**Online Supplementary Appendix to Accompany “Understanding Parties’ Policy Shifts in Western Europe: The Role of Valence, 1976-2003.”**

**1. Validating the Measure of Valence**

One of the most difficult points to address in the review of this manuscript regarded “convergent” validation of the valence measure employed i.e. checking the measure against others available in the literature. Perhaps the biggest hurdle is that to my knowledge there are no other cross-national measures of character-related valence in the literature, which was one of the primary reasons for creating one of my own. Within the valence literature covering Western Europe, the research I am most familiar with is that of Harold Clarke, Marianne Stewart, David Sanders, and Paul Whitely, who draw upon survey research data from the British Election Studies. However, their valence measure is based upon the concept of “issue ownership” which is a rather different conceptualisation of valence than the measure of character-based valence I employ in the manuscript.

Nonetheless, one way to think about the validity of the measure is to consider the relationship we should observe between it, and other concepts with which it should be theoretically related. In this respect, I would draw attention to a piece of my earlier research that appeared in *Electoral Studies* in 2009, in which I found evidence that changes in parties’ character-based valence attributes – which were measured using the same coding scheme I employ in the current manuscript - were strongly associated with changes in party support (as measured by changes in parties’ vote shares). I would argue that were the valence measure invalid, then it would have been difficult for me to find empirical evidence of this relationship. Table 1 below reports these results.

**Table 1. Estimating the Effects of Changes in Parties’ Character-Based Valence Attributes on Parties’ Vote Shares**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Explanatory Variable** | **Basic Model**  **(1)** | **Model with Country-Specific Intercepts**  **(2)** | **Absolute-Lagged Model**  **(3)** |
| *Δ in Party’s Character-Based Valence Attributes* | 0.11\*\*\*  (0.03) | 0.11\*\*\*  (0.04) | 0.10\*\*\*  (0.03) |
| *In Government* | -1.99\*\*  (0.92) | -1.87\*\*  (1.00) | -1.71\*\*  (0.84) |
| *Vote Share (t-1)* |  |  | 0.95\*\*\*  (0.03) |
| *Intercept* | 0.59  (0.41) | 0.64  (1.09) | 1.40\*\*  (0.60) |
| *R-Squared* | 174 | 174 | 174 |
| *N* | 0.11 | 0.12 | 0.86 |

\* = p<0.10, \*\* = p<0.05, \*\*\* = p<0.01, two-tailed tests.

Table reports OLS regression estimates. For the first two analyses, the dependent variable was the party’s change in vote share between the current election (t) and the previous election (t-1). For the analysis reported in column 3 of the table, the dependent variable was defined as the party’s vote share in the current election (t). Robust, clustered standard errors are in parentheses.

Second, with respect to comparing my valence measure with others in the literature, as I note this is difficult. Given the cross-national nature of the research I present in this manuscript, there is also the additional constraint of finding a “comparable” cross-national measure of valence that covers, in part, similar time periods as those covered in the manuscript. However, one data source that can provide some help here is the “European Voter Project,” (EVP) which includes election data for several of the countries included in my study, and for some of the same election periods. With this in mind, I was able to compare my valence measure, with valence-related data from three of the countries included in the manuscript - Britain, the Netherlands, and Germany. There are two survey items included in the EVP which are somewhat helpful in terms of validating the valence measure I use. These items are a “party sympathy” scale, and a “party leader sympathy” scale. These two measures basically capture public opinion regarding parties and party leadership and are akin to thermometer scores, and employing them moves me in the direction of addressing validity concerns. The scores for these variables were calculated as the change since the previous election, and then rescaled to run between 0 (low sympathy) to 10 (high sympathy). Table 2a below reports correlations between my overall valence measure, and the “party sympathy,” and “party leader” scores.

**Table 2a. Correlations Between Overall Valence Measure and “European Voter Survey” Party Data**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Correlation Variables** | **Change in Sympathy**  **(EVS)** | **Change in Leadership**  **(EVS)** |
| *Δ in Party’s Character-Based Valence Attributes* | 0.39\* | 0.37\* |

\* = p<0.05

Table 2b reports correlations between each component of the valence measure – competence, integrity, and unity – and the party sympathy, and party leader scores.

**Table 2b. Correlations Between Components of Valence Measure and European Voter Survey Party Data**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Correlation**  **Variables** | **Change in Sympathy (EVS)** | **Change in Leadership**  **(EVS)** |
| *Δ in Party’s*  *Competence* | 0.14 | 0.08 |
| *Δ in Party’s Unity* | 0.48\* | 0.48\* |
| *Δ in Party’s Integrity* | 0.36\* | 0.35\* |

\* =  *p* < 0.05

The resulting correlations are encouraging. The overall valence measure (change in party’s character-based valence attributes) and party sympathy has a reasonably strong correlation value of 0.38, and with party leadership of 0.37. Both correlation estimates are statistically significant at the .05 level. A similar story exists for the correlation estimates between the individual components, though those for the “competence” component of valence and the “party sympathy” and “party leadership” measures are somewhat weaker. As I note in the manuscript in relation to robustness checks of the central findings, this is not surprising given that parsing the data for the measure of valence in this way would likely invoke changes in statistical significance in the variables of interest (especially given the relatively small N). Additionally, I was able to draw on the “macro-competence” data for the main British political parties compiled by Green and Jennings.[[1]](#footnote-1) Their measure is based upon the concept of issue competence in particular, which is a somewhat different conceptualization of valence than the “character-based” valence measure I employ in the manuscript. However, the authors find that the public mood regarding party competence in Britain responds to a variety of heuristics and cues, including major events such as economic crises, scandals, and military conflict, so it is certainly reasonable to expect some degree of correspondence between my measure and the Green and Jennings measure. Accordingly, I compared my “change in parties’ character-based valence attributes” scores with differenced values for “macro-competence” for the British Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat parties over similar time periods. Given the different constructs of these two measures of valence the results were encouraging, with my valence measure positively correlating with the Green and Jennings measure at 0.48, suggesting that improvements in parties’ character-based valence attributes are associated with improvements in parties’ macro-competence. However, as a caveat, I should note this correlation was based on only 12 observations (a small fraction of the Green and Jennings time-series), and unsurprisingly the correlation was not statistically significant at conventional levels. Nonetheless, this does provide further reassurance of the validity of my measure.

Third, I ran an “errors-in-variables” regression analysis, which allows the researcher to specify the measurement reliability for each independent variable measured with error. I estimated the coefficients of my main regression analysis reported in the manuscript, while specifying that the measurement reliability between my measure of valence and the “true” value of the valence measure is set at a particular value – in this case .80. To the extent that the coefficient estimates on my key variables of interest remain statistically significant, this additional analysis provides evidence that my central substantive conclusions are robust to errors in my measurement of parties’ character-based valence attributes. Table 3 below reports the results of an “errors-in-variables” regression analysis which replicates the basic analysis reported in the manuscript (see Table 3 of the manuscript). The results of the analysis support my central conclusions, even when I assume an underlying level of measurement error in my key variables of interest.

**Table 3.** **Estimating the Effects of Parties’ Character-Based Valence Attributes on Parties’ Policy Shifts Using Errors-in-Variables Regression Analysis**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Explanatory**  **Variable** | **Errors In Variables**  **Model**  **(1)** |
| *Δ Previous Policy Position (t-1)* | -0.41\*\*\*  (0.08) |
| *Δ Parties’ Character-Based Valence Attributes* | -0.008  (0.005) |
| ***Δ Parties’ Character-Based Valence Attributes (t-1)*** | **-0.021\*\*\***  **(0.007)** |
| *Intercept* | -0.01  (0.06) |
| *R-Squared* | 0.25 |
| *N* | 125 |

\* = p< 0.10. \*\* = p< 0.05, \*\*\* = p< 0.01, two-tailed tests

Table reports errors-in-variables OLS regression estimates. For these analyses, the dependent variable was the party’s change in Left-Right policy position between the current election (t) and the previous election (t-1) relative to the mean voter position. For the two key valence variables, the value of measurement reliability between the valence measure, and the “true” underlying value of valence, is set at 0.80

**2. Orthogonality and Valence**

One of the concerns raised by an anonymous reviewer concerns the assumption of orthogonality, and they questioned whether unity, and to a lesser extent, competence, that are used in the construction of the overall measure of valence can be considered truly orthogonal to policy. This point is discussed in the manuscript under the section entitled “Other Sensitivity Concerns.” The example provided by the reviewer to illustrate their point regarded unity specifically, in that internal party disputes often occur as a result of policy disagreements that result in changes to parties’ policies, thus the assumption of orthogonality could well be violated in such instances. This is a great point to raise since events reported in *Keesing’s* that were assumed to affect a party’s unity often stemmed from disagreements over policy (e.g. the Conservative Euro-rebels in the ‘90s who deprived the party of its working majority in parliament). Tables 4 and 5 below provide the results of the analyses briefly described in the manuscript.

**Table 4. Estimating the Individual Effects of Competence, Integrity, and Unity on Parties’ Policy Shifts**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Explanatory Variable | **Overall Valence-Attributes Model**  **(1)** | **Competence Only Model**  **(2)** | **Integrity Only Model**  **(3)** | **Unity Only**  **Model**  **(4)** |
| *Δ Previous Policy Position (t-1)* | -0.52\*\*\*  (0.08) | -0.51\*\*\*  (0.08) | -0.53\*\*\*  (0.08) | -0.51\*\*\*  (0.08) |
| Δ Parties’ Character-Based Valence Attributes | -0.002  (0.002) | 0.014  (0.01) | -0.007  (0.004) | 0.004  (0.01) |
| *Δ Parties’ Character-Based Valence Attributes (t-1)* | **-0.015\*\*\***  **(0.005)** | **-0.005**  **(0.016)** | **-0.024\*\***  **(0.01)** | **-0.018\*\*\***  **(0.006)** |
| *Intercept* | 0.004  (0.003) | 0.02\*\*\* | -0.01  (0.01) | 0.03\*\*\*  (0.01) |
| *R-Squared* | 0.33 | 0.28 | 0.29 | 0.33 |
| *N* | 125 | 120 | 120 | 120 |

\* = p< 0.10. \*\* = p< 0.05, \*\*\* = p< 0.01, two-tailed tests

Table reports fixed effects OLS regression estimates. For these analyses, the dependent variable was the party’s change in Left-Right policy position between the current election (t) and the previous election (t-1) relative to the mean voter position as measured using the CMP data rescaled to a 1-10 Left-Right scale. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by party. R2 is calculated as the within-group estimator. Column 2 reports the results of analyses using only parties’ “change in competence” scores, while columns 3 and 4 report the results of analyses using only parties’ “change in integrity” scores, and “change in unity” scores, respectively.

Table 4 reports the results of regressions run on the component measures of the overall valence measure (competence, integrity, and unity). As noted in the manuscript, these results support the main analyses reported in the paper, with the one exception being that the lagged Δ *Party Competence* variable does not reach statistical significance.

**Table 5. Structural Equation Measurement Model**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Explanatory Variable** | **Model 1 Structural Equation Model** |
| *Δ in Competence between t and t-1* | 1.00 |
| *Δ in Integrity Between t and t-1* | 2.00\*\*\*  (0.45) |
| *Δ in Unity Between t and t-1* | 1.08\*\*\* (0.29) |
| *Δ in Party Position between t and t-1* | 0.26  (0.47) |
| *Χ2* | 1.69 |
| *P value* | 0.43 |
| *CD* | 0.84 |
| *N* | 153 |

\* = p<0.10, \*\* = p<0.05, \*\*\* = p<0.01, two-tailed tests.

Robust standard errors clustered by party shown in parentheses.

Table 5 reports the results obtained from running a structural equation model on the three components of the valence measure used – competence, integrity, and unity – in addition to changes in parties’ left-right positions. The three component measures of valence have significant factor loadings (though the effect is weaker for competence), indicating that these measures are explaining a significant proportion of the variance in our measure of valence. However, the factor loadings associated with a change in a party’s left-right position (relative to the mean voter position) are small and statistically insignificant. Furthermore, the model fit for this structural equation model is noticeably strong. The *χ2* statistic for this measure is small and insignificant[[2]](#footnote-2) and the coefficient of determination at 0.84 is near one, indicating strong overall model fit. These model fit statistics *increase* with the exclusion of the party position measure (not shown), further indicating that a party’s ideological position makes little contribution to our measure of valence. In other words, a party’s left-right position, as measured using the CMP data, does not contribute to latent valence, while the component measures of competence, integrity, and unity do. As reported in the manuscript, the correlations between these measures reveal a similar story. The relatively small N means that I cannot report any error correlation statistic, and this can potentially lead to underestimating the size of the standard errors. However, I would note that I’ve also run the structural equation model outlined above with robust standard errors, and also with standard errors clustered by country, and the substantive results do not change from those reported in Table 5.

**3. Additional Analyses**

*Controlling for previous vote share*

Aside from those analyses discussed above, several other tests of the robustness of the main findings were also performed. First, an anonymous reviewer of the manuscript suggested that the basic analyses should be re-run while also controlling for a party’s vote share at the previous election since it is plausible that parties with low support, or low political capital, are subject to greater negative reporting, and therefore more likely to move towards the centre in an attempt at electoral recovery. Accordingly, I ran the main analysis reported in the manuscript (see Table 3) whilst also controlling for previous vote share. The results, when controlling for previous vote share, are very similar to those reported in the manuscript, and are shown in Table 6 below.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Table 6. Estimating the Effects of Parties’ Character-Based Valence Attributes on Parties’ Policy Shifts Controlling for Previous Vote Share.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Explanatory Variable** | **Valence-Attributes Model**  **Controlling for Previous**  **Vote Share** |
| *Δ Previous Policy Position (t-1)* | -0.52  (0.08) |
| *Δ Parties’ Character-Based*  *Valence Attributes* | -0.001  (0.003) |
| ***Δ Parties’ Character-Based***  ***Valence Attributes (t-1)*** | **-0.015\*\*\***  **(0.005)** |
| ***Previous Vote Share (t-1)*** | **0.01**  **(0.02)** |
| *Intercept* | -0.21  (0.43) |
| *R-Squared* | 0.34 |
| *N* | 125 |

\* = p<0.10, \*\* = p<0.05, \*\*\* = p<0.01, two-tailed tests.

Table reports fixed effects OLS regression estimates. For this analysis, the dependent variable was the party’s change in Left-Right policy position relative to the mean voter position between the current election (t) and the previous election (t-1) as measured using CMP data rescaled to a 1-10 Left-Right scale. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by party. R2 is calculated as the within-group estimator.

*Parties’ policy shifts in response to changes in valence “relative” to other parties*

Second, an anonymous reviewer noted that while my empirical findings are consistent with the “Centripetal Valence Effect” hypothesis reported in Adams and Merrill (2009), the pattern I find is not equivalent to finding that parties moderate their policy positions when their character-related valence attributes improve *relative* to other parties. In order to address this concern I conducted supplementary analyses designed to evaluate how parties shift their positions in response to ‘relative valence.’ To address this issue I calculated, for each inter-electoral period, the change in the proportion of “total valence for all parties” the focal party receives. So, for the sake of illustration, let’s say party A’s cumulative valence score over the course of the previous inter-electoral period is -50, while party B’s is -25, and party C’s is -25 also. In this scenario, party A has received 50% of the “total valence for all parties” (-50 out of a total of -100), while parties B and C have received 25% each. Then, in the current inter-electoral period let’s say party A receives only 40% of the “total valence for all parties.” In this period party A has received 40% of the “total valence for all parties.” Accordingly, we would state that party A’s valence has improved by 10% (or changed by 10%) *relative* to the other parties from one inter-electoral period to the next. Given this approach we can then make similar calculations for the other parties. Table 7 below reports the results of the supplementary analysis I performed to test whether parties’ policy shifts are influenced by changes in their character-based valence attributes relative to other parties. Encouragingly, these additional analyses produce interesting results. First and foremost, the story of “valence relative to other parties” mirrors the story of “change in a given party’s valence,” as reported in the manuscript, with regard to both statistical significance and temporality. While the “relative valence” variable reported in Table 7 does not reach statistical significance, the lagged version of this “relative valence” variable does, and it also has the appropriate sign. In short, there is statistically significant evidence of a lagged response, i.e. that parties moderate their policy positions in the current time period when their proportion of overall valence increased relative to other parties in the previous inter-electoral period.

**Table 7. Estimating the Relative Effects of Parties’ Character-Based Valence Attributes on Parties’ Policy Shifts.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Explanatory Variable** | **Relative Valence Model** |
| *Δ Previous Policy Position (t-1)* | -0.54\*\*\*  (0.08) |
| *Δ Parties’ Relative Character-Based*  *Valence Attributes* | 0.08  (0.23) |
| ***Δ Parties’ Relative Character-Based***  ***Valence Attributes (t-1)*** | **-0.36†**  **(0.21)** |
| *Constant* | 0.02\*\*\*  (0.002) |
| *R-squared* | 0.31 |
| *N* | 133 |

† = p<0.08, \*\*\* = p<0.01, two-tailed tests.

Table reports fixed effects OLS regression estimates. For this analysis, the dependent variable was the party’s change in Left-Right policy position relative to the mean voter position between the current election (t) and the previous election (t-1) as measured using the CMP data rescaled to a 1-10 Left-Right scale. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, clustered by party. R2 is calculated as the within-group estimator.

**4. Coding Guidelines**

In the following section below I provide the coding guidelines that, as noted in the manuscript, were followed by myself during the process of content analysis of source documents, along with a second coder who replicated the content analysis for most of the countries included in the study. Several of the examples included in the coding guidelines also appear in the manuscript but I replicate a number of pages from *Keesing’s* so that readers can get a sense of the kinds of news reports I was coding to construct my measure of valence.

**Keesing’s Coding Guidelines**

**Brief Overview**

Coders perform manual content analysis of news reports drawn from the source document, *Keesing’s Record of World Events*. These news reports are compiled from information drawn from a variety of media sources in the relevant countries. Coders are expected to read news reports to determine whether they contain evidence of events (valence events as we refer to them) that would affect a political party’s competence, integrity, or unity (defined below). We refer to these party characteristics as “parties character-based valence attributes,” and parties’ evaluations in terms of these attributes can have important consequences for their levels of support (and thus, their success in elections), as well as parties’ policy strategies. It is important to bear in mind that evaluating parties in terms of their competence, integrity, and unity is considered a separate and distinct form of evaluation from evaluating parties in terms of the policy positions they adopt along the Left-Right ideological spectrum. It is also important to bear in mind that often a report discusses the behaviour of a party official, and the underlying assumption made here is that the behaviour of officials will reflect directly upon the parties with which they are affiliated. Coders must accomplish several tasks:

1. To identify whether a news report contains evidence of an event, or events, that would affect a party’s competence, integrity, or unity. There is no expectation that every report will, and indeed, the vast majority of reports do not.
2. To assign any event identified as affecting a party to a category - either competence, integrity, or unity.
3. To award any event identified as affecting a given party a score, or valence score of either -2, -1, +1, or +2.

What follows below are a series of guidelines which coders must follow closely in order to ensure consistency and reliability during the process of content analysis.

**Content Analysis: What NOT to Code**

*Keesing’s* covers a wide variety of political events, some of which could comfortably be assumed to affect parties’ character-based valence. However, for various reasons, and exceptions not withstanding, the following kinds of events appearing in news reports should not be coded:

1. Reports related to economic conditions. Coders will likely encounter reports presenting and discussing newly released economic data such as employment figures, and indicators of economic growth such as GDP. Reports such as these are not to be coded. Related to this kind of economic coverage, news reports may also discuss strikes or protests that appear to reflect poorly on the governing party or parties. We do not code these reports for two reasons. First, economic data is readily available from other sources, and second, it is unclear whether strikes or protests over economic conditions are *symptoms* or *causes* of possible government weakness. We are interested in the latter rather than the former.

Possible exceptions: If a report discussing a strike or protest discussed that party officials had disagreed publicly with one another, or confronted each other in some way regarding a strike or protest then, contingent on the details provided, this would constitute a valence event, which should be coded in the “unity” category. Similarly, it is possible that the publishing of economic reports, or a report detailing the handling of some form of economic crisis may result in internal party divisions, and perhaps the resignation (or reassignment) of officials with responsibility for aspects of economic policy. The former would result in a coding in the “unity” category while the latter would result in a coding in the “competence” category contingent on the information provided.

1. Reports of events related to parties’ policy positions. The clearest example here would be reports discussing policy announcements by governing parties, or a critique of governing parties’ policies. The latter may include protests against governing parties’ policies, and opposition parties’ criticisms of governing parties’ policies. Since we expect opposition parties to criticise government policies it doesn’t make sense to code such criticisms as valence events.

Possible exceptions: If a well known third party organisation (Amnesty International, for example) was critical of a particular policy or decision made by a party, or parties, then this would constitute a valence event that would need coding, particularly if the news report in question also provided evidence that the criticism had proven embarrassing in some way, or had undermined the party, or parties, affected.

1. Other events that can be viewed as symptoms of parties’ strengths and weaknesses rather than causes. These include (but are not limited to):
   1. Governing parties’ proposed legislation being rejected in parliament.
   2. Changes in party leadership
   3. Leadership disagreements. In the case of France, for example, the president and the prime minister can engage each other in pointed political debate, particularly in the run-up to elections. This is typical of politics in France.

Possible exceptions: If a news report notes that the jostling for a leadership position was causing damaging splits within a given party then these would need to be taken into consideration. If a report indicates a negative effect on the party in question, then coders should consider the details of any fallout, and whether a small, or more consequential, division has resulted.

* 1. Votes of no confidence in the legislature.

Possible exceptions: In the aftermath of a vote of no confidence, a report might indicate that divisions within a party had emerged, and depending on their seriousness, these events may result in the awarding of a score to the party in question in the “unity” category. If high-ranking party officials resigned or were reassigned, for example, then the fallout would make for a more serious valence event.

1. Ambiguous events – if an event appears to be of importance but coders have genuine uncertainty as to how the event should be coded, then the rule of thumb is “don’t.” These events should be noted by the coder so they can be discussed at a later date. Coders should note that the level of detail provided by a *Keesing’s* report is not a helpful way to approach ambiguity. *Keesing’s* reports often provide plenty of information from which a coder can make an informed decision about whether to assign a score, in what category, and of what magnitude, with relative ease. However, on occasion, *Keesing’s* reports will spotlight important valence-related events affecting parties, but with few details. For example, a report may simply note that a high-ranking party official resigned after admitting to engaging in some form of illegal activity (e.g. embezzlement) or embarrassing situation (an affair). Regardless of whether a report provides extensive detail of such events, or relatively few details, such events should be coded according to the guidelines keeping in mind “who was involved, what did they do, and with what result?”

**Content Analysis: What to Code**

What follows is a list of some of the more common kinds of events coders should look for in *Keesing’s* news reports.

1. Behaviour that violates accepted codes of conduct for political elites i.e. bribery, affairs (whatever their nature), personal misconduct (drug or alcohol-related problems), fighting, insensitive or inappropriate statements, embezzlement, and other abuses of office for personal gain, the breaking of national and international laws.
2. Incidents or events suggestive of poor performance (incompetence) on the part of party officials, or parties in general. Events of this kind would include reports condemning the government’s actions, or handling of a given situation or crisis, by a third party (or possibly praise), and statements regarding the underestimation of costs associated with various programs or policies.
3. Events that indicate intra-party divisions. When members of a party argue with one another openly (or in private but subsequently leaked) over a policy position or other matter (the handling of a crisis for instance), then this would indicate a potentially damaging party division. *Keesing’s* reports often state as much, but not always. Examples of these types of events include party elites resigning in protest over a government policy, quarrels between party elites that *Keesing’s* notes has caused internal problems for the party in question, and party elites leaving one party to join another.
4. Suicides. These incidents should be treated carefully. A suicide per se, should not be regarded as detrimental to the affected party unless it is clear from the report that the suicide has some bearing on the broader public’s view of the party in question, or that there is some evidence of embarrassing or illegal conduct, which prompted the suicide and may reflect poorly on the party in question. For example, a party official may commit suicide because damaging personal information may have become public, such as their involvement in an affair, or abuse of the powers of their office.

**Categorising Events**

Deciding how to classify events identified in a *Keesing’s* report is usually straightforward. These are the main examples:

1. Unity. Events that pertain to the valence-related attribute of unity would include all those which reflect upon a party’s sense of “togetherness” or “division.” Such events include:
   1. Party members resigning over conflicts with other party members (usually this is over policy disagreements but could be over the handling of a certain situation).
   2. Party members leaving to go to other parties because of differences of opinion with other party members.

Possible exceptions: As noted above, not all party conflict is expected to cause damage as, for example, in the case of the run-up to elections, different party elites may exchange “barbs” as part of the election process. In such instances, a score should only be awarded if the report states that damage had been caused to the party in question.

1. Competence. Events that pertain to the performance, or relative “wisdom,” of party officials are to be placed in this category. These are the main examples:
   1. Party officials making ill-thought, or insensitive comments or remarks in public (or that become public), such as those which are racist, sexist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, or generally deemed as politically incorrect.
   2. Statements or admissions by party officials that the cost of a program or policy initiative had been miscalculated and would actually cost more than expected. In such instances, party officials may state they need to generate more revenue through new taxes, or through cost-cutting elsewhere, or that the program or policy in question will have to be shelved, or scaled back.
   3. Reports or statements, which criticise governing parties for their actions (or inactions) in responding to resolve a problem or crisis. Reports may come from respected third parties, such as Amnesty International, and may be accompanied by the reassignment or resignation of a party official.
2. Integrity. Events that pertain to the honesty of politicians, as well as their (mis)conduct in various ways, should be placed in this category. Perhaps most obvious here are events in which party officials violate official rules, or norms, regarding the legal or expected conduct of party officials. These are the main examples:
   1. Drug and alcohol-related issues (e.g. caught in possession of illegal drugs, or being drunk and abusive in public).
   2. Sexual affairs (particularly those involving married participants).
   3. Taking bribes or offering bribes, as well as improper payments to other officials.
   4. Embezzlement or misappropriation of funds.
   5. Lying, or concealing expenses, or personal wealth, for the purpose of financial gain.
   6. Past indiscretions, or criminal activity, becoming known (e.g. it comes to light that a party official spent taxpayer money for their personal benefit in the recent past).
   7. Allegations of criminal conduct or other behaviour which violate expected norms of behaviour/conduct regarding party officials. As noted elsewhere, unless allegations are accompanied by evidence, they should not be considered as seriously as proven charges, or those for which a party official has been found guilty.
   8. Any other activity which would bring embarrassment or widespread condemnation to the party official involved.

**Awarding Scores of Differing Magnitudes**

Events are awarded a score of either -1 (negative one), -2 (negative two), +1 (plus one), or +2 (plus two) depending on their magnitude or seriousness. Most events reported in *Keesing’s* that involve party officials, and affect parties as a consequence, are negative. This isn’t too surprising given that politicians and parties are rarely broadly praised for their actions. For example, it is likely that the report of a sordid affair by a politician will be generally frowned upon by the public, especially if the politician in question had presented themselves in a virtuous light, or was responsible for promoting “moral values” for their party. Alternately, no one pays particular attention when a politician is still married after 30 years, and it certainly doesn’t receive media coverage. In short, negative events constitute the vast majority of events that are to be coded. Specifically with regard to events that would be viewed negatively, deciding on whether to award an identified event as either -1 or -2 is one of the more difficult aspects of the coding process. As has been noted elsewhere, if a coder feels the reporting of a specific event is too ambiguous to be certain as to how to code the event then the default position is not to code the event, but to make a note of it so it can be discussed at a later date. If a coder feels an event is worthy of being awarded a score, but is unsure of whether the event should receive a score of -1 or -2 then the default position is to award the event a score of -1. To assist with the process of awarding scores, and to ensure consistency (i.e. that similar events are awarded similar scores), here are some guidelines to follow:

1. How much space *Keesing’s* devotes to the report of a specific event in column inches. More serious events are usually – but not always – given more space. An event of major significance will usually receive more than a column inch of space. However, this is perhaps the weakest of guidelines to follow since it is regularly found in *Keesing’s* that events of minor significance can be discussed in some detail, while events of major significance are sometimes discussed relatively briefly.
2. The language or expression used in accounting an event, such as:
   1. “The party was dealt a serious blow when…..”
   2. “Politician X was highly embarrassed when….”
   3. “The scandal caused a damaging split in the party”
   4. “The incident highlighted government incompetence over the issue of….”
   5. “The issue caused widespread condemnation of…..(party or politician)”
   6. “Politician X tendered his resignation following the disclosure”
   7. “Damaging”
   8. “Perceived negligence”
   9. “A major scandal threatened to bring down…..”

If such language is used in the reporting of an event, then the event in question is typically of a serious magnitude, but especially when the report involves a highly visible party official, like those who work at the national level – a minister for example. As discussed below, in these instances a score of -2 will likely be awarded, but while such language typically indicates the presence of a valence event affecting a party that should be coded, the context in which the event took place will play an important role in determining whether a coding actually occurs, and of what magnitude.

1. The context surrounding reported events. The reports in *Keesing’s* do not always refer to events involving national-level politics and party officials working at the national level, so coders should consider what level an event involving party officials has taken place at. Events at the local or regional level, or involving local or regional party officials, are assumed to have a lesser impact than those at the national level unless a report explicitly states a broader consequence of events at the local or regional level. In sum, coders should pay attention to what happened, who was involved, and what (if any) were the consequences? Here are some guidelines for awarding scores considering context:

Single negative (-1) events

* 1. Include events that took place at the local or regional (state) level, such as misconduct by a party official e.g. their arrest, or abuse of official powers. A score of greater magnitude would only be awarded if additional detail provided in the report suggests otherwise.
  2. Include events that took place at the national level, particularly those involving highly visible party officials such as ministers or other prominent party elites, which involve “allegations” or “charges” that are yet to be proven, unless the report indicates something more drastic occurring as a result of the allegations or charges, such as the resignation of the affected party official.
  3. Insensitive, or ill-thought comments by party officials.

Double negative (-2) events

1. Include events that largely take place at the national level of politics such as the resignation of party officials because of some kind of misconduct or violation of codes of conduct, the involvement of a party official at the national level in some form of scandal, publicised criticism and/or disagreements between party officials that results in major party problems such as resignations.
2. Defections of party officials from one party to another.
3. Events involving current party officials versus former party officials. The important consideration here is whether the report of an event that could plausibly affect a party involved a former party member (or members), or a current party member. Here are some guidelines:
   1. If a former party official is found to have been involved in some form of misconduct (taking a bribe for example), then it is assumed that this does not reflect negatively on the party in question.
   2. If a former party official is found to have been involved in some form of misconduct, and that these revelations are reported to be affecting the party in some way in the present then these events will need to be coded. For example, if a former party official admitted to embezzling funds then, as per point a. above, no score is required. However, if the admissions of a former party member suggested that the activities were ongoing, or drew negative attention to current party members then these would need to be coded. Allegations of this nature should typically be awarded a score of -1 but as per the above guidelines, the ranking of the party officials involved should also be considered, as should any reported consequences of former party officials’ allegations. For example, if the report also indicated that a high-ranking party official had been implicated, who was then subsequently arrested or resigned, then this would merit a score of -2 being awarded to the event in question.
4. Events that are reported on multiple times. If an event is serious enough to warrant a score of -2 being awarded when it is first reported upon, then subsequent events that are related to the first reported event are to be awarded a score of -1, unless there is additional detail provided in the report to suggest otherwise. This situation can occur when, for example, a report covers the admission of illegal misconduct by a politician, such as embezzlement, who is then subsequently arrested. Following the arrest and charges being filed, subsequent reports in *Keesing’s* may then provide brief details of any trial, sentencing, and perhaps even some related side-revelations.
5. Coalition government. In a number of countries covered by *Keesing’s* the events being coded involve parties who are in a governing coalition. Here are some guidelines as to how to proceed in these scenarios:
   1. Events affecting individual parties in a coalition should code events as per the guidelines above.
   2. Reports covering instances where parties refuse to create or join a coalition should not be coded.
   3. Events highlighting disagreements among coalition members should be coded, and a score of the same magnitude should be awarded to both parties involved. The score awarded will be contingent on the magnitude of the disagreement. If the disagreement results in reassignments of ministerial positions, the collapse of the coalition, or resignations, the coders should award a score of -2. Any other disagreement should be awarded a score of -1 to both parties involved.

7. Multiple events in one news report. Occasionally, *Keesing’s* will cover multiple events in a single news report, particularly if the events being reported affect two or more parties. In these cases, each particular event should be considered separately from others, so it is possible that multiple codings, perhaps even for multiple parties, will result from one news report. For example, let’s say an investigation into misuse of public funds implicated a number of party officials from a given party, and each of the suspected officials in question was discussed in the report, then each instance would need to be coded. So, if two government ministers were implicated in the misuse of funds then two separate codings would be given.

**A Note on Awarding Positive Scores**

Due to the nature of media coverage, it is extremely rare to find parties, or those who represent parties, cast in a positive light. Without viewing the entire universe of political coverage, it does, of course, remain feasible (at least in theory) to find the non-policy related actions of politicians receiving praise. However, coders will likely find news reports containing details of events which would reflect upon party officials positively *incredibly* rare. Nonetheless, here are some very brief guidelines regarding what events might appear in *Keesing’s*, and how to code them:

Single positive (+1) events

1. Include events such as the handling of a local crisis or problem by a local or regional (state) party official (or officials), which receive broad praise, or some kind of selfless act (e.g. saving a child in danger).

Double positive (+2) events

1. As above but involving party officials at the national level.

**Examples**

Below are some sample pages taken from *Keesing’s* to give coders an idea of what *Keesing’s* reports look like. The sample pages show reports of events from the three different dimensions of valence (competence, integrity, and unity), and of differing magnitude.

**Competence:**

Figure 1 shows a page from *Keesing’s* which shows a number of news reports for Great Britain from February 1994. Events discussed under the Northern Ireland heading (starting in the middle column) were excluded since Northern Ireland was not part of this study. As can be seen by different subheadings in bold, a number of different reports can appear for a given county in a given month. All the reports in the left-hand column were analysed for evidence of valence events affecting political parties in Britain. On this particular page, the report under the subheading “Speech by Portillo” was determined to contain a valence event. This event, affecting the Conservative Party, was awarded a score of -1 in the “competence” category following the coding guidelines. While the event reported was not of great seriousness, Portillo, who held an important party post at the time (Chief Secretary of the Treasury), was criticised for comments he made, and subsequently issued an apology. It was assumed here that the issuing of the apology suggested that the comment had drawn broad criticism. The event falls into the “competence” category as per the guidelines since Portillo’s remarks displayed a lack of forethought, or the ability to act/speak appropriately, given his position. None of the reports contained under other subheadings pertaining to Great Britain produced any codings.

Figure 2 shows a news report from Denmark, also from February 1994 (the entries from Germany and France would also have been coded). In this example, the entry regarding the resignation of the Social Affairs minister from the Centre Democrats was identified as a valence event falling into the “competence” category, and as a result, the Centre Democrats were awarded a valence score of -2 for this particular event. As the report indicates , the event involved a government minister resigning from her position because she had rather carelessly passed on to the media highly sensitive and unsubstantiated information regarding sexual abuse at a centre for the mentally handicapped. Following the coding guidelines the score of -2 was awarded because of the position held by the person involved (a high-ranking party official at the national level), and also the resulting aftermath (the minister’s resignation). The valence event was coded in the “competence” category since the minister’s actions did not speak to her integrity, nor did they invoke any concerns over party unity, but they did suggest an inability to speak appropriately or with forethought, as in the previous example. Obviously, passing on such serious and unsubstantiated rumours would fit with the understanding of “competence” outlined in the coding guidelines.

**Unity:**

Figures 3 and 4 show pages from *Keesing’s* that were content-analysed and found to contain valence events affecting parties in terms of their unity. In Figure 3 the events in question date back to 1981 and are found in the report from Portugal. The reports in earlier volumes of *Keesing’s* took a different form from those of later, usually being less in number and covering a greater time period. Coders should note the difference between the appearance of reports in Figure 3 versus those in Figures 1 and 2.

In Figure 3, the passage of interest is in the paragraph discussing the congress of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), in which a valence event of -1 for “unity” was identified as per the coding guidelines. The report states that the party’s leading figure and Prime Minister, Dr. Pinto Balsemao, had been criticised by an opposing faction within his own party at the congress for his overtures towards President Eanes, who had fallen out of favour with members of the PSD because of a conflict with the late Prime Minister and former PSD member, Dr. Francisco Sà Carneiro. Although the details surrounding the event did not suggest there were any major ramifications as a result of the intra-party conflict, the criticism was aimed at the party’s leading figure over his attempts to reconcile with someone who had been openly feuding with one of the party’s icons. As a result, the event was considered worthy of being coded, but awarded a score of -1 accordingly. This report also illustrates the need for coders to read reports carefully to identify what is going on, and whom is being affected.

Figure 4 shows several news reports for Spain fro 1993. While the discussion of the calling of a general election is interesting (since the report mentions that corruption scandals were, in part, partially responsible for the calling of the general election), on this particular page the entry “Internal PSOE dispute” was determined to contain a valence event. This valence event, affecting the Spanish Socialist party, was awarded a score of -2 in the “unity” category in accordance with the coding guidelines. The events surrounding the Filesa scandal (which were also reported in *Keesing’s*, and subsequently coded), as the report notes, were serious enough to cause a major intra-party dispute between some of the party’s high-ranking officials, which eventually led to a decision to hold new elections. Aside from the rank of the party officials involved, the awarding of the score of -2 also reflected consideration of the language used in reporting the event. Report details such as, “…thereby making his letter an effective declaration of war by the party on the government,” and “Benegas accused ministers of breaching traditions of party loyalty and solidarity, and of seeking to topple him by blaming him for the Filesa scandal” strongly suggest that the event was of a serious nature, and should be coded accordingly. Finally, it is also worth mentioning that the seriousness of the event is also loosely reflected in the relatively large amount of space in column inches devoted to the event in *Keesing’s*.

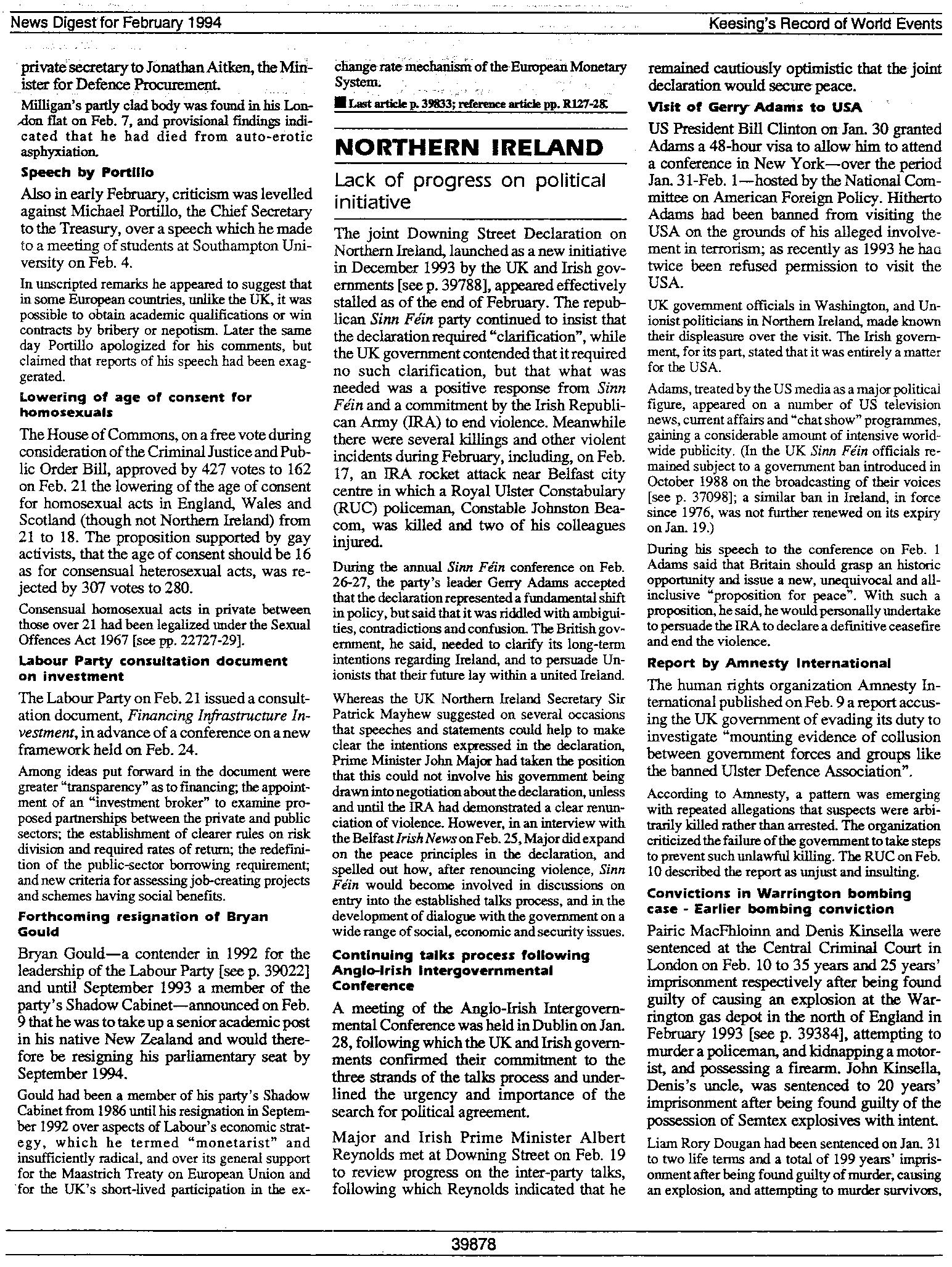
(Figure 4 also shows reports from Italy. These were also content-analysed for evidence of valence events, and a number of valence events were identified related to the investigations mentioned in the news reports).

**Integrity:**

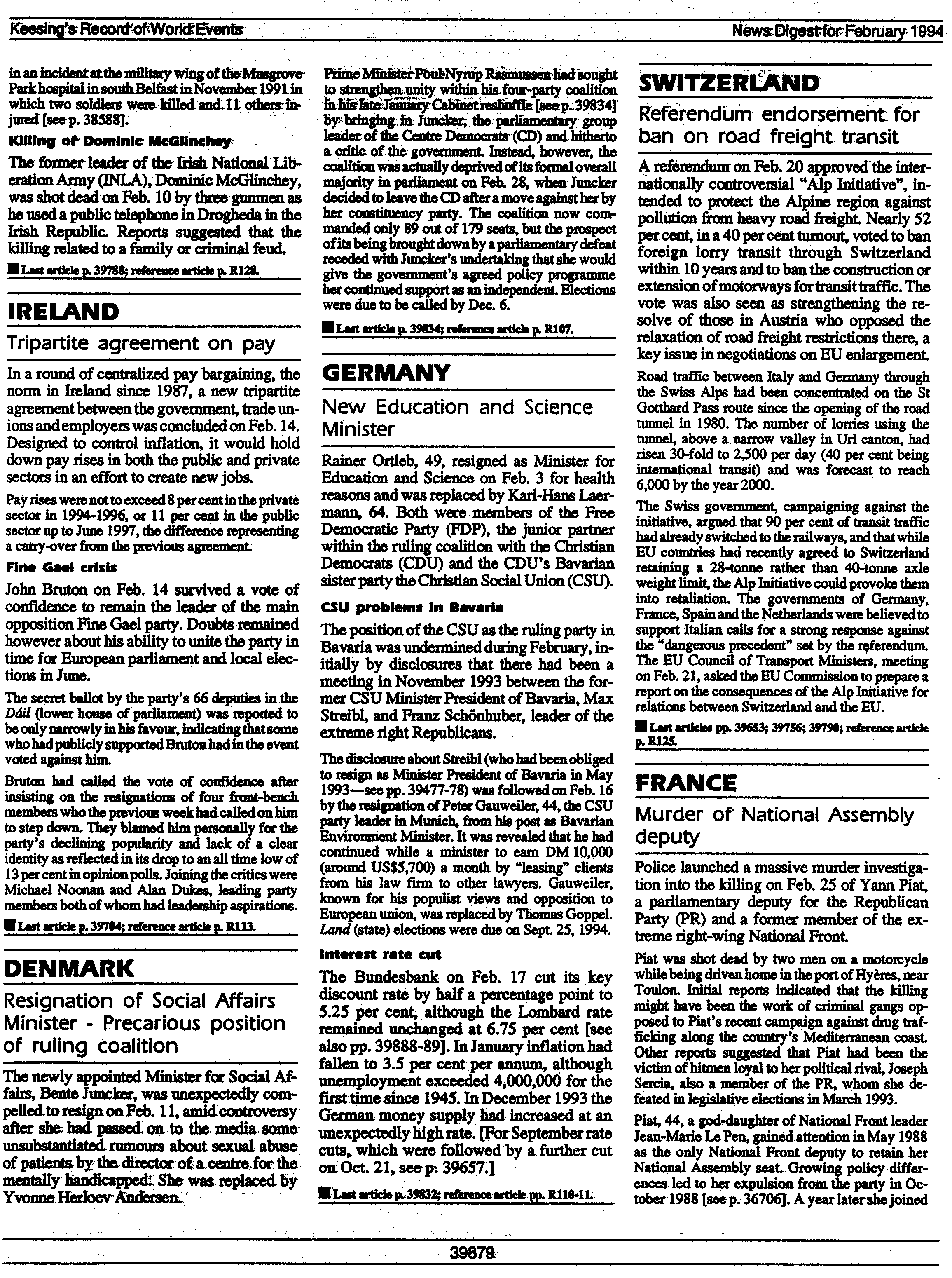
The final category to illustrate is that of “integrity.” Valence events that fall into this category usually take the form of politicians breaking laws, or engaging in other activities that run counter to the norms of conduct expected of elected or appointed party officials, such as having affairs, or abusing the powers of their offices for personal gain. Figure 5 shows a sample page containing news reports from Greece that appeared in the summary section of the 1989 volume of *Keesing’s* (the events discussed are from 1988). Although other valence events within this report would be coded, for illustrative purposes we are concerned specifically with the report, “Vote of confidence in Papandreou government – Further allegations by Koskotas.” In this report, content analysis identified a valence event affecting the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PSOK or PASOK) in the form of an official inquiry, following allegations by a prominent businessman of government favouritism that directly benefited PSOK’s leader, the Greek Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou. Following the coding guidelines, this valence event was awarded a score of -1 in the “integrity” category. Although the report noted that the businessman in question named the Prime Minister, this event was not awarded a score of greater magnitude since only allegations were involved that, at the time of the report, were unsubstantiated. Unsubstantiated allegations are important contextual information to consider in this instance as noted above.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Figure 6 shows a report for Germany from 1993. As with the other examples, all the entries listed in this report were content-analysed for evidence of valence events affecting parties. In this particular report, the entry “Resignation of Möllemann – Cabinet reshuffle” contained a valence event. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) to which Möllemann belonged was awarded a score of -2 in the “integrity” category for this event. Following the coding guidelines, the above would be considered a serious event because of who was involved (a high ranking party official), and because of what happened (abuse of office resulting in resignation). The event fell into the “integrity” category because the report stated that Möllemann took advantage of his position to benefit people close to him.[[5]](#footnote-5)

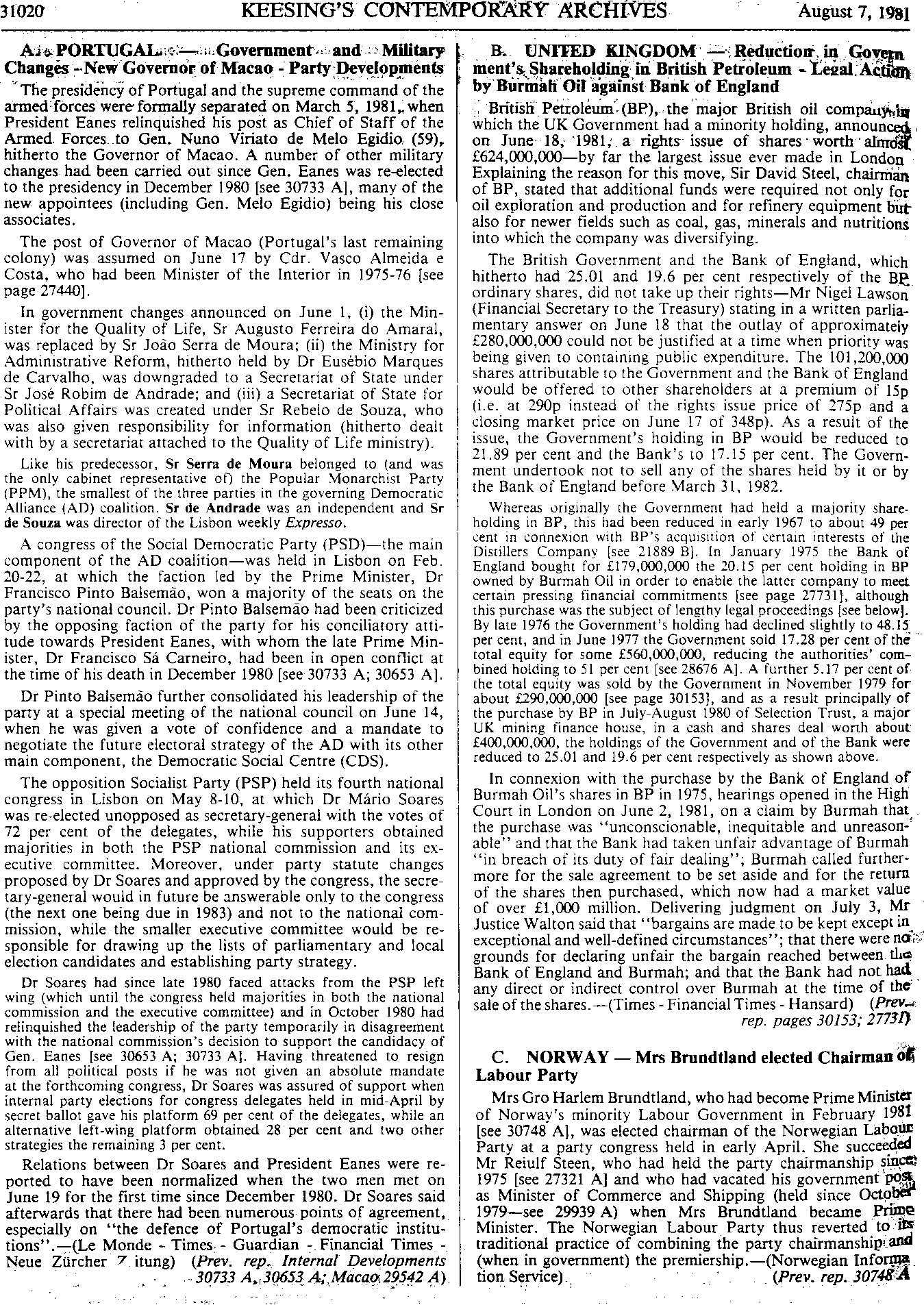
**Figure 1. Sample news report containing a “competence” valence event (-1)**



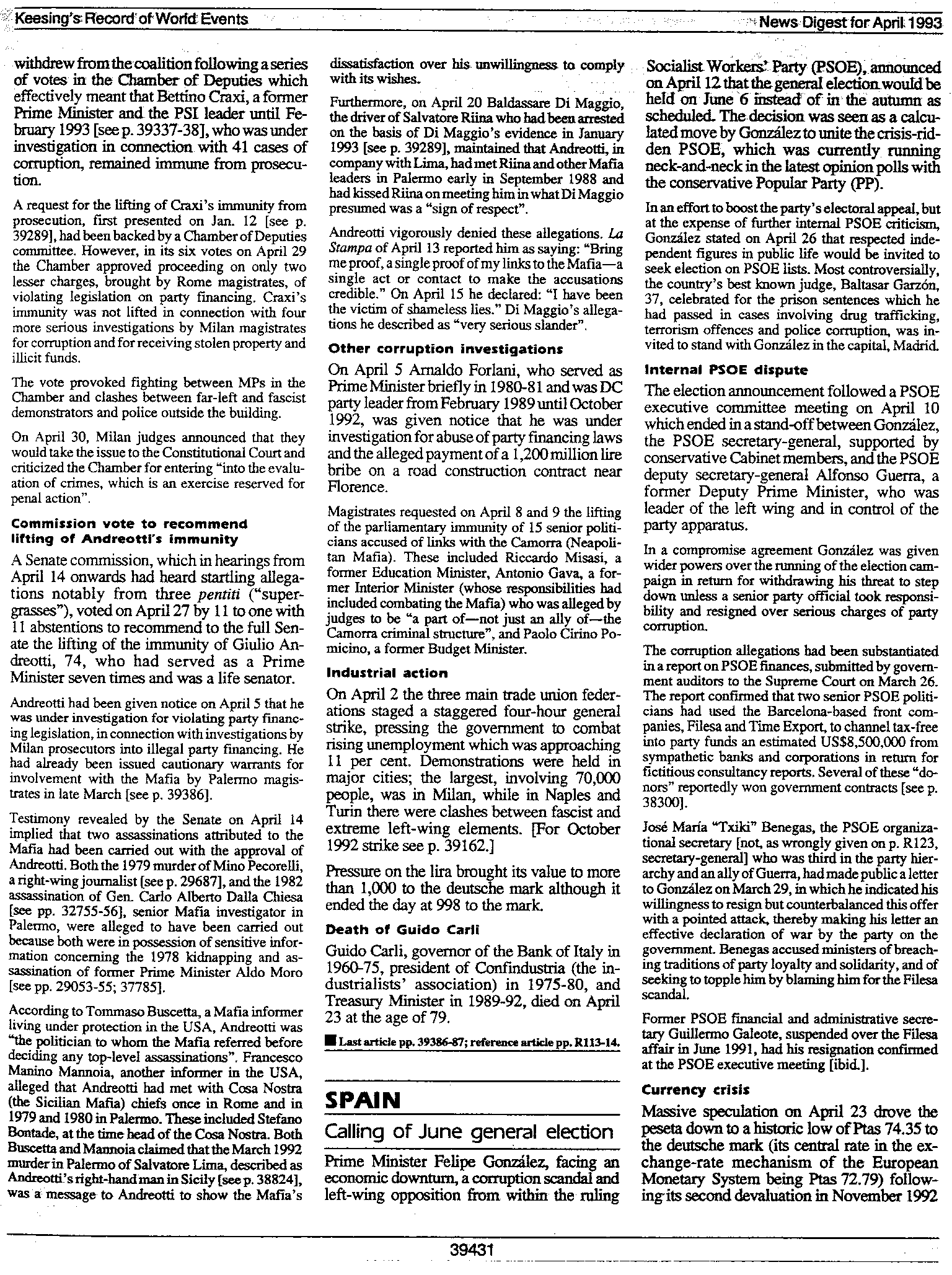
**Figure 2. Sample news report containing a “competence” valence event (-2)**



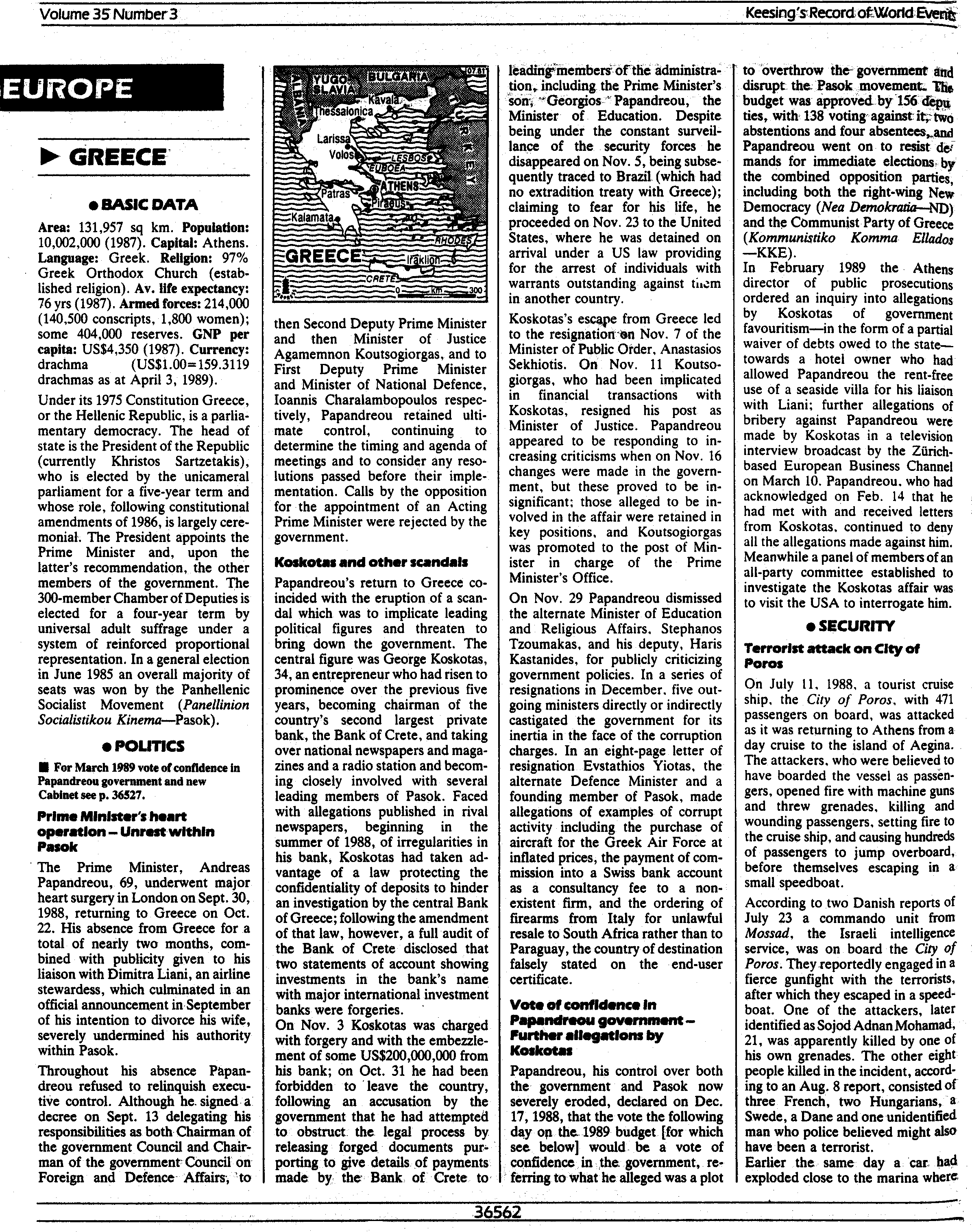
**Figure 3. Sample news report containing a “unity” valence event (-1)**



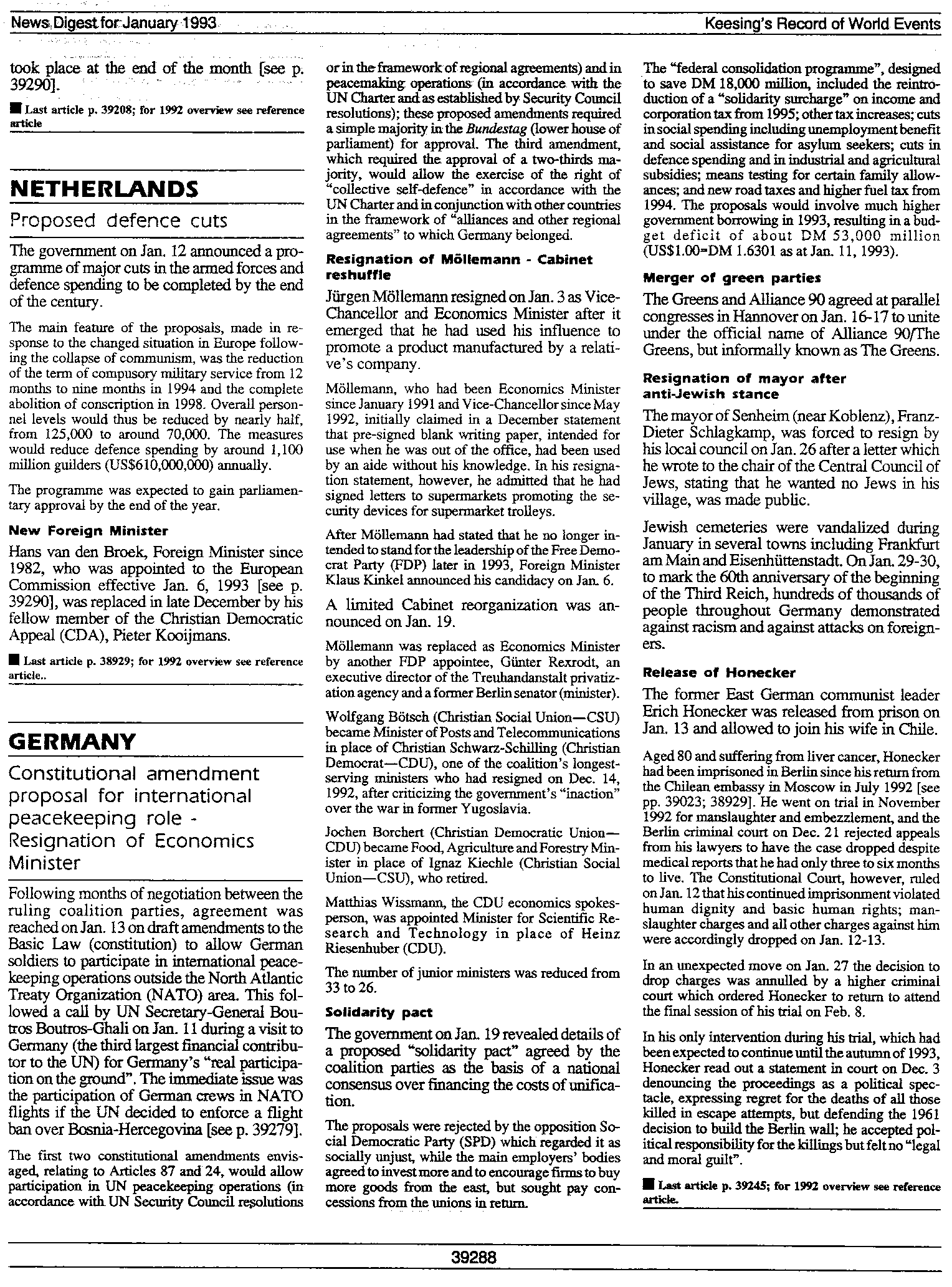
**Figure 4.** **Sample news report containing a “unity” valence event (-2)**



**Figure 5.** **Sample news report containing an “integrity” valence event (-1)**



**Figure 6. Sample news report containing an “integrity” valence event (-2)**



**Works Cited**

Clark, Michael. 2009. “Valence and Electoral Outcomes in Western Europe, 1976-1998.” *Electoral Studies* 28, 111-22.

Green, Jane, and Will Jennings. 2012. “Valence as Macro-Competence: An Analysis of Mood in Party Competence Evaluations in Great Britain.” *British Journal of Political Science*, 42, 311-43.

1. Green and Jennings 2012. My thanks to the authors for kindly sharing their data. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In contrast to most analyses, a statistically insignificant *χ2* statistic is indicative of good model fit for structural equation modeling. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The replications of the main analyses employing each of the component measures of valence (discussed above in the orthogonality section) were similarly replicated controlling for each party’s previous vote share. These analyses produce results substantively similar to those excluding a party’ previous vote share. As before, the only outlier in this respect is the analysis based around a party’s change in competence, with the lagged *Δ Party Competence* variable failing to reach significance at conventional levels. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A number of other valence events were also identified during content analysis of these news reports. Under the entry, “Prime Minister’s heart operation” the PSOK was awarded a score of -2 in the “integrity” category due to the Prime Minister’s ‘liaison’ with an airline stewardess resulting in his divorce announcement, which strained party relationships. Under “Koskotas and other scandals” four other valence events affecting PSOK were also identified, all receiving scores of -2. These were the Minister of Public Order resigning (competence), the Minister of Justice resigning (integrity), two officials from the Ministry of Education resigning (unity), and a number of outgoing ministers criticising the government (unity). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The report shown in Figure 6 also includes two other valence events that were identified through content analysis. The first, mentioned under the “Resignation of Möllemann” entry, involved the resignation of Wolfgang Botsch (CDU) from his cabinet position following his criticism of the government’s inaction over the war in the former Yugoslavia. Because this event involved a minister criticising a government of which he was a member, the event was awarded a score of -2 under the “unity” category. The entry also describes the resignation of a CDU mayor due to his insensitive and ill-thought regarding the presence of Jews in his town. This event was deemed relatively serious due to the fact that the mayor was forced to resign over his remarks, but since the position he held was mayor of a town, following the guidelines the event was awarded a score of only -1. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)