AMENDMENT TO RULES COMM. PRINT 115–70
OFFERED BY MR. ENGEL OF NEW YORK

At the end of subtitle B of title XII, add the following new section:

SEC. 12. OFFICE FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN AFGHANISTAN.

(a) Statement of Policy.—Congress declares the following:

(1) It is in the national security interests of the United States that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Afghan Taliban conclude, through inclusive negotiations, a political settlement in which the Taliban—

(A) renounces violence;

(B) breaks ties to international terrorism;

and

(C) accepts the Constitution of Afghanistan, including its safeguards to respect human rights, especially the rights of women, girls, and ethnic and religious minorities;

(2) There is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and the only way to achieve lasting stability is through a negotiated settlement.
(3) A negotiated settlement remains critical to providing effective incentives for the Taliban to break from international terrorism.

(4) The United States should engage in direct talks with the Taliban as an essential step toward a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan that includes all Afghan stakeholders, and should work with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan toward that end.

(5) The United States should use all of the tools at its disposal in seeking a political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan, including the diplomatic and development expertise at the Department of State and United States Agency for International Development.

(6) In order to mount a sufficiently robust diplomatic initiative, the Secretary of State should establish an office of senior officials based in the Department of State to focus solely on promoting a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall establish an office within the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, to be headed by
a senior employee at the level of Deputy Assistant Secretary or an equivalent position, to exclusively pursue a negotiated settlement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban by—

(A) leading United States efforts in seeking a negotiated peace to end the war in Afghanistan;

(B) coordinating within the Department of State and with the Department of Defense and other relevant Federal departments and agencies to develop and implement a strategy to create an environment enabling a negotiated settlement to such war;

(C) supporting and coordinating international efforts at establishing a peace process in Afghanistan; and

(D) working with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Taliban political commission, and regional partners to encourage a peaceful settlement to such war.

(2) PERSONNEL.—The office established pursuant to paragraph (1) shall consist of at least three full-time employees.
(3) **STATUS AS SPECIAL ENVOY.**—The head of the office established pursuant to paragraph (1) may be elevated to a Special Envoy or equivalent rank.

(4) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the congressional defense committees, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives a report describing the strategy of the Department, developed through the office established pursuant to paragraph (1), to pursue peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.