

Ecological Imbalance: Threat to Peace

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There must be a vigorous, comprehensive and continuous universal mass movement for peaceful process of human adjustment with the human environment leading to ecological balance.

Human Ecology is the study of the structure and development of human communities and societies in terms of the processes by which human populations peacefully adapt to their environments, taking account of the technological systems and patterns of social organisation through which this adaptation is effected.

This means, Human Ecology embodies the processes of adaptation of human population through various means with the Environment, both internal and external in all its aspects. That is to say, imbalance in Ecology occurs when this process of adaptation with environment is disturbed jeopardising peace.

Peace is not the deadly calm and quietude of the graveyard. It is dynamic and progressive and must assure human happiness for all. Factors of human peace are to be weighed against the factors of human environment, both internal and external in all their aspects.

A myriad objects, circumstances, as well as, physical, mental and psychological factors which surround the body and psyche of man are to be considered as the Total Human Environment. The ends and prospects of human happiness are dependent on tranquility, meaning peace, the total environment requiring to exist as an integrated and balanced entity. Environment is life itself and peace

must safeguard the well-being and the very existence of this life.

Interterritorially speaking, threat of war among nations is threat to peace. But it is impossible to be any war and the loss of peace in a world with totally integrated and balanced ecology. Disintegration gives rise to contradictions, the armed confrontation of which leads to war. The only way to overcome world-wide tension, unrest and war-situations would be through management of the total environment and the concomitant ecological processes conceiving the World Without Borders, as an integrated system, with the guidance of an Environmental Integration Index, to be worked out scientifically, leading to continued stability and peace in human societies everywhere.

There has been a theory of M A D, meaning Mutually Assured Destruction. The professed assurance for destruction denies the common people their basic needs. In the contradictory world with abject poverty in affluent plenty. This is done to deliberately prolong international tension, caused by the continuous arsenal-building with everyday piling up of hugely expensive ever-modernising most lethal weapons, produced through

competitive deployments of the rare scientific resources and talents, commissioned at public expense. World's biggest investment made is in arms production for killing of man by man, in contradistinction with the biggest investment needed by the world's majority being in food for the mere survival of the human body. For securing peace, total disarmament being the first pre-requisite, peace-loving owners of the planet, as its rightful legislators, must unite against all attempts for subversion of peace. In this respect, there must be a vigorous, comprehensive and continuous universal mass movement for peaceful process of human adjustment with the human environment leading to ecological balance.

The requirement for this universal mass movement is universal mass education for human ecology to achieve the negation of war. After the Second World War Emory Reeves in his monumental best-seller 'Anatomy Of Peace' established that two per cent of the money

and effort spent for research and production of the atomic bomb would be sufficient to carry out an educational movement that would make clear to the people what the virus of war is and how peace can be attained in human society.

Threat to universal peace is to be found when a particular state or a group of states is myopic in leading itself to think that it is the best judge to decide about the ecological processes to adjust rest of the world with the environment in its various facets. In this respect there is the need for a revolution in mankind's thinking as basic as the one introduced by Copernicus who first pointed out that the earth was not the centre of the universe.

It has been rightly said by Professor Arnold J. Toynbee that the cult of sovereignty has become mankind's major religion. Its god demands human sacrifice.

To repeat the statement of Emory Reeves, the people of the world must understand the

forces driving them toward the coming holocaust. It has nothing whatever to do with the ecological ideas of Communism or Capitalism, with Individualism and Collectivism. It is the inevitable conflict between non-integrated sovereignties in contact. We would put a Communist in the White House or establish the purest Jeffersonian democracy in Russian and the situation would be the same. Unless an over-all world government organisation can be established in time, with the conviction of one-world ecology, by persuasion and consent, no diplomatic magic will prevent the explosion. Isn't the embattled world already learning it in the hard way at the evanescent twentieth century?

Modern day population explosion, specially in the lesser technological societies of the world, definitely needing to be controlled, is universally made responsible to have posed a threat creating ecological imbalance. The eminent researchers Ehrlich and Ehrlich have stated that no geological

event in a billion years—not the emergence of mighty mountain ranges, nor the emergence of entire subcontinents, nor the occurrence of periodic glacial ages—has posed a threat to terrestrial life comparable to that of human over-population.

The so-called population-pressure is to be judged from the historical perspective. The higher technological societies started with an initial advantage. Before industrialisation their population was reasonably low. Whatever spectacular their industrial productivity might have been, they would have been doomed to ruination had they not found outlets through immigration to the New World, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. This large-scale migration happened through sheer pre-emption. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century these territories absorbed sixty million Europeans. European population excluding the USSR increased by about 300 million during the years 1650-1950. But today, during the last

decade of the twentieth century many more than 400 million Europeans live outside Europe. One can imagine where would have been the trace of modern European civilisation without the outlet for this population.

Whereas, the lower technological societies are unfortunately debarrd from this advantage having no outlet of any considerable significance. They can aspire for large-scale immigration and colonisation only with the perils of destructive wars. There are ample open spaces available for human settlement in many countries with low population densities around the world.

But the original settlers and occupiers there, who were virtually all kinds of restrictions and policies against the freshly intending entrants. In this context, the most pertinent question to ask would be: is there any room for much honesty in uttering most often the clichés like 'One World', 'Universal Brotherhood' etc.?

If we sincerely believe in the real sublimity of 'One World' and 'Universal Brotherhood', then even if every body and every nation may be under the respective territorial sovereignty each of them

simultaneously, must be considered to be under the overriding sovereignty of the Common Planet, which is required to be organised and managed with the principle of Democratic Federalism not-allowing the Genesis in Disunity. This is possible only through the conclusion to neutralise the ideals of Humanism, Golden Mean and Conservatism in all human affairs, both locally and globally. The awareness to plan, build and preserve the One World Environment collectively and with equal opportunity for all can only establish a Lasting Peace on Earth through Balancing Human Ecology.

In the concept of Scientific Leadership in balancing human ecology to preserve peace in human affairs with variable quantities of differing qualities, the pivotal point of reference should be to Plato's Philosopher-King, who only can lead superbly and supremely—not with ignorance, Pedantism, Dogmatism and Demagoguery—but with his unique pragmatic understanding of the Principal Common System, as the underlying connector of all the given variables, otherwise tending to create Directionless Confusion in a Systemless Environment and utterly Ecological Imbalance posing constant threat to peace.

A former diplomat, the author is a UN expert on world town planning and an environmentalist.

Jute Gets a New Lease of Life

Jute, which grows mainly in India, Bangladesh, China and Thailand, has just received a boost with publication of a report labelling it environmentally friendly. Natural fibres, it says, are much to be preferred to synthetics, which can be toxic and sometimes carcinogenic. The news comes on the heels of a bumper production year in India and will be welcome in Bangladesh, which is the world's largest exporter. —By Francis Mwanza

A world concern over ecology rises and leads to renewed interest in natural fibres, a Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) intergovernmental group says jute is an 'environmentally-friendly' commodity that could enjoy more 'favourable market conditions in the future.'

The group, which recently met at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, acknowledged the need for further analysis on the environmental implications of jute and kenaf usage, as compared to synthetics.

As part of a jute promotional campaign, an exhibition of articles made from jute from countries such as India and Bangladesh has been running at the FAO headquarters.

World production of jute, kenaf and allied fibres, says the FAO, is expected to reach

about 3.6 million tons in 1990-91, against about 3.2 million tons in the previous three seasons.

The increase is being attributed to remunerative prices, favourable weather and seed availability.

The sharp rise in production is the result of a bumper crop over 1.6 million tons in India—the world's largest producer of jute, and increases in China and Thailand of 11 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively.

According to the UN agency, world exports of jute are up, with shipments from Bangladesh, the world's largest exporter, increasing by over 27 per cent in 1989-90.

Major buyers of Bangladesh jute are Pakistan, India, Egypt, China and some European Community (EC) countries.

Jute exports are now recovering, says the Group, after falling over the last two seasons.

World exports of products made from jute and allied fibres declined from 1,149,000 tons in 1986-87 to 986,000 tons in 1988-89.

Jute exports to the United States have fallen from 123,931 tons in 1984 to just 86,767 metric tons in 1989. US jute imports from Bangladesh alone fell from 95,802 to 47,345 tons.

EC imports between 1984 and 1988 saw only a slight increase from 233,000 tons to 236,000 tons. In 1989-90, exports from Bangladesh rose by seven per cent and those from India by three per cent.

Last year the government of India launched the Internal

and External Market Assistance (IMA and EMA) Schemes to boost production and marketing of diversified jute products in the domestic as well as export markets.

The IMA scheme provides market assistance at the rate of 12.10 and 8 per cent, initially for a block of three years, 1988-89, to 1992-93 on the sale of specified jute decorative fabrics, carpets, blankets, felts, yarns and handicrafts.

The EMA scheme envisages market assistance at a uniform rate of 10 per cent on export of the same products specified by the IMA scheme for a period of three years up to 1991-92.

The main competition to jute comes from synthetic materials like plastics which are, by and large, cheaper



The process of desertification goes on unabated in the northern region of the country despite government restrictions on felling of trees. Photo shows fuelwood piled up at Chapai Nawabganj before being transported to different brick kilns around the area. —Photo: Mohsin.

Synthetics, however, have one disadvantage—they are hardly degradable. With increasing concern over the environment, and as plastics, especially, coming under fire from environmentalists, 'cheapness' may not be the key quality, but rather

'environmental-friendliness'. Jute is considered to be biodegradable and pollution-free.

Because the FAO is putting major emphasis on sustainable agriculture, the intergovernmental group has asked the organisation to undertake an environmental impact assess-

ment of jute to analyse the economic and social costs of environmental degradation.

Damage to the environment from natural fibres says a FAO report, was 'relatively limited' as the substances involved are biodegradable, while those released during the life-cycle of

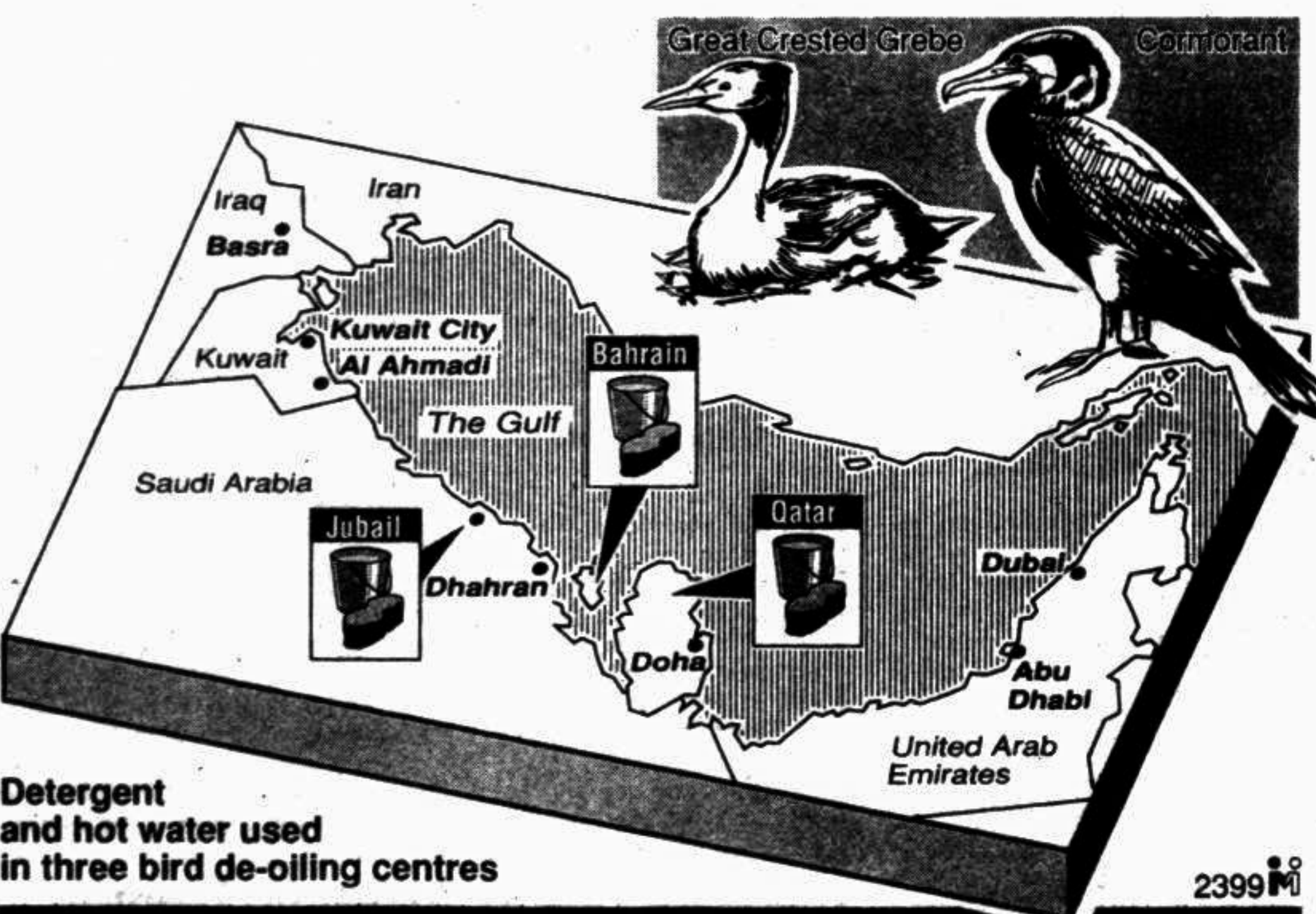
synthetic materials are 'toxic and sometimes carcinogenic.'

Natural fibres have other environmental advantages.

Their waste can be turned into fertilisers, and the jute sticks can be used as firewood.

BRITISH TEAM TREATS BIRDS CAUGHT IN GULF OIL SPILL

A three-man team from Britain's Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals set up three rescue and training centres to clean birds threatened As Gemini News Service reports, such rare species as the socotra cormorant were among more than 400 birds treated as centres in Jubail, Saudi Arabia and in Bahrain and Qatar. By Allan Thompson



Detergent and hot water used in three bird de-oiling centres

WHILE the bombardment of Iraq and the ground war in Kuwait captured the headlines, British specialists waged a battle behind the scenes to save hundreds of birds they had managed to pluck from certain death in the biggest oil slick in history.

A three-man team from Britain's Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) set up base in Jubail, Saudi Arabia, in early February at the request of the Saudi government.

Their mission was to begin efforts to clean up birds soaked in oil and to train local volunteers in their world-famous methods of de-oiling birds.

Before returning to Britain for a rest they had set up bird cleaning centres in Saudi and neighbouring Bahrain and Qatar. They were fighting the world's ever oil slick, at one point 30 miles long and eight miles wide.

Among the team's 400 patients were rare socotra cormorants and greater cormorants, black-necked and great crested grebes and countless other birds caught up in the oozing mess, still floating down the Gulf.

The rescue team reported horrific scenes of beaches carpeted with dead birds along the Saudi shore near the border with Kuwait.

Team member Jack Westlake said: 'Dead or dying seabirds were scattered every

few paces and in some places the oil was several feet thick. The sea was black as far as the eye could see and there was a terrible stench of crude oil.'

The mission included Westlake, an Arabic speaker with wide experience as an administrator in the Middle East, Tim Thomas, a wild life officer and expert on cleaning methods and Ian Robinson, a veterinary surgeon. All were volunteers.

By mid-February the Jubail unit had handled more than 400 birds with a success rate of about 60 per cent.

Twenty-seven socotra cormorants, a bird on the endangered species list, were brought in and so far, 25 have survived. The unit also dealt with 40 sea turtles found north

of Jubail. The RSPCA first got involved in efforts to clean animals from oil spill zones after the Torrey Canyon disaster in Britain in 1967. After that incident, which saw an oil tanker run aground near Land's End in Cornwall, spilling out thousands of tons of oil, the RSPCA was at the forefront of research into methods of treating oil spill victims.

In the Gulf, oiled birds are kept in temperature-controlled holding rooms, fed and given medication while they are being assessed for their ability to withstand the cleaning. Care has to be taken because of the problems of disease, hypothermia and starvation, all associated with oiling.

Ordinary detergent in hot water is used first to remove the oil then hot water under pressure does the rinsing. The birds stay on for several more days to make sure their natural waterproofing capabilities are in order and that they are healthy enough for release. Paddling pools act as rehabilitation centres for the recovered birds.

'It's a marvelous and very moving experience to see a dejected oil-blackened bundle of feathers slowly restored to its natural plume,' said Westlake.

At the Jubail the team worked in a former cookhouse near the beach. While Thomas took over the training of local volunteers Robinson, the team's vet, cleaned birds already in the unit.

Said Thomas: 'We are working flat out, but you forget the exhaustion when you see a rare bird, on the brink of extinction, like some of the casualties we have received, hanging on to life as a result of our efforts.'

Like nearly everyone near the combat zone, the team experienced air raid alerts, a reminder of the difficulties that come with the job. On their last night in Jubail before heading for Bahrain, a Saudi missile landed just three kilometers south of the team's hotel, the huge explosion rocking the building.

To geographers, the North Sea is just an arm of the Atlantic, and a relatively small one at that—960km long and 640km wide. They note in gazetteers that it has 'good fisheries.'

For how much longer? Avoided by swimmers at many coastal resorts, and infested with crabs that have turned an unnatural shade of black, the North Sea has become the 'cesspit of Europe.' One informal estimate suggests that enough waste is pumped into its waters each year to cover an area of nine square miles to a height of 16 stories.

The pollutants, chiefly a foul 'cocktail' of raw human sewage, dangerous chemical effluents, radioactive waste, detergents, oil spillage, coal spoil and ash from power stations, do not behave in such neatly-contained ways.

Nor do they all 'break down' and disperse, as once was fondly supposed. Many remain in suspension. They clog the little ocean shared by eight countries to an extent which, some scientists believe, has already exceeded its natural capacity for absorption.

Symptoms that the sea immortalised in Alfred Tennyson's poem 'Break, break, break on thy cold grey stones...' has deteriorated into what anti-pollution protesters call 'a sea of troubles' include:

- Beaches closed due to viral and bacterial contamination
- Exceptional algae 'blooms' which are killing fish, especially in the shallow, poorly-circulating eastern waters, meanwhile causing damage reckoned in millions of pounds to Scotland's fish farms
- A viral epidemic which led to the deaths of over 17,000 common seals
- Seabird colonies failing to breed
- Over-enrichment of sea nutrients, leading to oxygen deficiencies
- Official warnings that certain shellfish could prove fatal if eaten. The underlying fear is that it will be only a matter of time before contamination enters the human food chain in a big way.

In January, Britain brought into force the initial provisions of an Environmental Protection Act designed to 'prevent

IS IT TOO LATE TO SAVE THE NORTH SEA?

Environmental protection groups campaigning to save the North Sea say: 'Urgent action is needed now to stop pollution before disaster strikes.' Yet only now, more than 20 years after scientists started warning of the dangers, are firm steps towards a clean-up being taken by the countries concerned. Gemini News Service tackles the question: Are they doing enough?

By Nicholas Cole

and minimise' the discharge of dangerous substances from 5,000 industrial plants.

The legislation applies at first to new processes only. Existing ones will not come into scope until January 1994. Their operators are being allowed time to make the investment needed for compliance with the latest controls.

Britain has been called 'The Dirty Old Man of Europe' a label stemming from the accusation that it is Europe's worst polluter. Government sources hotly deny this. They insist that just one per cent of North Sea contamination comes from sewage dumped by Britain and that 65 per cent of pollution is caused by sewage-dumping in the rivers of mainland Europe.

The Rhine and Meuse share the blame, followed closely by the Scheldt—into which industrial waste from 1,500 Belgian firms alone allegedly pours each day—and the rivers Elbe and Weser. Some are in place said to be 'biologically dead.'

The politics of pollution are less fractions than all this suggests. Marine ministers have

acted in principle for years that a clean-up is vital. Their problem has been deciding on the best approaches and how to implement them.

At the third International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea held in the Hague last March, they assented to a package of measures that chiefly included:

- Minimising or phasing out sea disposal of wastes containing dangerous substances such as lead, mercury and cadmium
- Compiling a list of dangerous substances whose output should be halved by 1995
- Setting environmental quality standards to ensure pollution is kept below 'harmful levels'
- Preventing agricultural pesticides from reaching the North Sea. Ministers also endorsed the need for an integrated approach and stepping up inspections to ensure compliance with pollution and safety needs.

Yet converting the North Sea from sludgy brown back to

ecologically sound green will not happen overnight, or even in the next 12 months.

Comments Paul Horsman, head of the toxics department at Greenpeace: 'Toxic metals such as mercury and lead are still being put there, albeit at lower levels. They are going to provide problems for food chains, and for animals, for years to come.'

He says Greenpeace would like not just updating of old deadlines but a policy framework plus commitment to 'forced targets' for prompt reduction of poisonous waste dumping to zero.

'It's going to have to happen,' he goes on, adding that issues such as nutrient enrichment are now 'on the international political agenda for the future.'

Only this year is a 'baseline assessment' of atmospheric pollutants being made, in co-operation with the United Nations. Not until 1993 will a 'status report' on quality standards be ready. Ending sea disposal of untreated sewage and sludge is expected to take until 1998.

And while Britain and France have already banned the use of ships' anti-fouling paint containing TBT—tributyltin, one of the most poisonous known chemicals—on vessels over 75 ft long, other Euro community nations are not due to follow suit until June.

Finding alternatives to sewage dumping will, it is estimated, involve a capital outlay of 7 billion in Britain alone.

