

Sarasota Herald Tribune: Mahoney worries of Irans role in Iraq

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By Jeremy Wallace

In a conference call with reporters this morning U.S. Rep. Tim Mahoney said it's clear to him that Iran is heavily involved in the insurgency in Iraq.

Mahoney, the Democrat who represents most of Charlotte County, said improvised explosive devices are coming from Iran, according to the soldiers and government officials he met with over the weekend in Baghdad and Ramadi.

The three-day visit also didn't help Mahoney's confidence in the government in Iraq. He said the elections, long cited as a success by President George W. Bush, occurred way too early. Mahoney said the government isn't representative of the Iraqi people.

"It's an unrepresentative representative government," Mahoney said.

Mahoney said one top government official told him the legislature has insurgents in it.

Mahoney said it's clear America has to shift to a new role in Iraq, where American forces are primarily for securing the country's borders and training Iraqi soldiers.

Mahoney represents the 16th Congressional District, which includes all or part of eight counties from Palm Beach County to Charlotte Harbor.