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## **Top U.S. Officials: Maintain Pressure on Iran's Military Capabilities**

The United States' top military official voiced opposition to lifting the U.N. arms embargo and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) development ban on Iran during a July 7 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing. Following an exchange with Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) on Iran's "malign interference" in the region, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey stated, "under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking." Also at the hearing, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter stressed the need to stop Iran's ICBM program and to prevent the Iranians from obtaining a nuclear weapon. "We want them [the Iranians] to continue to be isolated as a military," Carter said. "Whatever happens as far as an agreement over the nuclear program with respect to Iran is concerned, I think we—and certainly I feel this—have a clear duty in the Department of Defense, first of all, to defend our friends and allies...especially Israel."