



BRIEF

ENCOUNTER

In 1978, Pierre Ledoux, the CEO of BNP, visited to the United States. In his memoirs, he recounts an exceptional meeting with George H. W. Bush, future US president. At that time, Bush was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the First International Bank in Houston after having served previously as US envoy to China and director of the US Central Intelligence Agency. He became US president in 1989.



“When I arrived in 1978, a time when we didn’t know many people... I was told by our manager that a certain Mr. Bush wanted to speak to me. I had no idea who he was, but thought that he was probably a banker.... I therefore went to the meeting and encountered a man who immediately told me he knew nothing of banking, but that he wanted to see me to find out about a certain number of things, since he was standing for President of the United States. I first thought that I was in the presence of a slightly deranged character, but quickly changed my opinion once he had told me his background. He used to be head of the CIA.... He’d had recent dealings with China, was aware that I knew this country well, and wanted to talk to me about it. He also wanted to find out more about the situation in France. During a very pleasant conversation, which lasted for more than an hour and a half, I got to know the man better. Having exchanged views that demonstrated his value and distinction, I retained an exceptional impression of him. When he was elected as Vice President [in 1980], I sent a telegram to congratulate him, to which he immediately replied. He combined simplicity with intelligence and knowledge of the world, leaving one with the impression that he would certainly make a very good president. It was an encounter that I will not easily forget.”

Pierre Ledoux, *Journal imprévu d’un banquier*





■ GEORGE H.W. BUSH AS CIA DIRECTOR IN 1976
