



## Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power

By Bruce Cumings

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America is the first world power to inhabit an immense land mass open at both ends to the world's two largest oceans—the Atlantic and the Pacific. This gives America a great competitive advantage often overlooked by Atlanticists, whose focus remains overwhelmingly fixed on America's relationship with Europe. Bruce Cumings challenges the Atlanticist perspective in this innovative new history, arguing that relations with Asia influenced our history greatly.

Cumings chronicles how the movement westward, from the Middle West to the Pacific, has shaped America's industrial, technological, military, and global rise to power. He unites domestic and international history, international relations, and political economy to demonstrate how technological change and sharp economic growth have created a truly bicoastal national economy that has led the world for more than a century. Cumings emphasizes the importance of American encounters with Mexico, the Philippines, and the nations of East Asia. The result is a wonderfully integrative history that advances a strong argument for a dual approach to American history incorporating both Atlanticist and Pacificist perspectives.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"*Dominion from Sea to Sea* is both original and so well researched that I am in awe of all the work and how all that information has been integrated."—Daniel Chirot, University of Washington  
(Daniel Chirot)

"In this sprawling and vastly interesting book, Bruce Cumings reorients American history from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Stressing America's expansionist thrusts and violent, unilateralist impulses, he illuminates how adventurers and entrepreneurs, state and federal governments, corporations and universities all collaborated to transform the West and revitalize America, especially after the Great Depression of the 1930s and the attack on Pearl Harbor. Rarely has a historian so evocatively and insightfully integrated the settlement of America's frontiers with the history of migration, technology, trade, agriculture, race, the environment, and foreign relations. *Dominion from Sea to Sea* reshapes and reorients our thinking about our nation's history; it is a book that must be read and discussed; it inspires pride and shame."—Melvyn P. Leffler, University of Virginia  
(Melvyn Leffler)

"In a rich and colorful narrative Cumings sweeps the reader westward across time and space, recounting U.S. history from the perspective of the Pacific, with special attention to California on one side and East Asia on the other. From Jurassic trenches to Silicon Valley, he links the westering of people, technology, capitalism, and lifestyles to both domestic and foreign policy and concludes that whatever has happened to California (and hence to the country), America remains ascendant, even if it doesn't always know how to go about its global leadership. Agree or disagree, the story is irresistible."—Carol Gluck, Columbia University  
(Carol Gluck)

"In this fascinating book, Bruce Cumings, whose scholarly work has focused on East Asia, shows that he can be just as adept and exciting in writing American history. Actually, it is a 'Pacifist' version of U.S. history. He shows that 'the American story' can never be fully told unless the Western parts of the United States as well as the Pacific region are incorporated. Describing in colorful detail developments in the Western states, including Texas, as well as the countries of East Asia, the author argues that these developments have been inseparable from the story of U.S. 'dominion from sea to sea,' or its overwhelming military presence in 'the global archipelago.' The book fits into an emerging scholarly trend, to transcend narrowly focused national narratives and to deal with larger entities and in large frameworks such as Atlantic history, Europeanization, South Asian cosmopolitanism that have already enriched our understanding of modern global history. Few historians are as capable as Cumings of launching the field of Pacific history, and readers will find in this imaginatively conceived and earnestly but also humorously presented history much that will help them understand how the United States became globalized domestically and internationally, and what the future holds both for the nation and for the world."—Akira Iriye, Harvard University  
(Akira Iriye)

"Bruce Cumings traces American history along its inexorable drive westward, not merely to California and the limits of the continent's frontier but all the way to the Pacific Rim. He argues that such westward outreach has transformed America's character and helped to write its destiny, if not always for the good. . . . To make his case, Mr. Cumings . . . has produced a sprawling narrative, with shifting subthemes and flashes

back and forth in time."—Arthur Herman, *The Wall Street Journal*  
(Arthur Herman *Wall Street Journal* 2009-11-20)

"This is nevertheless one of the richest and most thoughtful books of American history I have read in a long time. . . . Cumings's book is both a timely and splendidly enjoyable read."—Dominic Sandbrook, *Literary Review*

(Dominic Sandbrook *Literary Review* 2010-02-01)

"This book is a history of how the West has transformed America. It looks at our country's rise in power from a Pacific view."—Theodore Scott, *1776 Magazine*  
(Theodore Scott *1776 Magazine* 2009-12-23)

"The story of America's rapid unrolling of the exceptionalist carpet is very well told by Mr. Cumings. . . . [He] writes marvelously. . . . A lively rattlebag of a history of the Pacific slope and how the Pacific Ocean came to be an American Lake."—*Economist*

(*Economist*)

Selected as one of the *Atlantic's* 25 Best Books of the Year 2009

(*Atlantic Monthly*)

"Bruce Cumings, in this beautifully written book . . . presents consistently stunning analysis of a mountain of fascinating data."—James I. Matray, *American Historical Review*  
(James I. Matray *American Historical Review*)

About the Author

**Bruce Cumings** is chair of the History Department at the University of Chicago and author of the award-winning book *The Origins of the Korean War*.

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