

Tea's getting cold? Party's over?

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Mitt Romney's victories in Michigan and Arizona seem to have given him enough of a bump to make him the probable favourite to win the GOP nomination in the upcoming US presidential elections. But enthusiasm is lacking.

The Republican base has not been able to find a person who represents their "ideology" and is also electable.

No one loves Mitt Romney.

In the battle between the Republican establishment (McCain and co.) and a possible "insurgent", the establishment seems to have come out on top. Some had hoped that Romney would falter, clearing the path for a "white knight": Jeb Bush or some brilliant sitting governor.

This underscores the deeper problem faced by the Republican Party.

Its leading figures in Congress and in the media – as noted recently by the *New York Review of Books* – uphold an ideology so virulently anti-government that it attracts very few voters beyond those who vote in the primaries.

Even self-identified conservatives are more attracted to the rhetoric of the conservative movement than to its practical proposals – for example, social spending cuts and tax policies – which are supported by around 70% of conservatives.

Barring a political tsunami between now and November, Obama should have a relatively smooth ride to re-election.

Is such a tsunami on the horizon? Hard to say: tsunamis are intrinsically unpredictable.

Shimon Peres and Bibi Netanyahu will visit Washington next week, giving political forecasters yet more data from which to determine which way the wind is blowing.

Meanwhile, the Tea keeps getting colder.