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A. J. H.  
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Oral Message of Mr. Gorbachev  
to the Prime Minister Mrs.M.Thatcher

M.S.Gorbachev asked the Ambassador to convey personally to the Prime-Minister the following:

M.S.Gorbachev deeply regrets that the visit to Great Britain, which was jointly prepared, cannot take place in view of the necessity for him to return home urgently. He has also to cut short his visit to the United States of America and cancel a trip to Cuba.

As the Prime-Minister is already aware, a great tragedy - an earthquake happened in our country which caused considerable loss of life. I am convinced that Mrs. Thatcher will receive our decision with understanding.

Naturally, the visit is not canceled but postponed. The new dates could be agreed upon later.

December 8, 1988

I am instructed to add the following:

The earthquake has grave consequences. According to preliminary data, thousands of people lost their lives in Armenia. There is wide spread devastation.

The extraordinary measures are being taken in order to help the people. M.S.Gorbachev thinks that it is necessary for him to be back and personally head this most responsible work.