

Another Example of a Freudian “Slip of the Tongue”

Conor Cruise O’Brien was an Irish diplomat, who served as a delegate to the UN General Assembly during the period 1956-61. In his memoirs, he relates the following story:

The best orator in the Assembly at this period, a Latin American lawyer, used to produce masterpieces of towering, far-ranging eloquence, drawing heavily on history, philosophy, classical literature, and jurisprudence, to show the process of reasoning and cultural enlightenment which had led him to his decision as to how to vote on the subject before the Assembly. Curiously, this decision was absolutely invariably the same as that already reached – on a more direct method – by the United States delegation... His remarkable powers, both of speech and of hearing, ensured his election to a high [UN] office. On the occasion of his installation the American delegate meaning to congratulate him on his distinguished services... referred to him with bleak and unintentional accuracy as *this faithful servant of the United States* [emphasis in original]. The audience burst into unseemly laughter.

From O’Brien, *To Katanga and Back: A UN Case History*. New York: Universal Library, 1962, 20.