

Thursday, November 4, 2010

## **DIGGING BENEATH THE SURFACE: THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS**

Recently, Newsweek's Jonathan Alter decided, as the president has decided, that what liberals need is not better ideas but better marketing of the ones they have: "It's a sign of how poorly liberals market themselves and their ideas that the word 'liberal' is still in disrepute despite the election of the most genuinely liberal president that the political culture of this country will probably allow." "Despite"? In 2008, Democrats ran as Not George Bush. In 2010, they ran as Democrats. Hence, inescapably, as liberals, or at least as obedient to liberal leaders. Hence Democrats' difficulties. Responding to Alter, George Mason University economist Don Boudreaux agreed that interest-group liberalism has indeed been leavened by idea-driven liberalism. Which is the problem. "These ideas," Boudreaux says, "are almost exclusively about how other people should live their lives. These are ideas about how one group of people (the politically successful) should engineer everyone else's contracts, social relations, diets, habits, and even moral sentiments." Liberalism's ideas are "about replacing an unimaginably large multitude of diverse and competing ideas . . . with a relatively paltry set of 'Big Ideas' that are politically selected, centrally imposed, and enforced by government, not by the natural give, take and compromise of the everyday interactions of millions of people." This was the serious concern that percolated beneath the normal froth and nonsense of the elections: Is political power - are government commands and controls - superseding and suffocating the creativity of a market society's spontaneous order? On Tuesday, a rational and alarmed American majority said "yes." -written by George Will [HERE](#)

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 09:35