an update on the administration’s negotiati
gations with Armenia for its accession to the WTO. In his letter, Trade Represen-
tative official Richard W. Fisher indicates that the United States
strongly supports Armenia’s WTO membership and its integration into
the world economy.

Quoting from Mr. Fisher’s letter, “Armenia has made impor-
tative economic progress and tran-
sition to a market economy under very
difficult circumstances. We believe that Armenia’s implementation of
WTO provisions will facilitate fur-
ther progress towards increased invest-
ment and economic growth and that its
acceptance of WTO market access com-
mittments will foster Armenia’s further
integration into the global trading sys-
tem.”

Madam Speaker, the letter goes on to state that, “In the last year, Armenia
has made substantial progress in its
negotiations to complete the accession
process, both with the United States
and with other WTO members. Market
access negotiations on tariffs, services,
and agricultural supports are very
close to completion, and Armenia has
reported that its efforts to enact legis-
lative implementation of WTO provisions
are also in the last stages.”

Mr. Fisher notes that WTO delega-
tions will meet in July to further as-
 sess Armenia’s progress, and that the
administration shares the goal of many
of us in Congress that these negoti-
tations be completed as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker, this is certainly
very encouraging news. Since achiev-
ing its independence about a decade
ago, Armenia has sought to integrate
its economy with its immediate neigh-
bors, as well as with the larger world.
While Armenia has achieved bilat-
eral ties with the United States,
Europe, and other regions of the world,
unfortunately achieving economic in-
tegration in its immediate neighbor-
hood has proven more difficult, through no fault of Armenia’s, I should
add.

Armenia’s neighbors to the west,
Turkey, and to the east, Azerbaijan,
continue to maintain devastating eco-
nomic blockades. Armenia has sought
to normalize relations with its neigh-
bors but has been snubbed.

Still, despite the isolation imposed
on this small landlocked Nation by
hostile neighbors, Armenia endeavors
to become an integral part of the world
community through a range of inter-
national organizations, including
NATO’s Partnership for Peace program
and the Organization for Security and
Cooperation in Europe, the OSCE,
among others.

What Armenia needs most is eco-
nomic development. Membership in
the WTO will help Armenia attract invest-
ment and reach new markets under a
predictable international framework.

Madam Speaker, economic develop-
ment for Armenia over the longer term
will be based on that Nation’s ability
to establish trading networks, attract
investment, and enact the kinds of free
market economic policies that foster
sustained prosperity.

Armenia’s elected leaders know this,
but in the shorter term, Armenia still
needs the kind of assistance that a
great Nation like the United States
can provide. In the immediate years
after independence, as Armenia coped
with the effects of blockades and the
destruction wrought by a devastating
earthquake, there was a crying need
for direct humanitarian assistance.
In the years since, the thrust of assist-
ance has shifted to development aid.

In order to help Armenia achieve
self-sufficiency, the United States
must continue to provide develop-
ment and humanitarian assistance.
We must also use our influence to bring
about regional integration and confi-
dence-building measures that will
help Armenia and its neighbors achieve
stability and become full-fledged mem-
bers of the emerging global economy.

We must also do more to resolve the
Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, recog-
nizing the legitimate security and self-
determination needs of the Karabagh
people. This will create the kind of sta-
 bility that lends itself to economic de-
velopment.

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to say
lastly this evening that I am encour-
gaged by the support that the adminis-
tration has demonstrated in helping
Armenia’s accession to the WTO. I will
keep the pressure on the administra-
tion to help in the other areas through
direct assistance and in fostering re-
gional stability. That will make this
anticipated access to the WTO mean-
ingful in the lives of the people of
Armenia.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs.
Biggert). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule
1, the Chair declares the House in re-
cess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 o’clock and 32
minutes p.m.), the House stood in re-
cess subject to the call of the Chair.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House
was called to order by the Speaker pro
tempore (Mr. Dreier) at 12 o’clock and
10 minutes a.m.