

PRIME MINISTER

MR. GORBACHEV'S VISIT: SIGNING OF AGREEMENTS

You will need to make a few short remarks at the ceremony tomorrow for signing the agreements. I attach a text.

C D P

C. D. POWELL

5 April 1989

5,000 children killed
in school. pub

School will take 400
Children : 6-16 e
Specialise in English.

SP2AEQ

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SPEAKING NOTE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

AT THE

SIGNING OF AGREEMENTS ON THURSDAY 6 APRIL

Mr. President and General Secretary,

Mrs. Gorbachev, Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and

Gentlemen.

We are now going to witness the signing by the

Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Shevardnadze

and our own Foreign Secretary,

Sir Geoffery Howe of three agreements.

The first is a Memorandum of Understanding about the construction of a school in Leninakan in Armenia.

We have decided to build and equip a school for 400 children as a demonstration of our wish to help with the rebuilding of Armenia following the earthquake.

The money is coming partly from voluntary contributions, partly from the generosity

of a number of major British companies who are represented here today, and partly with funds from the Government.

There is a model of the school in the room here with some plans. We hope to have the building at least weather-proof by next winter. It is a prefabricated system and earthquake proof.

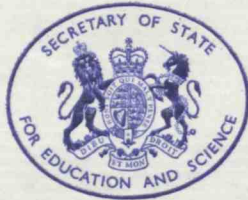
We want it to be a contribution to rebuilding the lives of those who suffered

so much in the Armenian earthquake,
particularly the young people.

The other two agreements are first, an
Investment Promotion and Protection
Agreement which we hope will give further
encouragement to trade between our two
countries; and second a Memorandum of
Understanding on visa procedures which
will reduce the time needed to obtain

visas with the general aim of simplifying travel between our two countries.

I will now ask the two Foreign Secretaries to sign the agreements after which we shall drink a toast to their success.



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Dear Paul

UK SCHOOL FOR ARMENIA

The Prime Minister asked for some speaking notes about the UK school in Armenia for use at the signing ceremony tomorrow at 10 Downing Street.

Attached are speaking notes and a brief background note together with a copy of the press notice, which the Department will be issuing tomorrow.

A copy of this letter goes to Stephen Wall.

Yours,

Tom

T B JEFFERY
Private Secretary

ccpl (2)

Ric Austin

Some further notes
about the school.

I doubt you will
want to use them

all, but
- 5 APR 1989

might draw on

them.

Tom 5/4.

'SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT
THE UK SCHOOL FOR ARMENIA

1. We were greatly shocked by the news of the terrible earthquake in Armenia last December and deeply saddened that over 5,000 children were killed. The first pictures we saw of the devastation in Armenia brought home to us, very sharply, the plight of those whose lives had been spared.

2. We wanted to help. We heard that many thousands of school places had been destroyed and that classes were being taught in tents. We thought we could help by building a school. We thought this would give parents and children in Armenia new heart for the future.

3. The Memorandum of Understanding signed today follows very constructive discussions between British Government officials and representatives of the Armenian education authorities.

4. The British Government, with the assistance of Aid Armenia and a number of major British firms as co-sponsors will build, furnish and equip a school in Leninakan to replace one lost in last December's earthquake. The school will provide for 400 children between the ages of 6 and 16.

5. It will be designed by the Department of Education and Science, assisted by a team of consultants, and built by a UK contractor. It will be built to withstand severe earthquakes and cope with the very hot weather in the Armenian summer and the very cold winters. It will be built with Russian stone and British slate.

6. Work will begin in Leninakan next month. The school will be completed before the beginning of the 1990/91 school year. The school will have a special emphasis on the teaching of the English language: it will be only 400 metres from the site of the English language school ruined in the earthquake.

7. I am absolutely delighted that UK skills and technology are being used to help build a new future for the children of Armenia. I thank most warmly Aid Armenia and those British companies who are making valuable contributions to the cost of providing the school.

8. The school will further strengthen the links between the UK and the USSR. Our futures depend on our young people. The knowledge and understanding they gain as pupils is central to their future lives as adults. We hope that this school will be a valuable contribution to the growing understanding that exists between the peoples of our 2 countries.

BACKGROUND NOTE

1. The school will provide for 400 children between the ages of 6 and 16. It will use the SCOLA system of building, based on the use of a light steel frame. The system was first developed 27 years ago with more than 2,000 schools having been built in the UK using the system since then.
2. The contractor will be Mowlen International Ltd. The consultants supporting the DES will be the Building Design Partnership as architects and quality surveyors, and Buro Happold as engineers. These 3 organisations are undertaking their work without profit.
3. Those who have already made commitments to contribute to the school are Aid Armenia, BP, British Steel, Cable and Wireless, Coloroll, GEC, ICI, P & O, and Rolls Royce.
4. It is difficult to be absolutely precise about the cost of the school at this stage, but it will be about £4m. In addition to the Government's funding the contributions promised are £250,000 from Aid Armenia and at least £250,000 from the British companies. Because of the uncertainty about the overall cost no reference is being made to the precise cost of the school at this stage. Nor are we making reference to the precise sums being committed by the donors.
5. The first contractor's team will arrive on site this month and work on the foundations will begin in May. The plan is to have the shell of the building closed in before winter, so that building can continue inside during the very cold weather.
6. The school is being designed to cope with the very severe earthquake conditions that occurred last December, and in accordance with the Russian seismology regulations.
7. The Armenian authorities are playing their part. They have undertaken to clear the site, lay the foundations and ground floor slab, complete some external works and provide the necessary services in time to ensure that the school is opened at the beginning of the 1990/91 school year.

PRESS NOTICE

91/89

April 6 1989

BRITAIN TO BUILD SCHOOL IN ARMENIA

The British Government, with the assistance of Aid Armenia and of a number of major British firms as co-sponsors, is to build, furnish and equip a school in Leninakan to replace one lost in last December's earthquake.

A Memorandum of Understanding to this effect was signed at 10 Downing Street today by the Foreign Secretary and the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the presence of the Prime Minister and Mr Gorbachev.

The school, in accordance with detailed arrangements agreed between the Department of Education and Science and the Armenian authorities, will:

- * Provide for 400 children between the ages of six and 16.
- * Be designed by the Department of Education and Science, assisted by a team of consultants, and built by a UK contractor.
- * Use the SCOLA - Second Consortium of Local Authorities - building system, developed by local authorities over 27 years for schools and other buildings, and capable of coping with mining subsidence.
- * Incorporate appropriate laboratory and physical education facilities.

- * Be built to withstand severe earthquakes.
- * Cope with the extremes of heat and cold which characterise the Armenian climate.

Commenting on the announcement, Education Secretary Kenneth Baker said: "My Department, in association with Aid Armenia and a number of major British firms, will provide this substantial piece of practical assistance to the reconstruction of earthquake-devastated Armenia.

"I am delighted that UK skills and technology are being used in this way to the benefit of the people hit by this terrible disaster.

"I am particularly pleased that Aid Armenia and a number of leading British companies are contributing.

"The school will further strengthen the links we are establishing through teacher and pupil exchanges following my visit to the USSR last Autumn."

Commitments to join with Aid Armenia in contributing to the school so far have come from BP, British Steel, Cable and Wireless, Coloroll, GEC, ICI, P and O, and Rolls Royce.

The contractor will be Mowlem International Limited.

The DES is planning to start on site on cleared land in the centre of Leninakan at the beginning of May this year, and to complete the school before the beginning of the 1990/91 school year. The Armenian authorities have undertaken to clear the site, lay the foundations and ground floor slab, complete some external works and provide the necessary services in time to make this possible.

By getting the structure roofed in by the end of December after summer heat which can reach 34 deg C, it will be possible to continue work in the Armenian winter when temperatures can plunge to minus 40 deg C.

A delegation from the DES visited Armenia in January and again in March to reach agreement with the Armenian education authorities on the sketch design produced by the DES architects.

The school will be in the form of five single storey pavilions containing the classrooms, assembly hall and sports hall. About 4,000 square metres of space will be provided. The design will have pitched roofs and be faced in tufa stone - a local volcanic rock.

NOTES:

- 1 The Government allocated £5m for Armenian relief and reconstruction shortly after last December's earthquake. A substantial part of the remaining funds will be devoted to the school.
- 2 The Chief Architect of the DES, Mr Peter Benwell, made arrangements to ensure the project proposal was put together rapidly.
- 3 The County Architect to Dorset County Council and Chairman of SCOLA, Mr Dick Patterson, volunteered the SCOLA system as suitable, after some adaptation, for conditions in Leninakan.
- 4 The SCOLA system of building, based on the use of a light steel frame, was first developed by the SCOLA Consortium of local authorities some 27 years ago. More than 2,000 SCOLA schools have been built in the UK since then, and its use has extended to the commercial and private sectors under commercial agreements with the Consortium. The characteristics of the frame make it eminently suitable for the type of earthquake conditions which prevail in Armenia.
- 5 Building Design Partnership as architects and quantity surveyors, and Buro Happold as engineers - both supporting consultants to the DES involved in the detailed design of the school - are having to allow for the extreme seismic forces to which the structure, and every building element from the foundations to the light fittings, may be subjected.

- 6 Mowlem International Ltd who, like BDP and Buro Happold, are undertaking their work without profit, are appointed as the managing contractors. Apart from the ground floor slab and some external works, all other building materials, labour and support facilities in the wasteland that is now Leninakan, will be taken in by Mowlem from the UK.

PRESS ENQUIRIES: Schools Desk 01-934 9882/3/4/5

