

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE**



Delivered by
hand to
Ambassador

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SERIAL No. ^{T186/88} 10 DOWNING STREET

Subject cc Maslov LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

8 December 1988

Dear Mr. Gorbachev.

I was very distressed by the news of the terrible earthquake in Armenia, with such heavy loss of life. It is indeed a calamity and I would ask you to convey my deepest sympathy to the families of the victims, and to all those who have suffered loss and injury. I hope you will let me know if there is any way at all in which the United Kingdom can help in the relief efforts. We shall also be encouraging the European Community to offer assistance.

Your Ambassador has delivered to me your message explaining that you will be returning direct to the Soviet Union from New York, and thus postponing your visit to the United Kingdom. I entirely understand this: your place must be at home at a time of such tragedy, and I know you would feel this very strongly. People in Britain will of course be disappointed not to see you and Mrs. Gorbachev, but they too will understand and will look forward to welcoming you as soon as fresh dates can be found.

May I take the opportunity to congratulate you on your speech at the United Nations. I have warmly welcomed your proposed reductions in Soviet conventional forces and armaments as an important step towards securing a better

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balance of forces in Europe. It holds out new hope - and makes it all the more important that we should meet soon to discuss the way ahead.

Once more I send you my deepest sympathy for the victims of the earthquake.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely

Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Mr. M. S. Gorbachev