



The Beltway Beast: Stealing from Future Generations and Destroying the Middle Class

Munir Moon

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Only a third party can tame the “Beltway Beast,” says Moon in a tone of controlled, well-thought-out frustration.

The Beltway Beast: A Challenge to Our Democracy by Munir Moon is a concise look at a litany of problems with the American political system—and a glimpse at a possible solution.

Moon’s main goal is to argue against political polarization. Rather than pointing a finger at one party, individual, issue, or belief system, Moon attacks the beast that is Washington, DC: “the Military-Industrial Complex, multinational corporations, lobbyists, media, and Congress.” If it feels like a lot to tackle in one slim volume, it is; but Moon puts all these oft-discussed issues in one place in order to prime Americans for his proposed solution: a third party.

Moon asserts that The People’s Party of America could help restore balance. The PPA, as Moon presents it, would be people-centered, focusing on “equality, fairness, freedom, and justice.” Throughout the book, Moon presents practical details behind those abstractions—but he doesn’t provide all the specifics, as this is to be an open movement, a community rather than one man’s opinion.

The book is well researched, filled with statistics on governmental failure: missing military equipment, inadequate representation of women and nonwhite citizens in the federal government, negligence in management of federal funds, lack of investment in education, and more.

While the book sees many faults in the government, this is not a book for pessimists. The idea of one party to represent all Americans may seem naive, but Moon embraces that challenge: “the goal is not to please or offend people but to advance some of the best ideas from the right, left, and middle.” Hopeful cynics like Moon will want to join the PPA.

The book’s problem-solution format is much more weighted toward the problem. It expounds on the government’s policies and actions regarding debt, defense, health care, schools, and diplomacy. The last two chapters focus on the platform and business practices of the PPA. For Moon’s key audience—those who also feel that “we keep on reforming reforms, so to speak, but to no avail”—this problem-focused approach does not present a strong enough call to action. Potential PPA advocates will be left champing at the bit: “So how do we actually get this party started?”

Moon’s life as an immigrant who achieved the American dream adds depth to the familiar political ideas the book discusses. His tone of controlled, well-thought-out frustration and exasperation will resonate with many Americans, and this calm reasoning helps further the cause more effectively than rage.

The Beltway Beast shows how a new party could tackle a broad swath of political issues.

MELISSA WUSKE (October 30, 2014)

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