Although the military-industrial complex became familiar to most Americans during the Cold War, Paul Koistinen shows that its origins actually go back to the dawn of this century. Mobilizing for Modern War, the second of an extraordinary five-volume study on the political economy of American warfare, highlights the emergence of this pivotal relationship. In this volume, Koistinen examines war planning and mobilizing in an era of rapid industrialization and reveals how economic mobilization for defense and war is shaped at the national level by the interaction of political, economic, and military institutions and by increasingly powerful and expensive weaponry. Covering the Gilded Age and Progressive Era through the Spanish-American War and World War I, Mobilizing for Modern War shows how a partnership evolved between government and business to prepare for and conduct modern warfare. Koistinen traces the origins of the military-industrial complex to the emergence of a modern navy at the turn of the century, when building a new fleet of steel, armor, and ordnance required a production team of political leaders, naval officers, and businessmen. A similar team was brought together again between 1915 and 1918 as the War Industries Board to mobilize the economy for World War I, and it became the model for subsequent industrial mobilization planning. Koistinen shows how mobilizing for World War I left an indelible imprint on twentieth-century life. By accelerating the emerging Progressive political economy, it strengthened the cooperative planning ethic within business and government and introduced the concept of industrial preparedness, carried out largely under military leadership. This book is part of the Modern War Studies series.

My Personal Review:
This was required reading for a graduate course in the history of American military affairs. Paul A. C. Koistenen's life long work in America's economic policies in all her wars is an essential aspect of history that every historian should fully understand. Koistenen's book Mobilizing for War: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1865-1919 looks in depth at how the Wilson administration instituted new government programs to effectively prosecute the war, which left long lasting effects on the American economy propelling the nation into the "modern age."

"Inevitably, the federal government would assume increased economic authority; public powers would touch private enterprise in myriad new ways...The Wilson administration had modernized the nation's banking structure when in 1914 it brought the Federal Reserve System into being." One of the most important creations of the Wilson administration was that of the War Industries Board (WIB) soon after America's entry into the war. "Through the board, centralized control over a planned economy was established and carried out by representatives of the government, the business community, and the military." The financier Bernard M. Baruch, who coincidentally later became part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's economic "brain trust" in World War II, chaired the WIB. Koistenen's book is an indispensable reference for studying America's economic policies during all its wars. Koistenen astutely argued that, "The World War I mobilization experience left an indelible imprint on twentieth-century life...It also sped the transformation in civil-military relations that modern warfare made necessary and introduced the idea and practice of industrial preparedness."

Recommended reading for anyone interested in American history.

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