA is cancelled;
- Obtain the LKP, altitude and time the a/c was heard from and position of the next reporting point;
- Request from ATC what other agencies they have informed;
- Obtain the POB and a manifest of passengers and crew;



- Consider upgrading incident to ALERFA if no further contact or information is obtained regarding the safety of the a/c;
- Contact the JRCC/ARCC of the SRR/FIR the a/c is due to enter and clearly agree upon who shall coordinate the incident;
- The RCC agreeing to accept coordination of an incident should formally state they accept coordination;
- Contact the a/c operator and ask if they have communication with the a/c or if the a/c has a sat. phone. Ensure the opr knows to contact the coordinating RCC immediately if they make contact with the a/c;

- Ensure all agencies that have been informed of the incident are kept updated and notified at the conclusion of the incident.

# Conclusion

- A review of this incident was undertaken and the following recommendations were made and implemented:
  - SOPs were adequate, however, they could be made clearer;
  - Replace the RCCNZ AFTN;
  - Refresher training be given to SAROs on overdue a/c;
  - An approach be made to the US Antarctic Programme at McMurdo Base in Antarctica to seek approval for their McMurdo Centre (Mac Centre ATC) to attempt radio communication with aircraft reported overdue in the Antarctic Ocean region in future.

**Thank you**

