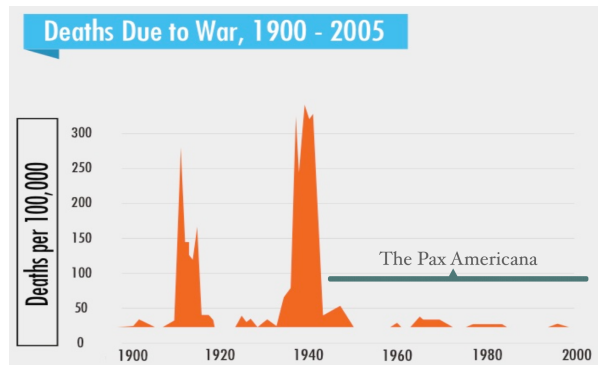


VIII. Contemporary Life

A. The Indispensable Country: America as World Police Power

1. In “contemporary” history—which means “existing for only a short period of time”—America had been the world police power. Since that time, the level of violence in wars has been the lowest in human history. This is known as the “Pax Americana.” (“Pax” is a Latin word meaning “peace.”)
2. Today two major problems still threaten world peace: 1) North Korea, a communist country that threatens its neighbors and America with nuclear weapons, and 2) Iran, whose leaders chant “Death to America! Death to Israel!” and who seem to want nuclear weapons too.
3. If the Pax Americana is to succeed, the United States will have to find solutions to both these problems.
4. Right now America is locked in a “cold war” with both of these countries, which means that there is no “hot war,” but there isn’t really peace.



The world has experienced more peace under American policing than ever before.

B. Contemporary Rights

1. Since America chose civil rights for “African-Americans” by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, there hasn’t been a great transformation in rights.
2. The “right to healthcare” seems to be the next kind of right that Americans want, but it’s not certain if they will choose to change the laws to create such a right.

C. Contemporary Technological Developments

1. Although there has been little progress in space exploration and nuclear energy one technology seems to be moving forward quickly: computers.
2. The incredible progress in computers is shown by the smartphone, which is 40,000,000 times smaller than the ENIAC, but 1700 times more powerful!
3. Imagine if, by contrast, cell phones were still at the ENIAC stage?! Of course, they would not even exist. Imagine if the most advanced computer had been developed in 1969, which represents the peak of space exploration so far. You still wouldn’t be able to carry one around; it would be the size of a fridge! In the computing field, at least, progress continues.
4. Indeed our entire civilization, from work to play to war, seems to have become “computerized.”