

# German Soldiers ‘Trained to Kill’ in Afghanistan: Expert

By [Global Research](#)

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Berlin – Senior German defence expert Wolfgang Ischinger said Germany must confront the reality that its soldiers are trained to kill, after a controversial German-commanded airstrike in which Afghan civilians died in September 2009. The head of Munich’s prestigious annual Security Conference said Germany still had a special status, more than 60 years after the end of World War II. Nevertheless, certain military facts had to be confronted.

“Soldiers are trained to kill others, or at least to threaten people in a way that they consider it plausible that they will be killed if they don’t do what is expected of them,” Ischinger said in an interview with the German Press Agency dpa.

German Bundeswehr soldiers were in Afghanistan because police and aid workers could not do the job alone, he added.

Afghanistan will be a key topic at the Munich Security Conference in February. Afghan President Hamid Karzai is due to attend the high-profile meeting, alongside senior government delegations from the US and Russia amongst others.

The former ambassador to Washington and London welcomed US President Barack Obama’s plans for an interim “surge,” and to begin withdrawing from Afghanistan in 2011. Ischinger said Germany should also increase its troop contingent.

“If we send too many, it can’t get so bad. If we send too few, it could be that the whole thing doesn’t work,” Ischinger said.

“It’s a completely different question whether that can be pushed through politically,” the 63-year-old added.

A parliamentary inquiry is underway into the Kunduz airstrike commanded by a German colonel in September, which killed or injured up to 142 people including civilians, according to NATO.

The attack – apparently meant to target Taliban fighters – rekindled a debate over the role of the military in Germany, where most people oppose the Bundeswehr’s deployment to Afghanistan.

It was only after the Kunduz airstrike that the German government began to talk of “war-like conditions” in relation to the security situation in Afghanistan.

“We are building fewer wells, and unfortunately have to shoot more,” Ischinger said, adding that these facts needed to be confronted. “This conversation needs to take place now.”

The defence expert also called upon Islamic states to send more – Muslim – soldiers to Afghanistan, “simply to counter the impression that the West is dominating an Islamic country.”

Ischinger defended Germany’s unique soul-searching over the role of the military.

“Germany is not, and will not become, a normal country,” Ischinger said, adding that this was not just due to the country’s history, but also its central position in Europe and role within NATO.

“It is wrong to say we want to be like all the others. We are not normal. We have to accept that,” he said. Even military successes had to be analyzed critically.

“It is not possible, in German political parlance, to talk of a hero. And it’s only right that this is difficult for us, since we seduced and abused the hero,” he said in reference to Germany’s Nazi past.

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