



As the last U.S. combat troops prepare to leave Iraq this month, the State Department is struggling to implement an expanded mission that it has belatedly realized it might not be able to afford.

Beginning in September, the State Department will take over all police training in Iraq from coalition military forces, and it has proposed replacing its current 16 provincial reconstruction teams spread across the country with five consular offices outside Baghdad.

But since planning for the transition began more than two years ago, costs have skyrocketed and the money to pay for them has become increasingly tight. Congress cut the State Department's Iraq request in the 2010 supplemental appropriation that President Obama signed late last month; the Senate Appropriations Committee and a House subcommittee have already slashed the administration's \$1.8 billion request for fiscal 2011 operations in Iraq.

Gen. Ray Odierno, the outgoing commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, and other U.S. officials are urging lawmakers to reconsider their plans, citing concerns that waning resources could jeopardize tenuous security gains.

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