Twitter Thread by Eric Feigl-Ding

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NEW—CDC was truly suffocated by Trump WH at every turn. Kyle McGowan, a former chief of staff at CDC, and his deputy, Amanda Campbell, witnessed WH dismissal of science, WH's slow suffocation of CDC's voice, meddling in messages & siphoning of CDC budget.
https://t.co/HeuNbUggiw



2) ""Everyone wants to describe the day that the light switch flipped—It didn't happen that way—more of like a hand grasping something, and it slowly closes, closes, closes, closes until you realize that, middle of the summer, it has a complete grasp on everything at the CDC"

3) "Mr. McGowan and Ms. Campbell, both 34, say they tried to protect their colleagues against political meddling from WH and HHS but was largely stifled by the Trump administration.

4) “The White House insisted on reviewing — and often softening — the C.D.C.’s closely guarded coronavirus guidance documents, the most prominent public expression of its latest research and scientific consensus on the spread of the virus.”

5) “The documents were vetted not only by the White House’s coronavirus task force but by what felt to the agency’s employees like an endless loop of political appointees across Washington.
Mr. McGowan recalled a White House fixated on the economic implications of public health.

6) “He and Dr. Robert R. Redfield, the C.D.C. director, negotiated w/ Russell T. Vought, the White House budget director, over social distancing guidelines for restaurants, as Mr. Vought argued that specific spacing recommendations would be too onerous for businesses to enforce”

7) ““It is not the C.D.C.’s role to determine the economic viability of a guidance document,” Mr. McGowan said.
They compromised anyway, recommending social distancing without a reference to the typical six-foot measurement.

8) “Over the summer, political appointees at the health department repeatedly asked C.D.C. officials to revise, delay and even scuttle drafts of @CDCMMWR they thought could be viewed, by implication, as criticism of President Trump.”

9) ““It wasn’t until something was in the M.M.W.R. that was in contradiction to what message the White House and H.H.S. were trying to put forward that they became scrutinized,” Ms. Campbell said.

“What’s not legitimate is to overrule science,” he said.

10) “Often, Mr. McGowan and Ms. Campbell mediated between Dr. Redfield and agency scientists when the WH’s requests and dictates would arrive: edits from Mr. Vought & Kellyanne Conway on choirs and communion in faith communities, or suggestions from Ivanka Trump, on schools.

11) “Every time that science clashed w/ messaging, messaging won”. Episodes of meddling sometimes turned absurd. In the spring, CDC published an app that allowed Americans to screen themselves for symptoms. But WH built its own, then demanded CDC wipe its app off its website”!

12) “Top CDC officials devised workarounds. Instead of posting new guidance for schools and election officials in the spring, they published “updates” to previous guidance that skipped formal review from Washington. That prompted officials in Dc to insist on reviewing updates.”

13) “especially unnerved last winter when officials in Washington told the C.D.C. that regular telephone briefings with another senior scientist, Dr. Nancy Messonnier, were no longer needed because Mr. Trump had his own daily briefings.”

(Sidebar: Dr Messonier is my hero)

14) “Dr. Messonnier angered the White House in late February when she issued a public warning that the virus was about to change Americans’ lives.

15) “There’s not a single thing that she said that didn’t come true,” Mr. McGowan said. “Is it more important to have her telling the world and the American public what to be prepared for, or is it just to say, ‘All is well?’”

“They need to be allowed to lead.”

16) BOTTOMLINE: CDC being censored and muzzled is one of the greatest travesties of this pandemic. And its tarnish reputation one of the worst stains of Trump WH.

➡■ all this is incredible painful to me cuz of what I also went thru in Jan trying to warn:
https://t.co/I5G7PL6boG