

The Colonial Legacy in Kenya-British Military Relations: 1963-2005., 2014

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Abstract:

Decades after the end of colonisation the intellectual debate over the positive and negative impacts of colonisation in Kenya is still very much alive. This study is not interested in justifying or condemning colonialism. On the contrary it focuses on Kenya-British military relations as one of the enduring independence period legacies in Kenya and is centered within Kenya's problematic decolonization experience and the wider context of the Cold War ideological confrontation. The desire by Britain to relentlessly pursue its imperial interests beyond Kenya's independence forms the thrust of this thesis and the study only adds up to the various attempts made by the Kenyan people to dismantle colonialism, both in its formal and informal dispositions. The objectives of the study were; to examine the nature and rationale of the evolution of Kenya-British military relations in the independence period, to evaluate their impacts on Kenya's foreign policy relations with other states and third, examine the impacts of these relations on Kenya's national security in the independence period. The study employs the realist school of thought in tracing the continuous British military presence in Kenya while igniting debate on Kenya's decolonization experience. For the investigative aim of this thesis, the study focuses on the colonial legacy in Kenya-British military relations within the independence period regimes of Kenyatta (1963-1978) Moi (1978-2002) and Kibaki (2002- up to 2005). Nevertheless the three regimes simply provide in terms of their institutional transition an attempt by the study, a modest evaluation of the present Kenya-British military relations. Primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study. Secondary sources included mainly written sources. The study found out that the British Army in spite of being an 'enemy' military during the Mau Mau War of independence and the ongoing Mau Mau atrocities cases against the British government, the same army continues to use the Kenyan hinterlands as military training areas long after Kenya's independence thereby shaping Kenya's military relations with its former colonial master. The study concludes that in spite of negative civil-military relations at the local level, the relations at national level have proved beneficial to both countries. More so the study informs that military relations between states have largely played a major role in determining the subsequent trajectory of economic, trade, diplomatic and political relations between the co-operating nations. It thus affirms the argument advanced by the study that the trajectory of development in Kenya continues to be determined and shaped not only by the conjuncture of precolonial, colonial and post-colonial socio-political and economic structures but also by the military linkages.