

Funding the Future

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It is widely known that right-wing people of a conservative disposition do not trust the government, however much they wish to control it.

There is also a lot of evidence that [they do not trust science](#). In both cases, the motivation is similar. They seem to think both act against the interests of the supposed free markets with which they are obsessed. Bizarrely, in both cases that is not true. Government is essential to provide the regulated spaces without which free markets can't exist. Science has underpinned a massive, supposedly free market. But, because many of the pharmaceutical sector's products need government licencing, they are treated as akin in the right-wing sceptics' mind, and so to be equally loathed.

This matters when someone like Trump comes to power.

As the [New York Times](#) reported a couple of says ago that:

The Trump administration, moving quickly to clamp down on health and science agencies, has canceled a string of scientific meetings and instructed federal health officials to refrain from all public communications, including upcoming reports focused on the nation's escalating bird flu crisis.

Experts who serve on outside advisory panels on a range of topics, from antibiotic resistance to deafness, received emails on Wednesday telling them their meetings had been canceled.

Bird flu is a current crisis. More than one hundred million birds have been killed. Seventy humans have had it in the USA. Cows are infected. It is being spread through raw milk - of which new US health secretary Robert F Kennedy Jnr is a big fan - and the risks are high. And US health officials have been banned from communicating about it. How that is supposed to help solve this problem is very hard to work out. My suspicion is that those imposing the ban know that. They do not care. Support for raw mile is more important than the spread of disease is the likely reasoning for this. It is madness.

And then came news yesterday that the Trump administration has gone further. This comes [from Science.org](#):

President Donald Trump's return to the White House is already having a big impact at the \$47.4 billion U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), with the new administration imposing a wide range of restrictions, including the abrupt cancellation of meetings such as grant review panels. Officials have also ordered a communications pause, a freeze on hiring, and an indefinite ban on travel.

The moves have generated extensive confusion and uncertainty at the nation's largest research agency, which has become a target for Trump's political allies. "The impact of the collective executive orders and directives appears devastating," one senior NIH employee says.

Amongst the programmes impacted are those on cancer research.

Anti-intellectualism, which often manifests in attacks on modern culture and science, is a key characteristic of fascism, of course. It seems that the Trump administration is, in that case, playing exactly by the fascist rule book on this issue. Not only is it intent on attacking medical science worldwide, as it is by seeking to undermine the World Health Organisation, but it is also seeking to do so within the US itself.

How will this play out? I really do not know. I hope that rational Americans will react with horror to what is happening. The trouble is, we know that there are a very great many irrational Americans who might well express delight at this action, although why would be really hard to tell.

What I do know is that this administration is now intent on being worse than I feared and that too many UK politicians will be sucked along in its wake and will offer copycat programmes here in the UK.

We have already seen the [utter irrationality of Reform on economic issues](#).

I am aware that the [Green Party's grasp of economic reality](#) remains very weak.

As I explained in a recent video, [the household analogy is still widely believed](#) by politicians.

If simple things, like the true nature of money and the fact that the macro economy is not like a household, are beyond the grasp of our politicians, then what hope do we have when it comes to science?

We need to worry. These people are threatening our well-being.