GOVERNMENTAL ROLE IN MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF EARTHQUAKES IN YUGOSLAVIA

Sergej Bubnov

Introduction

While natural phenonena cannot be avoided, at least at the present state of our knowledge and ability, nevertheless, the impact of a natural phenomenon on human lives and property can be mitigated.

Recent earthquake disasters in Montenegro, Al-Asnam, South Italy and Greece have proved once again that the main problems of earthquake protection are the disaster prevention measures to be taken by governments in order to avoid the loss of lives and the destruction of property, as much as possible. The analyses of the impacts of all these disastrous earthquakes have shown that the scope of the disaster could be substantially mitigated if appropriate governmental predisaster measures were adopted and realized before the earthquakes.

At present a great deal of theoretical and experimental research in the field of earthquake engineering has been carried out or is still in progress in many parts of the world. In the last decade tens of thousands of reports have been presented at various international conferences all over the world. Nevertheless, every new earthquake proves that the protection of human lives and property has not been essentially increased during recent years.

This is due mainly to the fact that most of the governments of the countries with earthquake prone areas, where earthquakes occur sporadically, are not sufficiently aware of the social and economic impact of disastrous earthquakes. As a consequence these governments have not prepared measures to mitigate the impact of strong earthquakes nor have they been able to organize and carry out emergency measures immediately after the earthquake disaster. Usually the first strong disastrous earthquake triggers governmental activity of this sort. Sometimes little by little this activity diminishes when no new strong earthquake occurs for a long period.

Disaster Prevention Measures

In Yugoslavia the first earthquake protection measures were instituted in Slovenia after the strong earthquake of 1895 in Ljubljana--intensity about VIII degrees MCS scale. There were no reinforced concrete structures at that time, but the design and technology of brick structures after the earthquake were improved. Since no earthquake resistance