

What remnants of Vandenberg's foreign policy do you see in your work today? How has Vandenberg's works influenced your work?

Over the years, we have had more bipartisan cooperation on foreign policy than people realize. In fact, for most of the post-war period, the nation has coalesced around the bipartisan foreign policy that Truman and Vandenberg created, which essentially revolves around the structures and alliances through which the United States leads the free world. We have taken it for granted that America would lead NATO, keep troops in Europe and Asia, maintain freedom of the seas around the world, and so on. Though we have experienced periods over the last seven decades, such as the 1970s during and after Vietnam as well as the current period under Trump, when the nation has questioned our global role, we nevertheless have maintained our structures and alliances and continued to lead the free world. I hope we continue to do so because if we retreat, the world will be a far more dangerous place both for ourselves and our allies. Truman and Vandenberg convinced me of the need for American leadership, and that has greatly shaped my thinking about America's global role.

How did the relationship between Truman and Vandenberg change Vandenberg's goals for foreign policy?

I don't really think that the relationship between them changed their goals. They generally shared the same goal, which was to convince the nation that the United States needed to shed its traditional isolationism and step up on the world stage to contain the Soviets. They realized that they needed to cooperate with one another to move this policy through Congress. They didn't have a particularly close personal relationship, but they had a very strong working relationship because they were very committed to their shared goal.

Was Vandenberg focused more on protecting American interests and safety or shaping and ensuring global peace?

To Vandenberg, they were one and the same thing. The way to protect American interests was to ensure global peace. Like Truman, Vandenberg understood that America would be best protected if the world was at peace. And he understood that the best way to ensure peace was for America to play a leading role on the world stage. Thus, America's interests and the world's interests meshed nicely.