

NEWS

**ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERS
LOOK TO EASTERN EUROPE**

For many American environmental engineering firms, particularly in California, there is a certain irony to the end of the Cold War. With the reduction in military spending, these firms are receiving fewer Defense Department contracts to clean up waste from weapons systems. But at the same time, the

environmental problems of our old adversary—Eastern Europe—now provide a lucrative market to fill the void.

That is what the California Commission for Economic Development discovered on a recent 16-day tour of Germany, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and the Soviet Union. Lt. Gov. Leo McCarthy and 22 representatives from six environmental firms traveled to the region to study environmental

problems and look for joint-venture business opportunities.

The opportunities seem to be plentiful, according to delegation member Neno Duplancic of International Technology Corp., Martinez, Calif. Duplancic, who appeared on European television and met with several high-ranking officials during the tour, estimates that cleanup costs will be a staggering \$800 billion over the next 10 years.

Each of the countries on the tour has its own set of problems. For instance, in Czechoslovakia, which is second only to Poland in generating the most industrial waste per square mile, 6 million cu yd of hazardous waste is piled in a volcano-shaped dump. On top is a lake of hazardous liquid waste. Meanwhile, near Budapest, Hungary and in what was East Germany, ground water has been polluted by mercury and chemicals from a steel factory.

With so many other pressing problems in this region, though, doesn't environmental cleanup rank very low on the list of priorities? "Yes and no," says Duplancic, "but there's a tremendous amount of pressure from neighboring Western European countries to proceed with cleanups, especially for air pollution. That's the highest priority."

Not surprisingly, funding could be a problem. In reunified Germany, the former East Germany will benefit from West German funds, but other countries will require massive assistance. Duplancic says the World Bank and International Monetary Fund will contribute, and a new nonprofit group, which was scheduled to start an official chapter and state its mission in mid-January, will also fund cleanups.