

Basel Convention**Garbage wars: May the trash be with you | Marcel Strigberger**By **Marcel Strigberger**

Marcel Strigberger

(May 27, 2019, 2:15 PM EDT) -- Is Canada going to war soon? Rubbish. That's what it's all about. About five years ago Canada shipped over 100 containers that allegedly contained plastic recyclables to the Philippines. After these "goods" arrived, inspectors found that more than half of the bins actually contained waste including household garbage and soiled adult diapers.

Naturally the Philippines government cried foul and asked nicely for the Canadian government to take back their offerings. So far, our government has apparently dragged its feet on the matter (fortunately not in the matter). And Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte is livid about it. He set a deadline for removal of the stuff (about 69 containers still undisposed of) and he said he would declare war on Canada if it failed to do so. The deadline has passed. But it seems Canada has undertaken to remove the goodies by end of June? Will we or is this another promise?

I believe most of us are sympathetic with the Philippines' position. Just remember how you feel when some inconsiderate lout walks by your house with his dog and when said pooch drops a load on your driveway, he does not pick it up. I doubt your reaction is to step out and pat the good canine, asking his owner if he knows any more tricks.

Our case is a bit more serious. Like 69 shiploads of same more serious. I'd say we are beyond poop and scoop here.

As well environmental groups are suggesting that Canada may be violating the Basel Convention, which controls international trade and disposal of hazardous goods, to ensure the return of shipments of wastes when it is deemed "illegal traffic." And this shipment was likely illegal as the contents were a bit different from what the papers declared them to be. And I doubt it is a defence to a Basel Convention violation to plead "buyer beware."

I don't know whether President Duterte is serious about declaring war on Canada. Given that our military is a voluntary one, I don't know how many of us would enlist to fight in this one. I just don't see any of our finest men and women saying to themselves, "We send them our exports and they react by attacking us. How ungrateful."

I am as patriotic a Canadian as anybody can be but certainly engaging in a war with the Philippines over, well, a crateloads of, well, whatever, would add a new dimension to the words in our anthem, "We stand on guard for thee." I suppose we'd be more on guard for what's coming back.

As well in the event of a war, we would be disadvantaged as unfortunately our government managed to dispose of one of our best military commanders, namely Vice-Admiral Mark Norman. For that matter their handling of the prosecution of the noble gentleman somewhat mirrors the product they shipped to the Philippines.

Never mind the Basel Convention. Just look what happens to your wallet if you try to smuggle an apple into Australia or New Zealand. I suppose I am not comparing apples to apples.

I have a suggestion on how to solve this crisis. Let's retrieve the containers by June 30. After all we now have a new supply ship, actually ordered as suggested by Mark Norman. Where to place them? I suggest the now defunct Mirabel Airport. It may not all be green. After all the airport is a white elephant. But I'm sure there is plenty of room there.

And just like Montreal's Dorval Airport was renamed, Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, we can honour our current PM by renaming Mirabel Justin Trudeau International Airport.

I'm sure our PM would like that as certainly the airport would be the world leader in minimizing flight carbon footprints.

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