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Steven Heydemann serves as the Vice President for Applied Research on Conflict and Senior Advisor on the Middle East at the US Institute of Peace. Heydemann is a political scientist who specializes in the comparative politics and the political economy of the Middle East, with a particular focus on Syria. From April 2011 to October 2014, Heydemann directed USIP's Syria program. He held principal responsibility for USIP's engagement with the Syrian opposition, including the Institute's role in a Syrian-led transition planning project, "The Day After: Supporting a Democratic Transition in Syria." An established expert on Syrian politics, Heydemann is the author of numerous books, articles, and op ed pieces on Syria and the Syrian conflict. These include *Authoritarianism in Syria: Institutions and Social Conflict* (1999); "The Big Picture: Envisioning a Best-Possible Peace for Syria" (foreignpolicy.com, December 13, 2013); "Syria's Uprising: Sectarianism, Regionalisation, and State Order in the Levant" (Fride, Madrid, May 2013); and "Managing Militarization in Syria" (foreignpolicy.com, February 22, 2012).