

How about 'Maliesia'?
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As long as the Umno/BN regime persists in pulling every dirty trick in the book to try and deny Malaysia the change of government it so sorely needs, it strikes me that a change of name might benefit, or at least better fit the nation.

Of course, as I hear you cry, this idea is far from original. Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, with the expert assistance of his extremely costly Israeli public relations consultancy, Apco Worldwide, has already tried it and failed.

But as far as I'm concerned '1Malaysia' was just a false and fatuous slogan, not a fundamental change of name. And as for its being a failure, I have to admit that many genuine national name changes have also been far from successful.

For example, the switch from 'Southern Rhodesia', the label it inherited from its arrogant, rapacious and racist former colonial masters, doesn't appear to have done Zimbabwe a great deal of good.

NONEor has the former colony of Burma notably benefited from the change of its name to Myanmar by the fascist military dictatorship that has brutally and corruptly ruled the place ever since the British departed.

And it's arguable whether Persia, having been freed from the corrupt, autocratic rule of its Shah, has made much progress under the mullahs and militarists of the Islamic Republic of Iran - or whether Bechuanaland, Cambodia, Ceylon and East Pakistan are any better-off for the change to, respectively, Botswana, Kampuchea, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Further complicating the issue of national nomenclature is the fact that all of us thoughtlessly change lots of countries' names for our own linguistic convenience.

For instance, the country we speakers of English for some reason refer to as 'Germany' is actually known by its inhabitants, who should have the right, after all, to have the last word on their nation's name, as 'Deutschland'. Similarly, or so my trusty SBS World Guide informs me, what we Anglophones call Albania is actually 'Shqipëria', however on earth you pronounce it, to the people who live there.

NONEOther examples of our mis-naming if not re-naming countries whose languages we're unfamiliar with include Bhutan, which is really called 'Druk-yul' in the local lingo; Hungary (Magyar), Iceland (Lydhveldidh Island), Ireland (Eire), Japan (Nippon), South Korea (Taehun min'guk), the Maldives (Divehi), Holland (der Nederlanden), and Sweden (Sverige).

We even have trouble deciding on whether to call that part of the so-called United Kingdom that's the home of the English language 'Britain' as the ancient Romans did, or 'England' after later conquerors from what's now Germany/Deutschland, the Angles.

My own country has and continues to experience this kind of confusion too. Dubbed 'New Holland' by early explorers from Holland/der Nederlanden and 'New South Wales' by their British/English counterparts, it became gradually and later officially known as Australia (roughly Latin for 'South land'), these days often abbreviated by us locals to 'Oz'.

Renaming Malaysia

But let's get back to the point of this column, my proposed change of name for Malaysia. The basis for the current name, obviously enough, is the British/English colonial entity 'Malaya' with 'si' added in expectation, erroneous as events turned out, of the inclusion of Singapore in the independent federation.

So 'Malaysia' is a misnomer on two counts. This country, despite decades of hysterical claims to the contrary, has no monopoly on Malayness, as many times the number of people of Malay ethnicity, culture and language live in the Philippines and Indonesia. And the first prime minister of Malaysia threw Singapore out.

orang asli rightsBut I personally like the sound of the name Malaysia, so I'm not about to suggest too radical a change. Keeping the first syllable 'Ma', for example, would be a nice way to acknowledge that the Malays were the first inhabitants of the country - after the Orang Asli and other indigenous races, of course - but dropping the second 'lay' syllable to remove any philological justification for Malay domination.

Of course Umno/BN would be outraged by this, as manipulation of the racial supremacy/special-privileges issue is what has kept this crooked coalition in power all these years.

Hence my suggestion that the 'lay' in Malaysia be change to "lie" in recognition of Umno/BN's long-time contribution to the nation, the falsehood and fraud that characterise its every action and utterance.

So what do you think? As far as I'm concerned, 'Maliesia' sounds almost as good as 'Malaysia', but has a certain ring of truth that the current name lacks.

Some may argue that, as long as we're going for a name change that completely fits Umno/BN's Malaysia, we might as well drop the 'si' bit as well and go for the entirely appropriate 'Maliea', pronounced to rhyme with 'Maliar'.

lee kuan yewBut on second thoughts I'd prefer to keep the 'si' in there, if only to irk Singapore's old despot, Lee Kuan Yew.

Besides accuracy, another advantage of the new name is, I must confess, rather self-interestedly Australian, as in the rather nasal accent with which my countrymen and I have a way of speaking, 'Malaysia' tends to come out sounding like 'Maliesia' anyway.

But just in case, despite all it has going for it, the change of the national name to 'Maliesia' doesn't find favour with the decision-makers in such affairs, I do have a back-up suggestion.

With the latest trial of Anwar Ibrahim on a sodomy charge about to resume, and facing the prospect of the lying mainstream media regaling the world once more with lurid, prejudiced and perjured tales of anal sex, another appropriate name for the nation could arguably be 'Malarsia'.

Admittedly changes even as minor as these that I've suggested are a very big step. But surely you must agree that, as long as the Umno/BN regime keeps giving Malaysia such a bad name around the world, at least the nation should have a bad name that fits.

And who more fitting to make the choice than three of those as responsible as any for

Malaysia's bad name - Najib and the members of his proposed 'false news' committee, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, Communications and Culture Minister Rais Yatim and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz.

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