To initiate a war of aggression is not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime. . . .” -- Robert H. Jackson, Chief U.S. Prosecutor, Nuremberg Military Tribunal

The Axis of Evil? “The depiction of [the Soviet Union] as evil releases some of our worst, not our best, qualities.” -- J. William Fulbright, The Price of Empire (199). (For more by Fulbright, see end of newsletter.)
Contents #1 July 19, 2012

US MEDIA HOSTILITY

Introduction: Dick Bennett

THREE VIEWS OF NORTH KOREA

Sunoo

Beal

Cumings

Contents #2 Three Parts: History, Media, Literature

WHAT HAPPENED, WHAT’S HAPPENING?

Bruce Cumings, North Korea (2004)

Garner (2010), Rev. of North Korea

Cumings’ LTE NY Review of Books (2007)

Cumings, et al., Inventing the Axis of Evil (2005)

Cumings: Korean War Games (2013)

Articles from Google

NYT Op-Ed, 3/11/13, by Amb. Donald Gregg, “Reach Out”

US MEDIA ANALYSIS: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (9 articles examined)
Analysis of media reporting requires knowing the subject. My media criticism was made possible by Bruce Cumings’ research or that of similar scholars independent of US dogmas and myths regarding “enemies.”

U.S. and S. Korea Military Drills 2012

US/SK Drills 2013

US/SK Pact Against NK Provocations


Who Cranked Up First? US/SK Drills vs. NK, and Newspaper Nationalism,

Klug, Nukes

Sang-Hun, SK Quick Response

Korea

US Shoring Up

Thanks to J. William Fulbright

NORTH KOREAN LITERATURE

Dick Bennett, OMNI Book Forum: Literature of US Enemies

The Way to War

A Way to Peace

*Literature from the "Axis of Evil"

Google Search

Contact Senators Boozman and Pryor
WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT’S HAPPENING? When Did the Korean War Begin? What, Who Caused It?

North Korea: Another Country BY BRUCE CUMINGS

2004
AMERICA’S LEADING HISTORIAN ON KOREA OFFERS NUANCED ANALYSIS THAT DEMOLISHES FAMILIAR GENERALIZATIONS

In the battle to open closed Western minds, this tart and witty broadside makes an excellent start.
—THE FINANCIAL TIMES

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.

Bruce Cumings is the author of Korea’s Place in the Sun, War and Television, Parallax Visions, and The Origins of the Korean War. He is a professor of history at the University of
North Korea, like Cuba, is a country suspended in time, one that exists off modernity’s grid. It’s a place where the cold war never ended, where the heirloom paranoia is taken down and polished daily.

Bruce Cumings
THE KOREAN WAR
By Bruce Cumings

Korea’s cold war chill is heating up. Four months ago a South Korean warship was sunk, and a South Korean-led international investigative team concluded that North Korea was responsible. Next week the United States and South Korea will begin large-scale naval exercises off the coasts of the Korean Peninsula and Japan in a show of force.
The world will be watching, and here’s a book that American policymakers may hope it won’t be reading: Bruce Cumings’s “Korean War,” a powerful revisionist history of America’s intervention in Korea. Beneath its bland title, Mr. Cumings’s book is a squirm-inducing assault on America’s moral behavior during the Korean War, a conflict that he says is misremembered when it is remembered at all. It’s a book that puts the reflexive anti-Americanism of North Korea’s leaders into sympathetic historical context.

Mr. Cumings is chairman of the history department at the University of Chicago and the author of “The Origins of the Korean War,” a respected two-volume survey. He mows down a host of myths about the war in his short new book, which is a distillation of his own scholarship and that of many other historians. But he begins by mowing down David Halberstam.

Mr. Cumings, who admires Mr. Halberstam’s writing about Vietnam, plucks the wings from “The Coldest Winter,” Mr. Halberstam’s 2007 book about the Korean War. The book, he argues, makes all the classic mistakes popular American historians tend to make about this little understood war.

Mr. Halberstam’s book is among those that “evince almost no knowledge of Korea or its history” and “barely get past two or three Korean names,” Mr. Cumings writes. “Halberstam mentions the U.S. Military Government from 1945 to 1948, which deeply shaped postwar Korean history — in one sentence,” he adds. “There is absolutely nothing on the atrocious massacres of this war, or the American incendiary bombing campaigns.” Ouch.

Americans need to get past the idea, Mr. Cumings says, that the Korean War was a “discrete, encapsulated” story that began in 1950, when the United States intervened to help push the Communist north out of the south of Korea, and ended in 1953, after the war bogged down in a stalemate. The United States succeeded in containment, establishing the 2.5-mile-wide demilitarized zone that still runs through Korea’s middle, but failed miserably at the war for the north, an attempt at Communist rollback.

Mr. Cumings argues that the Korean War was a civil war with long, tangled historical roots, one in which America had little business meddling. He notes how “appallingly dirty” the war was. In terms of civilian slaughter, he declares, “our ostensibly democratic ally was the worst offender, contrary to the American image of the North Koreans as fiendish terrorists.”

Mr. Cumings likens the indiscriminate American bombing of North Korea to genocide. He writes that American soldiers took part in, or observed, civilian atrocities not dissimilar to those at My Lai. An official inquiry is needed into some of these events, he writes, for any kind of healing to begin. (He also writes that this war, during which nearly 37,000 American soldiers died, deserves a memorial as potent and serious as Maya Lin’s
Vietnam memorial.)

Among the most important things to understand about North Korean behavior then and now, Mr. Cumings writes, is the **longtime enmity between Korea and Japan.** Japan took Korea as a colony in 1910, with America’s blessing, and replaced the Korean language with Japanese. Japan humiliated and brutalized Korea in other ways. (During World War II the Japanese Army forcibly turned tens of thousands of Korean women into sex slaves known as “comfort women.”) About this history Mr. Cumings writes, “Neither Korea nor Japan has ever gotten over it.”

**North Korea, which is virulently anti-Japan, remains bitter and fearful of that country and of the United States. It will do whatever it can to stay out of the hands of South Korea, where leaders have long-standing historical ties to Japan.**

Mr. Cumings, in “The Korean War,” details the north’s own atrocities, and acknowledges that current “North Korean political practice is reprehensible.” But he says that we view that country through “Orientalist bigotry,” seeing only its morbid qualities. We wrongly label the country Stalinist, he argues. “There is no evidence in the North Korean experience of the mass violence against whole classes of people or the wholesale ‘purge’ that so clearly characterized Stalinism,” he writes.

**The most eye-opening sections of “The Korean War” detail America’s saturation bombing of Korea’s north. “What hardly any Americans know or remember,” Mr. Cumings writes, “is that we carpet-bombed the north for three years with next to no concern for civilian casualties.”** The United States dropped more bombs in Korea (635,000 tons, as well as 32,557 tons of napalm) than in the entire Pacific theater during World War II. Our logic seemed to be, he says, that “they are savages, so that gives us the right to shower napalm on innocents.”

“The Korean War” has its share of awkward sentences, and Mr. Cumings makes at least one mistake of his own, referring to Michael Herr’s 1977 nonfiction book “Dispatches,” about the Vietnam War, as a novel.

But this lean book may put some readers in mind of **Wartime.** Paul Fussell’s acidic attack on some of the comforting myths about World War II. Mr. Cumings’s prose, at its best, is reminiscent of Mr. Fussell’s stylized, literate high dudgeon.

Witness the carnage in this passage from early in “The Korean War”: “Here was the Vietnam War we came to know before Vietnam — gooks, napalm, rapes, whores, an unreliable ally, a cunning enemy, fundamentally untrained G.I.’s fighting a war their top generals barely understood, fragging of officers, contempt for the know-nothing civilians back home, devilish battles
indescribable even to loved ones, press handouts from Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s headquarters apparently scripted by comedians or lunatics, an ostensible vision of bringing freedom and liberty to a sordid dictatorship run by servants of Japanese imperialism.”

This year is the 60th anniversary of the Korean War’s conventional start. Even from this distant vantage point, Mr. Cumings writes, there are still multiple unpleasant facts Americans have not learned about this war, “truths that most Americans do not know and perhaps don’t want to know, truths sometimes as shocking as they are unpalatable to American self-esteem.” His book is a bitter pill, a sobering corrective.

IRAN

Iran should be put on notice.
—DONALD RUMSFELD

SYRIA

There’s got to be a change in Syria.
—PAUL WOLFOWITZ

NORTH KOREA

I loathe Kim Jong-II.
—GEORGE W. BUSH
**Inventing the Axis of Evil: The Truth About North Korea, Iran, and Syria**

*by BRUCE CUMINGS, ERVAND ABRAHAMIAN, AND MOSHE MA’OZ*

**Paperback**
$14.95 / £8.99

**NOW IN PAPERBACK AN "AUTHORITATIVE AND INFORMATIVE" (THE NATION) PRIMER ON THE COUNTRIES CAUGHT IN THE CROSSHAIRS OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION, BY THREE RENOWNED EXPERTS**

A persuasive argument that the axis-of-evil trope is as illusory as those elusive WMDs. —KIRKUS REVIEWS

Ever since the “axis of evil” label was first applied by President Bush in his 2002 State of the Union address, the hawks in his administration have left little doubt as to where they intend to turn their attention after Iraq: North Korea, Iran, and Syria. Yet most Americans know very little about these three countries beyond what the Pentagon has told them.

For those wanting to know more about “who’s next,” this “timely exposition on global (in)stability” (*Korean Quarterly*) by three leading experts on each country sets the record straight, confronting relentless fear-mongering with hard facts. The authors explore each country’s history and internal politics alongside the spotty record of past U.S. interventions, including the Korean War and the CIA-sponsored overthrow of Iran’s elected prime minister in 1953. As one reviewer pointed out: “The most important thing we know about Syria is that we really don’t know what's going on in Syria” (*Slate*). While entertaining no illusions about these despotic regimes, *Inventing the Axis of Evil* demonstrates that the truth is far more complicated than some would have us believe.

Bruce Cumings is the author of *North Korea, Korea’s Place in the Sun*, and *Parallax Visions*. He teaches at the University of Chicago. Ervand Abrahamian is the author of *Tortured Confessions, Khomeinism*, and *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. He is Distinguished Professor of History at the City University of New York. Moshe Ma’oz is the author of *Syria and Israel* and *Assad*. He is a professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

**Category:** Current Affairs / Politics / Political Science

**Pub Date:** Fall 2005

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Friday, November 09, 2007

Bruce Cumings (and IF Stone): South Korea and US Started the Korean War  [Odd title, not supported by text nor by Cumings books on Korea in which the conflict is shown to be complex. –Dick]

Many of us learned from IF Stone's indispensable The Hidden History of the Korean War that it is far from clear that the Korean was started because of an invasion by the North as advertised. Now I come to find that Professor Bruce Cumings has written extensively on the matter suggesting, as Stone indicated, that the matter was far more complicated. In a letter to the NYRB, he cogently summarizes some of the evidence indicating that the war was essentially started by the South Korean military leadership, put in place and supported, as we learned from Stone by the US (MacArthur).

http://www.nybooks.com/articles/20840

New York Review of Books
Bruce Cumings writes:
To the Editors:

In his review of David Halberstam's book on the Korean War, The Coldest Winter [NYR, October 25], Richard Bernstein mentions the thesis "advanced in particular by Bruce Cumings" that Syngman Rhee or the South Korean military might have provoked Kim Il Sung's attack in June 1950. In a long chapter entitled "Who Started the Korean War?" I examined just about every thesis on how the war started including this thesis, first advanced not by me but by I.F. Stone in his Hidden History of the Korean War. I used formerly secret archival documents in English and Korean (including a large captured North Korean archive) to conclude this chapter by saying that all the theses were wrong, because civil wars do not start, they come along after years or even decades of internecine conflict—as in Korea.

Because the top US commander in Korea had secretly told his superiors that South Korean military forces started the majority of fighting along the 38th parallel in 1949, with attacks from the South beginning in May and ending in December and with a near war in August, it was incumbent upon me to examine Stone's thesis in any event. The South Korean commander of the parallel in the summer of 1949 was Kim Sok-won, a quisling who had chased after Kim Il Sung and other guerrillas in Manchuria in the 1930s, on behalf of the Japanese Kwantung Army—an army well known for provoking incidents, such as the one resulting in Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931. My main point, though, was that the commanders of the respective Korean armies had chosen different sides in the long anticolonial struggle against Japan, and it should not have been surprising that once they had the means to do so, they would again clash with
each other. What is more surprising is the direct American role, during the US occupation of Korea from 1945 to 1948, in putting in power an entire generation of Koreans in the military and the national police who had served Japanese imperialism.

David Halberstam and I spent an afternoon together before his tragic death, talking about this war, and his warmth and generosity did not hide the fact that he was entirely unaware of what might be found in an archive, apart from selected documents that came out after the Soviet Union collapsed. Neither is Richard Bernstein, whose last review lauded a completely shoddy book on North Korea by Jasper Becker, Rogue Regime [NYR, March 1], a book rife with elementary errors and thus a laughingstock among scholars. I don't believe The New York Review would treat many other fields of scholarship as if anyone can come along and offer their judgments without the slightest evidence that they know what they are talking about.

Bruce Cumings
Professor and Chair, History Department
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Posted by Ronald at Friday, November 09, 2007

Korean War Games

Global Network [globalnet@mindspring.com]

To: GN List Serve [globenet@yahoogroups.com]

Friday, April 05, 2013 10:34 AM

http://www.thenation.com/authors/bruce-cumings

Korean War Games

By Bruce Cumings

April 3, 2013

[Cumings’ negative assessment of NK and quick history of East Asia from 1930s to present. I have tried to help us follow this highly complex history by highlighting some names and phrases. –Dick]

North Korea greeted 2013 with a bang (or several of them), not the dying whimper that
Beltway officials and pundits had hoped for—and have been predicting ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall. In December, Pyongyang launched a long-range missile that, after many failures dating to 1998, got the country’s first satellite rotating around the earth. A couple of months later, North Korea detonated its third atomic bomb. Then, as the annual US–South Korean war games got going and a new president took office in Seoul, the North let loose a farrago of mind-bending rhetoric, bellowing that events were inching toward war, renouncing the Korean War armistice of 1953, and threatening to hit either the United States or South Korea with a pre-emptive nuclear attack. In between, Chicago Bulls great Dennis Rodman brought his stainless-steel-studded, tattooed and multi-hued six-foot-eight frame to sit beside “young lad” (as the vice chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff described the North’s new leader) Kim Jong-un at a basketball game in Pyongyang. As the saying goes, you can’t make this stuff up.

[ NK and E. Asia.]

The Republic of Korea [according to NK], one of the most advanced industrial states in the world, was, according to Pyongyang, a “puppet of the US imperialists” led by a “rat” named Lee Myung-bak; if he was on the way out, the incoming president, Park Geun-hye, brought something new, a “venomous swish of skirt,” to the Blue House in Seoul. As if the North weren’t hated enough (it ranked fourth in a 2007 global index of unpopularity, albeit behind Israel, Iran and the United States), it added blatant sexism to its repertoire—in Korean, this phrase is used to taunt women deemed too aggressive.

If the North’s heated rhetoric set some kind of record, the approach was hardly new. Nothing is more characteristic of this regime than its preening, posturing, overweening desire for the world to pay it attention, while simultaneously threatening destruction in all directions and assuring through draconian repression that its people know next to nothing about that same world. Twenty years ago, when the Clinton administration brought maximum pressure on the North to open its plutonium facility to special inspections, the North railed on about war breaking out at any minute; that 1993–94 episode likewise sought to shape the policies of an incoming South Korean president, Kim Young-sam. Almost forty years ago, when Jimmy Carter was president, North Korea shouted itself hoarse about the peninsula being “at the brink of war.” The difference is that, in past decades, specialists read this stuff in Korean Central News Agency reports that arrived weeks late, by snail mail; today, it gets instant Internet coverage, which the North is exploiting to the utmost (while the masses still have no Internet access). The daunting part, of course, is that the North relies on the good sense of its adversaries not to take its incessant warmongering racket seriously.

Today, the rhetoric is designed to do three things: to confront President Park with a choice of continuing the hard line of her predecessor or returning to engagement with the North; to raise the stakes of Obama’s stance of “strategic patience” (which has not been a strategy but has certainly been patient, as the North has launched three long-range missiles and tested two nuclear bombs since Obama’s 2009 inauguration); and to present China, which for the first time worked with the United States to craft the most recent UN sanctions against the North, with a choice—enforce the sanctions at the risk of events spinning out of control, or
return to its usual posture of voting for sanctions and then looking the other way when the North violates them.

* * *

It can hardly be said that Pyongyang's patented antics are disturbing amicable regional relations. Sitting now as prime minister in Tokyo is Shinzo Abe, whose grandfather Nobusuke Kishi ran the munitions industry in 1930s Manchukuo, the region of northeast China occupied by Imperial Japan after its 1931 invasion. This was the same time that Kim Il-sung and his fellow guerrillas combated Japanese militarists there, and that Park's father, Park Chung-hee (who was South Korea's ruthless military dictator for eighteen years), was an officer in the Japanese Army and the happy recipient of a gold watch for his loyalty to puppet Emperor Puyi. Famous for his brain-dead insensitivity to his neighbors' historic grievances against Japan earlier in his career and in his election campaign, Abe said at a public forum on his state visit to Washington in February: "I met [President-elect Park Geun-hye] twice...and my grandfather was best friends with her father, President Park Chung-hee.... so President Park Chung-hee was someone who was very close with Japan, obviously." Abe probably thought this was a compliment.

Meanwhile, China has besmirched a decade of careful diplomacy with its neighbors by instigating ever more serious confrontations with Japan and Southeast Asian nations over islands (most of them uninhabited rock piles) that it covets, called the Senkakus/Diaoyus, Spratlys and Paracels; barely a week goes by without Chinese naval ships intruding on islands claimed by Japan, counting on Tokyo—whose navy is far superior to China's—not to escalate the conflict. South Korea has a similarly insoluble dispute with Japan over yet another set of windswept rocks, Dokdo/Takeshima, which could also get out of hand.

* * *

[NK, SE Asia, USA, Nuclear Escalation, and Mutual Provocations]

Now comes Barack Obama with his "pivot to Asia," bringing new US bases and force projections to the task of containing China—while denying any such purpose. Surely many in Washington enjoy the spectacle of China, the world's second-largest economy, at the throat of Japan, the third-largest, with their relations arguably at the lowest ebb since they exchanged ambassadors in 1972. North Korea's relations with China may also be at their worst ever, now that Beijing is working hand in glove with Washington on sanctions. China is apoplectic because the North's missiles and A-bombs just might push Japan and South Korea to go nuclear. They certainly elicited a quick US response: in mid-March, President Obama decided on a $1 billion acceleration of the US ballistic missile interceptor program, adding fourteen new batteries in California and Alaska (calling them interceptors is a bit of a misnomer; in fifteen tests of these systems under ideal conditions, only eight worked). As luck would have it, such anti-missile forces are also useful against China's antiquated ICBMs. The truth is that Pyongyang ought to be paid by Pentagon hard-liners and military contractors for its provocations; the North Koreans are the perfect stalking horse for America's stealth containment of China—and for keeping military spending high.
At the end of March, Obama upped the ante by sending B-52 and B-2 Stealth bombers soaring over South Korea to drop dummy bombs. It was a needless and provocative re-enactment of “the empire strikes back”; more than sixty years ago, Washington initiated its nuclear blackmail of the North when it launched B-29s on simulated Hiroshima/Nagasaki bombing missions over North Korea in the fall of 1951. Operation Hudson Harbor dropped dummy A-bombs or heavy TNT bombs in a mission that called for “actual functioning of all activities which would be involved in an atomic strike, including weapons assembly and testing.” Ever since, nuclear weapons have been part of our war plans against the North; they were not used during the Korean War only because the US Air Force was able to raze every city in the North with conventional incendiaries. Hardly any Americans know about this, but every North Korean does; no wonder they have built some 15,000 underground facilities related to their national security. However provocative the North appears, we are reaping the whirlwind of our past nuclear bullying.

[Solution? Negotiation and the Three No’s]

Washington’s injudicious patience and Seoul’s hard line have gotten nothing from the North but the ever-growing reliability of its A-bombs and missiles. They really have no choice but to talk to Pyongyang—most likely along the lines of former Los Alamos head Siegfried Hecker’s suggestion that the programs be capped through the “Three No’s.” “No more nukes, No better nukes, No proliferation.” Given the North’s labyrinthine subterranean complexes, spies can never be sure to have pinpointed every bomb anyway, and a handful of nukes will provide security and deterrence for an insecure leadership with much to be insecure about. Otherwise, they are useless.

Last year, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said we have been “within an inch of war almost every day” with the North. Today, it looks more like millimeters. What a terrible commentary on seven decades of failed American policies toward Pyongyang.

In 2012 on Jeju, an island off the southern tip of Korea, villagers protested a South Korean-US military base installation. Koohan Paik and Jerry Mander explored the environmental, cultural and political repercussions of yet another US base in the Asia-Pacific region.

- Bruce Cumings, chair of the history department at the University of Chicago, is the author, most recently, of North Korea: Another Country.

Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
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Brunswick, ME 04011

   Telegraph.co.uk

1. NEW: North Korea declares invalid the armistice agreement that ended Korean war

   CNN - 5 days ago

   (CNN) -- A new joint military exercise between South Korea and the United States began Monday amid heightened tensions across the region.

2. South Korea and US begin military drills as North Korea threatens war

   Fox News - 5 days ago

3. US, South Korea begin military exercises

   CNN International - 5 days ago

2. South Korea and US begin military drills as North Korea threatens ...

   www.foxnews.com/.../south-korea-and-us-begin-military-drills-as-no...

   5 days ago – North Korean state media said Monday that Pyongyang had carried through with a threat to cancel the 60-year-old armistice that ended the ...

3. Pyongyang scraps armistice amid heightened saber rattling

   - CNN ...

   www.cnn.com/2013/03/.../south-korea-military-exercises/index.html

   5 days ago – North Korea’s announcement came as military drills involving South Korea and the … Eagle joint exercises that began March 1 and are scheduled to last two months. More than 3,000 U.S. forces are taking part in Key Resolve, …

4. U.S.–South Korea Military Drills Begin As North Korea Threatens War

   www.huffingtonpost.com/.../us-south-korea-military-drills-north-kor...

   5 days ago – SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea’s young leader urged front-line troops to be on "maximum alert" for a potential war as a state-run …
5. **War Games: South Korea, U.S. Begin Annual Military Drills As North ...**
www.huffingtonpost.com/.../war-games-south-korea-us-mil...
by Jade Walker - in 843 Google+ circles - More by Jade Walker

6 days ago – SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea and the United States began annual military drills Monday despite North Korean threats to respond by ...
The Korean Peninsula is heading into a difficult and very dangerous period. South Korean and U.S. troops are now conducting large-scale training exercises. North Korea is also planning military maneuvers, and threatens to pull out of the 1953 Armistice Agreement that has kept the lid on simmering North-South tensions for almost 60 years.

Pyongyang’s rhetoric has reached a new level of belligerence, threatening attacks upon America with its evolving missile and nuclear weapons capabilities. Such threats are still far beyond North Korea’s abilities, but they evoke shrill responses from conservatives in both Seoul and Washington, and stern comments from our military leaders....

I believe that Kim Jong-un seeks serious dialogue with Washington, but that he will push toward full nuclear weapons status for Pyongyang unless he becomes convinced that the United States means him and his country no harm. I take seriously the message that Dennis Rodman carried from Kim Jong-un to President Obama: “He wants Obama to do one thing: Call him,” Rodman told a television interviewer after he returned to America. He quoted the North Korean leader as saying, “I don’t want to do war.” [My emphases—Dick]

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/12/opinion/don
MAINSTREAM MEDIA AND US EMPIRE

US MEDIA TREATMENT OF NORTH KOREA

POT PAINTS KETTLE BLACK BY Dick Bennett

2012: “U.S., S. Korea Begin Military Drills.” (AP?). Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (August 21, 2012). “South Korea and the United States have begun annual military drills that North Korea calls a precursor to war. The U.S. says the two-week Ulchi Freedom Guardian drills started Monday with more than 80,000 troops from the U.S., South Korea and seven countries that fought with them in the 1950-53 Korean War. North Korea has repeatedly threatened to attack Seoul over perceived insults and denounces the exercises as preparation for a pre-emptive attack. . . .”

The editorial of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, March 8, 2013, continues the newspaper’s one-sided reporting of this so-called example of the “Axis of Evil.” It is so rife with hostility, that I would need an entire newsletter to explain.

2013: “U.S., S. KOREA BEGIN MILITARY DRILLS.” (AP?) Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (March 11, 2013). The brief report, which might have appeared on page one so dire it sounds, was garbled; I pulled out the following time line of threats and counter-threats.

The annual drills this year began March 10, 2013.

North Korean threatened “to respond by voiding the 1953 Armistice that stopped the Korean War and launching a nuclear attack on the U.S.”

SK then said NK wouldn’t answer two calls on a hot line and had cut the communication channel.

SK defense minister “vowed to respond to an attack by the North by toppling the regime.”
If Kim Jong Un really made such a horrendous threat (let’s see analysis of language and context), is he severely paranoid, or is he sanely responding to real threat (what happened to Iraq, what has been threatened against Iran)? If paranoid, why do the US/SK taunt him, knowing that he will increase his army and weapons, and might use them violently suicidely? US and SK seek to drive NK to violence to justify violence? The ADG report stated, without elaboration, that US Air Defense went to Red Alert in response to threat of nuclear attack. Such a brief and sketchy report offers only misunderstanding and fear. See Newsletter #1 with other views of Kim Jong-Un and NK, and the articles from Google following. —Dick

US/SK SIGN PACT TO COUNTER NK “PROVOCATIONS” by Dick Bennett.

“U. S., S. Korea Ink Counterblow Deal.” ADG (March 26, 2013). The Treaty “obligates the U.S. military to fight to defend its ally if a war breaks out on the Korean Peninsula,” including “local provocations from the North, such as its shelling of a border island in 2010, which killed four South Koreans.” Various kinds of provocations are specified. Your and my response? At least we can ask questions about such a dangerous agreement. What if SK provoked NK? (Was NK the absolute, sole aggressor that began the Korean War? See Stone above.) Will we support NK if provoked by SK? Does NK have a similar deal with a foreign power? Such deals sound provoking in themselves? The entire “ally” / “enemy” duality needs examination? Do SK peace organizations or political opposition exist, and what do they say?

What Do You Do With Crazy? Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Editorial (3-28-13) by Dick Bennett

In Part I of the Arkansas Democrat Gazette (ADG) editorial of March 28, 2013, the writer gives us a parable of a little man down the street who hates one of his neighbors utterly without cause, declares it, shouts it, and builds and accumulates a store of weapons. It’s like the story of neighbors, one with ducks, the other with turtles that kill the ducks, which angers the duck owner so much he finally perceives his turtle-owning neighbor not only as crazy but as a turtle! and blows his head off with a shotgun. Except there’s one big difference in the two stories: there was a demonstrable cause of the duck owner’s delusion.
The ADG parable writer asked only the question: What do you do with crazy? He doesn’t ask, how might we communicate with the little man down the street with all the weapons who threatens to kill his neighbor? When a reader asks that question, all the crisply clear boundaries and definitions of words like “crazy” seem less brightly certain. For “crazy” excludes rationality; you cannot talk to “crazy” by definition: “crazy” doesn’t function by cause and effect in the real world.

So in ADG’s parable, what do you do with crazy, the man down the street? You don’t try to find out why he hates you. You don’t—impossible thought—ask whether you or anyone had done anything to cause him to be so apoplectic. You don’t ask if there’s anyone in town, in the world, who is communicating with the little man down the street with a room full of guns and who gets along with him, through whom we might communicate with him. You only call in the police, “all standing around and they’ve got their own weapons—and many of those guns are trained on the little man. But [therefore?!] the little man rages just the same.”

That is, within the first few paragraphs the question, What do you do with crazy? becomes less clear because the fable-teller inadvertently reveals another crazy, the neighbors who, confronted with an apparently paranoid neighbor call in not family or friends of the angry little man, or not people experienced with seeking causes and effects of delusion, or experts in conflict resolution, but they call in what should be the very last resort—the police with guns drawn. And I say “apparently” because the furious neighbor, becoming furiouser and furiouser, has not yet been thoroughly studied to discover if there is some cause for such apparently insane behavior, an action that might also be applied to the behavior of his neighbors who seek armed force as the first resort just like their paranoid neighbor.

Not until paragraph 9 does the ADG fabulist mention negotiators, who “have been called in many times. . .and they try to talk reason.” But it’s too late in his story, his argument, and in the conflict situation. Perhaps he was in a hurry or perhaps he took for granted our easy acceptance of his case for unexamined “crazy,” so that just repeating crazy five times in the first five paragraphs would satisfy his readers’ credulity. But imagine yourself as the “crazy,” surrounded by police with guns drawn, and “negotiators” from your enemy knock on your door. Would this build your confidence? And listen to the negotiators (par. 9). They ask, “Are you hungry, little man?” But hunger is apparently not the source of his anger. A genuine examination of the source was not undertaken or, given the condescension, intended—not the negotiators or training in negotiation you find in college or professional training. And the next day the little man is just as angry as before.

Now the fabulist pauses to ask once again, “What do you do with crazy?” as though the issue had been exhausted. And he replies: “You watch and prepare. Because that’s about all you can do.” But these words are ironical, actually critical of the armed force still watching and waiting. They can take action. He clearly would have the police storm the house; they have their guns trained on him ready to shoot. But this moment in the fable marks Part II, a new level, of the editorialist’s argument, as he turns to the present reality of the parable’s point, the irrational behavior of Kim Jong-Un of Korea, little (not big) man, which all of us at least who are readers of the newspaper probably understood from the beginning—the ADG’s familiar story of the crazy dictator of NK threatening SK and USA.
The constant drum-beat for war by Washington and mainstream media has enthralled those of the public who do not study or think for themselves. Donal Wright of Cabot (ADG 4-4-13) opines: “Along with Iran, North Korea is a desperate nation with a nutcase leader and a trigger finger on a nuclear weapons,” omitting the only country who has actually had a “nutcase” leader who pulled that trigger, but factual history is of no concern to this lover of mass slaughter. He would have the US attack now: “We cannot afford to take the high road and simply wait to be attacked. We need leadership with enough courage to do WHATEVER IT TAKES [Dick’s caps] to protect us against this threat. If a country has to be devastated, better them than us.” The drum beat of ignorant animosity strikes every nook and cranny of society. The Weather Channel announcers, already reprehensibly negligent of climate change (what do meteorologists do?), sometimes reveal their equally blind and brainwashed lack of understanding of the consequences of US wars. As Al of “Wake Up With Al” remarked about NK: “Tourism in NK? Who would be going there anyway?” J. William Fulbright would reply: “To many Americans the Soviets [read North Koreans] remain an abstraction. . . and to many [North Koreans, no doubt, we appear the same, in a kind of mirror image. . . .What is important is that we come to think about each other as human beings.” The Price of Empire 230.)

Part II is about the actual history, which has been covered in preceding entries.

WHO CRANKED UP FIRST March 30, 2013? By Dick Bennett
For good reason many analysts of the US Empire refer to mainstream media as complicit extensions and many of them even as cheerleaders of the Empire. Just as the slogan “support the troops” is sacrosanct, so is the doctrine of Good USA vs. Evil, the “Axis of Evil.” Here is an example from *The New York Times* via the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* (March 30, 2013): Choe Sang-Hun, “N. Korea Cranks Up Its Threats.” I don’t know which newspaper chose this title, but it does not matter because both, and especially the latter, reflect the position of the US Empire: N. Korea (again) started it, again cranked up the threat engine. But the text shows otherwise fortunately, facts (who threatened first) trumping ideology (NK one of the “Axis of Evil”). Kim Jong Un “ordered his missile units to be ready to strike the United States and South Korea” because one day before, “U.S. forces had carried out an unusual practice bombing exercise [my italics] with advanced aircraft across South Korea.” Said a Pentagon spokesman: “The United States is fully capable of defending itself and our allies.” The unusual aircraft was shown on page one of the *ADG* (March 29) to be the USAF B-2 Stealth Bomber and an unidentified bomber flying “over the tense Korean Peninsula,” obviously and successfully threatening the threatened Kim Jong Un, who in that mentality follows his father and grandfather, who similarly responded to threats with threats. (See Cumings and other citations above.) But the US is not to blame, is never to blame, for the threats and tension, oh no, declared the Pentagon spokesman. “'North Korea’s bellicose rhetoric and threats follow a pattern designed to raise tensions and intimidate others.” Good reporter Choe, not responsible for the headline, gives us enough details to enable us to evaluate the headline, and respects his readers’ ability to read critically. Still, he is sucked in perhaps by the relentless Pentagon propaganda still exerted against two of the Axis of Evil, NK and Iran (Iraq, lacking nuclear retaliation, already invaded and occupied), when he refers to “the back-and-forth” between US and NK, when he should know it’s not random but is a matter of US primitive threat (“U.S. Shows Muscle in South Korea,” the bombers in flight, and that Stealth Bomber very scary-looking) followed by NK’s Kim Jong Un’s even more primitive-brain response (its missiles will “strike Washington” and SK, missiles which however might have saved Iraq from invasion and slaughter).

I have been examining merely the first three paragraphs of Choe’s report. What does Choe, reporter of if not for the Empire, choose to inform us about during the remaining two-thirds of the article? Does he offer details of US bomber (and missile) might, or of NK’s three-tiered missile system? What do you guess?

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**Klug, Foster. (AP). “Nukes a ‘Treasure,’ N. Korea Says.” *ADG* (April 1, 2013).**

Nuclear weapons are “the nation’s life” in this “state of war” by which protection NK will build a “stronger economy,” stated the Central Committee of the ruling Workers’ Party. Its nuclear armed forces “can never be abandoned as long as the imperialists and nuclear threats exist on earth.” In the final paragraph, Klug reports two B-2 stealth bombers dropped “dummy munitions on an uninhabited South Korean island” as part of the annual drills “that Pyongyang sees as rehearsals for invasion.” [Familiar information of US/SK annual joint maneuvers certain to exacerbate NK fears and counter-threats. It reminds me of US Strategic Air Command’s frequent flights to the Soviet borders until turning back at the last minute, but those incitements had a clear military purpose of revealing information about Soviet radar installations. These annual “drills” seem intended only to upset Kim Jong Un, regardless of (or because of?) his youth and mental condition. But we have seen how our leaders think he is “crazy” and unable to understand Mutual Assured Destruction.] --Dick.
Sang-Hun, Choe. *(NYT).* “S. Korea Vows Fast Response.” *ADG* *(April 2, 2013).*

To NK’s extreme language, the SK responded with tit for tat extremity, a hard line position of the conservative new president’s election (as noted in the last paragraph). “President Park Geun-bye of South Korea ordered the country’s military Monday to deliver a strong and immediate response to ANY [my caps] North Korean provocation.” “If the North attempts ANY provocation. . .you must respond strongly at the FIRST contact with them WITHOUT ANY POLITICAL CONSIDERATION.” The report also follows the familiar US mainstream media structure of reporting enemies (common in the Iraq and Afghan wars and in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict too): by omitting preceding events: the evil enemy strikes first, then our noble Department of Defense and our friends rush to defend. --Dick

“Korea.” *ADG* *(April 3, 2013).* Shows a photo of S. Korean self-propelled howitzers holding maneuvers near the border city of Paju, north of Seoul. The article reports criticism of NK by various countries and agencies (China, IAEA), but it also quotes NK officials, giving us some of their point of view, and it reviews the history of NK’s past self-restraints (its plutonium reactor at Yongbyon disabled 2007, the cooling tower there destroyed), but those gestures are represented as no long NK policy. In conclusion, the report describes the ratcheting up of hard line US/SK pressures on NK, not only the various shows of armed force, but economic sanctions, and investigations into the North’s [but not into SK’s or USA’s] human-rights abuses.” At the end, “nuclear expert Siegfried Hecker” is quoted estimating that NK has enough plutonium for several Nagasaki-size bombs. What the report does not tell is Hecker’s Three No’s—see Cuming’s essay above. –Dick.

“U.S. to Shore Up Defenses on Guam in Light of the N. Korea Threats.” *ADG* *(April 4, 2013).*
What a headline! And apparently created by the *ADG*, for no author is given for the report, but only: ”Compiled by Democrat-Gazette Staff from Wire Reports.” The article doesn’t mention the decade-long build up of Guam virtually into a stationary, immense, permanent carrier battle group. So who is threatening whom? And this shoring up is a new weapon, the only two batteries ready of Lockheed Martin’s Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAADS, only the military could think up this acronym), now based at Fort Bliss, TX. Why this ratcheting up of the US Guam threat? Listen to this: “The announcement followed North Korea’s banning of South Korean workers from entering a joint industrial complex near the demilitarized zone.” Some SK workers banned from their jobs triggers moving our new weapon across the Pacific to Guam, and despite US belief that NK “has not demonstrated that its missiles have the range to hit Guam or Hawaii, much less the U.S. mainland”? (There’s more of such revealing contradiction in this report as in the others; it’s part of the genre.) This is a long report for this newspaper, and I have discussed only the first five short paragraphs. Now the writers turn to NK blustering and threatening, followed by US dismissal of NK seriousness or capacity. All of this is a familiar game, despite the high danger, and neither side will stop the futility of the policy of armed force first, to try something that offers the possibility of peace. Then in another very familiar move, the reporters identify the beginning of the current crisis as NK’s “long-range rocket launch in December and an underground nuclear test in February,” which provoked tighter UN sanctions, etc. in endless repetition of the insanity of repeating the same failing action thinking the result will be different. Any hope of change from the new Pentagon Secretary or from President Obama? What do you guess? Then this article returns to the THAADS with the interesting but not surprising information that the LockheedMartinPentagon had contracted for five batteries total, two of them to go to the United Arab Emirates as part of a $16 billion “package.” Can you guess why? You got it: to defend that nation and Qatar “against the threat from Iran.” With the Axis of Evil to the west and to the east we will need more and more batteries! And how long will this continue? Well, the US/SK drills will continue to the end of April. (Two carrier battle groups at least are stationed permanently near Iran.) Nowhere in this article packed with NK crimes and misdemeanors is any attempt made to understand why NK’s leaders seem so paranoid, and if mentally ill what would be the best way to approach them, or to ask whether SK and US have been guilty of crimes and misdemeanors too.

**What can you and I do** in addition to everything suggested already? Always refer and ask your friends to refer to the DOD as the Department of War. Ask your newspaper editors and reports to read and be informed before they report, and to balance their reporting of US conflicts with other nations even-handedly.
What should the US government do?   For those you old enough to remember the Cold War, that mirror-image US/SU, tit-for-tat period of MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction), the similarity of US/NK today is obvious.  J. William Fulbright in *The Price of Empire* (1989) contains prescient plenty about the US/SU that we can apply to US/NK today.  Despite the threat of the global catastrophe of nuclear war, Fulbright writes, “we continue to conduct our international relations in the same old way—by the same rules of crisis management, balance of power, arms races, and confrontation that always in the past . . .have sooner or later culminated in war” (224). Fulbright held hearings in 1966 and 1969 on the psychological aspects of international relations. As Einstein urged, we need a new way of thinking.  Dr. Jerome Frank of Johns Hopkins University wrote to Fulbright: “He said that if we wanted to get along with the Russians, we should do the opposite of what we were then doing as a country; that instead of challenging them on every occasion, we should seek out ways to do things together so as gradually to ameliorate our animosity” (194).

OMNI BOOK FORUM: LITERATURE OF US ENEMIES
THE OMNI FORUM ON THE LITERATURE OF US “ENEMIES” AND PREVENTING WARS AND REDUCING THE CRUELTY OF WARS THROUGH LITERATURE  by Dick Bennett

THE WAY TO WAR

In 2013 OMNI sponsored a Book Forum entitled, “Literature of US “Enemies.”” Why was “Enemies” placed within quotation marks? Because they call into question the word and statement, they add the dimension of irony. Enemies? According to whom? Who declared the enemies?

Not the people of the US. Did we instigate the Vietnam War? The invasionS of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Grenada, or Panama? Iraq? The CIA overthrow of the elected governments of Iran or Chile? No in all cases and many, many more. (Blum, *Killing Hope, Rogue State*). The so-called “enemies” of the US have been designated as “enemies” by a small group of people in each case. Call them the military-industrial complex or the ruling elite.  And these men, for they are mainly male in war after war, have labeled and libeled the “enemy”—turning millions into one entity by calling them “enemy” nations—communist, or Sandinista, or raghead, or Taliban, in order to terrorize, bomb, and burn them with impunity. Their extreme, lethal simplifications were perfectly illustrated by the poster I once saw of the “Enemy Taliban” painted uniformly black.
So who are the enemy nations our leaders threaten, invade, occupy, and treat with “shock and awe”? The people? No. How do we know? It’s simple. We, also the people, became informed.

We can do that; we have done that. We can watch, listen, read, read between the lines, look below the surface of official “news” about war. The members of the peace movement opposed the Vietnam War because they knew the history and they cherished justice—that the US had rejected the 1954 peace agreement and established a brutal government in the South, that in 1962 the US began bombings, that in 1963 the Kennedy administration arranged a coup in which the puppets Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu were murdered in order to stop their efforts to negotiate a peace settlement, and that the illegal, unnecessary war continued for ten more years. (Chomsky, *Power Systems*, pp. 1-3). The Vietnamese leadership and people North and South also knew this and made a clear distinction between the people of the US and its government, which had systematically deceived the public, as the Pentagon Papers clearly showed.

We again became informed and created a peace movement to block the invasion of Iraq. Driving the invasion of Iraq was the small but powerful group of fierce imperialists of the Project for a New American Century (Elliot Abrams, John Bolton, Dick Cheney, Robert Kagan, William Kristol, Richard Perle, General Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, James Woolsey). The entire world knew that Bush and Cheney and PNAC deceived and bullied our Congress into invading Iraq, and not the people of the US, who protested by the hundreds of thousands. (Let us never forget these war criminals as we know they are by knowing the UN Charter and the Nuremberg principles and trials.) Likewise, the people of the US at least now know the people of Afghanistan--the Pashtuns (the Taliban)--did not attack the US, or they can learn it by learning about the people of Afghanistan.

And how do we learn? Some of you recall the proposal during the Cold War that the US and the SU (notorious mirror image) should exchange a million people. I still think knowledge of real people to be annihilated would have brought peace. Russians, Iranians, North Koreans, Iraqis, Afghans, are the interchangeable names of demonized “enemies” we are made to fear and to accept their slaughter as normal. Grocers, lawyers, carpenters, librarians all are reduced to a monstrous monolith to be bombed and burned. Those who are bullied or bully on the schoolyard, who are getting a divorce, or have lost their job, or worry about paying the mortgage, or fear their children’s drugs, or haven’t discovered Viagra, or cannot remember or walk as steadily as before—all are lumped into one group to make mobilization for killing easier.

A WAY TO PEACE

It doesn’t have to be this way. The people have within their power many ways to oppose the ideas and language of domination and death: thorough public education in critical thinking, skill of propaganda analysis, knowledge of “enemy” history, knowledge of the US Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Nuremberg Principles, determination to be a
world citizen and not a puppet or automaton, electing representatives for whom armed violence is truly the last option. And knowledge of “enemy” present particularity, the proposal that could have prevented the Cold War. This way is to learn all we can of the real people of the “enemy” nations through meeting them, living with them, and through their literature, which provides the supreme opposite of labels and stereotypes. We might not be able to afford living in the “enemy” countries where we would learn their extraordinary individuality up close, but we can learn about them through literature.

On February 22, 2013, the OMNI Center for Peace, Justice, and Ecology presented a Forum on the literature of several “enemy” nations.

We discussed the literature of all three of the so-called “Axis of Evil”, made possible by an anthology of translations, Literature from the “Axis of Evil”: Writing from Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Other Enemy Nations (Syria, Libya, Sudan, Cuba) (2006).

Jacob George (U.S. Army Res. Sgt., three tours in Afghanistan) discussed the new anthology of translations, Poetry of the Taliban (2012). Since ALL of the Taliban, and in the minds of some all of the Pashtuns, of which the Taliban are a part, have been turned into fundamentalist fiends by our deliberately war-mongering government and obedient corporate media, this book offers a surprising contrast. Jacob, founder of the anti-war bicycling organization, A Ride Till the End (ARTTE) and musician, turned one Taliban poem into a music.

Kaveh Bassiri discussed an excellent collection of Iranian poetry, Forbidden. Mr. Bassiri came to the US to go to high school and lived most of his life in the Bay area. He got an MFA in Poetry from Sarah Lawrence (New York) and is now doing a PhD in comparative literature focusing on translation at UA. He is working on an anthology of modern Iranian poetry, which will include many US poets translating Persian poetry. “I consider it a handshake between the two cultures.”

(I do not have the texts of their talks, but the Forum was filmed, has been shown on local Community Television, and is available on DVD.)

And I discussed the literature of the other two “Axis of Evil” countries presented in Literature from the “Axis of Evil,” Iraq and North Korea. My fuller notes may be read in OMNI’s Web Site.

DICK’S INTRO TO THE ANTHOLOGY

The Editors skewer US use of “axis of evil” rhetoric evoking the Axis Powers of
WWII. The word evil is evil and all-encompassing. “The 'Axis of Evil' is an abstraction that obliterates both the immense differences between the included countries, which are not even remotely in alliance with each other, and the distinctiveness of the individuals who live in them. Its harms cut deep and wide—distorting, diminishing, deluding, wounding, killing.

Thoughtful people will ask: Is the “enemy” a particular leader, or an ideology? A system of government, a people, a social group? But as soon as President Bush uttered the words “Axis of Evil” such questions were too late to stop the wars against the so-called Axis. The President had spoken the words, most of the Congressional minds boiled, and the machinery of destruction and death were already in gear.

But it is not too late to prevent the next explosion of constructed hatred, by deflating the phrase, to empty out its poison, by celebrating diverse works of national literatures of their particularity and through them, provide fresh perspectives on the notion of the “enemy nation.” Through the literature of nations threatened by the US or attacked and occupied, we are able to make a “war on ignorance” instead of the global, seemingly permanent, lethal “war on terrorism.”

Underlying this belief is the assurance that understanding of others is the preeminent purpose and achievement of literature. To see the real individuals living in different nations, to participate in lives around the globe. Our leaders and mainstream media give us abstractions of good and bad nations, when we must experience real people, unique individuals, like people living in the towns and an the farms of our own nation in all their diversity. If we are to decide whether to go along or not; whether to invade and bomb or not.

Thus the editors naturally recognize the importance of international education in general—the cultures of other nations, world literature translated and written in English, study abroad, exchange programs, multiculturalism. To widen our “circles of reference... against ignorance and fear of the ‘enemy.’”

NORTH KOREAN LITERATURE

Literature? That iron cage of a country has a literature? Our leaders never mentioned it, did not know? Our mainstream media were ignorant too? And compared to the other two nations of the “Axis of Evil” it is a walled-in to wall-out country. None of the four North Korean authors included in the anthology Literature from the “Axis of Evil” is in exile. All were published by official magazines or state-run publishing companies and following official guidelines particularly regarding respectful treatment of the Great Leader. Biographical information was not available for some of the
writers. So I was surprised by this judgment by the author of the North Korean introduction: “Nevertheless, what we witness on these pages is the persistent power of the written word, of the willingness to deliver, despite all obstacles, the stories of lives in North Korea as they relate to events we know only from the news. . . .”

The judgment is true. One story—by Kang Kwi-mi—tells a story about a displaced, poor Korean family living in Japan following WWII. Both sons learn to play the trumpet, and the second boy is particularly talented. Their parents are proud of them. But their father decides to return to North Korea, because he detested Japanese discrimination against Koreans. After returning to their old home, life was much better, and a musical career was assured for both boys—until the threatening US “spy ship, the Pueblo,” was captured and the US threatened war. Immediately the talented son joined his classmates in joining the Army, and his life was changed. When his Army enlistment ended, he became a worker at a rock quarry, because the country needed building stone. The decisions, his choices, and their repercussions in the family are told in painful detail, and that particularity unfolds within the political context of the US enemy and the beloved leader Kim Jong Il defending his country and its people, the larger Cold War replicated in this smaller mirror image.

Is this story (and the other three selections by North Korean authors) literature or merely a political pamphlet written for advancement and to avoid punishment? The motives of the North Korean writers are probably multiple. Whatever, the stories should be a wake-up call to the US. For the question—Are the leaders crazy and they and the people of North Korea paranoid?—is not the full story. There’s an old saying: You’re not paranoid if someone is trying to kill you. The North Koreans fear the US, with some good reasons, as traced above, and their fear combined with the repressions of dictatorship have created national solidarity. Inside this cell of real danger from outside and the Noble Leader resisting like crazy inside, NK writers and translators tell the stories of people trying to play a cornet, or be an engineer. Not entirely different from the plight of citizens in the National Security State USA, who don’t know whether the “evil” threats—from Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Grenadians, Panamanians, Vietnamese, Afghans (Pashtun? Taliban?), Iraqis, Iranians—-are real or not, or whether their leaders desire the good of the people or the good of the 1%, and whose writers, like those from the “Axis of Evil,” are trying to imagine people living in the conditions given them.

See my full notes in my newsletters.
In 2006, Words Without Borders included the works of four North Korean writers, translated into English, in its anthology Literature from the "Axis of Evil".

Korean literature is the body of literature produced in the Korean language. Some North Korean writers are very highly appreciated in the South and in 2005 Flowers of Fire (1974) was one of the first anthologies of Korean literature ...

That's the only place where you can find work by North Korean literary authors, even... All the short stories and poems included in the anthology were selected...

UG Course;SOAS;Literary Traditions and Culture of Korea. "History and Structure of the Korean Language", and 'The Other Korea: North Korea Since 1945') to...Anthology of Korean Literature: From Early Times to the Nineteenth Century.

Review of North Korean Literature Monthly called ‘Chosun Munhak’ from January ...Reviews the book 'Anthology of Korean Literature: From Early Times to the...

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8. **Modern Korean Literature: An Anthology** - Page 252 -

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*Peter H. Lee* - 1990 - Fiction

1903) actively introduced Western literature, especially drama, to the Korean reading public before he was kidnapped by the North Korean army in 1950.

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