

U.S. seeks EU pressure on Iranian banks

by UPI

BRUSSELS -- The United States urged the European Union to pressure Iran about its nuclear program by stopping two Iranian banks from operating in Europe. The plan to shutter the Saderat and Melli banks would build on a U.N. Security Council that U.S. and EU officials say they would push later in February, The Financial Times reported Tuesday. EU states, such as Germany and Italy, were resistant to taking action against the banks because they weren't subject to a U.N. action. However, the United States, Britain and France reached agreement with Russia and China on a draft Security Council resolution that would call on U.N. members "to exercise vigilance" against Melli and Saderat, their branches and subsidiaries abroad. The resolution doesn't freeze assets, but diplomat said they believe it could break the deadlock in the EU and undermine Iran's financial ties with Europe, the Times said. The United States maintains the banks are involved in terrorist financing and proliferation activities. U.S. diplomats said they expect the Security Council to pass a third resolution against Iran, regardless of the results of an International Atomic Energy Agency report assessing whether Iran answered all outstanding questions regarding its nuclear program.

Copyright © 2008, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

U.S. seeks EU pressure on Iranian banks by UPI