

Statement by John F. Kennedy (Bonn, 24 June 1963)

Caption: On 24 June 1963, at a press conference held in Bonn, the US President, John F. Kennedy, acknowledges the importance for stability in Europe of Franco-German reconciliation and emphasises the essential role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Source: United States-Department of State. Documents on Germany 1944-1985. Washington: Department of State, [s.d.]. 1421 p. (Department of State Publication 9446).

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement_by_john_f_kennedy_bonn_24_june_1963-en-93905483-32ae-4fa1-bae7-c50f75452433.html

Publication date: 23/10/2012

News Conference Statement by President Kennedy in Bonn Endorsing the Franco-German Treaty on Organization and Principles of Cooperation, June 24, 1963

The United States never registered any objections to the [French-German] treaty. What I think we are concerned about is the maintenance of the integrity of NATO. And it seemed to me that the form in which the treaty passed the Parliament here in the Federal Republic took very important cognizance of the NATO obligation and the NATO responsibility and the NATO defense. I don't think that we can find strength in bilateral arrangements that we can in multilateral arrangements.

The reconciliation of France and Germany, I think, is essential to the security of the West. Europe has been torn by civil wars over a good many hundred of years. To end that prospect, to bring France and Germany together, is a matter I would think of the greatest priority to the French and German people and a matter of the greatest interest to us. Twice the United States has been brought into war across the Atlantic because France and Germany were not friends. So I want to make it very clear that we support strongly the reconciliation and the effort at friendship which is being made and has been made over a number of years. We also want to be sure that NATO stays strong, because I think NATO is essentially the security of the Federal Republic, and we regard it as essentially the security of the United States. Those who do not place comparable importance on it, it seems to me, are ignoring history and are over-optimistic of the future.