CIVILIZATION-VALUE NARRATIVES AS A TOOL OF GLOBAL INFORMATION CONFRONTATION: AXIOLOGICAL AND SECURITY FORMAT

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Abstract. The article focuses on the features and features of civilizational value narratives as tools of global information warfare. Based on several interrelated methods, namely synergetic, dialectical, and structural-functional, we study the nature and basic features of civilizational-value narratives as axiological and security phenomena. The work substantiates the multidimensional nature of information confrontation in the modern world as a dialectical interaction of subjects operating in the international arena and regional and subregional systems. We also analyse the axiological and security formats of civilizational-value narratives in the context of the spread of classical, semantic, hybrid, and information wars. Considerable attention in the study is paid to the nature and features of the use of civilization-value narratives in the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation. We conclude that in the global information war, civilizational-value narratives play a key role since they are the quintessence of the cultural and historical meanings of the past and present, as well as the spiritual basis for designing the future. In turn, advantage in information warfare is the basis for state dominance in other areas of confrontation, particularly in economic, geopolitical, spiritual, and military.

Keywords: civilizational-value narrative; post-truth; global information warfare; propaganda; semantic weapon

General problem formulation

Our time features an established tendency towards intensifying global confrontation in various forms, which determines the dynamics and temporality of instability in social systems. Global confrontation in the modern world is a combination of economic, military, geopolitical, informational, spiritual, value, and

civilizational struggle. The articulation of the positions of opposing subjects, as a rule, reflects not only existing economic and geopolitical contradictions but is also based on civilizational, value, and ideological narratives that justify the logic of each side's arguments. That is why the study of narratives of global information confrontation becomes important for understanding its nature and causes, as well as the forms of its manifestation at the present stage of civilizational development. Civilization-value narratives do not incorporate the modern meaning of the global information confrontation but also reproduce people's mental-historical (civilizational-cultural) memory, which strengthens the argumentative and emotional basis of this process.

Analysis of the recent research and publications that have put forward the problem

Numerous scientific works deal with the problem of global information confrontation and the place and role of civilizational value narratives in its context. In particular, V. Pylypchuk characterized the main geopolitical changes in the information sphere of today, which enabled revealing the nature of the global information struggle. The scientific works of M. Prysiazhniuk and M. Shaynoga focused on the essential characteristics and stages of development of the global information struggle as a modern phenomenon.

The authors of the monograph "Strategic Communications in International Relations" together with such scientists as D. Dubov, A. Barovska, Yu. Kazdobina studied the peculiarities of the use of narratives at the international, national, and domestic political levels. T. Kushnirova revealed the nature and basic features of the narrative, and M. Ozhevan explored various models of narratives that differ in their construction and functional purpose.

H. Yefimenko, S. Gromenko, I. Gomenyuk, O. Ilyuk, O. Sorotsynska, and A. Kadelnyk study the types of civilization-value narratives used in the Russian-Ukrainian hostilities since 2014. In the context of the research logic, scientific explorations by O. Vysotsky and D. Pavlov that emphasize the essence of the propaganda space, the propaganda strategy of electronic diplomacy, and the post-truth phenomenon are interesting. For a deeper understanding of the destructive impact of anti-Ukrainian civilizational and value narratives, we referred to the works of H. Pocheptsov, O. Kurban, N. Voloshyn, and others.

The analysis of the above scientific works allowed us to formulate the goal of our study which is to reveal the nature of civilizational value narratives for understanding their instrumental and functional purpose in the global information struggle. Also, scientific study deals with the applied aspects of using civilization-value narratives in modern wars, taking the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation as an example.

Presentation of the main material with a full justification of the obtained scientific results

In the 21st century, the struggle for global leadership has intensified significantly, and the methods of this struggle are becoming more technological and sophisticated. Characterizing the features of the modern world order, scientists note that "at the turn of the third millennium, humanity entered a qualitatively new stage in its history. Its main distinction from all previous stages is the ambiguity of the main vector of development, which can lead to as material and spiritual prosperity and to a global crisis that threatens the death of the entire civilization" (Getman et al. 2021, p. 391).

One of the main forms of modern competition in the international arena has become the global information struggle. From our point of view, the causes of the global information conflict are radical changes in the geopolitical, economic, and geo-informational processes of our time. V. Pylypchuk singles out the following main geopolitical changes in the information sphere:

1) the information space of Western countries is rapidly turning into a single global information space, where the USA and EU countries play the dominant role in controlling information flows;

2) a global information infrastructure based on the Internet is being formed, which can be seen as an increase in the media interdependence of states;

3) the military information space controlled by NATO countries has significantly expanded, including the territories of Eastern Europe, the Baltic states, and other countries formed in the post-Soviet space;

4) in the modern information space, the processes associated with the development of partnership and rivalry are intensifying;

5) one of the main spheres of geopolitical confrontation is the information space at the global, regional, and national levels. At the same time, its priority at the specified levels depends on the specific goals of the state and can constantly change (Pylypchuk 2014, p. 38).

It can be argued that the global information space has become an arena of confrontation between the subjects of international relations, which, accordingly, goes on in regional and national information and communication interactions. The global information conflict is not only competition in the field of technologies for processing, saving, and reproducing information, it is also a struggle for meanings, assessments, and interpretations of events and phenomena that are mirrored in modern means of mass communication. During wars waged in the information age, cable news and the "new media" of the internet enable changing, sometimes on a daily or even hourly basis, the way wars are understood. As a result, a multitude of competing and often flawed narratives emerge that, ultimately, merely explain events in terms of self-serving political and cultural perspectives of a party in interest (Cage 2019, p. 53). In the information space, narrators are constantly creating and

transforming judgmental statements, interpreting facts and events that affect the human being as a whole, groups of countries, and individual states.

To clear up the phenomenon of "global information conflict", we refer to the study conducted by the American RAND Corporation in the late 90s of the XX century which substantiated the concept of "strategic information warfare" that provides that states use the global information space and infrastructure to conduct strategic military operations and reduce the impact on their information resources. The conducted research highlighted the key features of this type of warfare: the relatively low cost of creating means of information confrontation and the collapse of the status of traditional state borders during the preparation and conduct of information operations. Further study of the problem conducted by the specialists of the RAND Corporation led to the emergence of the concept of "strategic information warfare of the second generation". The report defined this concept as a fundamentally new type of strategic confrontation, generated by the information revolution, which introduces the information space into the circle of possible spheres of confrontation. The report also emphasized that the development and improvement of approaches to conducting strategic information warfare of the second generation in the future may lead to a complete rejection of the military force use. Second-generation information warfare is an attempt to change the opposing side - to destroy its traditional content and replace it with a new one. That means that certain ideas are not directed at individual people or groups, but at a whole social outlook that can further self-develop in the right direction. The report highlights the following main directions of action to achieve the desired result: creating an atmosphere of despiritualization and immorality, a negative attitude towards the enemy's cultural heritage; manipulating social consciousness and political orientation of social groups of the country's population in order to create political tension and chaos; destabilizing political relations between parties, associations and movements to provoke conflicts, inciting mistrust, suspicion, intensifying political struggle, provoking repression against the opposition and even civil war; decreasing in the level of information support of state authorities and management, inspiring erroneous management decisions; misinforming the population about the work of state bodies, undermining their authority, discrediting management bodies; provoking social, political, national, and religious clashes; initiating strikes, mass riots and other economic protest actions; making it difficult for management bodies to make important decisions; undermining the international authority of the state, its cooperation with other countries; causing damage to the vital interests of the state in the political, economic, defence and other spheres (Prysiazhniuk & Shainoha 2011, p. 73 – 74).

The global information confrontation as a struggle between worldviews and civilizational-value positions is reflected in certain narratives that we can see both at the regional and national levels. The center of gravity in any conflict is the narrative space. Therefore, dominating the narrative space should be a priority. Psychological, Information, Influence, and Stability Operations, are all aspects of Narrative

Warfare. The most effective weapons in warfare have always been the ones that target the cognitive space because they are the most enduring (Maan & Clark et al. 2020, p. 37).

Domestic scientists understand the narrative at three interrelated levels:

– an international narrative system that describes the structure of the world, its elements, and the way it works;

– national narratives that present the history of the state, its values and goals;

– a narrative of the problem, which explains why the government needs such a policy and what it will do to implement it successfully (Strategic communication in the international relations, 2019, p. 47).

Civilizational-value narratives play an important role not only in the global information confrontation but also in local information and semantic forms of struggle.

The authors of educational publication "Destructive impacts and negative narratives: tools to detect and countermeasure" emphasize that narratives are of crucial importance if we want to carry out effective information warfare or resist the enemy disinformation properly (Dubov et al. 2020). The first level of narratives is geopolitical (systemic), which explains what the world order is, how the world functions, what laws govern it, and what wide concepts of "good" and "evil" exist in it. In other words, these are narratives of a planetary scale, grand narratives. These are the narratives of religions, the narratives of ideologies. The struggle between communism and capitalism is precisely such a narrative. The Cold War is a grand narrative of systems rivalry. These narratives do not change very often and they affect almost everyone. The Cold War went on for fifty years – two camps competed with each other. Almost all states of the world were involved in this rivalry and interpreted it based on certain basic ideas about its causes, course, and goals. Then this rivalry gave way to the "World War on Terror". For ten years, states were divided into those who supported this fight and those who found themselves on the other side. Now this narrative is gradually being replaced by a new narrative, which can be conditionally formulated as defending democracy.

The second level is the national narrative (identity narrative) that focuses on nations, their history, aspirations, desires, and actions, it is about how nations see themselves and how others see them. Narratives are always embedded in ubiquitous power: stories shape power, and power shapes story (Plummer 2019, p. 19). Conventionally, this is the answer to the questions "who we are" and "what we want". The national narrative is a peculiar thing, but necessary. In many ways, this is the concept of the nation's vision, its guide to the future.

And finally, the third level is policy narratives. It is a tactical tool for explaining current government policy: why they make certain decisions, how they will contribute to development, who participated in making these decisions, what the problem is, how people should understand these or those events, and so on (Dubov et al. 2020, p. 51 – 52).

Civilization-value narratives in the global information confrontation are disseminated by relevant actors through a multi-channel system of propaganda and influence. For example, modern states, as subjects of information warfare, in addition to traditional means of information dissemination, develop and implement propaganda strategies within the framework of electronic diplomacy.

The propaganda strategy of electronic diplomacy is a mechanism for reasoned justification of foreign policy and state activities through the use of the communication capabilities of such Internet tools as websites and social networks. We can consider the goal of a propaganda strategy achieved not only when the recipient begins to act in the interests of the addressee, but also when begins to react in a certain way to the topics and people mentioned in the message, or pays attention to messages from a certain source of information. The fact is that a certain distribution of the recipient's attention structures their perception of reality according to the principle of significant (worthy of attention) - insignificant (unworthy of attention) (Vysotskyi 2018, p. 57).

In general, global information warfare features a significant range of technologies for creating, distributing, imposing, extracting, replacing, and political conjuncture of narratives. In this case, the narrator can remain anonymous or create a public network of pseudo-narrators.

So, a narrative is a certain view of the world, a perception of the world projected through the perspective of the narrator, which can be different, depending on the task he wants to achieve. The narrator in the text is ever-present and all-seeing, capable of penetrating the consciousness of the characters, which involves the ability to assimilate with an abstract author, subjectively assess the plot, and have their own opinion about the events the text tells about (Kushnirova 2019, p. 132). The creator of the text, who is focused on the global, regional, or national information space, specifically interprets facts, and the actions of the characters, presenting the past, current, and future pictures of the world.

Models of narratives vary according to their design and functional purpose. Thus, in 1972 sociolinguist W. Labov presented one of the most convincing models of narrative - delineating story patterns. According to this model, the narrator, building a narrative, tries to answer the following questions:

1. Abstract. What is the story? What caused the event?
2. Orientation. Who/what was involved in the event, where, and when?
3. Complicating Action. What happened? What is the sequence of events?
4. Resolution. How did this all end?
5. Evaluation. How can we understand this event?
6. Coda. What does this all mean? (Ozhevan 2016, p. 34).

We believe that the global information confrontation deals with all levels of semantic struggle: global events impact the local and, accordingly, the activities of regional and national subjects, under certain conditions, mirror at the global level.

Let us consider the Russian-Ukrainian hostilities as an example. We want to note that since 2014 the RF has systematically conducted information and psychological operations including the creation and transmission of narratives Ukraine considers hostile. Such narratives differ in their semantic load depending on the target audience: Ukrainian information space, Russian information space, information space of post-Soviet countries, the EU, the USA, and so on. The RF information war at the global, regional, and national levels demonstrates the multi-level nature of information warfare and the use of narratives of different directions.

Concerning the above, let us consider Russian typical civilization-value narratives starting from the hybrid information confrontation in 2014 – 2022 to the large-scale hostilities. Thus, the specialists of the NGO "Internews Ukraine" analysed over 850 thousand posts from VK and 16 thousand from Facebook (from January 1, 2016, to April 1, 2019) and defined several Russian narratives concerning the history of Ukraine. In particular, the main historical narratives widespread in the Russian and Ukrainian segments of the Internet included the following "Ukraine is a failed reflection of Russia", "Ukraine is an artificial project of the West", "Crimea, Donbas and the south-east of Ukraine are Russia", "The USSR is a powerful empire, Stalin is a hero", "Most of the Ukrainian nationalists were fascists", "Ukraine betrayed the victory over Nazism" (Hrytsak et al. 2019, p. 7 – 9).

Such narratives, on the one hand, focus on the civilizational-historical issues of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, and on the other hand question the subjectivity of Ukraine, imposing an imperial understanding of history and eliminating the level of the significance of Ukrainian national heroes, and so on.

In the media space of post-Soviet countries, Russia uses narratives such as: "The European Union is going to collapse", "reforms in Ukraine have failed", "the welfare of post-Soviet countries depends a lot on Russia", "The West is seeking to expand its geopolitical presence to weaken Russia. The European Union and the USA are in a conspiracy against Russia", "The European Union (Schengen Agreement, EU Neighbourhood Policy) is declining", and also that "Russia is rising from its knees, showing advancement despite Western sanctions", and so on. As a result of monitoring the influence of such narratives on the audience of the Eastern Partnership countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia), we can say that Russia presents information on the most relevant topics differently in a particular country (How the propaganda from the Russian Federation comes into Ukrainian information space, 2017).

Thus, the above civilizational-value narratives demonstrate the multi-level nature of the information confrontation: the opposition between Russia and the USA and the EU; reducing the importance of the European choice of Ukraine and demonstrating the advancement of the Russian Federation, and so on.

Ukrainian scientists A. Vysotsky and D. Pavlov claim that the Russian Federation has created a kind of multi-layered information space, which integrates more

or less successfully into the information space of other states. They state that Russia has become a narrator who purposefully produces propaganda meanings and connotations. We share the opinion of these scientists that the essence of propaganda that all the countries create is a constant process of constructing and intensifying meanings that convince and mobilize society to ensure the victory of some political forces over others in the processes of gaining power, making socially important decisions, as well as implementing the interests of international players on the world stage. Resulted from expansion with the goal of total coverage of all life spheres of individuals, groups, and societies, as well as due to the differentiation of means of influence, the propaganda space breaks down into several autonomous spaces (Vysotskyi & Pavlov 2020, p. 114 – 115). Therefore, it is quite logical that the Russian Federation used various civilizational-value narratives at the beginning of large-scale hostilities in Ukraine.

In this context, we want to note that we cannot deeply understand the nature of any war only through the prism of social, economic and geopolitical reasons. An important dimension of understanding the essence and causes of war are civilizational-value narratives that represent the opposing parties in certain verbal and textual constructions. As a rule, narratives that become especially demanded during war demonstrate a fundamental discrepancy in values, ideas, assessments, and ideals of the future between the opponents. During war, narratives become a "semantic weapon" that influences the consciousness of citizens, explaining to them the logic of events from the appropriate angle. Especially "deep" and universal are civilizational-value narratives based on mental structures and the historical memory of peoples and communities. The creation and dissemination of civilizational-value narratives contributes to uniting people (peoples) to fight the enemy (Kalynovskyi 2023, p. 290).

H. Pocheptsov consider a narrative as a typical tool for social engineering, since it enables maintaining the social system in stability (later it goes into a metastable state), and removing it from there. The narrative carries an ideology, since it is a view of the world from a very specific position, from which the concepts of friend/enemy arise (Pocheptsov 2008, p. 3).

During a war, the narratives of the attacking party become more and more aggressive and systematically "bombard" not only the information field of the country under attack but also other countries to form a picture of the world that is favourable to the attacker. Correspondingly, the country that is protecting itself has to produce "defensive" narratives that reproduce national, cultural and civilizational values aimed at protecting the interests of the state in all dimensions.

O. Kurban states that in the field of information warfare, narratives that have a destructive movement can be defined as "combat narratives" since by their nature, they are aimed at attacking an opponent. According to this researcher, there are both situational narratives and super narratives that act over a fairly long period of

time and form the core of the information war. Thus, the AM&RM analytical group identified nostalgia for the USSR as one of the long-lasting narratives of the Russian Federation ("Forward to the bright past"). This narrative emerged in the early 2000s as a means of ideological substantiation of the RF legal succession from the USSR and an attempt to create the format of the Common Economic Space or the Customs Union. According to AM&RM experts, the main sub-narratives of this super narrative are the following: Russia is like the USSR, only better; The USA and NATO are the evil that Russia is fighting against; Russia defeated Nazism and fascism; Russia, Belarus and Ukraine are fraternal countries; people in Russia live prosperously and properly; the West is notorious of immorality and decline of culture (Kurban 2021, p. 151).

To justify the large-scale hostilities started on February 24, 2022, Russia had disseminated narratives in the information space directed against Ukraine as a state, its national-cultural identity, and its European choice. Such "combat narratives" include the following: Ukraine does not have statehood experience; Russians and Ukrainians are the same people; Ukraine, under the influence of the West, had chosen the wrong civilizational vector of development which led to the government overthrow in 2014; Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians constitute a single national-cultural unity. The Russian Federation uses all available information and analytical resources for interpreting historical events, underestimating the national heroes of Ukraine, and promoting discussions about downgrading the Russian language in the public life of our state and using the institution of the church for propaganda, and so on.

Some Ukrainian scientists believe that the Russian Federation has been creating the post-truth technology that involves using pseudo-scientific, half-true and artificial narratives that are not close to the reality. They state that "on the one hand, the post-truth is a version of the reality that authorities build using mass media make the whole society or a group of people believe in it, and on the other hand, this is a statement where emotions and subjective beliefs are more important than objective facts" (Vysotskyi 2018, pp. 130 – 131). The post-truth is the base of policies led by all countries including Russia.

To understand the nature and consequences of information warfare at all levels, we should be aware of the following: "If the post-truth syndrome "infects" significant communities of citizens and massively "affects" the public consciousness, then a certain country faces a real danger of losing national value guidelines for development and national-cultural identity which makes this country an easy object of manipulation" (Krotiuk 2021, p. 125).

Analysing the features of modern global and local information warfare, some researchers identify metanarratives and narratives that concretize them. Thus, the President of the NGO "Ukraine-2050", and ex-president of the World Congress of Ukrainians E. Choliy presented to the public access a report that was based on me-

dia monitoring before the outbreak of large-scale hostilities, which contained five Russian meta-narratives regarding Ukraine:

1) *Ukraine is an inferior state.* This metanarrative included the following narratives: Ukrainians and Russians are the same people; Historically, Ukraine was a periphery of the former Russian Empire; Ukrainian history and language are not independent since they cannot be dissociated from those of Russia; Bolsheviks and Lenin are those who created Ukraine as a state; Ukraine follows Cossack traditions originated in Russia; Ukraine's economic decline is inevitable;

2) *the Ukrainian government is nationalistic, illegitimate and discredited.* This meta-narrative contained the following narratives: the Ukrainian government is illegitimate and is under the external control of the United States; neo-Nazis seized power in Ukraine; the events on the Maidan were an armed coup d'état supported by Western intelligence services, which led to the loss of Crimea, civil war and a deterioration in the lives of Ukrainians; the civil war in Ukraine that started in 2014 was not provoked by the actions of Russia, it was Ukraine who acted as the aggressor that has been waging war against its own people; since 2014, the hostilities in Ukraine have been supported in the interests and with the assistance of the oligarchs, the residents of Ukraine are dissatisfied with their government, which will lead to destabilization, mass protests and early elections; The Crimean platform is illegal and used to encroach the territorial integrity of Russia; Ukrainian gas transportation capacities to transit Russian gas to Europe are not reliable, Ukraine is an insecure partner for the supply of energy resources, so Russia had to build Nord Stream 2, which is completely justified;

3) *the West exploits Ukraine and is destructive to the world order.* The following narratives constitute this metanarrative: the United States is constantly intimidating the world with its statements that Russia is preparing an attack on Ukraine, but its real motive is an attempt to demonize the Russian Federation; the West also wants to use Ukraine to weaken Russia, is pushing Ukraine towards war but will not provide substantial aid if Russia really attacks; new strains of coronavirus are part of the process of modernizing biological weapons developed in secret US laboratories and that are tested on people; the first meeting of the US President J. Biden with Ukrainian President V. Zelensky has no significant meaning for the United States, and is useless for Ukraine since it is not of serious interest to the United States; Nord Stream 2 does not threaten the energy security of the European Union but, on the contrary, strengthens it by increasing the capacity of gas supplies to the EU, diversifying the ways of supply, and reducing its price; the USA has promised the Russian Federation not to expand the NATO into the areas of the former Eastern bloc;

4) *the Russian minority is the object of oppression in Ukraine.* This metanarrative contains the following narratives: the Russian language is harassed, The Language Law leads to forced Ukrainization; the Act on Indigenous Peoples discrimi-

nates and humiliates the Russian national minority; the Ukrainian establishment is notorious for neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism; monuments to the Second World War and the USSR are being desecrated; the Ecumenical Patriarch splits Orthodoxy; the President of Ukraine carries out repressions against pro-Russian media;

5) *there exists an external threat to Russia*. This metanarrative contained the following narratives: Russia is a peaceful state and does not threaten anyone, and Ukraine is an aggressor since it is preparing to return the occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions by military means; the United States is an aggressor and will try to start a war in Donbas, using Ukraine; in fact, NATO countries have already occupied Ukraine since there are lots of US and Alliance military personnel, as well as NATO military facilities and infrastructure on its territory; Ukraine is against the Minsk agreements and is disrupting the peace process; the Ukrainian military is demoralized and does not want to fight; Ukrainian troops are shelling the LND and DPR population and civilian infrastructure, and committing genocide in the Donbas, these Kyiv's actions may provoke the Russian Federation to use its armed forces to resolve the conflict in Donbas; Ukraine will not be able to resist in the war with the Russian Federation and is quickly lose it (Voloshyn 2022).

It is quite obvious that at the outbreak and during the hot phase of the Russian-Ukrainian hostilities, the RF used combat narratives against our state based on the historical memory of the society by emphasizing the positive memories of certain social groups about life in the USSR and using the ideas of the Slavic unity, rejection of Western values, and so on.

The above narratives may cause a significant threat to the information and, as a consequence, the state sovereignty of our country. In this regard, when developing the guidelines for humanitarian policy, it should be taken into account that the axiological basis of information security in Ukraine is the quintessence of mental, civilizational, political, legal, cultural, and historical values and traditions, which should ensure the sustainability of social development and the preservation of the national and cultural identity of our people (Kalynovskyi & Manuilov 2017, p. 25).

Therefore, strategically, democratic states should strengthen the axiosphere of society by reproducing values through education, taking care of information security, and protecting the country's cultural and information sphere from external influences. Information stability and the implementation of clear value priorities for the democratic development of the state will ensure competitiveness in the current global processes. (Danilyan et al. 2020, p. 465).

Conclusions

Considering the above, we can conclude that globalization of the media sphere led to the development of new tools in global information warfare which is currently one of the main forms of struggle between powerful global actors. An advantage in information warfare is the key to the state's success in other areas of confrontation,

in particular economic, geopolitical, and spiritual. In global information warfare, civilization-value narratives occupy a special place since they are the quintessence of the cultural and historical meanings of the past and present, as well as the spiritual basis for designing the future. The competition of civilizational and value narratives is a type of spiritual and informational struggle for the most favourable for a certain state (or group of states) project of the future world order or the system of international relations for a certain state (or group of states). Civilization-value narratives in global information warfare perform such important functions as integrating, protecting, propagandistic, and mobilizing, they play an important role in being a type of semantic weapon. Civilization-value narratives, in their content and forms of reproduction, can be both protective and aggressive concerning the cultural and information space of a certain country.

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