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COVER PHOTO — These two satellite images, taken on 4 March 1980 and 2 November 1980 by the National Earth Satellite Service's (NESS) NOAA-6 satellite, show the effect of the Iraq/Iran war on oilfield waste gas flaring in the two countries. The 3.8 micrometre thermal infrared sensor used to take these images is particularly sensitive to "hot" targets such as gas flares. The lettered white dot areas on the 4 March 1980 image are major gas flares in the northern Persian Gulf. Area A is in the Rumaila and Zubair Iraqi oilfields; Area B is in the Ahwaz, Marun, Aghi Jari, and Gachsaran Iranian oilfields.

The 2 November 1980 image, about a month after the start of the Iraq/Iran war, shows essentially the same area as the 4 March image. The waste gas flares of Areas A and B, however, are no longer present, due either to voluntary shutdown of the flaring or due to military destruction of the oil wells. The port city of Abadan, the world's largest refinery, does show up as a "hot" target on the November image but does not on the March image. At the time of the November image the refinery and oil storage areas of Abadan were burning from military attacks. (See page 1311)

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