



**(U) Presidential Encounters**

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*(U) Editor's note: in commemoration of the holiday, we asked NSAers to tell us about their encounters with US Presidents. Here's what we learned:*

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**(U) Advice for Ike**

(U) Back in July 1960 I met and spoke with President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Even though I was only 3 years old at the time, my family says I was talking with the President regarding his interstate highway program. My eldest sister's youth choir performed at the Eisenhower farm in Gettysburg, PA. My sister has a picture of President Eisenhower and me sitting at a picnic table looking at a map; since I have an obsession with maps (major and backup routes for vacations), my sister says I was discussing with the President where the next stretch of the interstate should go.

-- anonymous

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**(U) Nixon Signs Ruble**

(S) I had always wanted to meet a President of the United States, and I got the chance when former President Richard M. Nixon came to Moscow in March 1994. I was working at the U.S. Embassy as a DIA employee and heard one of his last speeches before he died on 22 April 1994. One of the reasons he had come to Russia was to meet with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. However, Yeltsin announced that neither he nor any member of his government would receive the 81-year-old former President, the first U.S. President to visit the Soviet Union and one of Yeltsin's earliest supporters. Apparently, Nixon offended Yeltsin by meeting freed conspirator Alexander Rutskoi before meeting with Yeltsin -- a matter of protocol.

(U) After the speech at the embassy, I was fortunate to be able to meet Nixon and get his autograph on a 200-ruble note, the only thing I had for him to sign. The next month, I stood in line at the Deputy Chief of Mission's home to sign former President Nixon's memorial book. I am so glad I was able to meet one of the U.S. Presidents.

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(U) [REDACTED] with President Nixon

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**(U) Ford on the Campaign Trail**

(U) It was my honor to meet Former U.S. President Gerald R. Ford. During his mini-term, President Ford traveled to New Hampshire and campaigned for his re-election. When his motorcade stopped in the town of Peterborough, the President gave a speech to the many voters, who turned out to meet him in front of the town hall. Afterwards, he shook hands with my wife and me. And then the motorcade continued on its way to Concord.

-- [REDACTED]

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**(U) Discussing Boats with Vice President Bush**

(U//FOUO) Shortly after I started working at NSA, I had the privilege of doing an intern tour on the staff of then-Vice President Bush (#41). On several occasions, I had the opportunity to sit in on meetings the Vice President held with senior officials such as the heads of Customs and the Coast Guard. It was a fascinating opportunity to see how our government works at the highest levels. I also had two more personal opportunities to meet the Vice President.

(U) The first occurred at a Christmas party the Bush family held for all staff members at their residence at the Naval Observatory. The Coast Guard Captain who headed our office had briefed us on protocol and made arrangements to introduce all of us to the Vice President. Due to the notoriously awful Washington DC traffic, my late arrival at the residence caused me to miss the group introduction. When I arrived, I asked the Captain if he would introduce me at his convenience. Unfortunately, the Vice President was engaged in greeting other guests. Later in the evening, however, I spotted the Vice President standing by himself. Figuring it was "now or never," I approached him and introduced myself, explaining that I had missed the "official" introduction because of traffic.

(U) The Vice President graciously welcomed me to his home. He had recently returned from a trip to Florida that my office had set up. While in Florida, the Vice President had the opportunity to drive Blue Thunder, a "cigarette boat" that Customs used for drug interdiction. I asked the Vice President about the trip and about his boat trip. I obviously hit a subject he favored because he formed a big smile and started telling me all about the boat and its performance capabilities. We continued talking about boats in general for several minutes until he was whisked away to greet a group of newly arrived guests. The opportunity to have the Vice President sign a photo taken of us talking at the party became the keystone to my (now nearly complete) collection of Presidential autographs.

(U) The second opportunity to meet the Vice President took place when I left the White House to return to Fort Meade. I was able to meet the Vice President in his office for a "farewell" and photo opportunity. We had our photo taken again, and, as a parting gift, he gave me a set of cuff links with the Vice Presidential seal and his signature on them.

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(U) Watch for more anecdotes...

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