

Articles & Op-Eds

Training Better Arab Armies

[Michael Eisenstadt](#) and [Kenneth Pollack](#)

Parameters

Autumn 2020

American security force assistance missions to Arab states have had only limited success, in large part because they do not train local units to fight in a manner well-suited to their cultural preferences and operational requirements.

The following is an excerpt from an essay originally published by the U.S. Army War College. To read the full text, download the PDF or [visit the Parameters website](#).

The United States must develop a radically different method of training partner Arab militaries to help them better meet future counterterrorism, unconventional, and conventional warfare challenges. Doing so will require the US military to approach the task in a very different way than it has in the past, devoting the same creativity, willingness to experiment, sustained focus, and seriousness of purpose to the security force assistance mission that it has to building up its own combat capabilities. While the US military has applied cultural knowledge to the mechanics and programmatic aspects of the SFA relationship in Iraq and elsewhere, there is little evidence to suggest it has done so systematically and consistently in its efforts to create effective combat units or capable national security institutions...