Twitter Thread by Gabrielle Hecht



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An interview with @CondoleezzaRice appeared on the @HooverInst website yesterday. She had some things to say about historians. A thread, beginning with a direct quote 1/

#twitterstorians @AHAhistorians @SocHistTech

"Let's start by really bringing the best young historians of China and India. History is being practiced in the academy in a way that's not really very inspiring. History departments ask much narrower questions than in years past.... 2/

... When I was a young faculty member, I remember sitting at a first faculty meeting with Gabriel Allman, author of The Civic Culture, and Seymour Martin Lipset, who had written the Political Man. These were historians who explored big questions." & now for some fact-checking 3/

Gabriel Almond (NOT Allman) was a political scientist, not a historian. He chaired the Stanford Political Science department from 1964 to 1969, and retired in 1976. Rice received her PhD in 1981 from the Univ. of Denver, and joined the Stanford faculty later that year. 4/

My historian’s mind sees a chronology snag, but I suppose it’s not impossible that emeritus profs attended faculty meetings back then. ?? Seymour Lipset was a sociologist AND a political scientist; again, not a historian. 5/

Indulge me by considering the next sentences in the interview. "The Hoover Institution today also has great historians. However, we want to attract more historians who will ask big questions. Regarding China, let's help to get the history straight.” 6/

My China colleagues can speak for themselves, tho I'm pretty confident in their qualifications to "get the history straight." But hey. 7/

I will pass on the comment about Hoover having great historians. You probably know whom I'm thinking of, but I don't need to go down that path tonight. I'd rather share a couple of other things. 8/

1st, a Wikipedia-sourced fun fact that truly has nothing to do with any of this (but I just can’t resist): "She traveled to Kazakhstan on Chevron's behalf and, in honor of her work, in 1993, Chevron named a 129,000-ton supertanker SS Condoleezza Rice." 9/

2nd - and this, dear #twitterstorians, is your candy jar for the evening - I present to you the review of Rice's book that appeared in AHR 1985.

You're welcome. 10/10