PERRY, OBAMA, AND HARRY TRUMAN

It's starting to look like 1948 all over again.

Mark Twain observed that while history doesn't repeat itself, it often rhymes. The 2012 presidential campaign is now rhyming with that of 1948 in iambic trimeter - the poetic form tragedians of Ancient Greece such as Aeschylus and Sophocles used to best express portending doom.

So let's revisit that extraordinary yesteryear of 1948, resulting in the most famous upset in American politics - Democrat Harry Truman defeating Republican Tom Dewey - and see how we can avoid a similar outcome by using it to our advantage.

In 1944, FDR was running yet again for reelection. He was dying and Dem Party leaders were afraid that his pro-Soviet hyper-leftie vice-president, Henry Wallace, would succeed him. They insisted Wallace be kicked off the ticket and suggested he be replaced by someone like Missouri Senator Harry Truman.

FDR agreed, promptly died 82 days after his 4th consecutive inauguration (April 12, 1945), whereupon Truman became president. He was the kind of Democrat we don't see any more - resolutely pro-military/pro-America in foreign policy, and just as resolutely New Deal liberal in domestic policy.

He nuked Japan, initiated the Cold War against the Soviets, saved Berlin with the Berlin Airlift and Europe with the Marshall Plan, and recognized the State of Israel 11 minutes after it declared independence on May 14, 1948, over the hysterical objections of his Secretaries of State (George Marshall) and Defense (James Forrestal).

Yet domestically he was a failure - for as the post-war economy sunk into deep recession, he refused to remove FDR's government controls hamstringing it. The Dems had controlled the House since 1930, and in the mid-term elections in 1946, voters in frustration threw them out. The Pubs gained 55 House seats and the Majority (246-188).

Under Speaker Joe Martin of Massachusetts, the Pubs managed to get a few things done like remove war-time price controls, but made no attempt whatever at dismantling FDR's New Deal. In the campaign of 1948, Truman went straight at them, labeling them the "Do Nothing Congress." The label stuck. Truman meant they refused to pass his "Fair Deal" government expansion programs which included national health insurance. Dem voters agreed, and Pub voters agreed with the label as well, for refusal to dismantle the New Deal.

Truman campaigned for his election as much against the Do Nothing Congress as he did against his Pub opponent, Tom Dewey.

Dewey was the Governor of New York, and had already lost to FDR as the Pub nominee in 1944. Yet he was the Pub Establishment guy, deemed "inevitable" to gain the nomination. One after one, other candidates fell by the wayside battling each other - former Minnesota governor Harold Stassen, California governor Earl Warren, Ohio senator Robert Taft, Michigan senator Arthur Vandenburg, and the popular favorite, General Douglas MacArthur, who couldn't campaign as he was running Japan.

When Taft, Stassen, and Vandenburg refused to agree on which one of them should "Stop Dewey" at the Pub convention and unite their delegates behind him, Dewey - unliked, unloved, regarded as "cold, stiff, and calculating" - won by acclamation. Dewey picked Warren as his running mate. The media proclaimed a ticket of the governors of New York and California was certain to defeat unpopular Truman and his neighbor state senator, Alben Barkley of Kentucky.

Truman was so unpopular there were not just one but *two* third party Dems running against him: FDR VP Henry Wallace and his Progressive Party, angry at Truman's inability to expand government more and his waging an "interventionist" Cold War against the Soviet Union; plus South Carolina senator Strom Thurmond and his "Dixiecrat" States Rights Party, angry at Truman for wanting to dismantle the South's Jim Crow laws and have blacks treated as fully human.

Dewey was convinced what he had to do was avoid risks and saying anything controversial, running a campaign of inane platitudes like, "You know your future is ahead of you." Truman went after Dewey's jugular, ridiculing him as "the little man on the wedding cake." Over and endlessly over again, Truman condemned "the do nothing, good for nothing 80th Republican Congress" as his main campaign theme.

He campaigned tirelessly, criss-crossing the country by train and drawing huge crowds. He was energetic and likeable. Dewey was cautious and distant. The Martin-led Republicans continued to do nothing, saying they had to wait for a Republican president to accomplish anything.

Truman won, 303 electoral votes to Dewey's 189, 49.6% vs. 45.1% of the popular vote. The Dems won 75 - *75!* - House seats, propelling them back into majority, 263-171.

By now you may have lost count of the number of times 2012 is rhyming with 1948. Truman's 1948 campaign is Zero's template. Repeatedly now, he is condemning the "do nothing Republican Congress." He and his campaign team are salivating in anticipation of taking on Dewey II, the Ken Doll of Mitt Romney.

There is an alternative to how this tragedy is unfolding. It's an opportunity being handed to Rick Perry on a platter. The opportunity is to *agree* with Zero:

"I completely agree with the president's opinion of Congress. Mr. Obama is right - this *is* a "Do Nothing Congress." Where we completely disagree is on what the Republicans have *not done* with their House Majority.

"Mr. Obama condemns them for doing nothing to advance his socialist agenda. Cooperation and bipartisanship for him means he gives the orders and they obey. He has made no effort whatsoever to work with them on solutions for the mess we are in, the mess his policies are making worse by the day.

"Not only is he the most radical left-wing president in our nation's history, he is also the most belligerently uncooperative. It's his way or the highway, period.

"So I applaud the Republicans in Congress for "doing nothing" to make our economy aggressively *worse* as Mr. Obama seems to want - for the worse our economy gets, the more people become dependent on government handouts, who then vote for Democrats as advocates (some would say drug-pushers) of those addictive handouts. I call this the Democrats' War on Jobs.

"Yet this is a Do Nothing Congress, for it has done nothing to make our economy *better*. It has done nothing to get the government out of the way, to end Mr. Obama's War on Jobs. It has done nothing to stop the EPA's ruthless determination to prevent us from getting more energy into our economy. It has done nothing to stop the explosive growth in federal regulations. It has done nothing to defund Obamacare. The list is inexcusably long of what this Do Nothing Congress has not done what it was elected in 2010 to do.

"This is why, according to Gallup, this Congress has the approval of 13% and the disapproval of 87% of Americans.

"What needs to be understood is that the House has the power of the purse. Our Do Nothing Congress has refused to use this power. The Senate and the President must agree if the House wants to spend money on a government program. But if the House *doesn't* want to spend money on a program, the program dies right there. Neither the Senate nor the President can do anything about it - they cannot spend any money unless it is first approved by the House.

"Voters gave Republicans their House Majority in 2010 to do one thing: *stop the spending*. They didn't stop in 2011, and they have not stopped in 2012, passing a 2012 budget just as insanely deficit-large as the three years before. All they had to do refuse to spend money on, say, Obamacare, and Obamacare dies. They didn't. On anything.

"This is why, as your president, I will make Congress part time. Mark Twain said no one's wallet is safe while Congress is in session. He was right. The more they are out of

Washington, the safer your wallet is. *As your president, I will inform Congress that what they will be doing during my term in office is not passing laws but repealing them, not creating government programs but defunding them*.

"Their job will be to work with me to get the government out of the way - out of the way of American's personal freedom, out of the way of American business creating jobs and prosperity. Our freedom and prosperity are being suffocated - suffocated by an incomprehensible number of rules, regulations, and government controls over our lives and economy.

"If you agree, I'm your guy to get the government out of the way. Then ask yourself, is your Congressman? Why should you vote for someone - Republican or Democrat - who refuses to get the government out of the way? My answer is: you shouldn't.

"I am asking not only for you to send me to the White House, I am asking you to send a Congress to Washington that will do something for freedom and constitutional government, not a Congress that will do nothing for either. That's the way to make America free and prosperous again. Thanks. I'm Rick Perry."

2012 does not have to end like 1948, with Zero defeating a plastic wedding cake man. In running against Do Nothing Republicans, Zero is teeing up the ball for Perry, who has already made a "part-time Congress" a signature campaign theme. If Perry lines up with the disgust and contempt conservatives have for the do-nothing-for-freedom Boehner Congress, he'll hit a drive that makes the green. Carpe diem, Rick.