



## North Korea: Another Country

*By Bruce Cumings*



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Depicted as an insular and forbidding police state with an “insane” dictator at its helm, North Korea—charter member of Bush’s “Axis of Evil”—is a country the U.S. loves to hate. Now the CIA says it possesses nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, as well as long-range missiles capable of delivering them to America’s West Coast.

But, as Bruce Cumings demonstrates in this provocative, lively read, the story of the U.S.-Korea conflict is more complex than our leaders or our news media would have us believe. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of Korea, and on declassified government reports, Cumings traces that story, from the brutal Korean War to the present crisis. Harboring no illusions regarding the totalitarian Kim Jong Il regime, Cumings nonetheless insists on a more nuanced approach. The result is both a counter-narrative to the official U.S. and North Korean versions and a fascinating portrayal of North Korea, a country that suffers through foreign invasions, natural disasters, and its own internal contradictions, yet somehow continues to survive.

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### Editorial Review

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Few books of political commentary are as insightful, outspoken, and even personable as this one. The author feels no obligation to keep his opinions to himself (unlike many commentators, who strive so hard for neutrality that they wind up not saying anything of substance). "I have no sympathy for the North, which is the author of most of its own troubles," he writes at one point, although he does allude to the "significant responsibility that all Americans share for the garrison state that emerged on the ashes of our truly terrible destruction of the North half a century ago." He also asserts, flatly contradicting the prevailing wisdom, that the Korean War, whose armistice was signed 50 years ago, is still the defining event of modern-day North Korea. The book is full of assertions that will challenge readers to reconsider several of their conceptions of contemporary history. It's also, and this is most unusual for a book of this nature, occasionally funny or even sarcastic, especially in its criticism of media responses to North Korea. A fresh, original take on a subject of growing international importance. *David Pitt*

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### Review

"Cumings counters the hype with an instructive history." *The New York Times*

"Few books of political commentary are as insightful, outspoken, and even personable, as this one."  
*Booklist*

"America's leading historian and political analyst of contemporary Korea." *Chalmers Johnson*,  
Author of *Blowback*

### About the Author

Bruce Cumings is the author of *North Korea, Korea's Place in the Sun*, and *Parallax Visions*. He teaches at the University of Chicago.

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