

ROBERT MENENDEZ  
NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:  
BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN  
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FINANCE  
FOREIGN RELATIONS

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3005

528 SENATE HART OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
(202) 224-4744

ONE GATEWAY CENTER  
11TH FLOOR  
NEWARK, NJ 07102  
(973) 645-3030

208 WHITE HORSE PIKE  
SUITE 18-19  
BARRINGTON, NJ 08007  
(856) 757-5353

November 9, 2016

The Honorable Ash Carter  
Secretary  
United States Department of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Bob McDonald  
Secretary  
United States Department of Veteran Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretaries Carter and Secretary McDonald:

I am writing to express my deep concerns about the long-term side effects of the anti-malarial drug Mefloquine on our servicemembers and veterans.

As you know, the U.S. Army developed Mefloquine in the 1970s and it has been administered to U.S. servicemembers for nearly four decades to combat Malaria. Since the 1980s, there have been troubling reports of major side effects associated with the drug, including neuropsychiatric symptoms that can have a severely negative impact on the quality of life for those affected. Heightened awareness of these side effects has led the Food and Drug Administration in 2013 to strengthen its warnings about the neurological and psychiatric effects of Mefloquine and the Department of Defense itself has significantly reduced use of the drug since its peak use in the mid-2000s. Given the widespread use of Mefloquine and the potentially long-lasting symptoms among those administered the drug, it is important for both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a plan to deal with what could become a significant health crisis among the veterans population.

With this in mind, I respectfully urge both the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to work together towards the establishment of a registry designed to track common symptoms and side effects among those servicemembers and veterans who took Mefloquine. This will allow the federal government to gather the necessary data to determine the extent of Mefloquine's possible harmful side-effects and to develop a comprehensive plan for treatment. A Mefloquine registry designed similar to our existing Agent Orange and Burn Pit registries will serve as a critical resources in developing proper treatments for those who are experiencing adverse effects of this drug.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please keep me advised of any action you take on this request.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator