

# **Four German soldiers killed in Kabul attack**

## **Victims of Social Democratic/Green government policies**

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The terrorist attack on a unit of the German army in Kabul two weeks ago, killing four soldiers and wounding 29, refutes the official propaganda of the German Social Democratic/Green government that the international peacekeeping force ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) will bring peace and political stability to Afghanistan. The opposite is the case.

Since the end of the war, conflicts among rival bands of gangsters and warlords in Afghanistan have intensified, and attempts by the major powers to promote their interests with the support of the central government in Kabul have only served to further inflame hostilities. Meanwhile, the living conditions of the general population have been reduced to the most basic level.

The dead and wounded soldiers in Kabul are the victims of the irresponsible and reactionary policies of the German federal government. These policies are developing according to their own logic and are resulting in a continual expansion of military deployments. Concealed behind all the talk about freedom, democracy and humanity lies a return to the politics of early 20th century colonialism, with all the devastating consequences this entails.

It is necessary to make a determined stand against such politics and demand the immediate withdrawal of German troops from Afghanistan and all other crisis areas. There is no justification for the presence of the German army in the Hindu Kush or Congo.

The forces behind the attack are still unknown. However, it is clear that explosive experts were involved. The explosive device, detonated by the suicide bomber as the ISAF bus with 33 German soldiers passed by, was constructed so that the force of the explosion would completely obliterate the vehicle.

The supposition that the incident was an act of revenge on the part of Taliban fighters is not without foundation. About three weeks ago, special units of the US Army carried out Operation Dragon Fury in two southeastern provinces of the country, massacring more than 40 suspected members of the Taliban. After this, a high-ranking Taliban commander gave official warning of an act of reprisal to be directed against both US units and ISAF defence troops.

This is the first time since the end of the Second World War almost 60 years ago that German soldiers have been killed while on duty abroad as a consequence of war. The 10 German soldiers previously killed in Afghanistan were regarded as victims of accidents. This time they were deliberately attacked and killed or wounded as representatives of an international force of occupation.

A few days after the attack and amid much military pomp, the bodies of the four soldiers were returned to Germany. They were young men aged between 22 and 29. In his customary brash and insensitive manner, Defence Minister Peter Struck (Social Democratic Party, SPD) told surviving relatives and friends that the young soldiers were “victims of a remorseless stroke of fate.”

It is hard to imagine a more banal comment on the tragic death of the four young men. Neither fate nor inevitability had anything to do with it. If Peter Struck or Angela Beer (the Greens’ military expert) were to speak the truth, they would declare before the soldiers’ open coffins: “After we prescribed in the defence policy guidelines that the German army had the task of representing the interests of German business and imperial interests worldwide, we knew that this would also lead to the deaths of some of our soldiers. This is what we wanted.”

Anyone expecting a decision from Berlin to withdraw troops as a result of the deaths of the soldiers was soon to be disappointed. Struck announced that the deployment of the German army in Afghanistan would not only be continued but also extended, and he commented: “That’s something we owe the dead soldiers, too.”

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer also vehemently advocate the presence of German troops in Afghanistan. The Greens, in particular, are once again outstripping their coalition partners on this issue. Winfried Nachtwei, their defence spokesman, stressed that people should not allow themselves to be demoralised and driven out of the country by “such pinpricks.”

Defence Minister Struck is steadfastly adhering to his plans to send German troops to the province of Herat, 600 miles away from the Afghan capital. American units continue to be involved in military action with scattered Taliban forces in the provinces outside Kabul. Ismail Khan, a tribal leader, has apparently received military help from the Americans to set up a mini-state in Herat and is terrorising the population.

The readiness of the German government to send its troops into such an unstable region is part of an effort to signal its willingness to cooperate closely with the US government in Washington. Herat shares a border with Iran. In view of the mounting tensions between Washington and Teheran, it would well suit the American government if the Germans were to defend this region.

The *Berliner Zeitung* newspaper spotted this very scenario. One of its commentaries declared, “The plan to step up the deployment of German troops is part of the chancellor’s new good-will policy towards the US.” The author goes on to refer to US threats of war against Iran and to the US’s need for a stable military launch pad in Afghanistan for such a war.

Every passing day increasingly exposes the genuinely imperialist character of the ISAF occupation force in Kabul. Sections of the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union opposition coalition) and representatives of the media are combining a demand for more security for German soldiers with a call for the deployment of heavy artillery and tanks. This marks the beginning of the next phase of military escalation.



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