The current war on science, and who's behind it

Mann and Hotez have more in common than being pilloried all over the internet. Although they trained in disparate disciplines, their fields are now converging (as if they weren't each threatening enough on their own). Climate change is altering the habitats, migrations, and reproductive patterns of pathogen-bearing wildlife like bats, mosquitoes, and other insects. It is causing the migration of humans as well. Our increasing proximity to these species in both space and time can increase the opportunities for us to catch diseases from them.

Yet Mann and Hotez insist that a third scourge is even more dangerous than these two combined. In their words:

> *It is currently impossible for global leaders to take the urgent actions necessary to respond to the climate crisis and pandemic threats because they are thwarted by a common enemy—antiscience—that is politically and ideologically motivated opposition to any science that threatens powerful special interests and their political agendas. Unless we find a way to overcome antiscience, humankind will face its gravest threat yet—the collapse of civilization as we know it.*

And they point to an obvious culprit: "There is, unquestionably, a coordinated, concerted attack on science by today's Republican Party."

They've helpfully characterized "the five principal forces of antiscience " into alliterative groups: (1) plutocrats and

their political action committees, (2) petrostates and their politicians and polluters, (3) fake and venal professionals—physicians and professors, (4) propagandists, especially those with podcasts, and (5) the press. The general tactic is that (1) and (2) hire (3) to generate deceitful and inflammatory talking points, which are then disseminated by all-too-willing members of (4) and (5).

There is obviously a lot of overlap among these categories; Elon Musk, Vladimir Putin, Rupert Murdoch, and Donald Trump can all jump between a number of these bins. As such, the ideas and arguments presented in the book are somewhat redundant, as are the words used. Far too many things are deemed “ironic” (i.e., the same people who deny and dismiss the notion of human-caused climate change claimed that Democrats generated hurricanes Helene and Milton to target red states in October 2024) or “risible” (see Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s claim that Dr. Peter Hotez sought to make it a felony to criticize Anthony Fauci).

https://arstechnica.com/science/2025/09/who-should-we-blame-for-the-current-war-on-science/