Petrostamps inspired by the Gulf conflicts in the Middle East

by Saleem Al-Ani

In the article (Oil in Paraguay?) written by our dear editor in the Spring 2013 issue of the Petro-Philatelist, he mentioned that the discovery of oil in a narrow strip of the barren section of the Chaco Boreal at the foot of the Bolivian Andes precipitated the Chaco war (1932-1935) between Bolivia and Paraguay. After finishing reading the article, I immediately thought about how many petrostamps in our catalogue are related to a conflict.

I wrote a previous article for P-P back in 2005, but the number of such stamps was not specified there. The article was entitled “Armed conflicts on petrostamps”. The present article takes a closer and more detailed look at conflicts in the Gulf region in the Middle East in particular.

I found it logical to begin with the country that took part in all these conflicts, Iraq. To commemorate Saddam’s battle of Qadisiya (the name given by Saddam Hussein to the Iraq-Iran war), Iraq issued in 1986 two petrostamps showing a derrick among other symbols (Scott 1255 and 1257, shown below). Two other petrostamps were issued in 2002 with the inscription “victory day”. The stamps show a silhouette of a refinery near the portrait of Saddam Hussein (Scott 1676 and 1677, shown here below).

The other side of the Iraq-Iran war, Iran, issued a stamp in 1983 to commemorate the Ecology week. The stamp shows a burning off-shore platform at Nowruz oil field (Scott 2121, shown in figure 5). In 1986, Iran issued a stamp commemorating six years of the Iran-Iraq war (Scott 2243, shown in figure 6). An illustration of the NIOC oil refinery at Abadan on fire is shown on the stamp. The rebuilding of the same refinery is shown on Scott 2365 (seen in figure 7) issued in 1989.

Mohammad Djavad Tondguyan was shown on the stamp Scott 2668, shown in figure 8. Tondguyan was the second oil minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran who was captured by the Iraqi forces in November 1980 during the Iran-Iraq war. Tondguyan was captured by the Iraqi forces on his tour to the fronts on the Abadan road in Khuzestan Province on 3 November 1980 at the initial phase of the Iran-Iraq war; his two deputies were also captured with him. They were reportedly taken to Baghdad. In October 1990, the Iraqi officials stated that he committed suicide two years after his captivity, but it was never proved.

A third country that was involved in the Gulf conflicts is Kuwait. This country issued 4 sets and a s/s related to the third Gulf war. Two of these sets were issued to commemorate the 1st and 2nd anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Scott 1154 (issued in 1991 and shown in figure 9) represents the

* The numbering of the conflicts in the Gulf region of the Middle East depends on whether the Iraq-Iran war is called the First Gulf War, which would make the 1990 war the Second and the 2003 war the Third.
first anniversary, while in 1992 Kuwait issued a miniature sheet, Scott 1200b (seen in figure 10 on a First Day Cover) commemorating the second anniversary. The stamp years of the

The souvenir sheet issued in 2008 (Scott 1679, shown in figure 14) commemorates 45 second anniversary. The stamp years of the diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Romania and refers to the intervention of the Romanian experts in extinguishing the oil wells on fire in 1991. It's interesting to see that all the oil symbols on these Kuwaiti stamps

Scott 1199, the one in the lower left refer to the oil wells fires in figure 11, is the only petroleum-related stamp on that sheet. The third and fourth sets were also issued in 1992. One of them commemorates the Earth Summit of Rio de Janeiro (Scott 1173-6, and 1176a-b, all visible in figure 11). The stamps of the set show a stylized well on fire. The other set commemorates the 1st anniversary of extinguish-

It's interesting that Romania also issued two souvenir sheets related to these conflicts. As a matter of fact the Kuwaiti s/s mentioned above was a joint issue with Romania (Scott 5054 shown in figure 17). In addition to this s/s, another sheet, overprinted “EFIRO 2008” (World Philatelic Exhibition), was issued in the same year (figure 18 - Michel Bl.429 f ). An FDC of the Romanian Scott 5054 souvenir sheet is also shown on the opposite page in figure 19.

The USA issued in the year 2000 a stamp showing oil well fires, Scott 3191b (figure 15), that was included in the series “Celebrate the century – the 1990’s”. Figure 16 shows what is
written on the back of the stamp. The theme of the stamp “Operation Desert Storm” was considered one of the main events during the 1990’s.

The list doesn’t stop here. Other countries have also issued petrostamps related to these conflicts: Liberia, Senegal, Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Sao Tomé & Principe.

I would be grateful if any other member refers to a stamp which I forgot about these conflicts.

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**Note:** Thank you Feitze for informing me about some stamps related to the article, which were not on my mind.

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Figure 17 - Romania Scott 5054
Issued in 2008 commemorating 45 years of diplomatic relationships between Romania and Kuwait

Figure 18 - Romania Michel BL429 I
This is the same s/s as Scott 5054 of figure 14, but overprinted “EFIRO 2008” (World philatelic exhibition in Bucharest)

Figure 19 - First Day Cover from Romania of the S/s Scott 5054

Figure 20 - Nevis Scott 1186b

Figure 21 - Senegal Scott 980

Figure 22 - Senegal Scott 980

Figure 23 - Liberia Michel BL256

Figure 24 - St. Tomé Michel 4657

Figure 25 - St. Tomé Michel 4658