

# Costello: JFK's Democratic Party no more

**Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune**

The 50th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination had me thinking: They just don't make Democrats like they used to.

In Kennedy's time, when a Democratic Senator, Representative or president swore an oath to uphold and defend the United States Constitution, he meant it. Today, those who actually do defend the constitution are condemned by today's Democratic Party as dangerous extremists or even terrorists.

Obama's Internal Revenue Service targeted for harassment activist groups who threatened his vision of America by educating Americans on the Constitution's original intent. Obama's Defense Department has labelled Tea Party activists enemies of the state and threatened punishment against servicemen and women who dare to affiliate with such groups.

None dare call this "McCarthyism." Well, not quite no one. I have no difficulty calling it McCarthyism, although that might be unfair to McCarthy. The communists McCarthy railed against were genuine enemies of our country. His crime was his tarring of the innocent.

Obama and the Democrats condemn as enemies those who defend the nation's founding principles.

Today's Democrats do not share Kennedy's love for this country.

Today's Democrats also view the relationship between the government and its people very differently than they did 50 years ago.

Kennedy's iconic line during his 1961 Inaugural Address on Jan. 20, 1961, implored his fellow Americans to, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

Contrast that with Obama's vision of modern America enunciated last week during his mumbling, bumbling press conference. At the hastily called presser he finally acknowledged his signature achievement as president, Obamacare, was failing miserably at keeping any of the promises he had made for it. In fact, if a private company had failed to deliver on such extravagant promises, Obama's Justice Department would prosecute that company's management for fraud.

In the middle of this 7,000-word attempt to illegally rewrite offending parts of the law, he made this claim: "Sometimes people look at what's taking place in Washington and they say, not enough is getting done that helps me with my life."

That's quite a departure from the Democratic Party's vision as enunciated and celebrated by JFK. Somehow I doubt that 52 years from now, Obama's appeal to dependency will be enshrined as Kennedy's declaration is today.

John F. Kennedy treasured the Constitution. Today's Democrats loathe the document. Obama himself disparaged the Constitution for the limitations that it placed on him: "[T]he Constitution is a charter of negative liberties. It says what the states can't do to you, it says what the federal government can't do to you, but it doesn't say what the federal government or the state government must do on your behalf."

The Democrats were furious when the Supreme Court upheld the First Amendment in the Citizens United case. Obama's IRS has harassed those who dared speak out against his political agenda. Democrats have run roughshod over the Fifth Amendment with environmental laws. Your property is not your own if the EPA or the Interior Department decides that a weed or a frog has a more legitimate claim to it. The mere mention of the Ninth or 10th Amendment will send Democrats into convulsive fits. And the Democrats' hostility to the Second Amendment is central to their core beliefs.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was a life member of the National Rifle Association. He embraced his membership shortly after his inauguration with these words: "I am pleased to accept life membership in the National Rifle Association and extend to your organization every good wish for continued success."

During his presidential campaign he proclaimed that, "By calling attention to a well-regulated militia, the security of the nation, and the right of each citizen to keep and bear arms, our Founding Forefathers recognized the essential civilian nature of our economy."

I doubt that any prominent Democrat today would even say "Founding Forefathers."

The Democratic president who preceded Kennedy also bore little similarity to the current president. While Harry Truman sat behind the presidential desk in the Oval Office, he had a plaque reminding him that "The Buck Stops Here."

Contrast that with Obama's sense of responsibility. He has exhausted his "blame Bush" excuse to the point that it became a late night comedy show punch line. The aforementioned press conference revealed no sense of personal responsibility, just thrashing about for a replacement scapegoat.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy would not even recognize today's Democratic Party.

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