

**AMENDMENT TO**  
**RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 119–8**  
**OFFERED BY MR. CLINE OF VIRGINIA**

At the end of subtitle F of title X, add the following:

1 **SEC. 10 \_\_\_\_ . CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL LEGAL OPER-**  
2 **ATIONS.**

3 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

4 (1) The People’s Republic of China (PRC),  
5 Russia, Iran, violent nonstate actors, and other for-  
6 eign adversaries and strategic competitors of the  
7 United States regularly employ law as a weapon  
8 against the United States and its allies and part-  
9 ners. This phenomenon has been labeled by Amer-  
10 ican legal scholars as “lawfare”, and by NATO as  
11 “legal operations”.

12 (2) The PRC has adopted “falun zhan” or “legal  
13 warfare”, sometimes translated as lawfare, as part  
14 of its strategic doctrine.

15 (3) Legal warfare is a critical part of the PRC’s  
16 strategy in the maritime, information, cyber, tech-  
17 nology, aviation, and space domains, and regarding  
18 Taiwan.

1           (4) Despite the magnitude and variety of the  
2       lawfare threats, no United States Government entity  
3       is tasked with systematically and holistically track-  
4       ing, informing, collecting best practices regarding,  
5       and otherwise facilitating, the defense of the United  
6       States and its allies and partners, businesses and  
7       citizens, against legal warfare by the PRC and other  
8       United States adversaries and strategic competitors.

9           (5) The Department of Defense has recognized  
10      the threat of legal warfare and hostile international  
11      legal operations, including competitor and adversary  
12      attempts to revise and erode legal norms. The De-  
13      partment of Defense 2024 Annual Report to Con-  
14      gress on “Military and Security Developments In-  
15      volving the People’s Republic of China” contains nu-  
16      merous references to the threat of PRC legal war-  
17      fare.

18          (6) In 2022, the United States Indo-Pacific  
19      Command (USINDOPACOM) launched a program  
20      designed to counter elements of PRC legal warfare  
21      that are within the Command’s scope. The  
22      USINDOPACOM Counter-Lawfare Program “con-  
23      sists of operations and activities that preserve legit-  
24      imacy, build legal consensus, and exposes and op-  
25      pose unlawful action and misinformation that threat-

1       ens the rules-based international order”. The success  
2       of USINDOPACOM’s Counter-Lawfare Program  
3       has inspired United States European Command,  
4       United States Cyber Command, United States  
5       Southern Command, and other commands within  
6       and outside these Combatant Commands to develop  
7       their own separate counter-lawfare and international  
8       legal operations activities.

9               (7) NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Pow-  
10       ers Europe (NATO/SHAPE) has issued a “Legal  
11       Operations” directive, which defines “legal oper-  
12       ations” as “the use of law as an instrument of  
13       power”, noting that the term may encompass any  
14       category of actions in the international “legal envi-  
15       ronment by state or non-state actors aimed at,  
16       among others, gaining/undermining legitimacy, ad-  
17       vancing/undermining interests, or enhancing/denying  
18       capabilities, whether at the tactical, operational and/  
19       or strategic/political levels”.

20              (8) In implementation of the “Legal Oper-  
21       ations” directive, the NATO/SHAPE “Legal Oper-  
22       ations Team” identifies allied vulnerabilities in the  
23       international legal operations arena, collects case  
24       studies and best practices, and monitors, trains for,  
25       prepares to counter, counters, and derives lessons

1       learned from adversaries' conduct of international  
2       legal operations.

3           (9) United States allies and partners, including  
4       the United Kingdom, France, and Israel, have also  
5       recognized the threat of hostile international legal  
6       operations (including terrorists' use of innocent civil-  
7       ians as human shields) and launched efforts to  
8       counter them.

9       (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

10           (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
11       after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
12       Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall establish  
13       within the Institute for National Strategic Studies at  
14       the National Defense University a Center for Inter-  
15       national Legal Operations (referred to in this section  
16       as the “Center”).

17           (2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Center shall  
18       be to provide necessary research, analysis, training,  
19       education, and recommendations on international  
20       legal operations to the Joint Staff, combatant com-  
21       mands, the Joint Force, and relevant civilian agen-  
22       cies, and to support counter-lawfare and other rel-  
23       evant programs at the combatant commands.

24       (c) FUNCTIONS.—The Center shall coordinate with  
25       relevant other Federal agencies, with United States allies

1 and partner nations, and with academia and the private  
2 sector, to carry out the following functions:

3 (1) Facilitating development and implementa-  
4 tion of a strategy or doctrine providing for a system-  
5 atic, coordinated whole-of-government approach to  
6 engaging in and defending against international  
7 legal operations, to include working with United  
8 States partners and allies to proactively build legal  
9 capacity, capabilities, and resilience, and the coordi-  
10 nated use of all relevant legal tools across govern-  
11 ment agencies and in coordination with the private  
12 sector and academia to achieve national strategic ob-  
13 jectives in the international arena.

14 (2) Enhancing United States Government un-  
15 derstanding of the overall international legal oper-  
16 ations strategies and objectives of, and monitor and  
17 assess the threats posed to the United States and its  
18 allies and partners by, foreign adversaries and stra-  
19 tegic competitors of the United States.

20 (3) Researching, identifying, tracking, ana-  
21 lyzing, and developing recommendations for the  
22 Joint Staff, combatant commands, the Joint Force,  
23 and other relevant Federal agencies to prepare for  
24 and counter significant specific international legal  
25 operations actions conducted by, and tools and op-

1       portunities available to, foreign adversaries and stra-  
2       tegic competitors of the United States and of its al-  
3       lies and partner nations.

4           (4) Evaluating lessons learned and best prac-  
5       tices from the successes and failures of United  
6       States and partner and ally efforts to counter com-  
7       petitor and adversary hostile international legal op-  
8       erations.

9           (5) Identifying lessons learned from the inter-  
10      national legal operations or similar strategies, doc-  
11      trines, and related coordinating offices and entities  
12      of United States alliances, including NATO, and  
13      United States allies and partners including Israel.

14          (6) Identifying and proposing options for ad-  
15      dressing current gaps in United States international  
16      legal operations capabilities, coordination,  
17      resourcing, and authorities.

18          (7) Identifying and tracking lessons learned and  
19      best practices from significant specific international  
20      legal operations actions conducted by, and tools and  
21      opportunities available to, the United States and its  
22      allies and partner nations.

23          (8) Researching, identifying, and exposing for-  
24      eign adversary and strategic competitor efforts to  
25      misuse and exploit United States and international

1 law, legal institutions, and norms, and publishing  
2 findings as appropriate.

3 (9) Encouraging and facilitating the develop-  
4 ment of international legal operations subject matter  
5 expertise within the United States Government, aca-  
6 demia, and private sector.

7 (10) Serving as the consolidated focal point for  
8 engagements carried out between the Department of  
9 Defense, the interagency, academia, and the private  
10 sector with respect to international legal operations.

11 (11) Otherwise serving as a consolidated focal  
12 point and research center to facilitate and support  
13 Department of Defense and interagency inter-  
14 national legal operations efforts, including with re-  
15 gard to national security-sensitive litigation.

16 (d) RESEARCH GRANTS.—The Center shall be au-  
17 thorized to accept qualifying research grants in accordance  
18 with section 2165 of title 10, United States Code.

19 (e) ADDITIONAL AUTHORITIES.—In carrying out this  
20 section, under the authority of section 2165 of title 10,  
21 United States Code, the Director of the Center may pro-  
22 vide for the support of educational programs in matters  
23 related to international legal operations—

24 (1) enter into contracts and cooperative agree-  
25 ments;

1           (2) make grants of financial assistance, includ-  
2           ing to civilian and military students, for educational  
3           or research purposes;

4           (3) provide cash awards and other items;

5           (4) accept voluntary services; and

6           (5) support national competition judging, other  
7           educational event activities, and associated award  
8           ceremonies in connection with covered academic and  
9           private sector engagement programs.

10          (f) STAFFING OF THE CENTER.—

11                 (1) EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION OF FAC-  
12                 ULTY AND STAFF.—

13                         (A) DIRECTOR.—The Director of the Cen-  
14                         ter shall be a civilian employee of the Depart-  
15                         ment of Defense and concurrently hold the title  
16                         of professor or professor of practice at the Na-  
17                         tional Defense University

18                         (B) ADDITIONAL STAFF.—The Center  
19                         shall also employ a Deputy Director and two or  
20                         more civilian professors, instructors, lecturers,  
21                         researchers, and administrative staff, as the  
22                         Chairman considers necessary

23                 (2) COMPENSATION.—The compensation of  
24                 Center civilian faculty shall be under the compensa-



1       tion plan authorized by section 1595(b) of title 10,  
2       United States Code.

3           (3) COMPOSITION.—The Secretary of Defense  
4       shall prescribe the compensation of civilian Center  
5       staff, in accordance with Federal guidelines.

6           (4) ASSIGNMENT OF MILITARY FACULTY AND  
7       STAFF.—The Armed Services may also assign mem-  
8       bers of the Armed Forces serving on active duty or  
9       in a reserve component to serve at the Center as  
10      professors, instructors, lecturers, researchers, or ad-  
11      ministrative staff.

12          (5) DETAILEES.—Any Federal Government em-  
13      ployee may be detailed or assigned to the Center as  
14      faculty or staff without reimbursement, in accord-  
15      ance with relevant National Defense University poli-  
16      cies. Such detail or assignment shall be without  
17      interruption or loss of status or privilege.

18          (6) PERSONAL SERVICE CONTRACTORS.—The  
19      Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff may hire  
20      United States citizens as personal services contrac-  
21      tors for purposes of personnel resources of the Cen-  
22      ter, if—

23            (A) the Chairman determines that existing  
24      personnel expertise is insufficient;

1 (B) not more than four United States citi-  
2 zens are employed as personal services contrac-  
3 tors under the authority of this paragraph at  
4 any one time; and

5 (C) the authority of this paragraph is only  
6 used to obtain specialized skills or experience or  
7 to respond to urgent needs.

8 (7) CONSULTANT SERVICES.—The Center may  
9 procure the services of experts and consultants in  
10 accordance with section 3109 of title 5, United  
11 States Code, but at rates not to exceed the daily rate  
12 paid a person occupying a position at level IV of the  
13 Executive Schedule under section 5315 of such title.

14 (8) INTERIM APPOINTMENT.—Until the Direc-  
15 tor of the Center is hired under regular Federal hir-  
16 ing processes, the President of the National Defense  
17 University may appoint a civilian National Defense  
18 University Professor as acting Center Director, and  
19 prescribe compensation in accordance with relevant  
20 Federal guidelines.

21 (9) SUPPORT DURING VACANCIES.—Until the  
22 Center is fully staffed, or subsequently when posi-  
23 tions at the Center are vacant, the Director of the  
24 Center may procure the services of experts and con-  
25 sultants, or request the support of members of the

1 Armed Forces serving on active duty or in a reserve  
2 component or civilian detailees to fulfill deputy di-  
3 rector, faculty, and staff roles.

4 (10) NUMBER OF FACULTY AND STAFF.—The  
5 number of faculty and staff billets at the National  
6 Defense University and its Components shall not de-  
7 crease as a result of the creation of the Center or  
8 the hiring of its staff.

9 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) The term “foreign adversaries of the United  
11 States” means—

12 (A) the Democratic People’s Republic of  
13 North Korea;

14 (B) the People’s Republic of China;

15 (C) the Russian Federation;

16 (D) the Islamic Republic of Iran;

17 (E) designated foreign terrorist organiza-  
18 tions and specially designated global terrorists;  
19 and

20 (F) any foreign government or foreign  
21 nongovernment entity, engaged in a long-term  
22 pattern of serious instances of conduct signifi-  
23 cantly adverse to the national security of the  
24 United States or security and safety of United  
25 States persons.

1           (2) The term “international legal operations”  
2       means the term “legal operations” as defined in  
3       NATO ACO Directive 080–119, ACO Legal Oper-  
4       ations, May 5, 2022.

5       (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—From  
6       amounts authorized to be appropriated for Operation and  
7       Maintenance, Defense-wide within the Department of De-  
8       fense, there is authorized to be made available to the Cen-  
9       ter \$1,400,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2029  
10      to carry out the purposes of this section.

