

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.8)

Senator Kimberley Kitching asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 16 November 2021:

A 2015 study found that the Taliban leadership was “acutely aware that its military campaign is dependent upon retaining access to Pakistani territory.” In congressional testimony in September of this year, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark A. Milley, stated that “never effectively dealing with Pakistan” was a critical error.

1. Does Defence agree with that statement?

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Senator’s question:

1. The Department of Defence agrees with General Milley’s assessments that the endstate in Afghanistan was the cumulative result of a series of decisions and actions taken over twenty years. The Taliban’s military campaign did depend on retaining access to Pakistani territory.