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German President Resigns Over Afghan War Comments

By Jason Ditz

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German President Horst Köhler [announced his resignation today](#), putting a surprising end to his six year term in office following growing uproar over his comments defending the war of Afghanistan.

In a weekend radio interview, [Köhler insisted that the war was necessary to protect German economic interests in the region, including trade routes.](#)

Köhler subsequently lashed out at domestic criticism of his comments, [saying that the media had not “shown the respect due to me as the holder of the highest office of state.”](#) In the end, however, the outrage was becoming a liability to the Merkel government, and he announced his resignation.

Germany’s role in Afghanistan has been a source of enormous domestic controversy, as Germany’s constitution specifically rules out participation in such a war, prompting many officials to claim that it “technically” isn’t a war, and that the constitutional limits don’t apply.