Wróg natury – konsumpcjonizm czy przeludnienie?

Egipt

„Today Egypt's battle is to preserve the soil and water that have always given life to the delta. One hundred fifty years ago this nation had five million acres of farmland and five milion citizens; now it has seven million acres of farmland and 60 million citizens. And every nine months there are nearly a million more Egyptians to feed”. (Peter Theroux, *The imperiled Nile Delta*, [w:] „*National Geographic*” 1997, vol. 191, p. 8).

Atol Bikini

W latach 1946-1958 USA przeprowadziło na Atolu Bikini 23 testy bomb atomowych, niektóre o sile tysiące razy większej od bomby zrzuconej na Hiroshimę. Wysiedlono wtedy 167 rdzennych mieszkańców Atolu.

„To this day the soil on Bikini contains too much radioactive cesium to permit the Bikinians, now numbering 2025, to return from their exile. My diving buddy Eric Hiner, who works at the Bikini field research station, explored the edge of the crater. Filled with pulvirized coral and sand, the crater is empty of most marine life. The bottom material is so fine that clams and other invertebrates are unable to take hold. Fortunately this bleak underwater landscape doas not tell the full story of Bikini.

Soon after the first atomic clouds mushroomed into the sky above Bikini Lagoon, scientists went out to test the water. What they found was alarming. Fish and coral showed high doses of radiation. [..] Given these sinister findings, I wasn't prepared for the wealth of life that greeted me underwater four decades later. A flurry of yellow-finned goatfish flew at me above a reef patch. I wondered if they had seen a diver before. Fish that normally shy away swam right up to me. [...] The lagoon healed itself, says William L. Robison of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California. Director of cleanup research at Bikini, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, Robison concludes that the daily exchange of lagoon waters with the open ocean has significantly diluted the contamination. 'Cesium 137, the main radioactive substance in the fallout, is pretty soluble in water', he said. 'Most has gone away. If you go down four to six inches in the sediment, you still find a little cesium, but in the water column there is no radioactive material harmful to fish or divers'. [...] ***Nature has won, I remember thinking. The lagoon has survived****.*

Now I worry about the rogue fishing boats that sneak into far parts of the atoll. Fishing is forbidden without permission from the far-removed Bikinians. Unfortunately, lack of resources makes enforcement – by the Marshallese government – nearly impossible. ***How ironic that without much effort a fishing fleet could destroy what years of nuclear weapons testing could not***”. (Bill Curtsinger, *Close Encounters With the Gray Reef Shark*, [w:] „*National Geographic*” 1995, vol. 187, p. 63).