

[Nature](#), one of the two leading scientific journals in the world, has a strongly worded editorial about the recent House hearings on climate change:

At a subcommittee hearing on 14 March, anger and distrust were directed at scientists and respected scientific societies. Misinformation was presented as fact, truth was twisted and nobody showed any inclination to listen to scientists, let alone learn from them. It has been an embarrassing display, not just for the Republican Party but also for Congress and the US citizens it represents. . .

One lawmaker last week described scientists as “elitist” and “arrogant” creatures who hide behind “discredited” institutions. . . Several scientists were on hand — at the behest of Democrats on the subcommittee — to answer questions and clear things up, but many lawmakers weren’t interested in answers, only in prejudice.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that the US Congress has entered the intellectual wilderness, a sad state of affairs in a country that has led the world in many scientific arenas for so long. Global warming is a thorny problem, and disagreement about how to deal with it is understandable. It is not always clear how to interpret data or address legitimate questions. Nor is the scientific process, or any given scientist, perfect. But to deny that there is reason to be concerned, given the decades of work by countless scientists, is irresponsible.

Of course, no ideology has a monopoly on this kind of know-nothingism, although it seems to attack different groups at different times. Still, it’s certainly odd to see the modern Right mimicking the Soviet approach to science, under which science is great — unless the scientists reach politically unpalatable conclusions, in which case there *must* be a scientific conspiracy afoot!