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**‘Kenya is no doubt a special case’:
British policy towards Kenya, 1960-1980**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History

Durham University

2015

Abstract

'Kenya is no doubt a special case': British policy towards Kenya, 1960-1980

Poppy Cullen

This thesis examines the ways British policy towards Kenya was made from 1960 to 1980 – from the last years of British colonial rule and through the first two decades of Kenya's existence as an independent state. Despite the late colonial traumas of Mau Mau, relationships between the British government and the new government of Kenya were very close. British officials actively pursued influence, and a combination of multiple and overlapping interests and a dense network of relationships encouraged British politicians, civil servants and diplomats to place a high value on this relationship, coming to describe it as 'special'.

The thesis examines how 'policy' was made, and argues that this emerged from numerous decisions taken by individuals at multiple levels, informed by 'habits of thought' as well as a general understanding of British interests which was shared – despite some rivalries and tensions between UK government departments. British attitudes were also shaped by misunderstandings and prejudices. Kenya, by contrast, was emerging as a neo-patrimonial state. This thesis examines how these systems interacted with one another and recognises the clear difference: British officials worked within a bureaucratic system in a way which gave their decisions a coherence and consistency; Kenya's elite pursued personal and factional interests. Even so, the British reinforced Kenyan neo-patrimonialism by working with individuals rather than through official channels.

The thesis argues that, despite the disparity in structure and form, this was a negotiated relationship. Leading Kenyans were often adept at using the British relationship to their particular advantage and were able to influence and shape British decisions in ways which complicate any simple neo-colonial analysis. The relationship remained close because British interests and those of leading Kenyans came to align on crucial issues, ensuring a continued mutual interest in the relationship.

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Abbreviations

BDOHP	British Diplomatic Oral History Project, Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge
BHC	British High Commission in Nairobi
CO	Colonial Office
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office
DSL	<i>Diplomatic Service List</i>
EAD	East Africa Department
EEC	European Economic Community
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FO	Foreign Office
GSU	General Service Unit
HMOCS	Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KNA	Kenya National Archive, Nairobi
KPU	Kenya People's Union
MMA	Malcolm MacDonald Archive, Durham
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOU	Memorandum of Intention and Understanding, 1964
NKG	New Kenya Group
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
ODM	Ministry of Overseas Development
RAF	Royal Air Force
SAS	Special Air Service
TNA	The National Archive, Kew
UKPH	United Kingdom Passport Holders
UN	United Nations

Introduction

On the fiftieth anniversary of Kenya's independence in 2013, UK Minister for Africa Mark Simmonds, Britain's representative at the celebrations, issued a 'Happy Birthday' message in *The Daily Nation*. With the German Ambassador to Kenya the only other foreign commentator included, Simmonds was keen to highlight the Anglo-Kenyan connection:

Today the UK/Kenya relationship is a modern one. The colonial era is past. We share the same goals: Prosperity, inclusive growth that benefits the poorest, and shared security. We work together in partnership, based on mutual respect and shared interests ... our partnership is broad, deep, and mutually beneficial. I welcome that and I am ambitious for what we can achieve together in the future¹

His message was positive and optimistic, designed to highlight the close Anglo-Kenyan relationship and make clear the emphasis British politicians and decision-makers still placed on Kenya.

2013 was also the year in which veterans from the 1952-60 Mau Mau Emergency, who had sued the British government, received a settlement in the British High Court of £19.9m. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary William Hague announced that 'The British Government recognises that Kenyans were subject to torture and other forms of ill treatment at the hands of the colonial administration. The British government sincerely regrets that these abuses took place, and that they marred Kenya's progress towards independence'.² Historians such as Anderson and Elkins had already been exposing the British government's brutal role in Mau Mau,³ but this was a striking admission of

¹ Mark Simmonds, 'At just 50, Kenya has made remarkable progress and has even more lined up', *Daily Nation*, 13 December 2013, p. 13.

² William Hague, 'Statement to Parliament on settlement of Mau Mau claims', 6 June 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-to-parliament-on-settlement-of-mau-mau-claims>, accessed 23 June 2014.

³ David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London, 2006); Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York, 2005); Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency* (Cambridge, 2013).

colonial abuses from the British government, which at independence had sought to conceal evidence of this.⁴ Part of Hague's speech was replicated almost word-for-word in Simmonds' editorial:

Although we should never forget our history and indeed must always seek to learn from it, we should also look to the future, strengthening a relationship that will promote the security and prosperity of both our nations. The ability to recognise error in the past but also to build the strongest possible foundation for cooperation and friendship over the next 50 years are both hallmarks of our democracy⁵

Yet what is striking is that, despite the brutality of the struggle for independence, this colonial past had in many senses already been overlooked as a close relationship long outlasted colonialism.

This thesis studies the emergence of this close relationship in the years around independence through to 1980 when the relationship was reaffirmed in the wake of Daniel arap Moi's succession as Kenyan President; in 1979 British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told Moi that '[t]he United Kingdom regarded Kenya in a very special light'.⁶ It will examine the detail of what became viewed as a 'special' relationship. In considering British policy towards Kenya, the thesis asks a wider question: what is 'policy' and how is it made? How did British diplomats, civil servants, and ministers decide what British interests were and how to pursue them? It will argue that policy is a nebulous concept and emerged from a series of decisions taken by various groups. A key argument this thesis will make is that policy was constructed through engagement with Kenyans in a process of negotiation. In the UK, there was 'policy' in the sense of a relatively consistent and coherent approach which transcended individuals; but this thesis also shows that 'policy' was made not solely by grand position papers, and explicit discussions about what 'policy' should be were infrequent. Rather, a combination of 'habits of thought' and patterns of relationship informed multiple decisions across government – and those decisions were policy, and in turn reproduced the relationships which made them. The British

⁴ See David M. Anderson, 'Mau Mau in the High Court and the 'Lost' British Empire Archives: Colonial Conspiracy or Bureaucratic Bungle?', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 39, No. 5 (2011), pp. 699-716.

⁵ Simmonds, 'At just 50'; Hague, 'Statement to Parliament'. Hague had said 'in the future' rather than 'over the next 50 years' and included an additional line: 'I trust that this settlement will support that process.'

⁶ Note of a Tête-à-Tête discussion between the Prime Minister and President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya at 10 Downing Street, 13 June 1979, The National Archives, Kew, (TNA) FCO 31/2587/49.

relationship with Kenya was shaped by a dense network of relationships which produced a 'policy' more consistently and effectively than any position paper could have done.

Decolonisation

Kenya, particularly because of Mau Mau, has featured prominently in histories of decolonisation as 'one of the classic cases of African decolonization'.⁷ The term decolonisation itself is problematic as it 'eliminates contradictions and smuggles a plan – God's or empire's, it does not matter ... [to] the "granting" of independence'.⁸ Although we know the outcome, this was, as Cooper reminds us, a time of 'multiple possibilities' and unknown futures.⁹ Post-war colonial policy was 'colonialism at its most reformist, its most interventionist, its most arrogantly assertive'.¹⁰ The pledge made in 1943 by Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley that Britain's aim was 'to guide Colonial people along the road to self-government within the framework of the British Empire' envisaged a long process.¹¹ Ending empire was certainly not as planned and consistent a process as Hilton Poynton, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office (CO) 1959-66, cast it in 1979, as 'the culmination of an evolutionary process ... consistently, and on the whole logically, carried out, at varying tempo, over a period of nearly 200 years'.¹² In fact, British officials 'were never more than a step ahead'.¹³ As Berman has

⁷ David Birmingham, *The Decolonization of Africa* (London, 1995), p. 43. See also John D. Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa*, Second edition (London, 1996), pp. 201-10.

⁸ E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo, 'The formative years, 1945-55', in B. A. Ogot and W. R. Ochieng (eds.), *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93* (London, 1995), p. 26. For a debate on how far this was planned see John Flint, 'Planned Decolonization and its Failure in British Africa', *African Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 328 (1983), pp. 389-411; Robert Pearce, 'The Colonial Office and planned decolonization in Africa', *African Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 330 (1984), pp. 77-93.

⁹ Frederick Cooper, 'Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (2008), p. 196.

¹⁰ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 451.

¹¹ Oliver Stanley, HC Deb 13 July 1943 vol 391 c48. See John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (London, 2012), pp. 357-8.

¹² Hilton Poynton, 'The View from the Colonial Office', in A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (ed.), *Africa in the Colonial Period. 3 The Transfer of Power: The Colonial Administrator in the Age of Decolonisation. Proceedings of a Symposium held at St. Anthony's College, Oxford 15-16 March 1978* (Oxford, 1979), p. 15.

¹³ David A. Percox, 'Internal Security and Decolonization in Kenya, 1956-63', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2001), p. 93.

convincingly argued, this was ‘neither a great victory for African nationalism nor a subtle behind-the-scenes triumph for a British neo-colonial plot’.¹⁴ Rather than a process dictated by either side, this thesis will highlight the negotiated nature of Kenyan decolonisation, with groups on both sides aiming for the most beneficial outcome for themselves and engaged in a process of compromise.

During the 1950s, British policy towards Kenya focused on counter-insurgency. But as Furedi has argued, ‘somewhere along the way the aim of counterinsurgency changed from restoring the authority of the colonial state to preparing the way for the process of controlled decolonization’.¹⁵ Two new constitutions were introduced, named for successive Colonial Secretaries – Lyttelton in 1954 and Lennox-Boyd in 1957 – with the first Africans directly elected to Legislative Council in 1957. Still, colonial officials took a long view: at a meeting at Chequers in 1959, independence for Kenya was suggested for perhaps 1975.¹⁶ And yet, as Lonsdale has argued, ‘Britain could not continue to remake Kenya by force when other European powers were abandoning attempts to remodel colonial rule for the moral high ground of informal empire’.¹⁷

By the starting point to this thesis, 1960, the transition noted by Furedi was well underway. In January, Colonial Secretary Iain Macleod accepted at the first Lancaster House conference that Kenya would achieve majority rule. Previous government policy, despite the Devonshire Declaration of African paramountcy in 1923,¹⁸ had promoted European settlement and Kenya as a ‘white man’s country’, before embracing Kenya within the broader 1950s policy of multiracialism and ‘partnership’.¹⁹ In accepting majority rule, Macleod changed the trajectory of British government planning for Kenya. This was a ‘watershed’ year for the British Empire.²⁰ In February, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan

¹⁴ Bruce Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (London, 1990), p. 415.

¹⁵ Frank Furedi, ‘Kenya: Decolonization through Counterinsurgency’, in Anthony Gorst, Lewis Johnman and W. Scott Lucas (eds.), *Contemporary British History 1931-1961* (London, 1991), p. 163.

¹⁶ Keith Kyle, *The Politics of the Independence of Kenya* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 89-90.

¹⁷ John Lonsdale, ‘Mau Maus of the Mind: Making Mau Mau and Remaking Kenya’, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1990), p. 416.

¹⁸ Duke of Devonshire, ‘Indians in Kenya’, July 1923, TNA CAB 24/161/34.

¹⁹ L. J. Butler, *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World* (London, 2002), p. 93.

²⁰ John Darwin, ‘Diplomacy and decolonization’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2000), p. 19.

made his famous 'wind of change' speech in South Africa, viewed subsequently and by contemporaries as a sign of changed British attitudes; although as Stockwell and Butler have recently argued, this was 'not simply an articulation of a closing chapter in British imperialism, but an intervention designed to shape and reorientate a dynamic process of adjustment'.²¹ In November, 'the epoch-making Resolution 1514' was passed in the United Nations (UN), calling upon European powers to hasten independence for their remaining colonies.²² 1960 was also the formal end of the Kenyan Emergency; with effective military victory over Mau Mau having been achieved by 1956. Two Kenyan nationalist parties were formed in 1960, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) and Kenya African National Union (KANU), and it was with these that the British government worked in making future plans. Over the next three years there were two further Lancaster House conferences; elections were held in 1961 and 1963; and Jomo Kenyatta was released from detention and became prime minister.²³ Kenya became internally self-governing in June 1963 and independent on 12 December 1963, the last of Britain's East African colonies following Tanganyika in December 1961 and Uganda in October 1962. A year after independence, Kenya became a republic with Kenyatta as president.

It has frequently been suggested that metropolitan officials hoped – perhaps even expected – to maintain the benefits of empire after independence while avoiding its costs.²⁴ Darwin has argued that independence was to lead 'into the sunny uplands – as they hoped – of diplomatic partnership, economic collaboration and informal influence'.²⁵ The 'audit of empire' Macmillan commissioned

²¹ Sarah Stockwell and L. J. Butler, 'Introduction', in L. J. Butler and Sarah Stockwell (eds.), *The Wind of Change: Harold Macmillan and British Decolonization* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 11. On the intentions of, and reactions to, the 'wind of change' speech see: Ritchie Ovendale, 'Macmillan and the Wind of Change in Africa, 1957-1960', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1995), pp. 455-477.

²² Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 304.

²³ For analysis of the elections see: George Bennett and Carl G. Rosberg, *The Kenyatta Election: Kenya 1960-1961* (London, 1961); Clyde Sanger and John Nottingham, 'The Kenya General Election of 1963', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1964), pp. 1-40.

²⁴ See A. N. Porter and A. J. Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonization 1938-64. Volume 2: 1951-64* (Basingstoke, 1989), pp. 37-8; David Percox, *Britain, Kenya and the Cold War: Imperial Defence, Colonial Security and Decolonisation* (London, 2004), p. 154.

²⁵ John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 269.

upon becoming prime minister in 1957 concluded that advantages were fairly balanced and, as Hopkins argued, 'What mattered was that ... [the British government] took steps to make friends and influence the people who would shape policies in the new states, when they came into being'.²⁶ Making friends and thereby retaining influence was crucial to British decolonisation policies in their hope to secure continuing benefits, but this thesis will argue that these ideas continued to characterise Britain's relationship with Kenya after independence.

Britain and Post-Colonial Kenya

In histories of post-colonial Kenya, the continuing importance of Britain has been widely recognised.²⁷ In the immediate decades after independence, this tended to be framed as neo-colonialism. Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah argued in 1965 that

the neo-colonialism of today represents imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage ... the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside²⁸

Arguments have been premised on the idea that the European colonisers 'traded positions of political power with positions of influence', and thus the interests of Kenya remained subservient to those of Britain.²⁹ For example, Mamdani argued in 1984 that Kenya was 'not an independent national economy, but a neo-colonial economy in which Britain was the leading imperialist'.³⁰ This critical view was often coupled with ideas of underdevelopment and dependency, inspired by a world-systems approach.³¹ The debate on Kenya was strongest in the 1970s-80s and focused upon the role of foreign

²⁶ Tony Hopkins, 'Macmillan's Audit of Empire, 1957', in Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock (eds.), *Understanding Decline: Perceptions and Realities of British Economic Performance* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 239-50.

²⁷ See Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011* (New Haven and London, 2011), pp.39-40; Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (London, 2013), pp. 103-4.

²⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London, 1965), p. ix.

²⁹ Charles O. Chiheka, *Britain, France, and the New African States: A Study of Post Independence Relationships 1960-1985* (Lewiston, N.Y., 1990), p. 2.

³⁰ Mahmood Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda* (Trenton, 1984), p. 95.

³¹ See for example: Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London, 1972), p. 36.

ownership, and especially multinational corporations, as opposed to the growth of an African middle class.³² In Leys' 1975 study of underdevelopment, he argued that foreign ownership remained prevalent and 'direct rule by the metropolitan power [became] unnecessary [as] society has been "locked into" its subordinate role in the international capitalist system by new means'.³³

The critical weakness of this dependency literature was its limited discussion of how dependency worked in practice, focusing as it typically has on the abstract with little direct evidence to support its claims.³⁴ Another key critique is neatly summarised by Berman: these theories are guilty of 'treating Africans as a relatively undifferentiated mass who were exploited, impoverished and impotent victims; dominated classes rather than agents of their own history'.³⁵ African agency is thus removed.³⁶ As Orwa argues, 'it is unrealistic to assume that Kenya is led by naïve leaders who have no perception of national interests except those of the multinational corporations and of a national elite'.³⁷ Leys later revised his original position to take into account an African capitalist class, and even suggested scholars should 'finally rid ourselves of the ideological handicap of dependency theory'.³⁸ Recent

³² Nicola Swainson, 'State and Economy in Post-Colonial Kenya, 1963-1978', *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1978), p. 360. Nicola Swainson, 'The Rise of a National Bourgeoisie in Kenya', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 8 (1977), pp. 39-55; York W. Bradshaw, 'Reassessing Economic Dependency and Uneven Development: The Kenyan Experience', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 53, No. 5 (1988), pp. 693-708; York W. Bradshaw, 'Perpetuating Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Link between Agriculture, Class, and State' *African Studies Review*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1990), pp. 1-28; and on multinational corporations: Alice Hoffenberg Amsden, *International Firms and Labour in Kenya: 1945-79* (London, 1971); Raphael Kaplinsky (ed.), *Readings on the Multinational Corporation in Kenya* (Nairobi; Oxford, 1978).

³³ Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism 1964-1971* (London, 1975), pp. 9, 18.

³⁴ For a recent critique see: Ichiro Maekawa, 'Neo-Colonialism Reconsidered: A Case Study of East Africa in the 1960s and 1970s', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, (2014), pp. 1-25.

³⁵ Bruce Berman, 'Up from Structuralism', in Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa. Book One: State and Class* (London, 1992), p. 180. For further critique see: John Darwin, 'Africa and World Politics since 1945: Theories of Decolonization', in Ngairé Woods (ed.), *Explaining International Relations since 1945* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 208-9.

³⁶ See John Lonsdale, 'Editorial: Agency in Tight Corners: Narrative and Initiative in African History', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2000), p. 12.

³⁷ Katete Orwa, 'Foreign policy, 1963-1986', in William R. Ochieng' (ed.), *A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980* (London, 1989), p. 220.

³⁸ Colin Leys, 'Kenya: What Does "Dependency" Explain?', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 17 (1980), p. 109. His revised views also sparked debate: Rafael Kaplinsky, 'Capitalist Accumulation in the Periphery: The Kenyan Case Re-Examined', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 17 (1980), pp. 83-105; J. S. Henley, 'Capitalist Accumulation in Kenya: Straw Men Rule OK?', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 17 (1980), pp. 105-108.

scholarship has typically done so; referring to post-colonial French-African relations, Chafer has argued that although 'this relationship was in many ways a dependent one, it was not one of straightforward dependency'.³⁹

However, moving away from the dependency thesis does not mean denying continuities. These form part of a wider debate in which scholars of Africa have increasingly questioned a simple division between the colonial and post-colonial, highlighting continuities and colonial legacies.⁴⁰ As Ellis has suggested, independence, 'while significant, did not always mark the radical break with the past that many observers once took for granted'.⁴¹ Independent states were the 'successors to the colonial regime';⁴² and, as Burton and Jennings have argued, continuities are 'hardly surprising, nor should they be blithely condemned'.⁴³ African economies, built up under colonial rule, were Western export-oriented. They still relied on foreign investment and development aid during the decades after independence and so continued policies of extraversion.⁴⁴ Cooper has characterised these as 'gatekeeper states'.⁴⁵

In Kenya, there were many similarities between the colonial and independent state.⁴⁶ Branch and Cheeseman have argued that the post-colonial state should 'be conceptualised as a representation of

³⁹ Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization?* (Oxford; New York, 2002), pp. 234-5.

⁴⁰ See Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford, 1999); J. L. Miège, 'The Colonial Past in the Present', in W. H. Morris-Jones and Georges Fischer (eds.), *Decolonisation and After: The British and French Experience* (London, 1980), pp. 35-49; Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, 1996); Terence Ranger, 'Postscript: Colonial and postcolonial identities', in Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger (eds.), *Postcolonial Identities in Africa* (London, 1996), pp. 271-281.

⁴¹ Stephen Ellis, 'Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2002), p. 11.

⁴² Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven, 1994), p. 283.

⁴³ Andrew Burton and Michael Jennings, 'Introduction: The Emperor's New Clothes? Continuities in Governance in Late Colonial and Early Postcolonial East Africa', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2007), p. 3.

⁴⁴ On extraversion see Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London, 1993).

⁴⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁴⁶ See William R. Ochieng', 'The Post-Colonial State and Kenya's Economic Inheritance', in W. R. Ochieng' and R. M. Maxon (eds.), *An Economic History of Kenya* (Nairobi, 1992), pp. 259-272.

the interests promoted during the latter years of colonial rule'.⁴⁷ In particular, structures and systems of authority remained remarkably similar.⁴⁸ As Branch has argued, the interests of 'loyalists' were encouraged and privileged by the late colonial state, and 'loyalists' continued to dominate as 'elite loyalists later became gatekeepers to the postcolonial state'.⁴⁹ Kenya's post-colonial state downplayed Mau Mau and its veterans were not favoured as some had previously anticipated. A self-consciously nationalist reading of history might question the continuing 'relations with the once "enemy" military'.⁵⁰ However, the military had long been used by the colonial state against Africans,⁵¹ and more significantly, for those who inherited the state, it was Mau Mau rather than the King's African Rifles who were the enemy: 'The administration was, therefore, by definition, anti-"Mau Mau"'.⁵² The nationalist movements which sought independence did so within the colonial system and using its discourses, seeking to appropriate rather than challenge it. In nationalist struggles for independence, colonial ideas were turned against the colonial state by 'deploying the rhetoric on which colonial rulers depended for their legitimacy and self-image'.⁵³ Contesting and winning elections provided a stamp of legitimacy to the process for both the nationalist victors and metropole.⁵⁴ Colonially-imposed state borders were accepted, as was the primacy of development as a legitimating rhetoric and mission of the state.⁵⁵ Nationalists co-opted colonial models and '[q]uestions of transforming the colonial system were neither answered nor posed'.⁵⁶

⁴⁷ Daniel Branch and Nicholas Cheeseman, 'The Politics of Control in Kenya: Understanding the Bureaucratic-Executive State, 1952-78', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, No. 107 (2006), p. 15.

⁴⁸ Nic Cheeseman, 'Introduction: Political Linkage and Political Space in the Era of Decolonization', *Africa Today*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (2006), pp. 3-24.

⁴⁹ Daniel Branch, 'Loyalists, Mau Mau, and Elections in Kenya: The First Triumph of the System, 1957-1958', *Africa Today*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (2006), p. 32.

⁵⁰ Njagi Arthur Munene, *The Colonial Legacy in Kenya-British Military Relations: 1963-2005*, MA thesis, Kenyatta University, 2013, p. 124.

⁵¹ Timothy H. Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Westport, 2003), pp. 31-3.

⁵² David Maughan-Brown, *Land, Freedom and Fiction: History and Ideology in Kenya* (London, 1985), p. 195.

⁵³ Cooper, 'Possibility and Constraint', p. 173.

⁵⁴ Crawford Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960-2010* (Madison, 2012), p. 115.

⁵⁵ Cooper, *Africa since 1940*.

⁵⁶ Gary Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue 1960-1965* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 163.

In Kenya, a process of land transfer was a key element in this continuity – indeed, in many ways this underwrote the emergence of the post-colonial relationship. In the early 1960s, the British government and others provided finance for Kenyans to buy European-owned land in a series of land settlement programmes. Concern about Europeans deserting or ruining their estates if not sold for inflated prices, or of landless Africans claiming them, drove fears of a widespread land grab at independence.⁵⁷ Land transfer was not a way of radically altering ownership, but a means of preserving stability.⁵⁸ Wasserman has argued that land had the potential to be ‘the major hindrance to a smooth transition ensuring the stability of the nationalist regime’;⁵⁹ particularly as many Kenyans equated independence with access to land ownership, expecting wide scale redistribution.⁶⁰ Instead, settlement schemes and the principle of respect for private property were accepted by Kenya’s incoming leadership, with additional schemes implemented after independence.⁶¹ This decision was part of a broader choice by the elite – which will be highlighted in different contexts throughout this thesis – to continue to look towards Britain and to maintain systems and structures from the colonial era. For Britain too, the decision to aid land transfer was an important one. This was a long-term financial commitment and these contributions made up a large part of Britain’s aid to Kenya into the

⁵⁷ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, p. 411.

⁵⁸ For details on these schemes see: Robert M. Maxon, ‘Small-Scale and Large-Scale Agriculture since Independence’, in W. R. Ochieng’ and R. M. Maxon (eds.), *An Economic History of Kenya* (Nairobi, 1992), pp. 273-96; Christopher Leo, ‘The Failure of the ‘Progressive Farmer’ in Kenya’s Million-Acre Settlement Scheme’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1978), pp. 619-38; Christopher Leo, ‘Who Benefited from the Million-Acre Scheme? Toward a Class Analysis of Kenya’s Transition to Independence’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1981), pp. 201-22; N. S. Carey Jones, ‘The Decolonization of the White Highlands of Kenya’, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 131, No. 2 (1965), pp. 196-8.

⁵⁹ Gary Wasserman, ‘Continuity and Counter-Insurgency: The Role of Land Reform in Decolonizing Kenya, 1962-70’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1973), p. 133.

⁶⁰ Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonization* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 194.

⁶¹ See John W. Harbeson, ‘Land Reforms and Politics in Kenya, 1954-70’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1971), p. 245; John W. Harbeson, *Nation-Building in Kenya: The Role of Land Reform* (Evanston, 1973); Gary Wasserman, ‘The Independence Bargain: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue 1960-1962’, *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1973), p. 112; B. A. Ogot, ‘The Decisive Years 1956-63’, in B. A. Ogot and W. R. Ochieng’ (eds.), *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93* (London, 1995), p. 64; Maughan-Brown, *Land, Freedom and Fiction*, p. 195.

1970s.⁶² As Wasserman's comprehensive study has shown, this was a key part of a process of 'consensual decolonization'.⁶³ With the importance of land settlement widely recognised, this thesis focuses on other aspects of the developing relationship.

There has been limited academic study of the nature or conduct of Kenya's foreign relations.⁶⁴ Kenya was not a foreign policy leader within Africa, focusing more on regional politics.⁶⁵ Kenya supported the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), particularly because of the 1963 charter which accepted the 'territorial integrity' of colonial borders and was thus helpful in Kenya's border dispute with Somalia; Ethiopia remained an ally for the same reason.⁶⁶ Kenya's stated and public foreign policy was one of non-alignment, a policy adopted by many African and Asian states after independence, focused on neutrality within the Cold War.⁶⁷ Non-alignment did not preclude involvement with economic and militarily partners and donors, but offered African states the opportunity to bargain for support.⁶⁸ However, the prominence of Britain within Kenya's foreign relations has been widely acknowledged; as Kyle has argued, 'the policies of Kenyatta's Government, officially non-aligned, possessed a quite

⁶² Gerald Holtham and Arthur Hazlewood, *Aid and Inequality in Kenya: British Development Assistance to Kenya* (London, 1976), p. 109.

⁶³ Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization*, p. 163.

⁶⁴ John Howell, 'An Analysis of Kenyan Foreign Policy', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1968), pp. 29-48; John Okumu, 'Kenya's Foreign Policy', in Olajide Aluko (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of African States* (London, 1977), pp. 136-162; John J. Okumu, 'Foreign Relations: Dilemmas of Independence and Development', in Joel D. Barkan with John J. Okumu (eds.), *Politics and Public Policy in Kenya and Tanzania* (New York; London, 1979), pp. 239-266; Samuel M. Makinda, 'From Quiet Diplomacy to Cold War Politics: Kenya's Foreign Policy', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1983), pp. 300-319; Orwa, 'Foreign policy', pp. 219-244; Chris Ikalikha Musambayi, 'The Politics of Regime Consolidation and Entrenchment: Moi's Foreign Policy 1978-1994', *French Institute for Research in Africa: Travaux et Documents*, No. 23 (1995), pp. 1-56.

⁶⁵ Howell, 'Kenyan Foreign Policy', p. 46.

⁶⁶ OAU Charter, 1963, http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/OAU_Charter_1963_0.pdf, accessed 15 July 2014; Korwa G. Adar, *Kenyan Foreign Policy Behavior towards Somalia, 1963-1983* (Lanham, 1994), pp. 1-3.

⁶⁷ See: Speech by His Excellency the President at Diplomatic Corps luncheon, 29 July 1965, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi (KNA) KA/4/9; Appendix I: Nineteenth regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, Statement by Joseph Murumbi, Chairman of the Kenya Delegation, February 1965, KNA AE/3/274.

⁶⁸ Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 63-5.

definite tilt towards the west'.⁶⁹ Even within this, as Hornsby has recognised, relationships with Britain were 'the cornerstone of Kenya's foreign policy'.⁷⁰

Kenya and Post-Colonial Britain

Neither neo-colonialism nor dependency theory have been used as theoretical tools for the study of British foreign policy. By contrast to scholars of decolonisation and scholars of Kenya who have highlighted continuities, the extensive literature on British foreign policy has rarely focused on these continuities and has largely ignored relationships with former colonies after independence.⁷¹ Hemming has even argued that 'The process of shedding Empire was an attempt to swap dwindling tangible assets for increased intangibles, thereby maintaining British global power. In this respect, Macmillan failed', suggesting that Britain did not sustain associations or benefits.⁷² This is a very different interpretation from those who have argued for neo-colonialism or that Britain maintained a substantial influence in former colonial possessions. For Britain, decolonisation has tended to be portrayed as a moment of change; and although always recognising its importance, in most studies of British decolonisation and foreign policy independence marks a country's departure from the narrative. A clear articulation of this comes from Northedge, who in 1974 viewed the end of empire as decisive: 'colonial policy disappeared with the passing of the colonial empire. Relations between Britain and the now independent states of the Commonwealth were then conducted ... in the same way as relations with any other state'.⁷³ The question this raises is why historians of British foreign policy have so rarely explored continuities through independence or the detail of post-colonial

⁶⁹ Kyle, *Independence of Kenya*, p. 200.

⁷⁰ Hornsby, *Kenya*, p. 103.

⁷¹ See for example: Paul Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980* (London, 1981); C. J. Bartlett, *British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke, 1989); Chris Wrigley, 'Now you See it, Now you Don't: Harold Wilson and Labour's Foreign Policy 1964-70', in R. Coopey, S. Fielding and N. Tiratsoo (eds.), *The Wilson Governments 1964-70* (London, 1993), pp. 123-135.

⁷² Philip E. Hemming, 'Macmillan and the End of the British Empire in Africa', in Richard Aldous and Sabine Lee (eds.), *Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 118.

⁷³ F. S. Northedge, *Descent from Power: British Foreign Policy 1945-1973* (London, 1974), p. 206.

relationships with former colonies, and indeed why contemporary policy-makers accorded them less significance.

One explanation might simply be that British interests had moved on; in what has sometimes appeared a direct transition 'away from Africa and towards Brussels'.⁷⁴ Rather than continuing relationships with former colonies, the study of British foreign policy has typically focused on Europe and America. Following Churchill's categorisation of British foreign policy based on three interlinked 'circles' – the empire-Commonwealth, American 'special relationship', and Europe – the two beyond empire seemed more significant.⁷⁵ The British government applied to join the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1961 and 1967, both attempts vetoed by French President Charles de Gaulle, before succeeding in a third application and joining in 1973.⁷⁶ The idea of an independent nuclear deterrent was a leading concern for reasons of status, strategy, and the American relationship,⁷⁷ and 'it was simply assumed' that Britain would acquire these weapons.⁷⁸ In 1963, in what appeared a testament to the 'special relationship' with America, the US agreed to supply Polaris missiles to Britain, jeopardising the 'independence' of the nuclear deterrent, but allowing Britain to remain a nuclear

⁷⁴ John Ramsden, *The Winds of Change: Macmillan to Heath, 1957-1975* (Harlow, 1996), p. 146.

⁷⁵ Richard Aldous and Sabine Lee, 'Staying in the Game': Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role', in Aldous and Lee (eds.), *Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role*, p. 152

⁷⁶ See David Gowland and Arthur Turner, *Reluctant Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-1998* (New York, 2000); James R. V. Ellison, 'Accepting the Inevitable: Britain and European Integration', in Wolfram Kaiser and Gillian Staerck (eds.), *British Foreign Policy, 1955-64: Contracting Options* (London, 2000), pp. 171-189; Kristian Steinnes, 'The European Challenge: Britain's EEC Application in 1961', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1998), pp. 61-79; Sabine Lee, 'Staying in the Game? Coming into the Game? Macmillan and European Integration', in Aldous and Lee (eds.), *Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role*, pp. 123-147.

⁷⁷ Margaret Gowing, 'Britain, America and the Bomb', in David Dilks (ed.), *Retreat from Power: Studies in Britain's Foreign Policy of the Twentieth Century, Volume Two: After 1939* (London, 1981), p. 129.

⁷⁸ Edward Spiers, 'The British Nuclear Deterrent: Problems and Possibilities', in David Dilks (ed.), *Retreat from Power: Studies in Britain's Foreign Policy of the Twentieth Century, Volume Two: After 1939* (London, 1981), p. 155.

power.⁷⁹ More widely, the American relationship and Cold War were central to British conceptions of their foreign policy.⁸⁰

British foreign policy was affected by two seemingly contradictory attitudes: one, a sense of decline, the other, the determination to remain a world power. Historiographical and contemporary debate on British foreign policy has tended to incorporate a narrative of decline.⁸¹ This has not been without its challengers,⁸² but although the realities of decline may have been overstated, contemporaries did have a sense of this. In 1966, an internal minute in the Commonwealth Office argued that '[h]aving reached the end, almost, of our colonial era, we seem also to have arrived at a stage of indecision in which we have no clear idea as to the course our overseas policies should follow'.⁸³ Blank has argued that Britain was in an 'extraordinarily vulnerable international financial position' which constrained policy options, with devaluation in 1967 the key symbol of this.⁸⁴ The decision to leave the military presence east of Suez, announced in 1967, was a signal of restricted ability and apparent evidence of decline.⁸⁵ Part of an explanation for Britain's post-colonial disengagement could thus be due to a lack of ability to sustain involvement.

⁷⁹ C. J. Bartlett, *'The Special Relationship': A Political History of Anglo-American Relations since 1945* (London, 1992), pp. 98-100; Alan Dobson, 'The Years of Transition: Anglo-American Relations 1961-1967', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1990), pp. 247-9.

⁸⁰ Michael David Kandiah and Gillian Staerck, 'Reliable Allies': Anglo-American Relations', in Wolfram Kaiser and Gillian Staerck (eds.), *British Foreign Policy, 1955-64: Contracting Options* (London, 2000), pp. 135-170; Richard Bevens and Gregory Quinn, 'Blowing Hot and Cold: Anglo-Soviet Relations', in Wolfram Kaiser and Gillian Staerck (eds.), *British Foreign Policy, 1955-64: Contracting Options* (London, 2000), pp. 209-238.

⁸¹ See Northedge, *Descent from Power*; Bernard Porter, *Britain, Europe and the World 1850-1982: Delusions of Grandeur* (London, 1983); David Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1991); Ellison, 'Accepting the Inevitable', pp. 171-189.

⁸² Jim Tomlinson, 'The Decline of the Empire and the Economic 'Decline' of Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2003), pp. 201-221; George L. Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline: The Rise of Britain Since 1945* (London, 2004); Jim Tomlinson, 'Thrice Denied: 'Declinism' as a Recurrent Theme in British History in the Long Twentieth Century', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2009), pp. 227-251.

⁸³ A.H. Read, 'The Idea of a Commonwealth Office Planning Staff', [1966], TNA FCO 49/136/11.

⁸⁴ Stephen Blank, 'Britain: The Politics of Foreign Economic Policy, the Domestic Economy, and the Problem of Pluralistic Stagnation', *International Organization*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (1977), p. 674.

⁸⁵ See Andrea Benvenuti, 'The Heath Government and British Defence Policy in Southeast Asia at the End of Empire (1970-71)', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2009), pp. 53-73; Matthew Jones, 'A Decision Delayed: Britain's Withdrawal from South East Asia Reconsidered, 1961-68', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 117, No. 472 (2002), pp. 569-595; Helen Parr, 'Britain, America, East of Suez and the EEC: Finding a Role in British Foreign Policy, 1964-67', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2006), pp. 403-421.

Yet British foreign policy aimed at a global role, evidencing what Sanders has described as ‘great power syndrome’, and there was no desire to leave all commitments.⁸⁶ Diplomats rarely ‘articulate[d] precisely why Britain *should* have a significant world role. Instead, they reflected that it did’.⁸⁷ A 1964 government report stated that: ‘It is in the general interest that Britain’s voice should continue to be heard and to carry weight in the world’.⁸⁸ A sense of confidence and self-belief thus remained and the desire to sustain this ‘lay at the core of decision-making’.⁸⁹ But although Africa formed part of Cold War policies to maintain influence as a counter to Soviet or Chinese competition, the continent played limited part in Britain’s global ambitions.⁹⁰ The Duncan report in 1969 divided the world into an ‘Area of Concentration’ of Western Europe, America and Japan, and an ‘Outer Area’ which comprised the rest of the world.⁹¹ Although this report was widely criticised, it clearly conveyed a sense that the world was divided into places where core British interests were engaged, and those where they were not. In this categorisation, the British government would have had limited interest or ability to maintain involvement in Kenya.

Part of the reason for the lack of bilateral studies is also that the Commonwealth has been the main means of studying post-colonial relations. The Commonwealth provided a focus for British foreign policy beyond Europe and America and was in itself a sign of continuing post-colonial relationships. This was partly why the British government was able to feel they had decolonised successfully, and was to offer the informal influence hoped for in decolonisation.⁹² Srinivasan argues that it ‘served as a bridge between the Empire and the postcolonial period and afforded the British leadership the

⁸⁶ David Sanders, *Losing an Empire, Finding a Role: British Foreign Policy since 1945* (London, 1990), p. 291.

⁸⁷ Their emphasis. Michael D. Kandiah and Gillian Staerck, ‘“At the Top Table”: British Elites’ Perceptions of the UK’s International Position, 1950-91’, in John W. Young, Effie G. H. Pedaliu and Michael D. Kandiah (eds.), *Britain in Global Politics Volume 2: From Churchill to Blair* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 182.

⁸⁸ Cmnd. 2276, *Report of the Committee on Representational Services Overseas, 1962-63* [Plowden Report] (London, 1964), pp. 2-3.

⁸⁹ Anne Deighton, ‘British Foreign Policy-Making: the Macmillan Years’, in Wolfram Kaiser and Gillian Staerck (eds.), *British Foreign Policy, 1955-64: Contracting Options* (London, 2000), p. 3.

⁹⁰ Ronald Hyam, ‘Winds of Change: the Empire and Commonwealth’, in Wolfram Kaiser and Gillian Staerck (eds.), *British Foreign Policy, 1955-64: Contracting Options* (London, 2000), pp. 191-206.

⁹¹ John W. Young, *Twentieth-Century Diplomacy: A Case Study of British Practice, 1963-1976* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 42-4.

⁹² Hyam, ‘Winds of Change’, p. 192.

conviction that they held great power status'.⁹³ Quickly, however, many Commonwealth members became increasingly critical of Britain. The 1956 Suez crisis revealed Commonwealth opposition to metropolitan policies and this expanded in the 1960s-70s, particularly concerning Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence on 11 November 1965, and arms sales to South Africa.⁹⁴ Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings became uncomfortable experiences for British leaders.⁹⁵ The OAU called for members to break diplomatic relations with Britain and although few followed this, some Commonwealth members did.⁹⁶ Criticism from Africa and the Commonwealth encouraged the limited positive attention scholarship has given to post-colonial relationships.

Perhaps another reason for this relative scholarly neglect has been that Britain was seen to disengage more completely at independence than France.⁹⁷ Connections between France and her former colonies were extensive and multiple, with bilateral cooperation agreements signed at independence which formalised defence and economic connections.⁹⁸ The importance of continuities is so well established in historiography that Chafer could write in 1992 that 'reference to continuity has become almost a cliché of surveys of French African policy'.⁹⁹ French post-colonial foreign policy overtly focused much more than the British on a continuing role in Africa.¹⁰⁰ Rouvez has argued that Britain's 'detached pragmatism' was because 'Britain did not need, or chose not to need, a post-colonial sub-

⁹³ Krishnan Srinivasan, 'Nobody's Commonwealth? The Commonwealth in Britain's Post-Imperial Adjustment', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2006), p. 266.

⁹⁴ See for example: E. Windrich, *Britain and the Politics of Rhodesian Independence* (London, 1978); P. Murphy, 'An Intricate and Distasteful Subject': British Planning for the Use of Force against the European Settlers of Central Africa, 1952-65', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 121, No. 492 (2006), pp. 746-777; C. Watts, 'Britain, the Old Commonwealth and the Problem of Rhodesian Independence, 1964-65', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (2008), pp. 75-99.

⁹⁵ Philip Alexander, 'A Tale of Two Smiths: the Transformation of Commonwealth Policy, 1964-70', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 20, No.3 (2006), pp. 303-321.

⁹⁶ Susan Aurelia Gitelson, 'Why do Small States Break Diplomatic Relations with Outside Powers?: Lessons from the African Experience', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1974), p. 478.

⁹⁷ C. M. B. Utete, 'Africa and the former colonial powers', in Olatunde J. C. B. Ojo, D. K. Orwa and C. M. B. Utete, *African International Relations* (London, 1985), pp. 109-10; Patrick Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa 1880-1995*, Second edition (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 155-6.

⁹⁸ Anton Andereggen, *France's Relationship with Subsaharan Africa* (Westport, 1994), pp. 62-3.

⁹⁹ Tony Chafer, 'French African Policy: Towards Change', *African Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 362 (1992), p. 37.

¹⁰⁰ Francis Terry McNamara, *France in Black Africa* (Washington, 1989), pp. 95-9.

Saharan zone of influence the way France did'.¹⁰¹ For France, Africa was intended 'to ensure major-power status'.¹⁰² This is certainly not something that could be said of Britain in the same period, with Africa playing a much smaller role in ideas of British great power status and foreign policy goals. Comparison with France might suggest that Britain had no particular policy towards former colonies.

A further significant explanation for the limited historiographical engagement is that British policy-making towards Kenya occurred mostly at the level of civil servants rather than politicians. Smith, Marsh and Richards have highlighted that 'government departments are the key policy-making institutions in British politics' yet have received limited scholarly attention, which has tended to focus on issues which engaged ministers.¹⁰³ This was again in direct contrast with French policy, where there were distinct forms of relating to Africa which did not have a parallel within Britain: a Ministry of Cooperation which 'became effectively a ministry for francophone Black Africa', and a personal advisor on Africa to the president.¹⁰⁴ French presidents were also more involved than British prime ministers, and between 1960 and 1978, 'French and African presidents held 280 meetings, and Presidents de Gaulle, [Georges] Pompidou, and [Valéry] Giscard d'Estaing made 32 state visits to Africa'.¹⁰⁵ These formal connections were more obvious than Britain's comparatively limited and lower-level focus on Africa.

However, despite the validity of these arguments, they do not mean that relationships with former colonies did not continue or were insignificant. As Jackson argues, there has been

an artificial division of the post-Second World War years into a period of "declining empire" and one of "post-empire", in which the links between the two have been very poorly

¹⁰¹ Alain Rouvez, with the assistance of Michael Coco and Jean-Paul Paddock, *Disconsolate Empires: French, British and Belgian Military Involvement in Post-Colonial Sub-Saharan Africa* (Lanham, 1994), pp. xii, 279.

¹⁰² Martin Staniland, 'Francophone Africa: The Enduring French Connection', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 489 (1987), p. 56.

¹⁰³ Martin J. Smith, David Marsh, and David Richards, 'Central Government Departments and the Policy Process', *Public Administration*, Vol. 71 (1993), p. 567. See also Keith Dowding, *The Civil Service* (London; New York, 1995), p. 113.

¹⁰⁴ Tony Chafer, 'Franco-African Relations: No Longer so Exceptional?', *African Affairs*, Vol. 101, No. 404 (2002), p. 346.

¹⁰⁵ Staniland, 'Francophone Africa', p. 52.

conceptualised. This ... has deflected attention from the many continuities in Britain's relations with the wider world¹⁰⁶

This thesis will argue that continuities were important and that Kenya continued to have a role in British foreign policy. Certainly these relationships were not as high profile as those with Europe or America and attracted less prime ministerial or foreign ministerial attention – which is what studies of foreign policy tend to focus on. The sense of decline and Britain's more limited financial capabilities did manifest themselves in how relations with Kenya were pursued, particularly in consideration in the 1970s of how much development aid the UK government was prepared to invest; but there was no managed policy of reducing involvement. The Commonwealth could encourage cooperation between Britain and Kenya: as one example, in 1967 both countries were involved in a Commonwealth committee to consider sanctions on Rhodesia.¹⁰⁷ But this was not the only forum in which relations were conducted, and bilateral connections were more significant than the Commonwealth.¹⁰⁸ The British relationship with Kenya reveals the diffuse way in which 'policy' was made through a dense network of relationships – economic, military and political.

While relatively sparse, the scholarship on continuing British relations with Africa and Kenya from the British perspective does offer useful insights. One such study is Badenoch's MPhil thesis on British relations with Malawi, which argues that 'The paucity of British interests in Malawi meant that her continued dependence on Britain was a burden. Britain wished to extricate herself as soon as possible. This could only be achieved through a massive injection of aid'.¹⁰⁹ Another study is Clapham's 1977 work on the relationships between Britain and both Ghana and Ethiopia.¹¹⁰ He argued that for Britain,

¹⁰⁶ Ashley Jackson, 'Review: Empire and Beyond: The Pursuit of Overseas National Interests in the Late Twentieth Century', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 122, No. 499 (2007), p. 1350.

¹⁰⁷ Arnold Smith with Clyde Sanger, *Stitches in Time: The Commonwealth in World Politics* (London, 1981), p. 68.

¹⁰⁸ S. R. Ashton, 'British Government Perspectives on the Commonwealth, 1964–71: An Asset or a Liability?', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2007), p. 76.

¹⁰⁹ H. A. Badenoch, 'Banda and The British: Anglo-Malawian Relations in the 1960s', MPhil thesis, Trinity College Cambridge, 2002, p. 93.

¹¹⁰ Christopher Clapham, 'Bilateral Relations: Ghana', and 'Bilateral Relations: Ethiopia', pp. 252–61. These ten pages are hidden in a far more general book: William Wallace, *The Foreign Policy Process in Britain* (London, 1977).

‘colonialism created interests and linkages with Ghana which, while not of the first importance, are none the less well worth maintaining’, highlighting cultural connections based on British language, education and institutions.¹¹¹ Ethiopia was not a former British colony but ‘even though Britain had no real direct stake in the country, Ethiopia impinged on British interests at several points’, especially Addis Ababa as an ‘African diplomatic centre’ and a broader interest in the Horn.¹¹² Clapham’s brief consideration hints at aspects of continued relationships but offers minimal detail, partly because it was written before the release of British government documents. Considering Kenya, some scholars have examined the Anglo-Kenyan relationship past 1963, but they have not tended to extend much beyond independence, certainly not into the 1970s. A key work which highlights the potential of the sources is Parsons’ study of the 1964 East African mutinies in which he compares Kenyan, Tanganyikan and Ugandan military policies, including British connections.¹¹³ Percox has also highlighted continuities in the military sphere, though only until 1965.¹¹⁴ In a recent MA dissertation, Cooley has focused on the Cold War in this relationship, but his study is limited in scope and has taken at face value certain contemporary ideas.¹¹⁵ Hilton, in an MPhil thesis examining the early part of this relationship, correctly recognised that British support ‘played an important part in the creation of the “Kenyatta State”’, and focuses on one particularly significant relationship, but misses much of the detail which made up the relationship.¹¹⁶ All of these have tended to focus on one aspect of the relationship, such as the military, rather than recognising the constant interplay between different interests. This thesis will argue that there was no single dominant British interest in Kenya, but the combination of different aims and opportunities combined to make Kenya particularly significant. Britain’s post-colonial relationship with Kenya offered direct benefits for British interests and ‘policy’ was made at multiple levels by civil

¹¹¹ Clapham, ‘Bilateral Relations: Ghana’, p. 252.

¹¹² Clapham, ‘Bilateral Relations: Ethiopia’, p. 258.

¹¹³ Parsons, *1964 Army Mutinies*; the mutinies are further discussed in Chapter 3: 1960-64.

¹¹⁴ Percox, *Imperial Defence*.

¹¹⁵ Edward Cooley, ‘The Cold War and Decolonisation in Kenya: British Foreign Policy, 1960-1965’, MA thesis, University of York, 2011.

¹¹⁶ Michael Hilton, ‘Malcolm MacDonald, Jomo Kenyatta and the Preservation of British Interests in Commonwealth Africa, 1964-68’, MPhil thesis, Trinity College Cambridge, 2009, pp. 31, 50.

servants, diplomats and soldiers as well as politicians, pursuing and valuing multiple aspects of the relationship.

Defining 'Policy'

This thesis will study British governmental policy, but in doing so it will raise the question of what 'policy' means and how it was made. It is very easy to discuss British policy as a singular defined concept, simply made and implemented, but this was in fact a much more complex process. Policy was made from a series of multiple decisions taken at varying times on different issues by various people. As Lindblom argues, policy 'is not made once and for all; it is made and re-made endlessly'.¹¹⁷ Policy-making was not necessarily a result of considered discussions of strategy or based on clear long-term goals, with the national interest 'not something which can be objectively determined but what the decision-makers perceive it to be'.¹¹⁸ Policy was made through a series of decisions based on precedent, ideas of national interest, circumstances, and pragmatism. Influences merged and varied to encourage certain recommendations and decisions.¹¹⁹ As Schmidt has argued, 'governments are not sentient beings with desires, will, and the capacity to act. Yet the need for shorthand sometimes leads to the personification of political structures'.¹²⁰ This thesis will attempt not to discuss states as singular and autonomous entities – 'Kenya' and 'Britain' – but rather as a series of institutions and individuals pursuing their own agendas; there was 'not one calculating decision-maker'.¹²¹

A study of foreign policy is by its nature a study of policy-makers, as to understand the 'policies' followed, it is necessary to understand who was making decisions and how they did so. High

¹¹⁷ Charles E. Lindblom, 'The Science of 'Muddling Through'' *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1959), p. 86.

¹¹⁸ Avi Shlaim, Peter Jones, Keith Sainsbury, *British Foreign Secretaries since 1945* (Newton Abbot, 1977), p. 14.

¹¹⁹ See Wallace, *Foreign Policy Process*, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 3.

¹²¹ Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, 'Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications', in Raymond Tanter and Richard H. Ullman (eds.), *Theory and Policy in International Relations* (Princeton, 1972), p. 42.

Commissions and embassies are key to this process, and ‘who we choose as ambassadors, where we send them and what we ask them to do *are* foreign policy’.¹²² In 1998 Wolfe argued that ‘the ambassador does not have a prominent place in discussion of foreign policy’.¹²³ Recently, however, there has been a growing historiographical interest in the work of diplomats, with a series of witness seminars and several edited collections on Britain’s overseas embassies.¹²⁴ Changes to diplomatic practice in the twentieth century, such as the increased speed of communications and technology, and the growth of summit diplomacy, had meant ambassadors were thought by some increasingly moribund.¹²⁵ Yet resident ambassadors have remained and continued to be valued. As Berridge and Young have argued, the key importance of embassies was their permanence as ‘a constant presence on the ground’.¹²⁶ This thesis will examine the role of the Britain’s diplomats in Nairobi and the politicians and civil servants in London to address the question of who the policy-makers were.

Another key question of this thesis, and a crucial influence on how policies were made, were British claims to knowledge, the nature of this presumed knowledge and (mis)understanding. The ideas of individual Britons about Kenya were shaped by their experiences, by who they talked to within Kenya, and by whose views they privileged. Diplomats working on Kenya were expected to provide local knowledge and expertise, and when there were explicit discussions over policy claims to knowledge

¹²² His emphasis. R. Wolfe, ‘Still Lying Abroad? On the Institution of the Resident Ambassador’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1998), p. 35.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹²⁴ See Rogelia Pastor-Castro and John W. Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy: British Ambassadors and Anglo-French Relations 1944-79* (Basingstoke, 2013); Michael F. Hopkins, Saul Kelly and John W. Young (eds.), *The Washington Embassy: British Ambassadors to the United States, 1939-77* (Basingstoke, 2009); M. D. Kandiah (ed.), ‘Witness Seminar: The Role and Functions of the British High Commission in New Delhi’, held 17 November 2011, (Institute of Contemporary British History, <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/icbh/witness/PDFfiles/NewDelhi.pdf>, accessed 10 September 2014); Gillian Staerck and Michael D. Kandiah (eds.), ‘The Role of HM Embassy in Washington’, held 18 June 1997, (Institute of Contemporary British History, 2002, <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/icbh/witness/PDFfiles/Washington.pdf>, accessed 27 October 2014); Gillian Staerck (ed.), ‘The Role of HM Embassy in Moscow’, held 8 March 1999, (Institute of Contemporary British History, 2002, <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/icbh/witness/PDFfiles/Moscow.pdf>, accessed 9 December 2014).

¹²⁵ Jeremy Black, *A History of Diplomacy* (London, 2010), p. 210.

¹²⁶ G. R. Berridge and John W. Young, ‘Conclusion’, in Michael F. Hopkins, Saul Kelly and John W. Young (eds.), *The Washington Embassy: British Ambassadors to the United States, 1939-77* (Basingstoke, 2009), p. 233.

mattered. But this knowledge was often flawed: as Vital has argued, diplomats work on ‘matters over which their control is severely restricted, of which their knowledge can never be better than imperfect and which they must generally approach without the tactical and intellectual advantages of unambiguous and wholly appropriate goals’.¹²⁷ A belief of knowledge could sometimes encourage misreading and inaccurate analysis. British self-confidence was coupled with a lack of self-awareness, contributed to by a combination of racism and amnesia, which allowed a succession of British officials to believe that they knew best what was in Kenya’s interests, while forgetting the problematic nature of Britain’s recent past in Kenya.

British decision-making was often pragmatic, not always coherent or clearly defined, but there were some consistent aims. At the simplest – and in some ways most important – level, British actors consistently sought simply to promote and ensure ‘friendly’ relations with Kenya. As Young argues, ‘promotion of “friendly relations” may seem an idealistic view of the intentions of officials employed to protect their country’s interests. But ... the promotion of friendliness can be the most effective way to achieve general ends’.¹²⁸ For British diplomats, soldiers and politicians this was certainly true regarding Kenya. Prior to independence they hoped to make ‘friends’ among emerging nationalists. When it became apparent that with Kenyatta they had, to at least some degree, succeeded, ensuring Kenyatta remained a ‘friend’ of Britain was their overriding aim. British decision-makers hoped for a positive relationship in which Kenya would remain favourable and beneficial to Britain. The comments of one diplomat on relationships with the United States seem equally applicable to Kenya: ‘the general theory was that goodwill created goodwill. And maintaining goodwill with a country that can at some stage be of help to you is worthwhile, even if you can’t see the way in which that is going to be supplied’.¹²⁹ A general positive atmosphere was more significant than any single tangible outcome.

¹²⁷ David Vital, *The Making of British Foreign Policy* (London, 1968), p. 13.

¹²⁸ Young, *Twentieth-Century Diplomacy*, p. 62.

¹²⁹ Nicholas Henderson, in ‘The Role of HM Embassy in Washington’.

The broad objectives shaped by these multiple relationships were also fairly consistent, although the detail of what was pursued shifted. Simmonds' fiftieth anniversary 'Happy Birthday' message highlighted some of the key aspects of the Anglo-Kenyan relationship, and the similarity with 1960s-70s ideas of British interests is striking.¹³⁰ These included a significant military relationship; economic connections in aid, trade and investment; tourism and education; a stake in Kenyan security; and for Kenya to remain a partner – in 2013 in the 'war on terror', previously in the Cold War.¹³¹ Making policy involved constant decisions about how to balance and pursue these various interests. Kenya came to be 'seen as one of the post-colonial success stories';¹³² particularly economically, with a growth rate of 5.4 per cent across 1963-78 and 'a reputation for stability and order'.¹³³ Kenya was a strategically significant colony for Britain, and 1950s British planning included Kenya as a necessary staging post.¹³⁴ The army inherited by independent Kenya was British trained and led.¹³⁵ These military connections were sustained as African states by necessity had to look to outside suppliers to build up their militaries, with no local arms industry.¹³⁶ Clayton in 1986 described training and military connections as 'arrangements of minimal political and military significance'.¹³⁷ But in fact, military links were crucial to British thinking about Kenya and, as will be argued, a significant benefit Britain received from Kenya.¹³⁸ They also shaped how influential Kenyans understood the possibilities of their relationship with Britain.

¹³⁰ See for example: S. Darling to Whitney, 'BAT lunch: Mr Gecaga', 3 April 1973, TNA FCO 31/1508/4.

¹³¹ Simmonds, 'At just 50'.

¹³² Alan Munro, interview by Poppy Cullen, Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, London, 13 March 2014.

¹³³ Arthur Hazlewood, *The Economy of Kenya: The Kenyatta Era* (Oxford, 1979), p. 76; G. K. Ikiara and T. Killick, 'The Performance of the Economy since Independence', in Tony Killick (ed.), *Papers on the Kenyan Economy: Performance, Problems and Policies* (London, 1981), p. 5.

¹³⁴ David French, *Army, Empire and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy, 1945-1971* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 255-9.

¹³⁵ Malcolm Page, *A History of the King's African Rifles and East African Forces* (London, 1998); Timothy H. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, 1999).

¹³⁶ Chester A. Crocker, 'External Military Assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa', *Africa Today*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1968), p. 16.

¹³⁷ Anthony Clayton, 'Foreign Intervention in Africa', in Simon Baynham (ed.), *Military Power and Politics in Black Africa* (London, 1986), p. 223.

¹³⁸ Crocker, 'External Military Assistance', pp. 17-8; M. J. V. Bell, 'Military assistance to independent African states', *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 5, No. 15 (1964), pp. 11-6.

This thesis examines the nature of the Anglo-Kenyan relationship and argues that this constant ‘policy-making’ involved equally constant negotiation. Historians have not always recognised this. Chikeka argued that ‘Foreign economic assistance to African states is often concentrated on one European source and thus allows manipulation, management, and decision-making from the outside’.¹³⁹ Cooley speculated upon ‘a deal between the British Government and Kenyatta: that Britain would keep Kenyatta in power as long as they could keep direct control over the central government machine’;¹⁴⁰ whilst Okoth argued that American policy ‘left Kenya with virtually no right to determine its own form of government and economy’.¹⁴¹ In fact, these views give too much power to outside influences to determine Kenyan policies. Rouvez has argued that when interests ‘clashed’, former colonial powers ‘had to interact by cajoling or coercing’;¹⁴² but more often in Kenya the British reacted by negotiating. British officials were concerned about being seen to be, or indeed actually, directing Kenyan decisions, and thereby losing Kenyan goodwill – which was ultimately their most important asset. Yet nor is it true, as Clayton argued in 1980, that ‘Kenyatta has seen benefits without constraints upon his military and foreign policy as a result of the British alliance’.¹⁴³ British policy-makers did not dictate, but neither were they disinterested or without a sense of their own interests. British diplomats, politicians and soldiers offered a lot to Kenya, but they did so because they gained much in return, and, as will be highlighted throughout this thesis, the balance of advantages was something decision-makers in both countries sought to influence to their advantage. Simmonds’ description of the relationship as ‘mutually beneficial’ is particularly significant.¹⁴⁴ Negotiation is a key part of diplomacy and ‘an indispensable mechanism for states’,¹⁴⁵ but the term in this context has a broader application than

¹³⁹ Chikeka, *New African States*, p. 109.

¹⁴⁰ Cooley, ‘Cold War and Decolonisation’, p. 60.

¹⁴¹ P. Godfrey Okoth, *United States of America’s Foreign Policy toward Kenya 1952-1969* (Nairobi, 1992), p. 113.

¹⁴² Rouvez, *Disconsolate Empires*, p. 4.

¹⁴³ Anthony Clayton, ‘The Military Relations between Great Britain and Commonwealth Countries, with particular reference to the African Commonwealth Nations’, in W. H. Morris-Jones and Georges Fischer (eds.), *Decolonisation and After: The British and French Experience* (London, 1980), p. 205.

¹⁴⁴ Simmonds, ‘At just 50’.

¹⁴⁵ Paul W. Meerts, ‘The Changing Nature of Diplomatic Negotiation’, in Jan Melissen (ed.), *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 79-80.

purely formal diplomatic negotiations; rather, it is intended to convey the atmosphere of exchange and willingness to talk which characterised relations at multiple levels. Policy-making was a two way process between British and Kenyan politicians, diplomats and civil servants, and interaction between 'policy-makers' from both countries formed the relationship.

This thesis will highlight the ability of leading Kenyans to shape this relationship to their advantage. In many instances, British involvement stemmed from Kenyan requests. Okumu in 1977 argued that '*Kenya continues to cultivate Britain as her major source of economic and technical assistance*';¹⁴⁶ whilst Cheeseman has suggested 'continuity can only be understood as stemming from the *conscious choice* of the KANU executive to reinstitute the structures of colonial rule'.¹⁴⁷ The role of Kenyan agency in this relationship was crucial. As Pinkney argues, though focusing on a later period, these were 'relationships which are clearly unequal, yet do not imply complete subordination' – a crucial distinction.¹⁴⁸ Factions within Kenya, as well as institutional interests in Britain, sought to gain the greatest possible benefit for themselves from each other. This relationship could only be pursued by British actors through contact with Kenyans, and was only successful because a Kenyan elite around Kenyatta decided it was in their interests to foster this.

Personal relations were crucial to these negotiations. These have typically been associated with French post-colonial relations with Africa, which were characterised by personal networks between leaders. Particularly significant was Jacques Foccart who 'became the embodiment of a special personalized style of Francophone relationship', establishing extensive networks with leading Africans.¹⁴⁹ France's personal networks were symbolic of the strength of their post-colonial relationships. But these personal relationships were not only significant to France; as Clapham has argued, 'Politics everywhere comes down to a set of personal interactions between individual human

¹⁴⁶ My emphasis. Okumu, 'Kenya's Foreign Policy', p. 156.

¹⁴⁷ My emphasis. Cheeseman, 'Political Linkage', p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Pinkney, *The International Politics of East Africa* (Manchester, 2001), p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ McNamara, *France in Black Africa*, p. 187.

beings'.¹⁵⁰ British relationships with certain Kenyan individuals greatly affected their actions. Relationships existed at multiple levels: governmental and extra-governmental, formal and informal, personal and institutional. Individual ties were extensive, particularly involving the European and Asian populations in Kenya, as well as with Kenyans who had travelled or studied in Britain. These connections were clearly significant, but this thesis will focus on governmental contact at formal and informal levels; in Cooper's terms, those who controlled the 'gate'.¹⁵¹ By the nature of this kind of personal connections not everything is known; private conversations which were not recorded were no doubt significant but untraceable, and 'formal structures that leave the clearest archival traces are not necessarily the ones that count for the most'.¹⁵² Nonetheless, this thesis tries to reconstruct a sense of these relationships.

Crucial to an understanding of the Anglo-Kenyan relationship is an awareness of the differences between the British and Kenyan states. The British system of government was bureaucratic and institutional, 'best characterised as emphasising consensus'.¹⁵³ This did not mean that those within the British bureaucracy always agreed on the emphasis of priorities; a series of different departments made up the British government and there could be disputes between these. But notwithstanding these differences, the culture of Whitehall fostered a collective identity and 'civil service cohesion' which encouraged a broad sense of the nature of British interests.¹⁵⁴ British diplomats and politicians approached their negotiations with this understanding, as individuals' careers and personal interests were understood in institutional and national terms, which shaped their behaviours and ideas. British 'policy' on any particular issue was the product of negotiation, shaped by relationships, but always –

¹⁵⁰ Clapham, *International System*, p. 89.

¹⁵¹ Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, pp. 156-61.

¹⁵² Cooper, 'Possibility and Constraint', p. 192.

¹⁵³ Grant Jordan and Jeremy Richardson, 'The British Policy Style or the Logic of Negotiation?', in Jeremy Richardson (ed.), *Policy Styles in Western Europe* (London, 1982), p. 81.

¹⁵⁴ Hugh Heclo and Aaron Wildavsky, *The Private Government of Public Money*, Second edition (London, 1981), p. 81.

on the British side – informed by that broad sense of their interests and the parameters of their possible action.

By contrast, the Kenyan state was neo-patrimonial, based on personal ties and client networks.¹⁵⁵

Dimier has described that

from outside, those states resembled any bureaucracy, with its procedural kind of control, its hierarchies, transparency and impersonal rules. From inside, they were taken over by ... a patrimonial kind of authority and legitimacy which rested on bonds of trust, loyalty, mutual dependence and permanent exception to the rules. In that system, characterised by opacity and personal relationships, the distribution of resources to “clients”, usually restricted to a specific clan, was the basis of power¹⁵⁶

Branch and Cheeseman have characterised the Kenyan state as bureaucratic-executive: ‘a particularly strong combination of administrative and executive power underpinned by an alliance of elites’.¹⁵⁷

Institutions were less sites of policy-making than individuals, and formal procedures were often bypassed, with people more important as individuals than for their official position. Jackson and Rosberg argued in 1982 that in much of Africa ‘persons take precedence over rules’.¹⁵⁸ This was the key difference to the British model. The Kenyans who were involved in decision-making and interacting with the British were seeking their own advantage as different factions competed over priorities, policies and contacts. Rather than working to a general sense of national interest – as British policy-makers did – Kenyans sought personal and factional advantage from their contact with Britain and from the foreign policies they pursued.

This thesis therefore focuses upon the interaction between a bureaucratic and a neo-patrimonial state. In seeking Cold War allies, and in the French pursuing close post-colonial personal connections,

¹⁵⁵ See: Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*; Bayart, *Politics of the Belly*; Jennifer A. Widner, *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya: From “Harambee!” to “Nyayo!”* (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 42-5; M. Tamarkin, ‘The Roots of Political Stability in Kenya’, *African Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 308 (1978), pp. 314-8.

¹⁵⁶ Véronique Dimier, ‘Bringing the Neo-Patrimonial State back to Europe: French Decolonization and the Making of the European Development Aid Policy’, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, Vol. 48 (2008), p. 433.

¹⁵⁷ Branch and Cheeseman ‘Politics of Control’, p. 12.

¹⁵⁸ Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley, 1982), p. 10.

external actors have often encouraged African neo-patrimonial systems by focusing on leaders and engaging with them on an individual basis. Dimier has argued that parts of the European Commission ‘fuelled neo-patrimonial practices’;¹⁵⁹ whilst Cooper has argued that ‘It took two sides to foster patrimonialism on the international level ... [with] the internationalization of clientage – cultivated from both side’.¹⁶⁰ The British were no exception to this regarding Kenya. They worked with Kenyans individually, privileging certain contacts, and focused on those they viewed as their ‘friends’, particularly the elite around Kenyatta. Despite their own institutional bureaucracy, in their interaction with the Kenyans, British actors reinforced Kenyan neo-patrimonialism.

Sources and Structure

Focusing on British government policy, this thesis will make extensive use of British government documents from the National Archives, Kew. It uses documents from the CO, Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO), Foreign Office (FO), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Ministry of Defence (MOD), and Ministry of Overseas Development (ODM), as well as the newly migrated Hanslope archive. It also uses British parliamentary debates recorded in Hansard. This will enable comparison of the views of different parts of the British government and the ways policy was decided upon. These sources will also be used to reveal communications between British and Kenyan individuals. Sources from the Kenyan National Archives, Nairobi, will reveal Kenyan policies and communications. The questions of who made policy will also be addressed using the Malcolm MacDonald collection in Durham, autobiographies of both Kenyan and British policy-makers, and interviews with British diplomats conducted as part of this research, as well as those from the British Diplomatic Oral History Programme. This will nuance the institutional focus and allow an exploration of personal views and opinions. The first chapter employs the *Diplomatic Service Lists, Colonial Office*

¹⁵⁹ Dimier, ‘Neo-Patrimonial State’, pp. 434, 450.

¹⁶⁰ Cooper, ‘Possibility and Constraint’, p. 192.

and *Foreign Office Lists*, *Who's Who*, *Who Was Who*, and Oxford Dictionary of National Biography to analyse the backgrounds and careers of the British civil servants and diplomats engaged with Kenya. These sources complement one another by bringing out the personal nature of policy-making and the role of individuals within both the Kenyan and British systems, as well as the more institutional side of policy-making; they also enable comparison of the Kenyan and British sides in the negotiation of this relationship.

Chapter One is a study of the British institutions and individuals involved in making policy towards Kenya from 1960 to 1980. Within the British government, different departments pursued their own priorities in potentially contradictory ways, and this chapter will introduce the theme of how knowledge was passed between and within departments and how potential contradictions were – usually – contained and managed. This chapter examines the mergers of the different overseas offices in the 1960s: the CO, CRO and FO to become the FCO in 1968. This also considers the policy-makers as individuals, analysing the backgrounds and careers of the people working in the departments which focused on Kenya. This chapter argues that there was a broad institutional identity, with many having similar backgrounds and sharing the same assessments of British interests. It thus highlights the bureaucratic nature of the British government. The themes emerging from this chapter about how policy was made, departmental divergence, and institutional mind-sets, will reoccur in later chapters.

Chapter Two considers the Kenyan individuals involved in the relationship, assessing who were the most prominent from the British perspective and how British figures related to them. It argues that Kenyatta was the crucial figure, with long-standing British concern over his eventual succession. He was viewed as the protector of British interests and source of stability in Kenya, particularly due to his decisions to continue British models and practices and the close relationship with Britain. Relationships were formed at high level meetings between the British and Kenyans, which gave certain Kenyans privileged access to British officials. This chapter argues that cultural similarities and accessibility encouraged British policy-makers to work closely with certain individuals. Meanwhile,

other Kenyans were often viewed by Britons through a series of categorical labels which sometimes obscured realities, with British diplomats thinking they understood Kenyan politics more accurately than they did. Yet while British 'knowledge' was often mistaken, and their sense of superiority evidently misplaced, this relative institutional coherence generally gave the UK government collectively a real advantage in negotiations.

The thesis then takes a chronological approach, examining how British 'policy' adapted during this twenty year period beginning in 1960. The period begins and ends with transitions: firstly independence and secondly the succession to Kenyatta. Both had the potential to substantially alter Kenyan politics and British relations with Kenya and were the two main British fixations as they struggled to preserve the relationship with Kenya they wanted. Much of this concerns plans and discussions about contingencies which never came to pass, such as chaos after Kenyatta's death. But these ideas were nonetheless significant as issues civil servants spent time working on and planning for, and which shaped their thinking and assumptions.

Chapter Three covers 1960-64, a period of uncertainty for British observers as they struggled to guide, or even predict, the process of decolonisation and any future relationship. Yet very quickly the interests of British and Kenyan officials came to align, and it was this which meant the relationship continued to be close and beneficial. The final colonial years show the continuities in policy and relationships which underpinned British ideas after independence, and the set of negotiations around decolonisation encouraged a symbiosis of interests between the Kenyan elite and British government. Chapter Four covers 1965-69, a period which involved explicit contest in Kenya between 'moderates' and 'radicals'. Stability was a key consideration, and the British government was – unusually – prepared to offer military guarantees to ensure this. During these years, Kenya was increasingly seen as a 'special' British relationship, with particular benefits and problems.

The 1970s are covered by three chapters. Chapter Five, 1970-73, focuses on the negotiated nature of the British-Kenyan relationship. The period was characterised by multiple negotiations over aid,

military agreements and personal relationships which clearly show that Britain was not in control of this relationship and could not dictate its terms. It highlights the role of Kenyans in shaping policies and what both sides hoped to achieve. The mid-1970s were a more pessimistic period in British ideas about Kenya, as all waited for Kenyatta's death and were uncertain exactly how to approach the future. This is covered in Chapter Six, 1974-July 1978, which ends with Kenyatta's death. Chapter Seven, August 1978-1980, covers the succession of President Moi. British policy-makers had long feared the aftermath of Kenyatta's death, but in his initial years as president, Moi sought to maintain the British relationship and use it to his advantage, pursuing this through a series of visits to Britain. These re-injected a greater sense of optimism into British ideas about the Kenyan relationship as they realised that this would continue under a new president, and that British interests remained protected.

Chapter One: Making 'Policy' (1): British Institutions and Actors

'We are monitoring carefully the activities of other Whitehall Departments ... to ensure that the importance of preserving good Anglo-Kenyan relations is well understood in the formulation of their policies'

M.K. Ewans to Norman Aspin, 2 November 1976¹

Externally, the British government could appear a bureaucratic, institutional system creating a single, defined policy. Internally, however, this was a much less coherent process. As Young argues, 'The Whitehall system sounds rational and tidy, but it does not prevent overlap, confusion and disagreement'.² The British government was actually several interlocking institutions of different departments which could have differing, sometimes competing, priorities, and did not always work in harmony; and as well as formal departmental structures, personal and individual ties also mattered. This necessitated internal bargaining and negotiation before reaching decisions which became 'government policy'. The British ideal of a distinction between politicians who made decisions and civil servants who supplied information and then followed policy may not have entirely represented reality, but despite these differences between individuals and departments, this was a bureaucratic system. General attitudes and assumptions were framed consensually – although 'policy' in the sense of decisions on particular issues could still be subject to negotiation. Thus, while the British government was not quite the smooth bureaucratic machine which people liked to pretend it was, it was a bureaucracy, and British officials all worked within the limits of the system and a set of defined rules. The dynamics of decision-taking (and therefore of 'policy') were fundamentally different to those in Kenya.

¹ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 'Anglo-Kenyan Relations', 2 November 1976, TNA FCO 31/2021/33.

² John W. Young, *The Labour Governments 1964-70, Volume 2: International Policy* (Manchester, 2003), p. 16.

Institutions were made up of individuals and the characteristics and experience of these individuals could influence decisions and planning. A 1978 report expressed the ideal of diplomacy: 'the defence of our interests is mainly a matter of patient persuasion and skilful negotiation ... it is precisely because our power as an individual nation is diminished, while our interests remain global, that Britain's future is more dependent than ever on the skills of those who represent us abroad'.³ This chapter will analyse the civil servants who worked on Kenya, particularly noting the disputed importance attached to ideas of local knowledge and experience. Those making 'policy' towards Kenya were most commonly civil servants rather than ministers, and they tended to share similar backgrounds. Heclo and Wildavsky have argued that civil servants had a sense of joint community, describing this as Whitehall 'Village Life', so that 'despite department allegiances, all officials are part of a greater civil service society'.⁴ These people owed their loyalty to the organisation of the civil service, and this encouraged a shared understanding of the British government and its interests. Reflecting on witness seminars conducted with former diplomats and policy-makers, Kandiah and Staerck highlight 'a remarkable unanimity of views, despite certain areas of divergence and dispute on the details'.⁵ This chapter will explore the government departments which focused on Kenya, recognising that departmental interests were complicated by structural change, with the creation and reforming of departments. During Harold Wilson's premiership, reorganisation of government departments was particularly frequent: in 1964 there were twenty-two departments, Wilson introduced five, then reduced these to twenty-one by 1969.⁶ This too complicates a simplistic reading of government policy.

³ Cmnd. 7308, *The United Kingdom's Overseas Representation* (London, 1978), p. 11.

⁴ Heclo and Wildavsky, *Public Money*, p. 80.

⁵ Kandiah and Staerck, 'At the Top Table', p. 195.

⁶ Richard Clarke, 'The Machinery of Government', in William Thornhill (ed.), *The Modernization of British Government* (London, 1975), pp. 63-8.

Politicians and Civil Servants

Multiple groups within Britain had a potential influence on foreign policy, including the prime minister, cabinet, political parties, ministers, pressure groups, parliament, public opinion, government departments and civil servants.⁷ Regarding Kenya there was ministerial and prime ministerial involvement at certain times, as well as parliamentary and public concern over some issues. There was a degree of British political interest in Kenya, most pronounced prior to independence when colonial policy was under scrutiny. Ministers were most involved in Kenya during the colonial period. Macmillan was more directly involved in decisions regarding Kenya than later prime ministers, and Colonial Secretaries viewed Kenya as one of their priorities. After independence ministers were less involved as Kenya was typically less of a priority. However, on certain key issues ministers did become engaged once more. There were some key flashpoints, on Asian immigration particularly, as well as on military policy, Europeans and land.⁸ Ministers were particularly involved in formal meetings to determine aid and military agreements, and personal contact with British ministers was valued by leading Kenyans. In 1972 one British businessman recommended 'that the visit of a senior Cabinet Minister, if not of the Prime Minister himself, would produce important results very quickly'.⁹ Ministerial visits encouraged personal relations, and demonstrated that Britain attached value to Kenya.¹⁰

However, the level at which most policy was directed and organised was the civil servants and government departments. The roles of civil servants and ministers were understood to be different.¹¹

⁷ See Kunihiro Wakamatsu, 'The Role of Civil Servants in the Formulation of Policy: An Analysis of the Policy Process on Commonwealth Immigration from 1948 to 1964', PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 1998, p. 30.

⁸ For an example of preparing to answer a parliamentary question see: J.M. Bennett to P. Rosling and E. Clay, 'PQ 5136B – Defence Agreement with Kenya', 1976, TNA FCO 31/2022/6; and for examples of parliamentary debates and questions: HC Deb 19 February 1970 vol 796 cc161-2W; HL Deb 11 March 1970 vol 308 cc800-3; HC Deb 23 April 1970 vol 800 cc610-1; HC Deb 27 October 1976 vol 918 c264W.

⁹ Meeting: Lord Aldington and President Kenyatta, 1 December 1972, TNA FCO 31/1211/90.

¹⁰ Leonard Allinson, interview by Jane Barder, British Diplomatic Oral History Project, Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge (BDOHP), 5 March 1996, p. 28.

¹¹ Anthony H. Birth, *The British System of Government*, Ninth edition (London; New York, 1993), p. 141; Wakamatsu, 'Role of Civil Servants', pp. 46-8.

Politicians were to design policy; civil servants, who were apolitical appointments remaining in office regardless of government change and thus meant to be impartial, were to implement it.¹² Feltham's *Diplomatic Handbook* – intended 'to provide a concise but comprehensive source of information' for future diplomats – argued that 'formulation of foreign policy ... is the task of the politician, while the management of international relations and the reconciliation of diverse foreign policy priorities is the task of the diplomat'.¹³ Yet in practice, as has often been recognised, civil servants have a role as policy-makers rather than simply policy-implementers, active in designing and creating policies.¹⁴ This was particularly true regarding Kenya, which was rarely a ministerial priority compared to concerns such as the European or American relationships. Ministers did not have the same depth or breadth of knowledge as civil servants, who built up experience and knowledge of foreign affairs over the course of their careers.¹⁵

Recommendations were made at civil service level before being passed up the hierarchy of authority to head of department, Under-Secretary or minister when necessary.¹⁶ Given the size of government ministries, ministers could not be appraised of all the workings of their departments, and thus 'the majority of internal politicizing occurs between civil servants rather than between civil servants and ministers'.¹⁷ As Birch suggests, 'there is a well-established hierarchy of decision-making, so that a principal knows what he can decide on his own account and what he must refer up'.¹⁸ Civil servants were aware of how much autonomy they had and when they needed higher approval. They hoped to reach consensus, before ministerial level if possible, in a style labelled 'bureaucratic accommodation'

¹² Birth, *British System*, p. 141.

¹³ R. G. Feltham, *Diplomatic Handbook*, Second edition (London and New York, 1977), pp. vi, 1.

¹⁴ See for examples: Dowding, *Civil Service*, p. 2; D. C. Pitt and B. C. Smith, *Government Departments: An Organizational Perspective* (London, 1981), pp. 48-9; Smith, Marsh, and Richards, 'Central Government Departments', p. 583; Wakamatsu, 'Role of Civil Servants', p. 49.

¹⁵ See Wakamatsu, 'Role of Civil Servants', pp. 50-1.

¹⁶ Richard Rose, 'The Political Status of Higher Civil Servants in Britain', in Erza N. Suleiman (ed.), *Bureaucrats and Policy Making: A Comparative Overview* (New York, 1984), p. 148; James Barber, *Who Makes British Foreign Policy?* (Milton Keynes, 1976), p. 58.

¹⁷ Smith, Marsh, and Richards, 'Central Government Departments', p. 581.

¹⁸ Birth, *British System*, p. 162.

by Jordan and Richardson.¹⁹ Vital has argued there was 'a purely intuitive conviction' that policies would be approved.²⁰ Civil servants preferred dealing with one another and sought to avoid involving politicians: 'I really do dislike sending you a series of nagging letters but there is yet another example before me of a difference of view between our two Departments which was not discussed at senior official level before being put to your Secretary of State'.²¹ On most concerns around Kenya there was substantial autonomy for decisions made at civil service level before, or even without, seeking ministerial approval.

Overseas Departments

The overseas departments were responsible for British relations with Kenya. The 1960s was a time of institutional flux in how the British government related to overseas countries. The move from colonial empire to Commonwealth, and thereafter 'the British government's disillusionment with, and scepticism about, the Commonwealth',²² affected the structure of policy-making. Britain's empire had been such a large and important part of external policy-making that until the 1940s there were three offices devoted to it: the India Office, Dominions Office and CO; the FO meanwhile dealt with the rest of the world. The Dominions Office became the CRO in July 1947, with the India Office disbanded a month later as India and Pakistan became independent and moved from that department to the CRO.²³ British contact with former colonies moved from the CO to CRO as territories became independent. Kenya had been within the remit of the CO since 1905, but at independence in December 1963 moved to CRO responsibility.²⁴ The CRO had been intended for the small number of

¹⁹ Jordan and Richardson, 'British Policy Style', p. 81.

²⁰ Vital, *British Foreign Policy*, p. 45.

²¹ Richard King to Michael Palliser, 4 February 1976, TNA OD 67/60/17.

²² Ashton, 'Perspectives on the Commonwealth', p. 76.

²³ F. M. G. Willson, *The Organization of British Central Government, 1914-1964*, Second edition (London, 1968), p. 191.

²⁴ Charles Jeffries, *The Colonial Office*, (London, 1956), p. 70.

Dominions.²⁵ As Joe Garner, Permanent Under-Secretary to the CRO, noted, decolonisation was 'an increased burden on the CRO for which it was not well prepared'.²⁶

This encouraged the idea of merger between overseas departments. In 1962 Duncan Sandys became Secretary of State for both CO and CRO, the first time one person held both positions, although when Wilson became Prime Minister in 1964 he reinstituted two separate appointments. A key step towards amalgamation, despite its indecisiveness, was the report of the Committee on Representational Services Overseas, or Plowden Report, published in 1964. This highlighted the 'different character' of the Commonwealth connection, but simultaneously argued that 'division of responsibility is becoming an anachronism'.²⁷ It therefore recommended creating a unified Diplomatic Service, bringing together the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Trade Commission Services; and this was established on 1 January 1965.²⁸ In the longer term, Plowden argued, a CRO and FO 'amalgamation ... must, in our view, be the ultimate aim. However, to take such a fundamental step now could be misinterpreted as implying a loss of interest in the Commonwealth partnership'; the report thus 'hesitate[d]' to actually recommend immediate amalgamation.²⁹

Although it had not been the Plowden Report's recommendation, Wilson's government increasingly considered merger between CO and CRO. The Private Under-Secretaries of the departments, Garner of CRO and Poynton of CO, were the most powerful civil servants involved. Both valued the distinctive role of their own departments and were concerned for the careers of their staff. Poynton in particular 'fought the Colonial Office corner'.³⁰ Poynton's attitude influenced the pace of the mergers, an

²⁵ Trevor Clark, 'Chalk and Cheese? The Colonial and Diplomatic Services', in John Smith (ed.), *Administering Empire: The British Colonial Service in Retrospect, Proceedings of a conference jointly sponsored by the University of London and the Corona Club held at the Senate House on 27th and 28th May 1999 under the auspices and direction of the Institute of Historical Research and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies* (London, 1999), p. 52.

²⁶ Joe Garner, *The Commonwealth Office 1925-68* (London, 1978), p. 347.

²⁷ Cmnd. 2276, *Report of the Committee on Representational Services Overseas, 1962-63* [Plowden Report] (London, 1964), pp. 4, 12.

²⁸ The Diplomatic Service Order 1964, 20 November 1964, TNA DO 197/47/18.

²⁹ Report of the Committee on Representational Services Overseas, pp. 12-3.

³⁰ S. R. Ashton, 'Poynton, Sir (Arthur) Hilton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/62163>, accessed 11 August 2014.

interesting example of how a theoretically bureaucratic system could be affected by such personal considerations. Poynton recognised in 1964 that the CO 'is bound to shrink further and has no long-term future as a separate Department',³¹ but wanted this to 'be described as a "merger" or "amalgamation" ... not be spoken of in terms of the Colonial Office being absorbed'.³² Poynton hoped 'to avoid the impression that the Colonial Office is a piece of carrion which had better be buried as quickly as possible'.³³ The Colonial Secretary liked the title of 'Commonwealth Office' for the new department, and Garner liked that its initials would continue with the Colonial Office 'CO'.³⁴ Decision-makers were trying to satisfy everyone and ensure a sense of collective civil service solidarity. Merger occurred on 1 August 1966, coinciding with Poynton's retirement, and Garner became Permanent Under-Secretary for the new Commonwealth Office.³⁵

Quickly thereafter, the new department's amalgamation with the FO was considered. By the mid-1960s the differentiation of foreign from colonial and Commonwealth policy was being challenged; as Garner argued in 1967, 'no-one would pretend that our relations with Commonwealth countries are more friendly than our relations with the United States or, indeed, that our relations with African countries are more friendly than our relations with Western Europe'.³⁶ However, this did not mean merger was necessarily popular. Colin Imray of the CRO recalls being 'horrified to learn in 1965 that the FO and the CRO were to be merged. My first reaction was to write to the Australian Public Service Board to ask if I could transfer to the Australian Government Service', although he did not do so.³⁷ Others, however, did not expect merger to 'be quite such a traumatic experience as some people

³¹ Hilton Poynton minute, January 1964, TNA DO 197/20/5.

³² Hilton Poynton to Saville Garner, 20 January 1964, TNA DO 197/20/5.

³³ H. Poynton to Secretary of State, 19 June 1964, TNA DO 197/20/21.

³⁴ Longford to Prime Minister, 'Merger of the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office', 1 March 1966, TNA FO 366/3581; Saville Garner to Secretary of State, 19 June 1964, TNA DO 197/20/19. Here, CO will refer only to Colonial Office, not Commonwealth Office.

³⁵ Press Notice: Merger of the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office, 8 June 1966, TNA FO 366/3582.

³⁶ Saville Garner, 'The future of the Commonwealth Office and Foreign Office: A Personal View', 2 February 1967, TNA FCO 77/31/1.

³⁷ Colin Imray, 'Memoir', BDOHP, 2002, p. 4.

fear'.³⁸ Plans were made for amalgamation in 1969 or 1970.³⁹ Some joint internal departments were created and by March 1968 eighteen of seventy-two were combined.⁴⁰ But the timing was sped up by political events: at the resignation of George Brown as Foreign Secretary in March 1968, the Prime Minister announced the merger would occur in October.⁴¹ Wilson argued that he had done so 'to make it clear that the decisive option in this matter had then been taken'.⁴² This made the process quicker than had been anticipated and the FCO was created in October 1968.

One issue arising from the mergers was the number of personnel transferred from CO and CRO. This was often seen as an FO absorption: Wallace has argued that the 'FCO was still, recognizably, the Foreign Office, absorbing other Departments and Services without losing its character'.⁴³ Leonard Allinson, originally from CRO, recalled that 'everyone at the Foreign [and Commonwealth] Office is Foreign Office based and nobody in the Commonwealth Office sat in a senior position there for very long after the merger'.⁴⁴ That it is still typically referred to as the 'Foreign Office' rather than FCO is a sign of this primacy. Part of the rationale for the mergers was a reduction in staff numbers. In 1968, the merger committee hoped to 'cut out about ten of the 55 Departments'.⁴⁵ A CRO civil servant who worked on staffing at the time recalled that 'the pressure was to reduce CRO staff because it was believed, and I think it was true, that the CRO had been more lavishly staffed than the Foreign Office, certainly in some of the bigger missions'.⁴⁶ It was explicit policy that CRO rather than FO staff were more likely to lose their jobs due to merger. Lloyd notes that 'thirty who were considered not up to

³⁸ Mark Allen to C. Crowe, 'The Future of the Commonwealth Office and Foreign Office', 8 February 1967, TNA FCO 77/31/1.

³⁹ J.M. Heath to Larmour, 'Merger of the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Office', 23 February 1968, TNA FCO 77/31/14.

⁴⁰ The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *The Merger of the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Office, 1968* (London, 1968), pp. 6-7.

⁴¹ Christopher Pollitt, *Manipulating the Machine: Changing the Pattern of Ministerial Departments, 1960-83* (London, 1984), p. 73.

⁴² Prime Minister to Foreign Secretary, 19 March 1968, TNA FCO 77/31/30.

⁴³ Wallace, *Foreign Policy Process*, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Leonard Allinson, interview, p. 8.

⁴⁵ 'Merger: Agreed Paper by the Merger Committee (Revised)', 9 May 1968, TNA FCO 77/41/Annex A.

⁴⁶ J.K. Hickman, interview by D.M. McBain, BDOHP, 18 December 1995, p. 12.

FCO work were given early retirement'.⁴⁷ As this makes clear, FO staff were thought to be more qualified, with the CRO staff those potentially 'not up to' it. One diplomat thought 'most of the more capable CRO officers adapted quickly to Foreign Office realism'.⁴⁸ However, as this makes explicit, it was the CRO staff who had to adapt. There were indeed reductions: 'Over one hundred posts have been saved in the first phase of the merger, in addition to the 398 previously saved at home since the unified Diplomatic Service was set up'.⁴⁹ The choice of language that the posts had been 'saved' is interesting: clearly this was meant to appeal to an external public and government concerned by staffing costs rather than those who worked within the departments, who would be unlikely to relish their posts being 'saved'.

Other Departments

During the later twentieth century diplomacy increasingly involved other departments as the divisions between domestic and foreign policy became less clear-cut.⁵⁰ Policies towards Kenya could affect and be influenced by multiple departments. The three most significant were MOD, Treasury, and ODM. These departments had different and sometimes conflicting priorities. The Treasury was crucial as it controlled the budgets of each department and thus had greatest oversight.⁵¹ Britain's economic weakness during these years meant a strict control of budgets. Wallace has described Treasury 'involvement [as] the most direct, the most ancient, and the least amenable to Foreign Office direction'.⁵² Different departmental priorities regarding finance were clear, as typically Treasury wanted to restrict spending whilst other departments hoped for the maximum possible amount to

⁴⁷ Lorna Lloyd, *Diplomacy with a Difference: The Commonwealth Office of High Commissioner, 1880-2006* (Leiden, 2007), p. 250.

⁴⁸ Colin Imray, 'Memoir', p. 4.

⁴⁹ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *The Merger*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration*, Second edition (London, 2011), p. 218.

⁵¹ See Birth, *British System*, p. 156; Smith, Marsh and Richards, 'Central Government Departments', p. 573.

⁵² Wallace, *Foreign Policy Process*, p. 40.

finance their desired outcomes.⁵³ This could lead to conflict, but Thain and Wright have highlighted that departments 'cannot allow relations to break down' as they needed to keep a good working relationship with the Treasury.⁵⁴ For the Treasury, Kenya was a very small part of the sum of their work, but control of the finance allocated to Kenya ensured that their role was crucial to foreign policy-making.

MOD had a substantial interest in Kenya. During these two decades, defence finance was cut and perceptions of British defence policy shifted. The key decisions were to leave east of Suez and to focus on a 'smaller, professional armed forces, and a potent nuclear strike force' rather than large conventional army.⁵⁵ MOD was created in 1964 from previous multiple service departments, and Denis Healey as Minister of Defence 1964-70 was key to this reshaping.⁵⁶ There was also some overlap between foreign and defence policy-making: FCO had a Defence Department, whilst MOD had 'its own "foreign service" in the 150 or so service attachés and their substantial staffs stationed in overseas missions in nearly seventy foreign countries'.⁵⁷ The role of these attachés was to ensure military relationships 'by exchanging military information, to do what can be done to sell military equipment of British manufacture, [and] to act as the immediate go-between in strategical [sic] planning'.⁵⁸ Defence and air attachés were stationed in Kenya, and provided an alternative route of communication directly to MOD.⁵⁹

⁵³ Heclo and Wildavsky, *Public Money*, p. 87.

⁵⁴ Colin Thain and Maurice Wright, *The Treasury and Whitehall: The Planning and Control of Public Expenditure, 1976-1993* (Oxford, 1995), p. 205.

⁵⁵ Adrian Smith, 'Command and Control in Postwar Britain Defence Decision-Making in the United Kingdom, 1945-1984', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1991), p. 305. See also Michael Dockrill, *British Defence since 1945* (Oxford, 1988).

⁵⁶ William Jackson, *Britain's Defence Dilemma: An Inside View: Rethinking British Defence Policy in the Post Imperial Era* (London, 1990), p. 101; Peter Nailor, 'Denis Healey and Rational Decision-Making in Defence', in Ian Beckett and John Gooch (eds.), *Politicians and Defence: Studies in the Formulation of British Defence Policy 1845-1970* (Manchester, 1981), pp. 154-177. MOD will be used here to refer to all prior defence ministries as well as the unified MOD.

⁵⁷ Wallace, *Foreign Policy Process*, p. 43.

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Moorhouse, *The Diplomats: The Foreign Office Today* (London, 1977), pp. 335-6.

⁵⁹ See for example: P. Rosling to Mellor and Watkins, 'MOD Assistance to Kenya for President Kenyatta's Funeral', 1 September 1978, TNA FCO 31/2319/194.

ODM was the other crucial department relating to Kenya. This department was created by the incoming Labour government in 1964, and, as Pollitt argues, was 'another example of the implicit theory that creation of a new, separate department could give a new emphasis and impetus within an established policy field'.⁶⁰ Like the mergers to FCO, this was a source of debate and differing departmental attitudes.⁶¹ It was described by one of its staff, however, as 'a very exciting Ministry to belong to'.⁶² The creation of a new department also showed recognition of the increasing prominence of aid as 'a major activity of Government', a continuation of the idea that Britain had a responsibility and interest in development.⁶³ In 1970, the Conservative government merged ODM into FCO as the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), before Labour re-established ODM in 1974, though this time without a Cabinet Minister.⁶⁴ Killick has argued that 'the contrasts between the two situations were not in practice as dramatic as might have been expected', but where the department was placed and whether its minister was in Cabinet was a symbolic statement about the primacy attached to the government's aid programme.⁶⁵

The key issue, then, was the relationship between departments. Foreign policy-making was 'a shared concern' and often entailed seeking cooperation between departments to find agreement.⁶⁶ The role of informal and personal communication between civil servants could be vital.⁶⁷ There were, according to one former Permanent Under-Secretary at MOD, 'major and complex negotiations to hammer out policies'.⁶⁸ In another context, Pieragostini has argued that how 'departments interact as they seek to

⁶⁰ Pollitt, *Manipulating the Machine*, p. 72.

⁶¹ D. J. Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development, Volume 4: Changes in British Aid Policy, 1951-1970* (Basingstoke, 1980), p. 19.

⁶² John Coates Edwards, interview by Malcolm McBain, BDOHP, 28 June 2007, p. 11.

⁶³ Morgan, *Colonial Development*, p. 13. See also Cooper, *Africa since 1940*.

⁶⁴ Morgan, *Colonial Development*, p. 30.

⁶⁵ Tony Killick, 'Policy Autonomy and the History of British Aid to Africa', *Development Policy Review*, Vol. 23, No. 6 (2005), p. 669. See also Jim Tomlinson, 'The Commonwealth, the Balance of Payments and the Politics of International Poverty: British Aid Policy, 1958-1971', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2003), pp. 424-9.

⁶⁶ Wallace, *Foreign Policy Process*, p. 45. See also Clive Ponting, *Whitehall: Tragedy and Farce* (London, 1986), p. 97.

⁶⁷ For an example see Thain and Wright, *Treasury and Whitehall*, p. 203.

⁶⁸ Ewen Broadbent, *The Military and Government: From Macmillan to Heseltine* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 6.

impose their images and protect their interests can be crucial for the nature of the decision that finally emerges'.⁶⁹

But there could be friction and misunderstanding between departments with competing priorities. One concern was inclusion in communications relating to policy areas shared between departments, as ODM sometimes struggled to assert its separate role and identity.⁷⁰ More significant than procedural issues, however, was broader dislike and distrust between departments. One revealing example was the unhappy relationship between High Commissioner Eric Norris and ODA in 1971. Those in ODA 'were not altogether happy with the way British High Commission, Nairobi were handling our affairs'.⁷¹ They were internally criticising because they felt their interests in Kenya were not being met. Norris in March 1972 also had criticism about having 'missed important opportunities' – implicitly blaming this on ODA.⁷² This was quite an opaque critique, but in the FCO there was

little doubt that his comments were directed mainly at the ODA. Relations between the High Commission and the ODA have not been happy recently and there have been some sharp exchanges ... In our view Sir E Norris has usually, but not always, had good grounds for his complaints and we have supported him as far as possible⁷³

There was a clear tension between High Commissioner and ODA, with FCO trying to play a moderating role. But this also encouraged some further criticism from FCO: 'ODA have at times been obstinate and inflexible, and their processes are long-winded ... I find their tendency to dispute our political judgements and conclusions (sometimes enlisting Treasury aid against us) very irritating and time-wasting'.⁷⁴ The Planning Staff in FCO used Norris' critique to highlight their own problems with 'other Departments – particularly that Anti-Foreign Office, the Aliens Department of the Home Office – who strive perpetually to impress upon distinguished foreigners their equality of insignificance in British

⁶⁹ Karl Pieragostini, *Britain, Aden and South Arabia: Abandoning Empire* (Basingstoke, 1991), p. 13.

⁷⁰ W.G. Lamarque to R.W. Munro, 27 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/610/100.

⁷¹ A.R. Thomas to King, 28 January 1971, TNA OD 26/277.

⁷² Eric Norris to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Valedictory Despatch', 29 March 1972, TNA FCO 31/1197/1.

⁷³ S.Y. Dawbarn to Permanent Under-Secretary, 25 April 1972, TNA FCO 31/1197/5.

⁷⁴ His emphasis. S.Y. Dawbarn to J.E. Cable, 8 May 1972, TNA FCO 31/1197/7.

eyes'.⁷⁵ The implication was that FCO should control foreign relations and its staff were guarding their departmental responsibility. Yet other departments were engaged as their interests – aid, finance, military, immigration – became involved and departments had to negotiate policies and accord priorities. Viewed up close, the British government was not a single smoothly-functioning organisation, but an assembly of different institutions in which differences of institutional culture or personal rivalries could produce considerable frictions.

East Africa Department

Kenya's place in Whitehall altered as departments merged (table 1). Until independence at the end of 1963, Kenya was covered by the CO's East African Department, staffed by a head of department and two principal officers. This department was wound up after Kenya, the last of Britain's East African territories, became independent. The years 1964–68 were those of greatest institutional flux and the changing departments which covered Kenya reflected this uncertainty about how exactly to organise relationships with former colonies. In 1964 responsibility for Kenya was split into two departments in CRO, one economic and one political. In 1966 these were united: with the creation of ODM, 'the functional division between the geographical and economic Departments is a false one'.⁷⁶ Kenya was additionally included in the FO for 'questions affecting the FO' in the North and East African Department, curiously transferred in 1967 to the West and Central Africa Department.⁷⁷ With the creation of the FCO, the East African Department (EAD) was created.⁷⁸ The mergers thus simplified the policy-making process by limiting Kenya to one department and one set of people.

⁷⁵ J.E. Cable to Dawbarn, 27 April 1972, TNA FCO 31/1197/7.

⁷⁶ 'A Suggested Reorganisation of the Distribution within the C.R.O. of economic and political work on East and West Africa', [January 1966], TNA FO 366/3580.

⁷⁷ For all of this information see *The Diplomatic Service List* (London), (DSL), *The Foreign Office List* (London), and *The Colonial Office List* (London) for the years covered.

⁷⁸ For simplicity, EAD will refer from this point to all of the departments designated with responsibility for Kenya in CO, CRO, FO, Commonwealth Office and FCO, unless there is a need to specify which of these is being referred to.

Table 1: Kenya's Place in the Overseas Offices

Year	Colonial Office	Commonwealth Relations Office	Foreign Office
Up to 1963	East Africa Department		
1964-65		East Africa Economic Department; East Africa Political Department	North and East African Department (for questions affecting FO)
1966	Commonwealth Office: East Africa Department		North and East African Department (for questions affecting FO)
1967-68	Commonwealth Office: East Africa Department		West and Central African Department (for questions affecting FO)
1968 onwards	Foreign and Commonwealth Office: East Africa Department		

EAD was the most important London department where staff focused on Kenya. In 1969 EAD's responsibilities were described as 'Political and bilateral economic relations with Burundi, Ethiopia, French Territory of the Afars and Issas (French Somaliland), Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda. Organisation of African Unity'.⁷⁹ EAD also took the role of coordinating policy, and its staff viewed themselves as most knowledgeable, with some level of oversight. In 1976, 'We are monitoring carefully the activities of other Whitehall Departments ... in order to ensure that the importance of preserving good Anglo-Kenyan relations is well understood in the formulation of their policies'.⁸⁰ Clearly, EAD policy-makers thought they knew best what policy should be, and were keen to ensure that others followed their advice.

Initially, seven Africa Departments were planned in the new FCO: East, West, North, Southern, Central, Rhodesia Political and Rhodesia Economic, with the latter two intended 'to merge with Southern Africa [Department] when [the] situation allows'.⁸¹ This compares to plans for nine Middle East, South Asia

⁷⁹ DSL 1969, p. 8.

⁸⁰ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 'Anglo-Kenyan Relations', 2 November 1976, TNA FCO 31/2021/33.

⁸¹ Draft organisation plan for combined Foreign Office/Commonwealth Office, First stage October 1968, edition of 9 May, TNA FCO 77/41/1.

and General departments, four for dependent territories, five for America and the Far East, six for Europe and the UN, as well as the non-geographical departments.⁸² This indicates a reasonably large commitment to Africa, even allowing for the effect of the Rhodesian situation. This remained under review by the Post-Merger Committee which aimed to reduce the number of departments. In 1969 they suggested the 'ultimate aim should be to cover Africa by two main departments'.⁸³ This suggests a reduced priority being accorded to Africa, although this recommendation was not implemented and EAD remained separate.

EAD heads of department were key figures. The FCO prescribed that heads of department 'remain the pivotal officers of the organisation on whom its good functioning essentially depends'.⁸⁴ One former diplomat regarded head of department as 'one of the best jobs available ... senior enough to give responsibility for policy and advice to Foreign Office Ministers while junior enough to keep one's feet firmly on the ground'.⁸⁵ They were the highest authority within the department, and would take decisions or pass these upwards. During the years 1960-80 there were twelve heads of EAD: one in the final CO years, three within various CRO departments, three within FO, and five in FCO (table 2). All those within FCO and several from FO and CRO had experience in Africa prior to this appointment. Within those appointed from the FCO, there was a mixture of backgrounds, with two coming from CRO with East African experience and three from FO. All were of a similar age at the time of their appointment, and most came directly from, and many went onto, overseas postings, often as Ambassadors or High Commissioners. Length of tenure varied: the longest was seven years for Fernley Webber in CO, followed by five for Martin Ewans in FCO; excluding Webber, the mean was 2.8 years.

⁸² Draft organisation plan for combined Foreign Office/Commonwealth Office, First stage October 1968, edition of 9 May, TNA FCO 77/41/1

⁸³ Record of meeting of Post Merger Committee, 13 February 1969, TNA FCO 79/104/4.

⁸⁴ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *The Merger*, p. 8.

⁸⁵ Alan Campbell, *Colleagues and Friends* (Salisbury, 1988), p. 65.

Table 2: Heads of East Africa Department (CO, CRO, FO, and FCO)⁸⁶

	Role	Start Date	Date of Leaving	Immediately Prior Career	Immediately Following Career	Previous Office Experience	Previous African Experience
Fernley Douglas Webber	Head of CO East Africa Department	1958	1965	Establishment Officer, CO	Deputy High Commissioner Kuching	CO	
Walter Geoffrey Lamarque	Head of CRO East African Economic Department	1964	1965	Deputy High Commissioner Eastern Nigeria	Seconded as Head of ODM East Africa Department	Indian Civil Service, CRO	Nigeria
Norman Aspin	Head of CRO East African Political Department	1963	1966	Deputy High Commissioner Freetown	Counsellor and Head of Chancery, Tel Aviv	CRO, Treasury	Rhodesia, Sierra Leone
Michael Scott	Head of CRO East and Central African Political Department	1965	1968	Counsellor and Director of British Information Services, Delhi	Counsellor, Nicosia	CO, CRO	
Ronald Stratford Scrivener	Head of FO North East African Department	1963	1965	FO	Counsellor and Consul-General, Bangkok	FO	
Denis James Speares	Head of FO North African Department	1965	1968	Counsellor, Nicosia	Head of North African Department	FO	
Charles Martin Le Quesne	Head of FO West and Central African Department	1964	1968	Charge d'Affaires and Consul-General, Bamako	Ambassador, Algiers	FO	Mali, Algeria
Eric George Le Tocq	Head of FCO East African Department	1968	1972	Head of Atlantic Department	High Commissioner Mbabane	CRO	Ghana, Uganda

⁸⁶ *The Colonial Office List 1962* (London, 1962), p. 459; *The Foreign Office List 1965* (London, 1965), p. 382; DSL 1966, pp. 287-8; DSL 1967, pp. 252, 313; DSL 1969, pp. 271, 371; DSL 1970, p. 355; DSL 1972, pp. 229, 329; DSL 1973, p. 245; DSL 1977, pp. 306, 389; DSL 1978, p. 302; DSL 1979, p. 334; DSL 1980, pp. 110, 165, 181, 283, 316, 323; DSL 1986, p. 284; *Who's Who 1990* (London, 1990), p. 1078; *Who's Who 1994* (London, 1994), pp. 488, 607, 1374, 1636, 1703, 1706; *Who's Who 2000* (London, 2000), p. 1214; 'British High Commissioner to retired to Dacre', *Cumberland and Westmorland Herald*, 5 August 2011, <http://www.cwherald.com/a/archive/british-high-commissioner-who-retired-to-dacre.375739.html>, accessed 7 November 2014; 'Sir Martin Le Quesne', *Telegraph*, 10 April 2004, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1458935/Sir-Martin-Le-Quesne.html>, accessed 7 November 2014.

Simon Yelverton Dawbarn	Head of FCO East African Department	1972	1973	Counsellor, Athens	Consul-General, Montreal	FO, Treasury, FCO	Algeria
Martin Kenneth Ewans	Head of FCO East African Department	1973	1978	Counsellor, Dar es Salaam	Deputy High Commissioner New Delhi	CRO, FCO	Nigeria, Tanzania
Alan Gordon Munro	Head of FCO East African Department	1977	1979	Consul-General, Rio de Janeiro	Head of Middle East Department	FO, FCO	Libya
John Adam Robson	Head of FCO East African Department	1979	1982	Head of Chancery and Consul-General, Oslo	Ambassador, Bogota	FO, FCO	Zambia

British High Commission, Nairobi

The British High Commission in Nairobi (BHC) was the other main site of British interaction and 'policy-making'. The High Commission was equivalent to an embassy and ambassador, but a specific form for Commonwealth representatives, initially conferring separate advantages, but by the 1960s essentially the same.⁸⁷ BHC was one of the larger British missions in Africa. In 1966, it consisted of thirty-two diplomats in Nairobi and one in Mombasa, compared to eighteen in Tanzania, seventeen in Uganda, and thirty-eight in Nigeria.⁸⁸ BHC was also a large mission compared to other foreign missions in Kenya. In 1972, BHC was Kenya's largest foreign mission, with twenty-four diplomats, compared to twenty from America, twelve from France, and ten from the Soviet Union, with all other missions having fewer than ten.⁸⁹ This clearly indicates the priority the British Government accorded to their relationship with Kenya.

The staff in BHC included a High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner, and Head of Chancery who was 'the main political officer ... [and] coordinated the running of the High Commission', a new

⁸⁷ Lloyd, *Diplomacy with a Difference*, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁸ DSL 1966.

⁸⁹ A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, 'Diplomacy and Diplomats: The Formation of Foreign Service Cadres in Black Africa', in K. Ingham (ed.), *Foreign Relations of African States: Proceedings of the Twentyfifth Symposium of the Colston Research Society held in the University of Bristol April 4th to 7th, 1973* (London, 1974), p. 291.

position for former CO and CRO countries.⁹⁰ There were also Counsellors and first, second and third secretaries, who could have specific focuses such as information, economics, commercial, agriculture, capital aid, or administration. There could also be advisors and, depending on what was required, these included labour, passport, agricultural, immigration, aid and commercial advisors. The size and composition of BHC remained reasonably similar. From 1965 (when the diplomatic service was created) to 1980, BHC ranged in size from a high of thirty-two to a low of twenty-two diplomats, with an average of twenty-six (table 3). There was also a further staff of lower-ranking civil servants, as well as locally employed staff, although it is harder to find accurate numbers of these. In 1976 there were a total of 115 locally employed staff, focusing mostly on consular work, immigration, registry, secretarial and administrative work.⁹¹ There were also clearly members of the Security Services among the diplomats, although it is hard to identify them and the absence of intelligence documents means it is difficult to write about this part of the relationship.⁹² These people were 'always a presence ... asking [their] own questions, and feeding them into the ... policy and strategic picture'.⁹³ Walton has recently argued that 'the secret services helped the British government to establish and then maintain close liaisons with former colonies', including a meeting prior to independence between Kenyatta and the head of MI5, establishing an intelligence relationship which continued thereafter.⁹⁴

London gained their information about Kenya from BHC and one of the key roles of BHC was to report events and their analysis of these. In debates and discussion over policy, BHC diplomats were expected to provide local knowledge, and it was this which gave them such influence as they had. BHC reacted to events in Kenya, decided what was important to share, who should be spoken to in the Kenyan administration, and whose ideas would be valued. This made personal relationships crucial to claims

⁹⁰ David Goodall, interview by Poppy Cullen, St Chad's College, Durham, 3 September 2013.

⁹¹ Direction of Diplomatic Effort, Country Assessment Paper: Kenya, 1979, TNA FCO 31/2605/24.

⁹² Although some have been identified; for example Frank Steel and Walter Bell: Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action* (Dingle, 1983), p. 157; Calder Walton, *Empire of Secrets: British Intelligence, the Cold War and the Twilight of Empire* (London, 2013), p. 271.

⁹³ Alan Munro, interview.

⁹⁴ Walton, *Empire of Secrets*, pp. 335, 271-2.

of knowledge and influence. Studies of diplomacy and former diplomats have widely recognised the importance of this; as one diplomat described regarding his time in India: 'much the most important thing I had to do there was to get to know a lot of Indians—the largest number possible—and to get to know a certain number of them really rather well'.⁹⁵ Social connections were significant to this, with High Commissioners inviting Kenyan ministers to 'everything from tennis matches to cocktail parties'.⁹⁶ As one civil servant recalled, 'If a High Commissioner could demonstrate that he and his staff had a good local understanding, and if the host country was not at the top of the political agenda in the UK, the recommendations of the post could ... carry great influence in London'.⁹⁷

The functions of diplomatic missions were 'the promotion of friendly ties, the negotiation of agreements, lobbying, clarifying intentions and promoting trade, as well as propagandising, political reporting and providing policy advice to their government'.⁹⁸ Black aptly described diplomacy as 'the implementation of policy through accredited persuasion'.⁹⁹ Table 4 shows the division of work BHC themselves believed they did during 1979. As this indicates, consular and immigration work, aid and exports took most time. Civil servants were ranked according to grades, with ten in total and grade 1 the highest; and the division amongst grades is also interesting, with the highest grades spending most time on political work, and defence handled exclusively by the middle grades.

There were multiple forms of communication between British civil servants in London and diplomats in Nairobi. These included telegrams, tele-letters and letters as well as 'the regular flow of papers, telegrams and files, telephone calls, and informal meetings'.¹⁰⁰ Moorhouse estimated that in 1977, 600,000 telegrams were sent between London and missions abroad.¹⁰¹ Telephone calls between

⁹⁵ Robert Wade-Gery, in 'British High Commission in New Delhi', p. 12.

⁹⁶ Hilton, 'MacDonald, Kenyatta', p. 27.

⁹⁷ Colin Imray, 'Memoir', p. 5.

⁹⁸ Michael F. Hopkins, Saul Kelly and John W. Young, 'Introduction', in Michael F. Hopkins, Saul Kelly and John W. Young (eds.), *The Washington Embassy: British Ambassadors to the United States, 1939-77* (Basingstoke, 2009), p. 1.

⁹⁹ Black, *A History of Diplomacy*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Barber, *British Foreign Policy*, p. 49.

¹⁰¹ Moorhouse, *Diplomats*, p. 179.

London and Nairobi in the 1960s were infrequent: during Edward Peck's two years as High Commissioner, 1966-68, he received only one phone call 'to ask the whereabouts of Malcolm Macdonald, to which I was able to reply that I had no idea'.¹⁰² Communication between policy-makers could be both formal and personal, and was never purely institutional. In his first letter to a new member of EAD, Timothy Bellers in BHC handwrote a 'PS' to his formal letter on 'East German links with Kenya': 'Welcome to East Africa Department – I look forward to much active (and I hope from us stimulating) correspondence between us'.¹⁰³ One of the most formalised methods of communication was the despatch.¹⁰⁴ These were formal communiques sent at the highest level of foreign policy-making between High Commissioner and Secretary of State. High Commissioners typically wrote an introductory despatch, annual reviews, and periodic despatches on important events, and outgoing High Commissioners sent a Valedictory 'parting shot'.¹⁰⁵ These were sometimes widely circulated within Whitehall as one of the ways that knowledge about Kenya was disseminated.

¹⁰² Edward H. Peck, *Recollections 1915-2005* (New Delhi, 2005), pp. 215, 223.

¹⁰³ T.J. Bellers to Gordon Wallace, 'East German links with Kenya', 8 March 1972, TNA FCO 31/1198/13.

¹⁰⁴ A selection of the subjects thought suitable or necessary for despatches were: Geoffrey De Freitas to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 'Kenya: Detailed Discussions on Defence and Financial Assistance', 21 April 1964, TNA DO 213/135/109; Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'The Political Situation in Kenya: The Present', 5 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/32; Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Kenya: Future British Policy', 13 June 1969, TNA FCO 31/358/1; A.A. Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Africanisation in Kenya', 26 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1507/2; S.J.G. Fingland to Anthony Crosland, 'Visit to Kenya by the Secretary of State for Defence', 19 January 1977, TNA DEFE 13/1252/44.

¹⁰⁵ G. R. Berridge and Lorna Lloyd, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy*, Third edition (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 382.

Table 3: Number of Diplomats in BHC¹⁰⁶

Year	Total in BHC	Counsellors and High Commissioner	First Secretaries	Second Secretaries	Third Secretaries	Defence Advisors	Others*
1965	28	4	11	9	0	2	2
1966	32	5	10	10	2	2	3
1967	31	5	11	8	2	2	3
1968	24	4	11	6	1	2	0
1969	27	3	14	7	1	2	0
1970	27	3	12	9	1	2	0
1971	24	3	12	5	2	2	0
1972	24	3	9	8	1	2	1
1973	22	3	8	6	2	2	1
1974	23	3	8	8	2	2	0
1975	29	3	10	10	0	2	4
1976	26	3	8	8	1	2	4
1977	28	3	10	8	1	2	4
1978	24	3	10	6	0	2	3
1979	24	3	6	7	0	2	6
1980	26	3	8	5	2	2	6

* Includes variously: Agricultural Adviser, Chief Clerk, Passport Officer, Immigration Officer, Commercial Officer, Accountant, Archivist, Labour Adviser

¹⁰⁶ DSL 1966, pp. 27-8; DSL 1967, pp. 30-31; DSL 1968, pp. 31-2; DSL 1969, p. 32; DSL 1970, p. 32; DSL 1971, p. 32; DSL 1972, pp. 32-3; DSL 1973, pp. 32-3; DSL 1974, p. 33; DSL 1975, p. 33; DSL 1976, pp. 66-7; DSL 1977, p. 67; DSL 1978, p. 65; DSL 1979, p. 65; DSL 1980, pp. 41-2.

Table 4: Functional Analysis of BHC work, compiled by BHC in 1979¹⁰⁷

Function	Grades 1-4 (High Commissioner, Deputy, Counsellors)	Grades 5-8 (First and Second Secretaries)	Grades 9-10 (Third Secretaries)	Locally Engaged Staff	Percentage of Time
Consular	8	13	16	14	33.5
Immigration	2	9	14	9	23.0
Aid	17	15	14	5	18.0
Export Promotion	7	12	14	3	12.0
Political (including labour affairs)	21	9		1	5.0
Defence		15			5.0
Economic (including Scientific and technical)	16	3		1	2.5
Support of UK Domestic Policies	1	1		1	0.5
Culture	1	1		1	0.5

High Commissioners

The role of the High Commissioner, and until independence the Governor, as the 'man on the spot' was a crucial one. While the impact of the earlier 'men on the spot' on British colonial rule has been widely recognised, there has been less attention to the role of these men during decolonisation.¹⁰⁸ Onslow has recently addressed the case of Christopher Soames in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and has argued that

a Governor could make a marked contribution to the process and tone of political transition through a combination of political realism, individual quirks, and personal charm which proved a vital adjunct to big decisions made in Whitehall on the basis of geo-political

¹⁰⁷ Country Assessment Paper: Kenya, 1979, TNA FCO 31/2605/24.

¹⁰⁸ Young, *Twentieth-Century Diplomacy*, p. 60.

imperatives. Old fashioned diplomacy and diplomats therefore should not be airbrushed from history as key individuals navigated the rocky terrain of decolonisation¹⁰⁹

The role of High Commissioners was fundamentally different; Governors ran colonies. Yet their position as those on the ground reporting from post meant that there were similar expectations of expertise and individuals could be influential, while the language of 'man on the spot' was still used about High Commissioners.¹¹⁰ Young has argued that 'the days of "the man on the spot" pushing policy in a certain direction were not necessarily over ... the twentieth-century ambassador was no mere "marionette"'.¹¹¹ The importance of the diplomats 'on the spot' will be highlighted throughout this thesis, with High Commissioners sometimes able to influence and shape British assessments and actions. Most significant in his ability to shape policy in the metropole was Kenya's last Governor, only Governor-General, and first High Commissioner, Malcolm MacDonald.¹¹²

The High Commissioner was the highest ranking British diplomat in Kenya. The Nairobi posting was a significant one in the hierarchy of ambassadorial positions. Moorhouse, writing in 1977, argued that 'a nation sends its most talented representatives to those places abroad which, for one reason or another, are of the most concern to it'.¹¹³ At ambassadorial level in mid-1975, fourteen countries had grade 1 ambassadors, with Cairo and Lagos the two African posts; in grade 2 were twenty-three including Cape Town and Nairobi.¹¹⁴ This offers an indication of the African priorities of the British Foreign Service, and of Kenya's primacy in British relationships with East Africa. Those who became High Commissioner in Kenya had progressed to almost the highest grade; aside from MacDonald,

¹⁰⁹ Sue Onslow, 'The Man on the Spot: Christopher Soames and Decolonisation of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia', *Britain and the World*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2013), p. 68.

¹¹⁰ See L. Reid to Campbell, 18 September 1967, TNA FCO 16/117/88.

¹¹¹ John W. Young, 'Conclusion', in Rogelia Pastor-Castro and John W. Young (eds.), *The Paris Embassy: British Ambassadors and Anglo-French Relations 1944-79* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 214.

¹¹² See Hilton, 'MacDonald, Kenyatta'.

¹¹³ Moorhouse, *Diplomats*, p. 41.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.

'whose distinguished political career had already placed him well beyond this', all seven High Commissioners in Nairobi until 1980 received the KCMG.¹¹⁵

The choice of High Commissioners to Kenya after independence is thus revealing (table 5). Although the role of all of them was the same, 'some do of course carry more weight than others'.¹¹⁶ The first two were political appointments, who will be discussed in some detail. These 'non-professional' heads of mission were fairly rare in British diplomatic practice, but appointed most often to America and important missions at key times.¹¹⁷ The following High Commissioners were more conventional career diplomats (though Antony Duff later became head of MI5), though there was no single model and they came from FO, CRO and CO backgrounds. Three High Commissioners, Peck, Eris Norris, and Duff, were appointed in their early fifties, and all three returned to become Deputy Under-Secretary of State in FCO. For Stanley Fingland and John Williams, Nairobi was their final posting before retirement, and both also had the most African experience. For Peck and Norris it was their first Ambassadorial and first Africa posting, whilst the others had experience as High Commissioners or Ambassadors and in Africa. They were in position between two and four years, a usual length of posting.

¹¹⁵ A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, 'Accredited to Africa: British Diplomatic Representation and African Experience, c.1960–95', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2000), p. 92.

¹¹⁶ Meerts, 'Diplomatic Negotiation', p. 86.

¹¹⁷ Moorhouse, *Diplomats*, p. 252.

Table 5: High Commissioners in Nairobi¹¹⁸

	Start Date	Date of Leaving	Immediately Prior Career	Immediately Following Career	Previous Office Experience	Previous African Experience	Previous Ambassadorial Postings
Geoffrey de Freitas	1963	1964	High Commissioner Ghana	Council of Europe	MP	Ghana	Ghana
Malcolm MacDonald	1964	1966	Governor-General Kenya	Special Representative in Africa	MP	Kenya	Canada, India
Edward Peck	1966	1968	Assistant Under-Secretary of State	Deputy Under-Secretary of State	FO		
Eric Norris	1968	1972	Assistant Under-Secretary of State	Deputy Under-Secretary of State	CRO		
Anthony Duff	1972	1975	Deputy High Commissioner Kuala Lumpur	Deputy Under-Secretary of State	FO, FCO	Egypt	Nepal
Stanley Fingland	1975	1979	Ambassador Havana	Retired	CRO, FCO	Nigeria, Rhodesia, Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone, Cuba
John Williams	1979	1982	Assistant Under-Secretary of State (Africa)	Retired	CO, FCO	Nigeria, Benin	Fiji, accredited Benin

MacDonald went to Kenya as the final Governor in 1963 and had a crucial role in reshaping perceptions in London about Kenya and Kenyatta. MacDonald came from an earlier career as Colonial Secretary and roles in Canada, Malaya, Singapore and India, key imperial responsibilities around decolonisation. According to his biographer, MacDonald 'hadn't wanted to come [to Kenya] at all ... [and] told Sandys that he really knew nothing about modern Africa and African politics'.¹¹⁹ But his political background and experience of decolonisation encouraged his appointment. As independence approached, he was asked by Europeans, Kenyan MPs and Kenyatta to remain in Kenya as Governor-General after

¹¹⁸ DSL 1967, p. 285; DSL 1970, p. 320; DSL 1976, p. 222; DSL 1978, pp. 234, 342-3; DSL 1980, p. 173; DSL 1982, p. 338; *Who's Who 1994* (London, 1994), pp. 547, 1416; *Who's Who 1996* (London, 1996), p. 638, 1502; *Who Was Who 1981-90* (London, 1990), p. 471. See also and based on: Kirk-Greene, 'Accredited to Africa', pp. 79-128.

¹¹⁹ Clyde Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald: Bringing an End to Empire* (Liverpool, 1995), p. 4.

independence, with Kenya becoming independent as a monarchy.¹²⁰ According to MacDonald's report of his conversations with Kenyatta: 'I had quickly won the complete confidence of all the new Ministers as Governor, and they wanted me to stay in Kenya to help them through the initial stages of Independence, and if possible longer'.¹²¹ This makes strikingly clear the support MacDonald had from leading Kenyans.

At independence, a High Commissioner also went to Kenya. Geoffrey de Freitas, a former Labour politician, went with the anticipation that he would become High Commissioner to the proposed East African Federation.¹²² He was there briefly and unsuccessfully; as Sanger tactfully put it, 'he did not endear himself to the Kenyans'.¹²³ Correspondence from de Freitas in 1964 indicates his lack of understanding of the situation and key players in Kenya.¹²⁴ In July 1964, MacDonald wrote to Commonwealth Secretary Sandys: 'I am very sorry indeed to say that Geoffrey de Freitas is doing great harm to relations ... he is now an unfortunate liability'.¹²⁵ MacDonald advocated that de Freitas leave sooner than planned and suggested ways of orchestrating this.¹²⁶ Garner's response made clear that those at the top in CRO were also concerned by de Freitas' behaviour.¹²⁷

There is some suggestion that de Freitas was finally withdrawn at Kenyatta's request. Garner in 1965 wrote that before decolonisation 'we never had any requests to remove a High Commissioner ... and, from the East African Governments, we have now had no less than three', one of which was about de Freitas.¹²⁸ Certainly, rumours later circulated that 'previous High Commissioners had actually been

¹²⁰ Malcolm MacDonald to Saville Garner, 3 August 1963, Malcolm MacDonald Archive, Durham (MMA) 45/1/42-3; Malcolm MacDonald to Duncan Sandys, 18 September 1963, MMA 45/1/44-5.

¹²¹ Malcolm MacDonald to Duncan Sandys, 18 September 1963, MMA 45/1/44-5.

¹²² (David) Malcolm McBain, interview by John Hutson, BDOHP, 27 April 2000, p. 14.

¹²³ Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald*, p. 404.

¹²⁴ See Geoffrey de Freitas to Malcolm MacDonald, 15 April 1964, MMA 45/1/14.

¹²⁵ Malcolm MacDonald to Duncan Sandys, 4 July 1964, MMA 45/1/17-20.

¹²⁶ Malcolm MacDonald to Sandys, 6 July 1964, MMA 45/1/21-2.

¹²⁷ Joe Garner to Malcolm MacDonald, 27 July 1964, MMA 45/1/25.

¹²⁸ Joe Garner to Malcolm MacDonald, 20 July 1965, MMA 53/1/85-90. The others were Neil Pritchard (High Commissioner in Tanganyika, 1961-63) and Robert Fowler (High Commissioner in Tanzania, 1964-65).

removed from Kenya because the Kenyans had got upset'.¹²⁹ According to Malcolm McBain, in BHC at the time, the withdrawal occurred after Kenyatta visited London in 1964 and 'a former white settler emerged from one of these clubs, rushed up to him and kicked him'; following which 'angry, slightly tipsy, African MPs ... demanded to see the High Commissioner'. De Freitas refused 'and the word got round that the High Commissioner was a coward ... it led to his withdrawal from Nairobi'.¹³⁰ The choice of the next High Commissioner was therefore a matter of particular concern. CRO needed someone, as MacDonald put it, 'to try to undo the awful damage that Geoffrey has done'.¹³¹ Lord Delamere, a leading European in Kenya, Sandys, and some Kenyan ministers favoured MacDonald.¹³² The decision that MacDonald would become High Commissioner was indeed supported by Kenyan leaders.¹³³ Kenyatta publicly welcomed this and described MacDonald as 'a warm friend to me personally'.¹³⁴ In 1965, however, Garner wrote to MacDonald that 'in some ways, Kenya is too small for you ... when there is a bigger job to be done'.¹³⁵ MacDonald left as High Commissioner in 1966, but remained based in Nairobi as Special Representative in Africa until 1969. Thereafter, he continued to be engaged in the relationship, visiting Kenya and meeting Kenyatta, invited to events when Kenyan politicians were in London, and attending Kenyatta's funeral.¹³⁶

¹²⁹ Leonard Allinson, interview p. 25. See also Lloyd, *Diplomacy with a Difference*, p. 238.

¹³⁰ Malcolm McBain, interview, pp. 20-1.

¹³¹ Malcolm MacDonald to Saville Garner, 10 August 1964, MMA 45/1/27-9.

¹³² Lord Delamere to Duncan Sandys, 7 September 1964, MMA 43/4/3; Duncan Sandys to Malcolm MacDonald, 14 September 1964, MMA 43/4/1-2; Malcolm MacDonald to Duncan Sandys, 20 September 1964, MMA 43/4/4-5.

¹³³ See for examples: Charles Njonjo to Malcolm MacDonald, 2 November 1964, MMA 43/5/2; Ronald G. Ngala to Malcolm MacDonald, 3 November 1963, MMA 43/5/21; R. da Gama Pinto to Malcolm MacDonald, 3 November 1964, MMA 43/5/50; T.J. Mboya to Malcolm MacDonald, 10 November 1964, MMA 43/5/100.

¹³⁴ Statement by the Hon. Jomo Kenyatta, Prime Minister of Kenya, 2 November 1964, MMA 43/4/7.

¹³⁵ Joe Garner to Malcolm MacDonald, 20 July 1965, MMA 53/1/85.

¹³⁶ See J.S. Wall to I. Maxwell, 14 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/23; W.L. Allinson to E.G. Le Tocq, 23 November 1970, TNA FCO 31/616/4; M.K. Ewans to Campbell, 18 January 1974, TNA FCO 31/1707/2; telegram no. 489, Owen to Nairobi, 26 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2316/142.

Diplomatic Personnel

This section will consider the individuals within EAD and BHC. These were the (almost all) men who were making decisions and thus British 'policy'. The following analysis is drawn from the *Diplomatic Service Lists*, *Foreign Office Lists*, *Colonial Office Lists* and *Who's Who*. It will take into account those working in BHC from 1965, the creation of the diplomatic service, to 1980, including first secretaries (grade 6) and above; and those involved at the higher levels of EAD from 1960 as head of department, assistant, and Under-Secretaries with oversight of EAD. It is not possible to find information for all of those involved, but a total of seventy-nine staff from BHC and thirty-seven from EAD are included in this study.¹³⁷

Recruitment differed between departments. The key area of colonial experience was the former Colonial Service, renamed Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service (HMOCS) in 1954 with the recognition that 'the conception of an all-embracing Colonial Service has lost much of its relevance'.¹³⁸ HMOCS was recruited personally during 1910-48 by Ralph Furse, 'the father of the colonial service'.¹³⁹ This was distinct from CO, whose staff were home civil servants.¹⁴⁰ The FO was seen as the most elite; recruitment was tightly controlled, and 'the Service was regarded as socially exclusive and arrogant. This view may not have been entirely justified ... But there was undoubtedly something in it'.¹⁴¹ For the FO there were two recruitment methods in the 1950s:

One was Method A, which was a kind of test of your general civility, urbanity, ability to get on socially with everybody, and included three compulsory papers. The other was Method B, which involved a far wider range of optional written papers plus the other three compulsory ones. That's the method I chose; I knew I'd never survive the house party test¹⁴²

As this indicates, the ability to make personal connections was a key indicator of job suitability. One diplomat recalled that 'The Diplomatic Service was held [in] particularly high esteem; thus for the

¹³⁷ See Appendix 1.

¹³⁸ Jeffries, *Colonial Office*, p. 137.

¹³⁹ Robert Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service* (Syracuse, 1963), p. 201.

¹⁴⁰ Jeffries, *Colonial Office*, p. 125.

¹⁴¹ Campbell, *Colleagues and Friends*, p. 4.

¹⁴² John Latto Farquharson (Ian) Buist, interview by Malcolm McBain, BDOHP, 8 April 2008, p. 3.

modest salaries which government offered they could command applications from a talented market and they took advantage of it'.¹⁴³ This rigorous process allowed entry to only a select group.

Many of these men had similar backgrounds, and tended to fit a general mould (tables 6 and 7). A high proportion had seen military service, either in the Second World War or through national service. Most in EAD were aged between forty-one and fifty-five on starting their position: well established in their careers but not at the zenith. In BHC, most were aged between thirty-six and fifty-five, as first secretary positions could be reached at an earlier age. The outlier over sixty was MacDonald: usually there was compulsory Diplomatic Service retirement at sixty. Those two who were first secretaries in BHC aged below thirty were high-fliers: Imray had moved from third secretary in Canberra in 1958 to first secretary in 1962, a very quick transition;¹⁴⁴ Chris Crabbie joined FCO as second secretary in 1973, and went to Nairobi as first secretary on his first overseas posting in 1975.¹⁴⁵ Most were in position between two and four years. Almost 30 per cent had experience working in other government departments, this being more common amongst those in BHC than EAD. They had worked in a range of departments including the Post Office, India Office, Cabinet Office and Ministry of Education. This experience would have given wider exposure to the priorities of other departments and encouraged the sense of institutional belonging and collective identity, with a shared Whitehall culture and sense of British interests.

¹⁴³ Alan Gordon Munro, interview, BDOHP, 16 May 1996, p. 21.

¹⁴⁴ DSL 1970, p. 263.

¹⁴⁵ DSL 1980, p. 157; DSL 1977, p. 204.

Table 6: Age of Civil Servants at Starting Role

	Number in BHC	Number in EAD
<30	2	1
31-35	7	1
36-40	10	4
41-45	16	9
46-50	19	12
51-55	17	8
56-60	6	2
60+	1	0

Table 7: Background of Diplomats and Civil Servants in BHC and EAD

	Number in BHC	Percentage in BHC (%)	Number in EAD	Percentage in EAD (%)	Number in BHC and EAD	Percentage of total EAD and BHC (%)
Military Service	47	59.5	24	64.9	71	61.2
Oxbridge*	19	77.0	24	80.0	43	78.2
Other government departments	28	35.4	6	16.2	34	29.3
CO background	4	5.1	10	27.0	14	12.1
CRO background	26	32.9	16	43.2	42	36.2
FO background	36	45.6	15	40.5	51	44.0

*University education known for only 30 of those in EAD and 25 in BHC.

A particularly high proportion had been to university at Oxford or Cambridge; of the group as a whole, this proportion was 78.2 per cent. This fits into a widely recognised bias of the overseas service at this time.¹⁴⁶ As Young has highlighted, civil servants 'were still predominantly male, upper class and Oxbridge educated'.¹⁴⁷ In 1965 the proportion of successful entrants to the Diplomatic Service from Oxbridge was twenty-eight of forty-three entrants, in 1966, thirty-one out of forty-one. Even more notable were the CRO successes, where in the years 1960-64 only one successful candidate of the

¹⁴⁶ See Rose, 'Higher Civil Servants', pp. 144-5.

¹⁴⁷ Young, *Twentieth-Century Diplomacy*, p. 26.

twenty-eight appointed had not attended Oxbridge.¹⁴⁸ A 1967 paper on the image of the Diplomatic Service highlighted that

We should not, however, be too concerned about the present preponderance of Oxbridge entrants. We need the best brains and personalities from all walks of life in the country, and Oxbridge still seem able to attract the highest proportion of these¹⁴⁹

By 1978 this was changing, so that 'one in three' were recruited from other universities.¹⁵⁰ This Oxbridge recruitment meant, however, that many shared similar backgrounds and would have been educated with a similar outlook. As one Treasury official described: 'The Civil Service is run by a small group of people who grew up together'.¹⁵¹ This shared background is significant as many held common views and outlooks; what Joll has in another context termed the 'unspoken assumptions' of policy-makers who 'fall back on their own instinctive reactions, traditions and modes of behaviour ... things which they take for granted'.¹⁵² Part of this seems to have been the underlying sense of superiority which was present in the attitudes of many Britons, highlighted through later chapters.

Issues of personnel management and timing were key to appointments. One example of this is Alan Munro who, in his words, 'was an Arab specialist, not an Africa one,' and became head of EAD in 1977 because 'they wanted me to go, and I did eventually go, to the Middle East department, but it wasn't available'.¹⁵³ Finding people who were free at the right time was essential in a process of shuffling people between roles. Despite the notional premium on local knowledge, experience and training were not always priorities; Tallboys recalled being:

greeted with words along the lines of "Ah, Tallboys, yes, you are to be Desk Officer for Kenya, Uganda and the East African Economic Community in East Africa Department – go away and do it". This was I suppose in the best traditions of the Diplomatic Service, that seemed to work

¹⁴⁸ Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service, [1967], TNA FCO 79/71/8.

¹⁴⁹ Campbell, 'The Diplomatic Service Image', [1967], TNA FCO 79/71/5.

¹⁵⁰ Cmnd. 7308, *The United Kingdom's Overseas Representation* (London, 1978), p. 10.

¹⁵¹ Unnamed Treasury official quoted in Heclo and Wildavsky, *Public Money*, p. 76

¹⁵² James Joll, '1914: The Unspoken Assumptions', in H. W. Koch (ed.), *The Origins of the First World War: Great Power Rivalry and German War Aims* (Basingstoke, 1977), p. 309.

¹⁵³ Alan Munro, interview.

then on the principle that if a person was intelligent enough to be appointed to the Administrative Grades then he must be intelligent enough to do any job without delay¹⁵⁴

Another recalled that 'my education in the Foreign Office was reading all the despatches coming from all the worldwide posts, which obviously taught you a lot about the countries they were writing on but also taught you an awful lot about your colleagues'.¹⁵⁵ Training by reading others' despatches meant diplomats were inculcated into the methods and ideas of their predecessors: what had been viewed as important was likely to remain unchallenged if this was how new members were educated. Those higher up were given more briefing. When Williams was High Commissioner designate, a list of briefing calls included the minister and three others from FCO, representatives of the Department of Trade, Defence Sales, Export Credits Guarantee Department, and Bank of England, commercial contacts at five firms, and contacts at Crown Agents, British Council, and Commonwealth Secretariat.¹⁵⁶ As this suggests, commercial and economic connections were highly significant, and there was a sense of necessary preparation. Prior to leaving London to become High Commissioner, Peck additionally took Swahili lessons and read Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya*.¹⁵⁷ But training was typically not extensive, and diplomats were expected to be adaptable.

A key issue in organising personnel was knowledge and experience. There was an evident tension between the imagined emphasis on knowledge and the reality that the FCO wanted generalists who would be flexible. Kirk-Greene has highlighted that

generalists have traditionally been the very foundation and pride of the Diplomatic Service, men and women who have successfully built up a professional repertoire of diplomatic knowledge and practice by regular (or at least frequent) postings between the FCO in London and UK missions around the world, without single country continuity or sustained regional clustering¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Richard Gilbert Tallboys, 'A Memoir of Twenty Years with Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service 1968-1988 - with emphasis on commercial work', BDOHP, 1999, p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Peter Fowler, in 'British High Commission in New Delhi', p. 18.

¹⁵⁶ Briefing Calls for Williams, High Commissioner Designate Nairobi, 1979, TNA FCO 31/2603/17.

¹⁵⁷ Peck, *Recollections*, p. 216. Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (London, 1938).

¹⁵⁸ Kirk-Greene, 'Accredited to Africa', p. 99.

Diplomats needed to be adaptable to different situations and countries. Following the creation of the Diplomatic Service, official policy encouraged that diplomats should serve in countries previously covered by the other department. This helps to explain the higher proportion of FO rather than CRO backgrounds in BHC. By 31 December 1967, 409 former Foreign Service personnel had served in Commonwealth Office posts, and 262 vice versa.¹⁵⁹ Thus, despite the notional emphasis on knowledge, what mattered most was actually a shared set of assumptions, with the sense that diplomacy was everywhere performed and practiced in similar ways.

Prior to the mergers, levels of African experience necessarily differed between departments. Garner argued in 1964 that CRO had

built up a volume of expertise in Commonwealth Relations; we have not only a corpus of knowledge but a very wide range of intimate personal contacts and friendships with our opposite numbers. In a sense we are a specialist Department, and it would be absurd to dissipate this at once and to throw away the experience of a lifetime¹⁶⁰

The FO, for obvious reasons, did not contain much African experience; at the time of the merger to FCO, 'only one of its senior officers had any substantial African experience'.¹⁶¹ Some in CRO valued colonial expertise; for example, John Hickman working in EAD 1963-64,

had very little experience of Zanzibar, having only come on the scene recently. The first thing I did [following the 1964 revolution] was to get hold of the two or three people from the Colonial Office who had dealt with Zanzibar but who were now no longer responsible for it. I could only go to the Colonial Office to tell us who was who and what was what¹⁶²

The CO was where greatest expertise about former colonies lay, and it was those who had worked within it who had knowledge to pass on.

However, after a country's independence, CRO was 'resolute in its refusal to accept any lateral transfer from HMOCS', and although HMOCS staff could reapply, they had to take the same exams as new

¹⁵⁹ Cross-Postings up to 31 December 1967, TNA FCO 77/31.

¹⁶⁰ J.J. Saville Garner to Viscount Amory, 3 April 1964, TNA DO 197/39/5.

¹⁶¹ Lloyd, *Diplomacy with a Difference*, p. 249.

¹⁶² J.K. Hickman, interview, p. 10.

recruits.¹⁶³ CRO preferred not to appoint people from HMOCS to the same country, viewing this as implying little had changed, although there is some suggestion that the new rulers of former colonies were not necessarily opposed to having continuing personnel.¹⁶⁴ This was different from French post-colonial policy where several former governors remained as ambassadors, and civil servants as advisers.¹⁶⁵ MacDonald was unusual in doing this in Kenya. This attitude meant, as Garner later recognised, the 'chance therefore was missed of recruiting any considerable body of men with experience in depth of life in the new Commonwealth countries'.¹⁶⁶ One who moved from CO to CRO thought CO staff were:

very hurt by the outlook of the CRO, who took the view that Colonial Office people couldn't really serve in CRO posts, and there was a lot of feeling about that, because quite a lot of CRO people were over-promoted to take jobs as High Commissioners and Deputy High Commissioners, which should have gone to some very good Colonial Office people, most of whom ended up in Home Civil Service Ministries¹⁶⁷

After the FCO was formed in 1968, only one staff member in EAD had previous experience in the CO. This may be because by that time many of those who had been higher up in the CO had retired, but also suggests that many within CO and HMOCS left overseas policy-making with the department's end.¹⁶⁸

However, there was also continuity and transfer. Hodge has argued that the careers of these men form 'an important thread of continuity across the seemingly fundamental rupture of decolonization and independence'.¹⁶⁹ Some members of HMOCS transferred to the FCO: Kirk-Greene suggests that by the mid-1970s more than 125 were in FCO, fifty from East Africa.¹⁷⁰ As he later argued, this 'allowed

¹⁶³ Anthony Kirk-Greene, 'Decolonization: The Ultimate Diaspora', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (2001), p. 142.

¹⁶⁴ Clark, 'Chalk and Cheese?', p. 51.

¹⁶⁵ Andereggen, *France's Relationship*, p. 61.

¹⁶⁶ Garner, *Commonwealth Office*, p. 364.

¹⁶⁷ Denis Doble, interview by Malcolm McBain, BDOHP, 29 March 2004, p. 5.

¹⁶⁸ Clark, 'Chalk and Cheese?', p. 51.

¹⁶⁹ Joseph M. Hodge, 'British Colonial Expertise, Post-Colonial Careerism and the Early History of International Development', *Journal of Modern European History*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2010), p. 24.

¹⁷⁰ Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Britain's Imperial Administrators, 1858-1966* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 272.

the FCO to introduce a new cadre of African specialists'.¹⁷¹ Of those who worked in EAD and BHC, fourteen had worked in HMOCS, of whom eleven in Africa (table 9). Thus, the experience of former CO staff was not entirely lost as some individuals moved through the merged offices. Williams, who became High Commissioner in Nairobi in 1979, had worked in CO, CRO, Commonwealth Office and FCO.¹⁷² The two most significant colonial officials who worked on Kenya in the lead up to independence were Webber and Leslie Monson. They attended the Lancaster House conferences, met Kenyan delegations and visited Kenya.¹⁷³ Webber's career moved away from Africa after the CO's closure, but Monson's did not. He became High Commissioner to Zambia, then Assistant and later Deputy Under-Secretary for Africa supervising EAD until 1969, when he oversaw the remaining dependent territories.¹⁷⁴ He was described as 'one of the most experienced and able members of the former Colonial Office'.¹⁷⁵ Some knowledge and institutional memory from the CO was thus transferred through the mergers.

But overall, the FCO valued 'experience' within the department and habits of mind over real 'local knowledge'. Table 8 shows that a lack of African experience was not a bar to working in BHC, and a larger number of previous postings did not necessarily mean an increased likelihood of African experience. Standen, on his eleventh placement in Nairobi, had worked extensively in South East Asia, with Nairobi his only African posting.¹⁷⁶ Some individuals expressed a sense of difference between departments and some suspicion about colonial experience. David Goodall, in BHC in the late 1960s and from an FO background, 'would like to think that maybe I was more objective'; whilst a former CO officials in BHC at the time

¹⁷¹ Kirk-Greene, 'Decolonization: The Ultimate Diaspora', p. 143.

¹⁷² DSL 1982, p. 338, *Who's Who 1990* (London, 1990), p. 1957.

¹⁷³ See for examples: Note of a meeting held at the Colonial Office on Wednesday 8 November between the Colonial Secretary and Representatives of KANU, 13 November 1961, TNA CO 822/2244/11; W.B.L. Monson to Secretary of State, 20 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/30.

¹⁷⁴ DSL 1968, p. 285; DSL 1970, p. 304.

¹⁷⁵ Leonard Allinson, 'Monson, Sir (William Bonnar) Leslie', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52296>, accessed 18 September 2014.

¹⁷⁶ DSL 1970, p. 356.

was immensely knowledgeable about Africa. I mean, he was very good, he was very tough and so on, but I couldn't say his view was particularly objective. It was just a different sort of mind-set. I don't mean that he was arrogant or imperialistic or anything, but he was used to managing and running an African territory. Whereas we were supposed to be observing it and negotiating with it where necessary¹⁷⁷

A difference in attitude and mentality was, at least sometimes, perceived to exist, and some diplomats seemed to fear that their colleagues who had too much local knowledge might somehow be out of line institutionally.

Table 8: BHC Overseas Postings

Posting Number	Number in BHC	Number with African experience	Percentage with African experience (%)
First	4	n/a	n/a
Second	10	4	40
Third	12	6	50
Forth	16	11	69
Fifth	15	12	80
Sixth	10	7	70
Seventh	6	6	100
Eighth	2	1	50
Ninth	2	0	0
Tenth	1	1	100
Eleventh	1	0	0

Some of those involved clearly were Africa specialists. In terms of African experience, a total of 57.8 per cent of the EAD and BHC sample had prior experience (including in HMOCS) of working in Africa. This was a majority, but by no means an overwhelming one. Of these, seventeen had experience in East Africa and twenty-four had worked in two or more African countries, with Nigeria and South Africa the most common. These were countries with larger and highly graded missions and thus higher staff numbers. It is also notable that twenty-one had been working elsewhere in Africa prior

¹⁷⁷ David Goodall, interview.

to their role in Nairobi or EAD. This does suggest that at least some were building up African experience. Working in London departments which dealt with Africa could also be a way of gaining experience.

Table 9: African Experience

	Number in BHC (total 79)	Number in EAD (total 37)	Number from both EAD and BHC (total 116)
HMOCS	13	1	14
HMOCS in Africa	10	1	11
African experience	48	19	67
Two or more countries of African experience	18	6	24
East African experience	14	3	17
Nigeria	12	3	15
South Africa	8	5	13
Tanganyika/Tanzania	10	1	11
Ghana	7	2	9
Kenya	1	1	2
Egypt	4	1	5
Uganda	3	0	3
Immediately prior job in Africa	13	8	21
Immediately following job in Africa*	7	2	9

*Known only for 70 from BHC and 31 from EAD

Former head of EAD Munro argued that to be a specialist, on Africa or elsewhere, 'you would be expected to have 70 or 80 per cent of your time, either from home or abroad, in that area'.¹⁷⁸ Many did not develop this kind of specialism, but some did spend most of their working lives focused on Africa. Some even had a more specifically East African focus. Consular first secretary Winefred White

¹⁷⁸ Alan Munro, interview.

(née Durbin), one of few women to work in BHC, began her career in the Ministries of Labour and Food, then moved through CO, CRO, Commonwealth Office and FCO, with overseas postings in Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Spain and Kenya.¹⁷⁹ She thus had substantial experience in East Africa as well as in the different overseas departments in London. Several individuals worked in EAD in several capacities or in both EAD and BHC. Norman Aspin, head of the CRO's East Africa Political Department 1963-66, became Assistant Under-Secretary of State for EAD, 1974-76, and again in 1980.¹⁸⁰ Martin Le Quesne was head of the West and Central African Department in the FO, 1964-68, and was later Deputy Under-Secretary of State with responsibility over EAD from 1971 to 1974.¹⁸¹ Allinson was Head of Chancery in BHC in 1970, became Deputy High Commissioner 1972-74, then Assistant Under-Secretary of State with responsibility over EAD in 1980 (he returned to Nairobi as High Commissioner in 1982).¹⁸² Clearly these men who worked in EAD and then supervised it, or worked on Kenya from both London and Nairobi, would have built up a detailed knowledge and awareness of Kenyan events, people and places.

Conclusion

British government attitudes may have appeared coherent and stable from a Kenyan perspective, but there was often conflict and negotiation between departments pursuing their own agendas. Different departments could have differing priorities and even within FCO the views of its Defence Department, EAD, BHC and Economic Department could diverge. Relations between and within these departments are crucial to understanding how and why policies emerged. Decisions had to be agreed upon by many organs within government, and when these involved politicians there were even more groups involved. Plans were the work of multiple sections of government, working sometimes cooperatively

¹⁷⁹ DSL 1982, p. 335.

¹⁸⁰ DSL 1980, p. 110.

¹⁸¹ DSL 1972, p. 329; DSL 1977, p. 306; *Who's Who 2000* (London, 2000), p. 1214.

¹⁸² DSL 1981, p. 104; DSL 1986, p. 98.

and sometimes obstructively, as they pursued the interests of their own department, as well as broader UK interests.

For the policy-makers involved, a key question was how much emphasis to place on local knowledge and how far to privilege experience. The FCO favoured both specialists and generalists, and even specialists were expected to have wider experience. There was tension over this issue; yet in discussions and making decisions, most believed local knowledge mattered, and this was what BHC was supposed to provide. Diplomats were expected and required to have some local knowledge, and even influence. But, as one former diplomat argued:

there is a possibility that active and sensitive officials will come to understand too well the preoccupations of the foreigners with whom they deal, and give them disproportionate weight. They need the counterweight of the endlessly repeated question, "Where do Britain's interests lie?"¹⁸³

Local knowledge was essential, but could not be allowed to prejudice British interests. There was also some scepticism about CO and HMOCS personnel and the value of their knowledge following the empire's independence. Yet, as this thesis will make clear, the idea of local knowledge itself is also problematic, as frequently those British who made claims to this understood less of Kenyan politics and society than they believed.

Staff within BHC and EAD had a reasonable degree of autonomy, and heads of EAD and High Commissioners were most able to exercise influence over the decisions which in effect made 'policy'. But all worked within institutional confines. As Allison and Halperin have argued, those involved in making policy were 'individual[s] in a *position*'.¹⁸⁴ It was their position which made them significant in this context rather than their individual characteristics. The British involved were primarily functionaries, for whom Kenya was one element of a wider career of public service. Thus, changes in personnel tended to make marginal difference to the direction and pursuance of British policy. Those

¹⁸³ Peter Unwin, *Hearts, Minds and Interests: Britain's Place in the World* (London, 1998), p. 54.

¹⁸⁴ Their emphasis. Allison and Halperin, 'Bureaucratic Politics', p. 48.

coming to the office adapted to the knowledge which had built up in files and people, and to the aims and objectives which had been set – or accepted – by their predecessors.¹⁸⁵ The culture of the departments and civil service in general encouraged cooperation and the pursuance of shared goals. Similar backgrounds, outlooks and ideas of British interests meant disagreement tended to be over detail rather than the broad scope of policy. There were rivalries, but plans were framed within a Whitehall consensus and shared culture of bureaucracy. This was not necessarily because policy and aims were clearly defined, but rather because a broader sense of what British politicians, civil servants and diplomats wanted to achieve from their relationship persisted. Despite internal departmental and individual disputes this was, ultimately, a bureaucratic system.

¹⁸⁵ Wakamatsu, 'Role of Civil Servants', pp. 50-1.

Chapter Two: Making 'Policy' (2): Kenyan Institutions and Actors

'This High Commission enjoys a privileged access to members of the ruling inner circle which is the envy of other Missions'

Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 13 June 1969¹

The Anglo-Kenyan relationship was founded on a set of relationships with Kenyan individuals. This chapter is about what British diplomats thought of the Kenyan politicians with whom they dealt: how they categorised and understood them, how they reported on them to their superiors and politicians in London, and how attitudes in London affected what diplomats thought. British policy-makers encouraged communications with certain individuals in a continual search for people who would be 'friendly' to perceived British interests, trying to cultivate and influence them. During the late colonial period British officials sought to choose who would lead Kenya to independence; when Kenyatta emerged as the leader, they focused on him and his elite, whilst simultaneously trying to predict his succession, which coloured their assessments until it occurred in 1978.

Views of individuals mattered because Kenyan politics was very much driven by personalities, as people pursued their own interests in a system of neo-patrimonialism. Clapham has defined this as 'a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines' but in which those with official positions 'exercise those powers, so far as they can, as a form not of public service but of private property'.² Kenyatta distrusted institutions, and whilst Kenya had an effective and functioning civil service, he encouraged a political culture in which decisions were ultimately made by an informal elite around him. The High Commissioner in 1966 noted 'the rather confused demarcation of ministerial responsibilities in Kenya'.³ This encouraged a 'court' politics of personal rivalries with

¹ Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Kenya: Future British Policy', 13 June 1969, TNA FCO 31/358/1.

² Christopher Clapham, *Third World Politics: An Introduction* (London, 1985), p. 48.

³ Edward Peck to Michael Scott, 26 April 1966, TNA DEFE 24/660/40.

'the faction the main tool of political struggle'.⁴ Tamarkin in the late 1970s argued that '[p]olicy-making and decision-making is the prerogative of the President who brings into the process a small group of advisers comprised of Ministers, high-ranking civil servants, relatives and friends'; as a result, access to the president was typically the most important way of influencing policy.⁵ Those in the British government recognised that 'effective power rests with the President and his most immediate advisers'.⁶ This was particularly significant because the Kenyan elite remained in position for an extended time; as Goldsworthy has argued, 'no one in mid-1963 could have predicted how extraordinarily stable this élite group would prove to be'.⁷ British policy-makers certainly did not predict this. The 1957 and 1958 elections 'brought to the fore a generation of politicians who dominated the postcolonial landscape'.⁸ Of those Africans attending the 1960 Lancaster House conference (which of course had some major absences, most notably Kenyatta), British diplomats still listed six as key figures in 1978 and several others had been important until their deaths.⁹ British diplomats worked with and even reinforced this neo-patrimonial system by engaging with people primarily on an individual and personal basis. Indeed, they came to understand and naturalise a focus on individuals as something 'African'; as one head of EAD noted: 'Africans, though not without a sense of protocol, attach a great deal of importance to personal relations'.¹⁰

Who British officials talked to and how they interacted with them greatly shaped their views. Diplomats tended to have extensive contacts. They prided themselves on their access and were sometimes frustrated when this seemed lacking, such as in April 1976 when increasing detentions of

⁴ G. B. Lamb, 'The Political Crisis in Kenya', *The World Today*, Vol. 25, No. 12 (1969), p. 538.

⁵ Tamarkin, 'Roots of Political Stability', p. 302.

⁶ British/Kenyan Ministerial Talks 5-10 March 1973, Brief no. 3: Facts and Figures on Kenya, TNA FCO 31/1503/180.

⁷ David Goldsworthy, *Tom Mboya: The Man Kenya Wanted to Forget* (Nairobi; London, 1982), p. 216.

⁸ Branch, 'Loyalists, Mau Mau, and Elections', p. 29.

⁹ Kenya Constitutional Conference, 1960: Biographical Notes on those Attending from Kenya, KNA MSS/115/7/1/21; Leading Personalities in Kenya, 1978, TNA FCO 31/2314.

¹⁰ E.G. Le Tocq, note for the record, 22 October 1970, TNA FCO 31/617/31.

MPs meant 'MPs are no longer willing to be seen talking to diplomats in public'.¹¹ Difficulties in access meant problems gaining information, as it was through individual contacts that British knowledge was gathered. If Kenyans would not speak publicly, BHC staff would have to rely increasingly on private contacts. Roberts has highlighted, about Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere but appropriate to Kenyatta as well, 'the perception of the presidents as archetypal African "big men", an image skewed both by their own propaganda and the stereotypical assumptions of foreign diplomats'.¹² These 'stereotypical assumptions' will be key to this chapter. The underlying question is how much British diplomats, or the politicians in London whom they advised, ever really 'knew' about what was happening in Kenyan politics. It is clear that they thought they understood this well, believing they were in a position to accurately assess Kenyan individuals, politics and interests – often thinking they knew these better than the Kenyans themselves. This self-belief and assumed superiority underpinned their views and interactions: 'some new difficulties may arise – as is only to be expected from some of the immature and emotional African political leaders'.¹³ But British judgements were by no means always sound. This chapter will first consider the importance of Kenyatta, then discuss two interlocutors whose cultural accessibility shaped British views of them, before considering other Kenyans who were thought less accessible, and the categorisations which shaped – and skewed – British views of them.

Kenyatta

Kenyatta was the central figure in independent Kenya until his death in 1978. He was arrested in 1952 as Mau Mau leader, released in 1961, became prime minister in 1963 and president in 1964 – a post he held until his death. These brief details suggest the dramatic nature of his transformation from detainee to key ally. Kenyatta had been accused and convicted of being the leader of Mau Mau, and

¹¹ P.R.A. Mansfield to M.K. Ewans, 5 April 1976, TNA FCO 31/2019/15. On detentions see Hornsby, *Kenya*, pp. 288-9.

¹² George Roberts, 'The Uganda–Tanzania War, the Fall of Idi Amin, and the Failure of African Diplomacy, 1978–1979', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (2014), p. 10.

¹³ Malcolm MacDonald to Secretary of State, 30 October 1963, TNA CO 822/3052/13.

was vilified in Britain and by many of Kenya's Europeans. A letter from one European in December 1960 asked: 'Has Her Majesty's Government lost all sense of decency that it can be contemplating the release of Kenyatta?'.¹⁴ When he visited Nairobi in 1961, Colonial Secretary Reginald Maudling 'avoided ... being photographed shaking his hand'.¹⁵ Oliver Lyttelton, Colonial Secretary 1951-54, wrote in his 1962 autobiography that Kenyatta was 'a daemonic figure with extreme left-wing views'.¹⁶ But these ideas about Kenyatta were based on presumption rather than accurate knowledge. When MacDonald was appointed Governor, he was told by advisers in London that Kenyatta was 'a wicked old man who was fortunately far past his prime, who was quickly declining in physical and mental powers ... rapidly boozing himself to death'; although others did admit 'that few Europeans either inside or outside Kenya really knew much about Kenyatta'.¹⁷

Once he was released from detention, Kenyatta quickly came to be viewed more positively, a change spearheaded by MacDonald.¹⁸ And once he was seen as a 'friend', he was a particularly close one. His ability to assert his control over KANU was crucial as he 'cleverly manipulates the factions'.¹⁹ Jackson and Rosberg described his role as an 'umpire' as he 'presided over this personal-factional struggle ... but he did not seek to eliminate the competition', rather using this when it benefitted him.²⁰ In a character sketch of Kenyatta in January 1966, MacDonald (by then High Commissioner) wrote that 'nothing is more important to an understanding of the situation in Kenya – and to some extent in neighbouring regions – during these important times than an appreciation of the quality of that extraordinary man'.²¹ One diplomat in London described in response the 'almost Churchillian performance that Kenyatta has produced in the past few years, and which has won him world-wide

¹⁴ Isla M. Atherley to Macleod, 6 December 1960, TNA FCO 141/6771/D 40/1.

¹⁵ Reginald Maudling, *Memoirs* (London, 1978), p. 95.

¹⁶ Oliver Lyttelton, *The Memoirs of Lord Chandos* (London, 1962), p. 394.

¹⁷ Malcolm MacDonald, *Titans and Others* (London, 1972), p. 241.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 253. See also Chapter 3: 1960-64.

¹⁹ CRO, 'Kenyatta, Jomo', June 1964, TNA DO 213/204/7.

²⁰ Jackson and Rosberg, *Personal Rule*, p. 103.

²¹ Malcolm MacDonald to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 'Kenya: Kenyatta', 27 January 1966, TNA FO 371/187869.

respect'.²² Favour towards Kenyatta was strong and continued through the 1960s and early 1970s, before diminishing as corruption increased and Kenyatta became less able.²³ But until his death, Kenyatta was viewed positively by most British observers.

Like many other nationalists who gained power at independence, Kenyatta was one of Britain's 'enemies-turned-friends'.²⁴ At his death, the British press highlighted this change: 'the Mau Mau leader who turned from Britain's arch-enemy to close friend'.²⁵ The attitude of the European population also changed and Kenyatta was transformed, as Knauss argued, '[f]rom Devil to ... statesman-leader-father figure'.²⁶ British officials thus tried to rationalise their relationship with Kenyatta by reinterpreting his past. MacDonald in 1966 denied any Mau Mau involvement: 'From my now intimate knowledge of Jomo Kenyatta's personality I feel sure that he never approved of the atrocities [or] Mau Mau excesses during the Kenyan emergency, and that he had no personal responsibility for them'.²⁷ Responses in CRO were less certain. One thought MacDonald 'a little starry-eyed';²⁸ another argued that Kenyatta was 'undoubtedly a prime instigator of the terrorist movement'.²⁹ One official interestingly did 'not think history will acquit [him] completely of some measure of responsibility ... I quite see that in the mythology of the post colonial era, history must be re-written. But we do not have to accept the re-writing'.³⁰ He clearly recognised that British ideas about Kenyatta and Kenya were undergoing a remembering and forgetting in the process of nation-

²² J.A. Shepherd, 'Mr. MacDonald's Despatch on Kenyatta', 19 January 1966, TNA DO 213/204/44.

²³ On corruption see, for example, S.J.G. Fingland, 'Kenya: First Impressions', 2 February 1976, TNA FCO 31/2019/5.

²⁴ David Cannadine, 'Introduction: Independence Day Ceremonials in Historical Perspective', in Robert Holland, Susan Williams and Terry Barringer (eds.), *The Iconography of Independence: 'Freedoms at Midnight'* (London, 2010), p. 9. Kwame Nkrumah was another prominent example

²⁵ 'Kenyatta dies in his sleep', *South Wales Echo*, Cardiff, 22 August 1978, KNA MSS/29/122.

²⁶ Peter Knauss, 'From Devil to Father Figure: The Transformation of Jomo Kenyatta by Kenya Whites', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1971), pp. 131-7.

²⁷ Malcolm MacDonald to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 'Kenya: Kenyatta', 27 January 1966, TNA FO 371/187869.

²⁸ R. Firman minute, 20 January 1966, TNA DO 213/204/44.

²⁹ F.P.B. Derrick minute, 16 February 1966, TNA FO 371/187869.

³⁰ Du Boulay minute, 3 February 1966, TNA FO 371/187869.

building which was occurring in Kenya, and simultaneously in Britain about Kenya.³¹ Kenyatta's role in Mau Mau was an awkward part of the colonial past which British officials did not want to address too deeply. In arguing for the influential role of Kenyatta's jailor Leslie Whitehouse, Watkins argued that Kenyatta was transformed in prison;³² but Savage has argued that Kenyatta 'has always been a conservative. Only the circumstances of the moment ever made it seem otherwise'.³³ Kenyatta came to be viewed as a reconciler, and after his death the High Commissioner argued that '[h]is main legacy to Kenya is that he genuinely followed the precept of his book – suffering without bitterness'.³⁴

Given the importance British officials attached to their relationship with Kenyatta, they were highly concerned by his succession, which, especially by the 1970s, came to be the lens through which they viewed Kenyan politics. British favour for Kenyatta meant that 'successors to Mzee [Kenyatta] inevitably look a puny lot. It could hardly be otherwise'.³⁵ British politicians, civil servants and diplomats feared that Kenya under a future leader would be less favourable to British interests and become unstable.³⁶ A draft paper in 1965 entitled 'After Kenyatta – Who?' categorically stated that 'removal of Kenyatta's control over the Kenya Government poses dangers to the British and the Western position', speculating upon the possibilities for a 'break down in law and order' and the potential need for 'evacuation of British subjects'.³⁷ Uncertainty was a key concern: despite their self-belief in their own knowledge, British policy-makers were also profoundly uncertain about the future after Kenyatta. Significant time was therefore spent on making succession predictions and assessing possible candidates as they hoped to recognise a successor, forge connections, and thereby protect

³¹ See also Timothy Parsons, 'The Lanet Incident, 2-25 January 1964: Military Unrest and National Amnesia in Kenya', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2007), pp. 51-70.

³² Elizabeth Watkins, *Jomo's Jailor: Grand Warrior of Kenya. The Life of Leslie Whitehouse* (Watlington, 1993), p. 195.

³³ Donald C. Savage, 'Kenyatta and the Development of African Nationalism in Kenya', *International Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1970), p. 537.

³⁴ Stanley Fingland, 'The Death and Funeral of President Kenyatta', 6 September 1978, TNA FCO 31/2319/196. See Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering Without Bitterness: The Founding of the Kenya Nation* (Nairobi, 1968).

³⁵ S.Y. Dawbarn to W.L. Allinson, 6 April 1973, TNA FCO 31/1496/5.

³⁶ Richard Hodder-Williams, 'Kenya after Kenyatta', *The World Today*, Vol. 36, No. 12 (1980), p. 476.

³⁷ Draft, 'After Kenyatta – Who?', [1965], TNA DO 213/69/2.

British interests. This seemed so important because the date of Kenyatta's death was uncertain but expected to be much sooner than it was, and possibly at any moment. In 1967, as one of multiple examples, the High Commissioner wrote to EAD: 'the following thoughts, inconclusive as they are, represent the total perspicacity of our combined crystal-balls'.³⁸ This level of uncertainty shows that British diplomats sometimes recognised the limits to their knowledge.

Njonjo and McKenzie

Despite Kenyatta's importance, British contact through most of his presidency was usually not directly with him but particularly with two other leading Kenyans: Bruce McKenzie and Charles Njonjo. As High Commissioner Peck recalled, these 'two dominant figures ... were invaluable channels to the President and meant that I need rarely press to see him personally'.³⁹ McKenzie was born in South Africa, moved to Kenya in 1946, and was described by one Briton working in Kenya as 'the only European in 1959 ... who saw clearly that Kenya would soon have an African government'.⁴⁰ McKenzie joined KANU in 1961 and remained Minister for Agriculture in 1963, a post he had been appointed to in 1959. He was the most influential European politician in independent Kenya and his visible ministerial presence 'suggested there was a place and a role for Europeans in independent Kenya'.⁴¹ He also had extensive business interests as 'Director of over 20 Kenyan registered companies and an unknown number of foreign companies' when he died.⁴² He retired as a minister in 1970, publicly due to ill-health, to which the High Commissioner's response was that 'for all his faults, we have lost an influential friend at court'.⁴³ Yet this was by no means the end of McKenzie's influence with either the British or Kenyan governments, and until he was killed in 1978, 'though he no longer holds public office, [he] is still very

³⁸ Edward Peck to E.G. Norris, 13 June 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/1.

³⁹ Peck, *Recollections*, p. 219.

⁴⁰ John Butter, *Uncivil Servant* (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 83.

⁴¹ James Gibbs, 'Uhuru na Kenyatta: White Settlers and the Symbolism of Kenya's Independence Day Events', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2014), p. 519.

⁴² S.J.G. Fingland to Munro, 31 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/9.

⁴³ Eric Norris to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1970', 12 January 1971, TNA FCO 31/851/1.

much in the President's confidence'.⁴⁴ McKenzie handled key policy initiatives and negotiations well beyond his remit as a minister, described by one British High Commissioner as 'Minister for Backstage affairs'.⁴⁵ McKenzie had a private brief for defence, and was often sent to Britain to broker defence sales rather than anyone from the Kenyan Ministry of Defence.⁴⁶ McKenzie had close British ties and knew how to use his connections, hinting once again at the importance of personal rather than ministerial position.

It has been suggested that McKenzie was a spy for the British government. One of the key allegations comes from the journalist Chapman Pincher who, in an article published at McKenzie's death, described McKenzie as an 'Intelligence agent ... with close links with Britain's SAS [Special Air Service] ... [who] rendered important Intelligence services to Britain'.⁴⁷ However, in his 2014 autobiography Pincher is less explicit; whilst he still describes McKenzie as having 'close personal relations with British, American, Canadian, Iranian and Israeli intelligence', he does not refer to him directly as a British agent.⁴⁸ Other evidence which points to McKenzie's connections with British intelligence is a reference by a CRO civil servant that Mackenzie 'was himself in the [SAS] Regiment'.⁴⁹ However, even this makes no reference to any current contact, and another diplomat had previously speculated that McKenzie favoured the SAS 'I suppose because McKenzie must have served with S.A.S. during the War'.⁵⁰ McKenzie did serve with the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the Second World War. A former High Commissioner described that McKenzie 'maintained a not-so-secret liaison with the UK High Commissioner', but exactly what this means – if he was a spy or merely intermediary – is unclear.⁵¹

⁴⁴ M.P.J. Lynch to Kirkness, 25 July 1974, TNA FCO 31/1718/48.

⁴⁵ Edward Peck to M. Scott, 28 August 1967, TNA FCO 38/10/21.

⁴⁶ See for examples: Note of meeting with Bruce McKenzie in the CRO, 5 January 1966, TNA DEFE 24/660/2A; Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and Bruce McKenzie at 10 Downing Street, 5 August 1974, TNA DEFE 11/652/7.

⁴⁷ Chapman Pincher, 'Mid-air Revenge: Crash Riddle of Man who let Amin's enemies into Entebbe', *Daily Express*, 26 May 1978, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁸ Chapman Pincher, *Dangerous to Know: A Life* (London, 2014), p. 99.

⁴⁹ R.M. Tesh minute, 6 January 1965, TNA DO 213/38/31.

⁵⁰ W.F. Bell to Walsh Atkins, 21 March 1964, TNA DO 213/38/3/2.

⁵¹ Peck, *Recollections*, p. 219.

Bloch and Fitzgerald in 1983 suggested McKenzie had 'been an MI6 agent since at least 1963' and was probably recruited during Mau Mau.⁵² Walton has argued that McKenzie 'may well have been' a British agent, and was also an Israeli one.⁵³ Dowden described him as 'head of MI6 in East Africa',⁵⁴ and Branch as 'probably a British and Israeli intelligence agent',⁵⁵ whilst Hornsby has argued there 'is evidence that such intelligence links existed'.⁵⁶ According to Bergman, 'McKenzie was one of the most important and long-lasting *Mossad* contacts in Africa', code-named 'The Duke'.⁵⁷ He claims that McKenzie's second wife had served in the SAS, and McKenzie became 'best friends' with Israeli Brigadier General Tsvi Zamir, although he 'was never paid by Israel for his services. According to his case officers, he volunteered out of sheer appreciation for the Zionist movement and the Jewish people and his friendship with Zamir'.⁵⁸ McKenzie's links with Mossad are beyond the scope of this thesis; however, it is notable that he was unpaid, and that he used his contacts in a similar manner to his British connections: to gain military support from Israel.

It seems, however, entirely possible that McKenzie was simply an intermediary, who saw in this an excellent way of pursuing his own interests. Redactions in documents do sometimes conceal the name(s) of people in the Kenyan government who passed information to the British – but it is not clear that McKenzie's name was among those redacted, as many documents do cite him directly as a source of information.⁵⁹ One BHC staff member suggested McKenzie '[d]idn't trust the British government an inch – probably rightly'.⁶⁰ Following a meeting with McKenzie in 1964, one diplomat noted that McKenzie 'is in a peculiar and unique position in the Kenya Government, and even his own senior

⁵² Bloch and Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence*, p. 153.

⁵³ Walton, *Empire of Secrets*, p. 273.

⁵⁴ Richard Dowden, *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles* (London, 2008), p. 44.

⁵⁵ Branch, *Kenya*, p. 40.

⁵⁶ Hornsby, *Kenya*, p. 226.

⁵⁷ Ronen Bergman, 'Israel and Africa: Military and Intelligence Liaisons', PhD thesis, Corpus Christi College Cambridge, 2006, p. 176.

⁵⁸ Bergman, 'Israel and Africa', p. 177.

⁵⁹ See M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 9 July 1976, TNA FCO 31/2022/1; telegram no. 920, Fingland to FCO, 4 April 1977, TNA FCO 31/2121/18; Nairobi to CRO, 30 August 1965, TNA DO 213/69/1.

⁶⁰ David Goodall, interview.

European officers are uncertain of his motives'.⁶¹ If he was a spy, this was not widely known among British diplomats and civil servants. McKenzie was not uniformly positive about Britain and 'tries to be genuinely non-aligned when it serves Kenya's interests'.⁶² As Hornsby recognised, 'McKenzie's dual loyalties were well known at Cabinet level and there is no evidence in the High Commission correspondence of actions that were to the detriment of Kenya'.⁶³ Unquestionably, McKenzie had extensive contacts across countries and within their intelligence services and acted as an intermediary passing information; however, as far as it is possible to tell, it seems that McKenzie was acting in his own interests, or what he perceived to be Kenya's interests, rather than directly to benefit any foreign government. After his death, the High Commissioner recognised that McKenzie's 'influence, although substantial, was exercised largely in his own interests and in his own interpretation of Kenya's interests, and this did not always coincide with British interests or British views on Kenyan interests'.⁶⁴ British policy-makers viewed McKenzie as working for his own benefit and position – not as a conduit for British interests.

Njonjo had been educated and practiced as a lawyer in Britain before becoming a powerful figure within Kenya as Attorney-General and close advisor to the President.⁶⁵ Njonjo was not always favoured by those around him in Kenya,⁶⁶ but the British believed him 'almost certainly the most pro-British of all the members of the Kenya Cabinet'.⁶⁷ British diplomats frequently talked to him and generally believed him a useful ally. Goodall, first secretary in BHC, recalled that he was 'very much one of our interlocutors'.⁶⁸ He was not as favoured by the Americans.⁶⁹ British policy-makers did recognise some

⁶¹ F.N. Brockett minute, 16 April 1964, TNA DO 213/65/8.

⁶² Biography Bruce McKenzie, November 1966, TNA DO 213/129/12/4.

⁶³ Hornsby, *Kenya*, p. 226.

⁶⁴ S.J.G. Fingland to Munro, 31 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/9.

⁶⁵ Biographical Note: Njonjo and McKenzie, September 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/33.

⁶⁶ See comments in Njenga Karume with Mutu wa Gethoi, *Beyond Expectations: From Charcoal to Gold* (Nairobi, 2009), p. 181.

⁶⁷ R.W. Munro to J. Johnston, 6 October 1970, TNA FCO 31/616/2. See also David W. Throup, 'The Construction and Destruction of the Kenyatta State', in Michael G. Schatzberg (ed.), *The Political Economy of Kenya* (New York, 1987), p. 50.

⁶⁸ David Goodall, interview.

⁶⁹ Telegram no. 307, Nairobi to FCO, 6 May 1980, TNA FCO 31/2827/29.

of Njonjo's flaws and a more critical appraisal of him was evident by 1980: 'He remains our best friend here and as such is worthy of support but we should not be under any illusions over [his] popularity or political deftness'.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, British officials knew Njonjo and consistently felt able to work with him. Both McKenzie and Njonjo were key supporters of Kenyatta and remained influential throughout this period – although British diplomats' access to them may have led them to an overestimation of their actual influence. For McKenzie and Njonjo, portraying themselves to the British as particularly significant, and thus ensuring they were treated that way, could prove useful. British personnel did occasionally recognise this: in 1975 the High Commissioner reported that Njonjo had 'confessed to being entirely baffled and for once I felt he was not lying nor attempting to cover anything up'.⁷¹ Pro-British and powerful, these men were acting in their own interests rather than Britain's.

One reason why McKenzie and Njonjo were so favoured by the British and vice versa was the underlying cultural ties. British diplomats still confidently assumed their own superiority, and they had closer relations with those most culturally similar – of whom McKenzie and Njonjo were the key examples. One very visible sign of this was Njonjo's choice of dress: pinstripes with a rose in his buttonhole. Njonjo was described by High Commissioner Duff as

"the black Englishman", outwardly an intelligent man of urbane charm, [he] is often the haven of normality and calm good sense to which one turns with relief when the rest of the Kenyan political scene appears to be shrouded in impenetrable cotton wool⁷²

This indicates both preference for Njonjo and how difficult British diplomats could find it to relate to others by comparison. Cultural similarities encouraged and facilitated connections to certain individuals who appeared comprehensible.

⁷⁰ N.R. Jarrold to P.A. Raftery, 12 August 1980, TNA FCO 31/2828/52.

⁷¹ Antony Duff to Head of Chancery, 11 March 1975, TNA DO 226/15/30.

⁷² A. Duff, 'Impressions of Kenya', 18 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1191/56.

The cultural bias towards Britain amongst the Kenyan elite was much wider. High Commissioner Peck wrote in 1967 that Kenyan politicians had a 'preference for the British way of life to the Americans'.⁷³ The interests of these men had been shaped in the latter colonial years, and many favoured the continuation of systems which offered them benefits.⁷⁴ Of Kenyan MPs in 1963, 30 per cent had received educational awards from Britain.⁷⁵ Kipkorir has also highlighted the importance of the Alliance High School as a 'formative experience both politically and personally' for many of Kenya's elite, with ten of seventeen of Kenya's cabinet at independence and nine of fourteen permanent secretaries educated there.⁷⁶ As Good has argued, 'western values were generally held high, not least by the educated African elite'.⁷⁷ In the 1978 British-compiled 'Leading Personalities in Kenya' report, twenty-eight of the 106 people included had received some kind of education or training in Britain.⁷⁸ The fact that British policy-makers made these reports at all suggests their sense that they knew how and who to categorise as 'important'. This of course reflected their own judgements and potentially led them to overlook others: because the British had trained certain people, they knew them and thought they were important.

McKenzie and Njonjo had both formal and informal contact with the British. Formal contact was often with ministers and they met multiple British ministers across this period: Commonwealth, Defence, Foreign and Commonwealth, Overseas Development, as well as the Prime Minister.⁷⁹ They often went to meetings as a pair and had a considerable level of access in Britain; when they asked for meetings, they generally received them. In 1966, anticipating McKenzie and Njonjo coming to Britain, head of

⁷³ Edward Peck to Michael Scott, 14 August 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/10.

⁷⁴ Branch and Cheeseman 'Politics of Control', p. 19. See also Branch, 'Loyalists, Mau Mau, and elections', pp. 27-50.

⁷⁵ Charles Hornsby, 'The Social Structure of the National Assembly in Kenya, 1963-83', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1989), p. 289.

⁷⁶ B. E. Kipkorir, 'The Alliance High School and the Origins of the Kenya African Elite 1926-1962', PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge, St John's College (December 1969), pp. 391, 2.

⁷⁷ Kenneth Good, 'Kenyatta and the Organization of KANU', *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1968), p. 135.

⁷⁸ Leading Personalities in Kenya, 1978, TNA FCO 31/2314.

⁷⁹ For examples see: Record of a meeting between the Minister of Overseas Development and B. McKenzie and C. Njonjo, 30 August 1974, TNA FCO 31/1713/46; Record of a conversation between the Secretary of State and Njonjo in the CRO, 16 May 1965, TNA PREM 13/2743/10.

EAD Michael Scott minuted that 'if the Ministers turn up with a mission to deliver a personal letter from President Kenyatta to the Prime Minister we should find it difficult to sidetrack them to either the Commonwealth Secretary or the Minister of Defence in the first instance'.⁸⁰ Clearly, Scott thought that they could not be denied prime ministerial access. The personal and formal were interlinked, however, as Scott also noted that '[a]s Mr. McKenzie knows Mr. Healey personally quite well, he may very well approach him first'.⁸¹ McKenzie also had links to British businessmen.⁸² Prior to the merger to FCO in 1968, McKenzie and Njonjo were informed by the Commonwealth Secretary that:

Mr. [Michael] Stewart would be in charge of the merged Office and that when representatives of the Kenya Government wanted access to the top, they should go to him. He would ensure that Mr. Stewart was aware of the sensitive matters which Mr. Njonjo and Mr. McKenzie might wish to discuss with him from time to time⁸³

Clearly these men were expected to have 'sensitive matters' to discuss, and were being offered 'access to the top' as people British ministers were willing to talk to. In 1969 BHC encouraged another meeting with the Commonwealth Secretary and noted in favour of this that:

The Secretary of State may be getting a little tired of talks with McKenzie but there is no doubt that McKenzie finds discussing his problems with him of great benefit and a sympathetic reception does much to bolster his morale⁸⁴

As well as formal meetings and communication, informal exchanges provided a crucial way of passing information and knowledge between leading British and Kenyan policy-makers. Personal connections were vital in establishing the 'friendly' relations which were the British aim. This contact was so significant partly because Kenya's neo-patrimonialism privileged individuals, but it was also in many cases the way British diplomats chose to interact; thereby reinforcing this system. There are multiple examples of this kind of informal, social contact at which the British could gain an insight into Kenyan

⁸⁰ M. Scott to Norris, Walsh Atkins, 1 November 1966, TNA DO 213/129.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Note of points made at a private dinner given by Lord Aldington for Bruce MacKenzie, 30 October 1970, TNA T 317/1587.

⁸³ Note of a conversation between the Commonwealth Secretary and Charles Njonjo and Bruce McKenzie, 25 September 1968, TNA DEFE 24/660/118/2.

⁸⁴ Telegram no. 3083, Nairobi to Commonwealth Office, 13 September 1969, TNA FCO 31/227/45.

thinking.⁸⁵ Social events could establish and reinforce relationships; although they could also potentially encourage diplomats to focus on those they knew and those who 'turned up at functions when we invited them'.⁸⁶ When MacDonald was High Commissioner he wrote to Njonjo with the number for the 'direct line to my study ... if you ever want to telephone me at 2 Tchui Road without someone else picking up the receiver'.⁸⁷ This suggests the level and discretion of communication between them; hinting at personal, private, and potentially frequent conversations. McKenzie was also prepared to offer informal advice, and his British contacts to listen to this. On an issue of loans in 1970 'McKenzie has given us useful guidance as to how we should play this at the talks'.⁸⁸ In 1968 BHC was privately approached by McKenzie to help 'produce a clear internal security plan' for the president's death, with the intention to ensure stability in the transfer of power. BHC helped create a plan which would restrict movement, detain potential opponents, and restrict or expel 'unfriendly diplomatic missions', working privately with McKenzie.⁸⁹ Clearly BHC was McKenzie's first choice of partner, and for British policy-makers, he and Njonjo were their key intermediaries, encouraged by both their willingness to play this role and their cultural similarities.

'Moderates' and 'Radicals'

Beyond these three key individuals, British diplomats, civil servants and politicians viewed Kenyans through several different lenses, categorising them to rationalise and explain their relationships. Key to this was a distinction drawn between 'moderates' and 'radicals'. Prior to independence, the CO tried to make sense of relationships by casting those who would work with them as 'moderates'. KADU was initially seen as the 'moderate' party, and it was only when it became apparent that KANU was

⁸⁵ See for example: Edward Peck to M. Scott, 21 March 1967, TNA FCO 31/227/11.

⁸⁶ R.J.S. Edis to Steele, Bellers, Arthur, 15 September 1970, TNA FCO 31/597/45.

⁸⁷ Malcolm MacDonald to Charles Njonjo, 3 April 1965, MMA 45/8/52.

⁸⁸ EAD Note: 'Kenya Aid Talks April 1970', 31 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/609/62.

⁸⁹ 'Contingency Plan for Arrangements in the Event of the President's Serious Illness or Death', 1968, TNA FCO 31/213/1. At the same time, they were asked to assist in making plans for the President's funeral.

most likely to win the election that the decision was taken to work with them.⁹⁰ As Kyle has argued, during 1960-63,

the aim of British policy in Kenya politics was to split Kanu between its "moderates" and its "extremists", with its "moderates" then joining forces with Kadu. What changed from time to time was the definition of a Kanu "moderate" and a Kanu "extremist"⁹¹

British conceptions of 'moderates' shifted as circumstances changed and people were redefined within British ideas. Kenyatta was the key example of this: seen initially as an 'extremist' leader of Mau Mau, he became a favoured 'moderate'.

Combined with these labels were ideas about ethnicity and the presidential succession.⁹² British diplomats came to post-independence politics with views on ethnicity shaped by their colonial past. High Commissioner Peck recalled 'the Wakamba being one of the fighting rather than commercial tribes',⁹³ echoing colonial ideas about so-called 'martial' groups.⁹⁴ Diplomats thought they understood Kenya's ethnic groups and could assess them: 'There is no other tribe in Africa quite like the Kikuyu',⁹⁵ and they were always keen to note who had 'support amongst his particular section of the tribe'.⁹⁶ This became central to their understanding of the succession, with the idea that the Kikuyu would continue to be in control of this, either through finding a successful Kikuyu candidate, or through an ethnic compromise.⁹⁷ Once more this offers a sense of the British thinking they understood Kenyans and could accurately assess them. This was part of why the relationship worked as it did, as British

⁹⁰ Philip Murphy, *Party Politics and Decolonization: The Conservative Party and British Colonial Policy in Tropical Africa, 1951-1964* (Oxford, 1995), p. 68.

⁹¹ Keith Kyle, 'The Politics of the Independence of Kenya', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1997), p. 48.

⁹² The role of ethnicity in Kenyan politics is something widely recognised; see Widner, *Rise of a Party-State*; Daniel Branch and Nic Cheeseman, 'Introduction: Our Turn to Eat', in Daniel Branch, Nic Cheeseman, Leigh Gardner (eds.), *Our Turn to Eat: Politics in Kenya since 1950* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 1-21.

⁹³ Peck, *Recollections*, p. 219.

⁹⁴ Parsons, *African Rank-and-File*, pp. 56-60; Henry Bienen, 'Military and Society in East Africa: Thinking Again about Praetorianism', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (1974), pp. 508-9.

⁹⁵ A.A. Duff, 'Impressions of Kenya', 18 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1191/56.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ W.L. Allinson to S.Y. Dawbarn, 7 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1496/2.

policy-makers were self-confident about their understanding, even if often their ideas were not as accurate as they believed.

Tom Mboya and Oginga Odinga were the leaders of two factions of KANU explicitly described by contemporaries as 'moderate' and 'radical' respectively.⁹⁸ The rivalry between Mboya and Odinga had aspects of both the political and personal and had begun during the 1950s as they sought national leadership.⁹⁹ Attitudes towards them coloured politics fundamentally up to 1969 and Britain's different categorisations were used to assess them. Mboya emerged as a trade union leader in the 1950s, becoming Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs at independence, then for Economic Planning and Development in 1964. British policy-makers recognised his talents in politics and MacDonald described him as 'by far the ablest, most hard working, and in some moods wisest member of the Government, not excluding the Prime Minister [Kenyatta]. He would be pre-eminently able by any standard in any country'.¹⁰⁰ But Mboya lacked parliamentary support and, as MacDonald again noted, 'I fear he has a genius for using his immense ability to rub people up the wrong way'.¹⁰¹ Mboya has sometimes been viewed as a non-ethnic leader whose power base was in Nairobi, and he was even described as 'de-tribalised',¹⁰² although Goldsworthy has argued that in fact 'his attitude was one of ethnic tolerance blended with a distinct pride in being Luo'.¹⁰³ Certain British diplomats and Kenyans considered Mboya in terms of the succession, but many Kenyan politicians opposed this,¹⁰⁴ leading in 1968 to 'Government legislation to avoid the possibility of Mboya becoming the next President'.¹⁰⁵ In

⁹⁸ Governor's Office, 'The Political Situation in Kenya as at January 1963', 24 January 1963, TNA CO 822/3052/1.

⁹⁹ See E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo, 'Democracy and the Ideology of Order in Kenya', in Michael G. Schatzberg (ed.), *The Political Economy of Kenya* (New York, 1987), p. 195; R. Buijtenhuijs, 'The Kenyan African National Union', *International Journal of Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1974-75), p. 62; Cherry Gertzel, *The Politics of Independent Kenya 1963-8* (Evanston, 1970), p. 14; Branch, *Kenya*, p. 68; Lamb, 'Political Crisis in Kenya', p. 539.

¹⁰⁰ Malcolm MacDonald, 'Note on Kenya on the eve of the Independence Conference, September 1963', 15 September 1963, TNA CO 822/3052/10.

¹⁰¹ Malcolm MacDonald to Secretary of State, 30 October 1963, TNA CO 822/3052/13.

¹⁰² Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Mboya's Assassination and its Aftermath', 11 November 1969, TNA FCO 31/351/147.

¹⁰³ David Goldsworthy, 'Ethnicity and Leadership in Africa: The 'Untypical' Case of Tom Mboya', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1982), p. 116.

¹⁰⁴ See Lamb, 'Political Crisis in Kenya', p. 542.

¹⁰⁵ R. Greatbatch to Michael Scott, 26 March 1968, TNA FCO 31/209/2.

July 1969 Mboya was assassinated, most likely not by 'radicals' but by other 'moderates' who wished to prevent his succession. These categories shaped British ideas; yet they were far from adequate to explain political rivalries.

Despite categorising him as a 'moderate', British officials were uncertain about Mboya, who lacked a cultural affinity which could have made him more favoured. Mboya was a prominent figure in the West: he published a pamphlet with the Fabian Colonial Bureau in 1956, forwarded by Margery Perham, attended Oxford University, and organised an 'airlift' of students to the US.¹⁰⁶ But, unusually among the Kenyan elite at this time, he was closer to America than to Britain as 'the one Kenyan moderate figure who completely dominated American thinking'.¹⁰⁷ He did not fit the British style of policy-making and was not expected to be pro-British if he did become President. He also did not talk to British diplomats very much, with fewer examples of private conversations with BHC, particularly after independence.¹⁰⁸ His choice not to talk to them extensively surely influenced British uncertainties about him. In 1965 Imray in BHC suggested that 'Kenyatta has never wholly trusted (or liked) him', perhaps signalling as much the British attitude as Kenyatta's.¹⁰⁹ Following discussions between BHC and the US Embassy in August 1967, High Commissioner Peck argued that the Americans should aim 'to broaden their outlook and counter their tendency sometimes to see the Kenyan situation through Mboya's eyes', suggesting that Mboya was having excessive influence upon American thinking.¹¹⁰ British observers were far more sceptical about his chances of succession and clearly thought they had a more accurate understanding than the Americans.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Tom Mboya, *The Kenya Question: An African Answer* (London, 1956); Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* (London, 1963), pp. 139-43.

¹⁰⁷ Okoth, *Foreign Policy toward Kenya*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁸ For one infrequent suggestion that MacDonald talk to Mboya see C.F. MacLaren to B. Miller, 25 August 1965, TNA DO 213/68/14.

¹⁰⁹ C.H. Imray to R.M. Tesh, 30 June 1965, TNA DO 213/65/55/56.

¹¹⁰ Edward Peck to Michael Scott, 14 August 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/10.

¹¹¹ R. Greatbatch to Michael Scott, 26 March 1968, TNA FCO 31/209/2.

Odinga, by contrast, was a 'radical' Kenyan politician. His background was in business before being elected to Legislative Council in 1957. Odinga was the first to call for Kenyatta's release in June 1958, in a move that shocked and scared the British government, as well as many of his African colleagues; and – ironically given later British views of Kenyatta – it was this which irredeemably fixed his 'radical' label for the British.¹¹² The description of 'radical' was not just a British language being applied to Kenyans; it was also one which certain Kenyans chose to appropriate. In part, this was a way to signal opposition, as being 'radical' meant being opposed, in differing ways, to Kenyatta's mainstream Kenyan politics. Ochieng describes 'radicals' as those 'who stood for fundamental changes in the social, economic and political fields'.¹¹³ Odinga supported redistributing land without compensation, thus rejecting one of the pillars of continuity which encouraged Anglo-Kenyan cooperation. In other ways, too, Odinga was less favourable to the British and their interests. During defence discussions in early 1964, Odinga would 'not agree [to] further discussion now in front of British Service Commanders' even though other Kenyan ministers wanted this discussion.¹¹⁴

Another sign of Odinga's 'radicalism' was his apparent sympathy for Communism. In 1961 the Kenyan government reported that Odinga was 'convinced that communism is the answer to Kenya's problems and will do all in his power to see that this ideology is adopted after independence',¹¹⁵ in a 1965 speech he described that 'Communism to him was "just like food"'.¹¹⁶ One British diplomat did give the caveat that 'Odinga for his part remains something of an enigma. He is probably not a Communist, but an ambitious opportunist, who is glad to dispense the immense funds provided by the Communists and relishes the prospect of buying his way to power'.¹¹⁷ British diplomats did attempt to nuance their understandings, but in some ways this was perhaps even more damning: not even a sincere

¹¹² Kyle, *Independence of Kenya*, pp. 86-7.

¹¹³ William Ochieng', 'Independent Kenya, 1963-1986', in W. R. Ochieng' (ed.), *A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980* (London, 1989), p. 205.

¹¹⁴ Telegram no. 380, Nairobi to CRO, 18 February 1964, TNA T 317/431.

¹¹⁵ Director of Intelligence and Security, Nairobi, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, 9 February 1961, TNA FCO 141/7094/9.

¹¹⁶ D.M. McBain to R.M. Tesh, 4 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/33.

¹¹⁷ H. Gilchrist, 'The Kenya Scene', 9 September 1964, TNA DO 213/65/10.

Communist, but an 'opportunist', although the suspicion of communism remained. Some British civil servants did question this simplistic interpretation. Imray, first secretary in BHC, argued in June 1965 that: 'All this speculation tends to cast Odinga and his followers in the role of "baddies" in Kenyatta's eyes, and the "moderates" in the role of "goodies"'. This is oversimplification'.¹¹⁸ But although these labels could be obstructive rather than revealing, for many the simplified version continued to influence thinking. Odinga's position changed substantially as the later 1960s saw him lose influence and power – a process fully supported and approved by British observers. He resigned the vice-presidency and formed the opposition Kenya People's Union (KPU) in 1966, followed by imprisonment in 1969. After he was released, Odinga's support and activities were still commented upon by British observers, but he was no longer viewed as having the same importance or influence.¹¹⁹

Whilst he was vice-president however, British decision-makers had to interact with Odinga, and often at the highest level: in February 1965 he met the Prime Minister after attending Winston Churchill's funeral.¹²⁰ Yet they hoped to avoid having to work too closely with him. In May 1965, with Odinga thought to be intriguing against Kenyatta – and against British interests – British policy-makers and Kenyatta did not want Odinga to represent Kenya at the upcoming Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting in London. Kenyatta felt unable to personally attend because to do so meant leaving Odinga as Acting President and 'he simply does not trust Odinga to conduct affairs properly'; to ask anyone else to lead the delegation 'would be an almost intolerable public insult to Odinga'.¹²¹ MacDonald viewed this as 'extremely regrettable',¹²² whilst those in EAD sought a way round this: 'We have consulted our lawyers, who confirm that this [constitution] does not prevent both the President and the Vice-President being out of Kenya at the same time ... That is, of course, not to say that Kenyatta

¹¹⁸ C.H. Imray to R.M. Tesh, 30 June 1965, TNA DO 213/65/55/56.

¹¹⁹ See for example: C.T. Hart to D. Wigan, 5 February 1975, TNA FCO 31/1883/4.

¹²⁰ Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the Vice-President of Kenya, Oginga Odinga at 10 Downing Street, 1 February 1965, TNA PREM 13/174.

¹²¹ Malcolm MacDonald to Arthur Bottomley, 12 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/36.

¹²² Ibid.

might not find it extremely difficult'.¹²³ It is clear that EAD staff were prepared to go to some effort to try and prevent Odinga leading the delegation, but it was Kenyan internal opposition to Odinga which made this a possibility.¹²⁴

Instead, the delegation was led by Joseph Murumbi, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, who had important access to both Kenyatta and British diplomats in the early 1960s. Murumbi was described as 'well-disposed to us and we find him the most reasonable to deal with of all the Ministers'.¹²⁵ Based on his position being sworn in on Independence Day, he was ranked fifth in what British policy-makers believed to be 'the official order of precedence' in the Kenyan government.¹²⁶ British diplomats considered Murumbi a 'moderate', close to Kenyatta, who could be trusted with exchanging sensitive requests. In preparing for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting in June 1965, Deputy High Commissioner Henry Stanley of BHC wrote to EAD that

Ministers can speak quite frankly to Murumbi on any topic; he is intelligent, articulate and cultured, and rather more a man of the world than many African politicians ... As regards tactical handling ... I suggest plain speech and maximum exposure of him to the more realistic African line¹²⁷

British policy-makers were preoccupied by whom they would be talking to, and in finding the best way to talk to them. When Odinga was removed from the vice-presidency in 1966, Murumbi was appointed, and retained significant British access, before he retired from politics at the end of 1966.¹²⁸

¹²³ N. Aspin to Chadwick, 17 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/37.

¹²⁴ D.M. McBain to R.M. Tesh, 1 June 1965, TNA DO 213/65/42.

¹²⁵ H.S.H. Stanley to N. Aspin, 29 January 1964, TNA DO 213/65/6.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Stanley to Aspin, 4 June 1965, TNA DO 213/65/41.

¹²⁸ See: Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the Vice-President of Kenya at No. 10 Downing Street, 12 October 1966, TNA PREM 13/2178.

Succession Candidates

Another key feature of British assessments was potential candidacy for the presidency. Speculation on the succession was a major preoccupation, although British decision-makers did not try to directly foist a candidate of their choosing – they were too uncertain themselves to attempt this. Diplomats and civil servants sometimes struggled to predict the most likely candidates, despite a fascination with the subject: Stanley in 1965 thought it 'pretty well impossible now to identify the future leaders'.¹²⁹

British ideas about the succession were by no means static, as was exemplified by James Gichuru. He joined Legislative Council in 1961, stood in as KANU president until Kenyatta's release from detention, became Minister of Finance in 1963 and Minister for Defence in 1969.¹³⁰ Some Kenyans described him as Kenyatta's choice for successor.¹³¹ In September 1963, MacDonald assessed him as a future 'compromise leader ... a good choice, because he is experienced, moderate and wise, except that his is too gentle and unself-assertive a nature to give really potent leadership'.¹³² In 1964, Stanley wrote that he was 'one of the most reasonable Ministers', a 'moderate', loyal to Kenyatta and a potential successor.¹³³ Yet opinions about Gichuru became increasingly critical – 'a chronic diabetic and alcoholic'¹³⁴ – until by 1968 he was judged 'a non-starter' for the succession.¹³⁵ By 1970, opinion had certainly hardened: 'It is a pity that the Kenya Government continue to give important posts to Gichuru, as he makes trouble wherever he is'; although they recognised that much of the work of his Ministry was not done by him (often McKenzie was involved).¹³⁶ Gichuru was no longer in the 1970s someone British representatives sought out or whose opinions they valued. It seems that as he lost

¹²⁹ H.S.H Stanley to L.B. Walsh Atkins, 5 January 1965, TNA DO 213/73/3.

¹³⁰ Leading Personalities in Kenya, 1978, p. 20, TNA FCO 31/2314.

¹³¹ Karume, *Beyond Expectations*, p. 221.

¹³² Malcolm MacDonald, 'Note on Kenya on the eve of the Independence Conference, September 1963', 15 September 1963, TNA CO 822/3052/10.

¹³³ H.SH. Stanley to L.B. Walsh Atkins, 18 February 1964, TNA DO 213/134/18.

¹³⁴ Edward Peck to E.G. Norris, 13 June 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/1.

¹³⁵ R. Greatbatch to Michael Scott, 26 March 1968, TNA FCO 31/209/2.

¹³⁶ R.W. Munro to E.G. Le Tocq, 1 October 1970, TNA FCO 46/545/27.

influence and was ruled out of succession possibilities, he became less useful to the British, and they felt less need to talk to him.

By contrast, someone who became increasingly significant to British policy-makers and whom they sought to cultivate was Mwai Kibaki. Kibaki 'Obtained First Class Honours (London University) in Economics, the first Kenya African to do so', became a junior minister in 1963, Minister of Commerce and Industry in 1966 and Minister of Finance in 1969.¹³⁷ The idea of a Kibaki succession was mooted in 1964 and, prophetically, 'we should regard Kibaki as the next but one' – though the author probably did not anticipate how long it would be until then.¹³⁸ Diplomats viewed Kibaki positively, and his appointment as Minister of Finance in 1969 was 'likely to be very much to our advantage'.¹³⁹ EAD stated in 1970 that 'because of his ability and relative youth, he is likely to be an important figure in Kenya for an indefinite time to come'.¹⁴⁰ Establishing connections was a priority, and when Kibaki visited London for aid talks in April 1970 a meeting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer was encouraged 'for the purpose of getting acquainted, rather than for any substantive discussions'.¹⁴¹ This highlights the importance British decision-makers placed upon Kenya's economy being well-managed and a secure environment for investment, as well as on fostering personal political communication with those they thought likely to be influential in future. Kibaki was increasingly consulted as one of the key figures of the elite, viewed by 1972 as 'the most capable, intelligent and potentially effective'.¹⁴²

The two most likely successors during the 1970s were Moi and Njoroge Mungai and their rivalry became a key feature of politics. Neither were categorised as simply 'moderate' or 'radical', but British officials still sometimes struggled to relate or assess them accurately. Moi had been a teacher before

¹³⁷ Brief for Chancellor of the Exchequer, Biographical Note: Mr Mwai Kibaki, 31 March 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

¹³⁸ H.S.H. Stanley to N. Aspin, 29 January 1964, TNA DO 213/65/6. Kibaki became president in 2002.

¹³⁹ Ian McCluney to J.W.L. Lonie, 27 January 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

¹⁴⁰ Brief for Chancellor of the Exchequer, Visit of Mwai Kibaki, 31 March 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

¹⁴¹ Ian McCluney to J.W.L. Lonie, 27 January 1970, TNA T 317/1385; Note of a meeting held in the Chancellor's room at 4.30 p.m. on Thursday 9 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

¹⁴² A. Duff, 'Impressions of Kenya', 18 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1191/56.

being elected to Legislative Council in 1957 alongside Mboya and Odinga. He cofounded KADU then joined the government in 1964 as Minister for Home Affairs, becoming vice-president in 1967. Mungai was a doctor and claimed great familiarity with Kenyatta as his physician. He had been educated in Uganda, South Africa and America; he became Minister for Health and Housing in 1963, Defence Minister in 1964, and Foreign Minister in 1969.

The position of vice-president was a crucial indication of the succession, particularly from 1968 when a constitutional change meant that the vice-president would automatically succeed for 90 days after the president's death.¹⁴³ British policy-makers speculated over the appointment after Odinga and Murumbi in 1967. Gichuru, Kibaki, Moi and Mungai were considered along with others, although the High Commissioner thought Ronald Ngala, former leader of KADU, most likely.¹⁴⁴ Once appointed, Moi's position as vice-president in no way lessened the speculation among British officials, with others considered to varying levels of expectation.¹⁴⁵ In a sign of the views of individuals held by British civil servants – and the speculation the succession caused amongst them – in 1967 directly after Moi became vice-president:

off-the-course book makers in E. Africa department were offering the following odds: -

5-1 Arap Moi

6-1 Gichuru

100-7 Kibaki

100-8 Mungai

20-1 The field

The superintending Under Secretary was at that time inclined to think that the price for arap Moi was on the generous side, but clearly much depends on whether he continues to show improvement in training!¹⁴⁶

There was no certainty and a considerable amount of speculation.

¹⁴³ H. W. O. Okoth-Ogendo, 'The Politics of Constitutional Change in Kenya since Independence, 1963-69', *African Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 282 (1972), pp. 30-2.

¹⁴⁴ Edward Peck to E.G. Norris, 6 September 1966, TNA DO 213/69/9.

¹⁴⁵ Edward Peck to E.G. Norris, 13 June 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/1.

¹⁴⁶ Norris to E. Peck, [1967], TNA FCO 31/210/2.

Much of what was written immediately after Kenyatta's death was designed to make Moi's succession appear inevitable and unquestioned.¹⁴⁷ Khapoya described Moi in 1979 as 'really the front runner to succeed Kenyatta from the very beginning'.¹⁴⁸ It is not clear when the 'very beginning' to which Khapoya refers is – Kenya's independence? Moi's appointment as vice-president? – but regardless, it is hard to support this assessment given the many others variously considered. In fact, Moi's succession was by no means inevitable, nor always the British choice. Branch has recently described Moi as 'the candidate of British influence';¹⁴⁹ but until the final years of his vice-presidency and initial presidency, Moi was not viewed particularly positively in Britain. The High Commissioner in 1967 took Moi's succession 'under consideration, but I think largely as a front man; his performance so far as number two does not suggest that he is of presidential timber'.¹⁵⁰ Describing a constitutional debate in 1968, Edis remarked that 'Moi added his clumsy weight to the Government position in a singularly ineffective speech';¹⁵¹ whilst another diplomat noted that '[Moi's] typical reaction seems to be clumsily veiled and heavy-handed threats'.¹⁵² They rarely viewed him positively. In 1970 he was considered 'the likeliest of the compromise candidates should the President die soon, but it is difficult to see him lasting long', and this was a fairly common British assessment of Moi until the mid-1970s.¹⁵³

Mungai too occasioned differing British views. He was dismissed as one of the 'lightweights' by Stanley in 1964,¹⁵⁴ and as 'shallow and rather unreliable' by MacDonald in 1966.¹⁵⁵ From 1967 Mungai was increasingly viewed as a potential successor, although not necessarily positively: Peck wrote that he

¹⁴⁷ See for examples: Joseph Karimi and Philip Ochieng, *The Kenyatta Succession* (Nairobi, 1980); Hilary Ng'weno, *The Day Kenyatta Died* (Nairobi, 1978); Padma Srinivasan, "'Orderly' Succession', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 13, No. 41 (1978), pp. 1732-3.

¹⁴⁸ Vincent B. Khapoya, 'The Politics of Succession in Africa: Kenya after Kenyatta', *Africa Today*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1979), p. 17.

¹⁴⁹ Branch, *Kenya*, p. 124.

¹⁵⁰ Edward Peck to E.G. Norris, 13 June 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/1.

¹⁵¹ R.J.S. Edis to Ling, 23 October 1968, TNA FCO 31/350/3.

¹⁵² R.J.S. Edis to R.G. Tallboys, 6 November 1968, TNA FCO 31/350/10.

¹⁵³ Eric Norris to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1969', 12 January 1970, TNA FCO 31/593/1.

¹⁵⁴ H.S.H. Stanley to N. Aspin, 29 January 1964, TNA DO 213/65/6.

¹⁵⁵ Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'Can It Happen Here?', 31 January 1966, TNA DO 213/70/2.

'has charm, intelligence and ambition sometimes to the point of arrogance, but is at the same time venal, lazy and a light-weight'.¹⁵⁶ Yet by August 1970, 'The best hope for United Kingdom interests would seem to be a quick transmission post-Kenyatta to Mungai who appears from many points of view to have outstandingly the best presidential credentials'.¹⁵⁷ The views of British diplomats fluctuated depending on personal preference and events in Kenya.

Part of the reason why both Moi and Mungai were often viewed negatively by British observers was a lack of cultural affinity. Unlike with Njonjo and McKenzie, British policy-makers were not really comfortable with either. Perhaps tellingly, neither had been educated in Britain. The pro-British ethos of Kenya's political leadership appeared potentially threatened. Both were described as possibly 'damaging to our interests as well as those of Kenya' – neatly equating British interests in Kenya with Kenya's interests.¹⁵⁸ The British judged both through stereotypes and an assumed superiority.

With Moi, British condescension was intellectual. Moi was viewed as having some serious weaknesses, described variously as 'his precarious hold on the loyalties of his own people (the Kalenjin), his incompetence as an administrator, and his intellectual shortcomings',¹⁵⁹ as well as 'his widely suspect judgement. His ineptitude, his apparent craving for popularity at any price, and his habit of acting without thinking through the consequence'.¹⁶⁰ The Deputy High Commissioner in 1973 wrote that 'In any serious recital of talents and qualifications Moi would scarcely rate a mention ... he is very unsophisticated by world standards. In some ways he remains a primitive from the outback'.¹⁶¹ The condescending racism which permeates this language indicates the importance of cultural connections: British diplomats did not feel entirely at ease with Moi. Head of EAD in 1973 viewed Moi

¹⁵⁶ Edward Peck to Michael Scott, 14 August 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/10.

¹⁵⁷ R.M. Purcell to Joy, Counsell, Le Tocq, 4 August 1970, TNA FCO 31/597/34.

¹⁵⁸ W.L. Allinson to S.Y. Dawbarn, 7 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1496/2. See also A.A. Duff, 'Impressions of Kenya', 18 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1191/56.

¹⁵⁹ Eric Norris to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: The internal Political Situation', 30 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/596/4.

¹⁶⁰ T.J. Bellers to G. Wallace, 26 April 1972, TNA FCO 31/1191/21.

¹⁶¹ W.L. Allinson to S.Y. Dawbarn, 7 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1496/2.

as 'a person with whom we should reckon extremely seriously. He may not be particularly bright, but lack of intelligence has hitherto not been much of an impediment for an African leader; it perhaps even increases his danger'.¹⁶² Despite seeing Moi as a more likely successor, the condescension continued, with a sense of African difference. In 1972, the High Commissioner suggested he 'is perhaps shrewder than he appears (he does not appear shrewd at all)'.¹⁶³ In fact, as his succession made clear, British policy-makers consistently underestimated Moi.

By contrast, Mungai was measured against a series of unfavourable stereotypes of lustful, alcoholic, and despotic Africans. One critique was that 'Mungai is said to have the makings of a dictatorial, ruthless and leftist leader'.¹⁶⁴ In 1972 he was described as 'something of a playboy ... with a taste for beer and blondes'.¹⁶⁵ At a meeting with a British diplomat in Brasilia in 1972, Mungai drank heavily and was explicitly critical of Britain, particularly over Rhodesia.¹⁶⁶ The head of EAD was not that surprised, although 'When he is sober (as he normally is), Mungai usually behaves quite sensibly, even helpfully'.¹⁶⁷ High Commissioner Duff's response was that:

below the comparatively polished surface of the African politician, official and businessman there are forces and emotions of a kind which, in the world at large, have long since vanished below the horizon ... It often takes little to spark off an emotional surge which can carry even the most literate East African back to a primitive level of thinking ... But in dealing with them, in this period between independence and the time when, hopefully, they reach a genuine maturity of good sense and experience, what has to be considered is whether an individual is capable of checking his irrational impulses effectively enough for us to be able to do business with him. Fortunately, the senior Kenyan leaders are capable of disciplining themselves in this manner, and Dr Mungai generally does so.¹⁶⁸

Coming from a high level civil servant, this overt racism shows that certain colonial attitudes had changed remarkably little. Mungai's public criticism of Britain meant that at times he was especially

¹⁶² M.K. Ewans to Campbell, 6 November 1973, TNA FCO 31/1496/16.

¹⁶³ A.A. Duff, 'Impressions of Kenya', 18 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1191/56.

¹⁶⁴ M.K. Ewans to Campbell, 6 November 1973, TNA FCO 31/1496/16.

¹⁶⁵ *Leading Personalities in Kenya*, 1972, p. 72, TNA FCO 31/1192/3.

¹⁶⁶ R.C. Hope-Jones to H. Smedley, 8 August 1972, TNA FCO 31/1192/5.

¹⁶⁷ S.Y. Dawbarn to R.C. Hope-Jones, 17 August 1972, TNA FCO 31/1192/6.

¹⁶⁸ A.A. Duff to H. Smedley, [1972], TNA FCO 31/1192/8.

disfavoured: one member of BHC 'had the fortune (or misfortune!) of experiencing for myself Dr Mungai at his euphoric worst ... it was a fairly nauseating performance'.¹⁶⁹ The British were very sensitive to any criticism of recent or current colonial policy – they had, after all, much to be sensitive about. In 1973, McKenzie suggested to Duff that 'Mungai was mentally unbalanced'.¹⁷⁰ This assessment was then directly echoed by Duff, clearly showing the importance of McKenzie in directly shaping his ideas.¹⁷¹

Yet as the 1970s progressed and no alternative candidate emerged as British observers had expected, it became increasingly apparent that Moi would succeed. There were several key indicators of this. In the 'major upset' of the 1974 elections, Mungai lost his Dagoretti seat.¹⁷² Duff assessed that he lost 'because of his personal unpopularity and his arrogance'.¹⁷³ Moi and Mungai were clearly rivals by this time, and Moi was getting better press coverage. This was a key moment in the succession struggle between Moi and Mungai, described by Branch as 'a calamitous blow' to Mungai's chances, as successors had to be elected MPs to succeed constitutionally.¹⁷⁴ Surprisingly, however, Duff thought that

Paradoxically, Moi's success in securing the defeat of his outstanding rival for the succession, Dr. Mungai, has weakened his position. While Mungai was there many leading Kikuyu preferred Moi. Now he has gone, at any rate for the time being, they see less need to support Moi and are in any case less inclined to do so because of the maladroitness he showed during the election¹⁷⁵

Duff's remarks were seen 'somewhat unexpectedly' by EAD, and were not borne out by events, showing once again the inability to predict sometimes displayed by British policy-makers.¹⁷⁶ This also

¹⁶⁹ W.L. Allinson to S. Darling, 21 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1505/3.

¹⁷⁰ A.A. Duff to Deputy High Commissioner, 10 August 1973, TNA DO 226/13/61.

¹⁷¹ A.A. Duff to Deputy High Commissioner, 31 August 1973, TNA DO 226/13/69.

¹⁷² C.T. Hart to D. Wigan, 16 October 1974, TNA FCO 31/1705/13.

¹⁷³ Antony Duff to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Aftermath of the Kenyan Elections', 4 December 1974, TNA FCO 31/1707/18.

¹⁷⁴ Branch, *Kenya*, p. 130.

¹⁷⁵ Antony Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Aftermath of the Kenyan Elections', 4 December 1974, TNA FCO 31/1707/18.

¹⁷⁶ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 10 December 1974, TNA FCO 31/1707/19.

suggests, however, the unwillingness of British officials in 1974 to accept or back Moi – or indeed anyone else – as successor.

The succession rivalry came to a head with the Change-the-Constitution movement in 1976. The constitutional provision for the vice-president to automatically succeed for 90 days meant that Moi was the 'acknowledged front runner in the succession race', and 'an open challenge on Moi's position' aimed to change this.¹⁷⁷ As Tamarkin argued, for those in the potential pool of successors, 'the stakes ... were so high that it was inconceivable that any group would give up before it was crystal clear that the cause was lost'.¹⁷⁸ The movement was ended in October 1976 by Njonjo, with a statement 'that it is a criminal offence for any person to compass, imagine, devise, or intend the death or the deposition of the president'.¹⁷⁹ High Commissioner Fingland, however, thought that 'it certainly should not be taken that we have heard the end of a challenge' to Moi.¹⁸⁰ There was still uncertainty amongst British officials, who had not ruled out the possibility of an alternative successor.¹⁸¹

British commitment to Moi increased through the later 1970s, partly due to Moi's support from other leading Kenyans whom the British had closer relationships with. By 1977: 'The best hope for a stable succession and action to counter corruption and Kenya's other problems lie with the group now associated with the Vice-President'.¹⁸² The 'group' around him was key, with Njonjo, Kibaki and McKenzie its most significant members. These men were already favoured by the British 'and it was to be hoped that the support of these and other Kenyan leaders would guide him into sensible paths'.¹⁸³ Supporting Moi therefore did not necessitate a change in those the British were already

¹⁷⁷ S.J.G. Fingland to M.K. Ewans, 29 September 1976, TNA FCO 31/2019/42. For more detail on the Change-the-Constitution movement see: Karimi and Ochieng, *Kenyatta Succession*, pp. 21-38; Karume, *Beyond Expectations*, pp. 181-7.

¹⁷⁸ Tamarkin, 'Roots of Political Stability', pp. 24-5.

¹⁷⁹ Njonjo, quoted in Khapoya, 'Politics of Succession', p. 14.

¹⁸⁰ Fingland to M.K. Ewans, 3 November 1976, TNA FCO 31/2019/53.

¹⁸¹ W.J. Watts to M.K. Ewans, 19 October 1976, TNA FCO 31/2019/49.

¹⁸² Stanley Fingland to David Owen, 'Kenyan Politics during Kenyatta's Decline', 25 October 1977, TNA FCO 31/2121/51.

¹⁸³ M.K. Ewans to Campbell, 18 January 1974, TNA FCO 31/1707/2.

talking to. Kibaki and Njonjo were expected to be able to influence a weaker Moi, encouraging the view that Moi would be the most beneficial successor for British interests.¹⁸⁴ Yet still in 1978, Moi was described as 'Cunning rather than clever, impatient and impulsive. Somewhat inarticulate ... But a tall and rather imposing man who at least looks like a national leader'.¹⁸⁵ That British policy-makers had to comment on his physical stature rather than attributes speaks volumes to the limits they still believed of him – despite that only months later he would become president. Kibaki and Njonjo's support was crucial in Moi's installation as president, and power immediately after the succession was spoken of as a 'triumvirate of Moi, Njonjo and Kibaki'.¹⁸⁶

With both Moi and Mungai, the lack of cultural connection shaped British views. Both were described as 'primitive' – admittedly an extreme opinion – but the views of Moi as unintelligent and Mungai as a 'playboy' were a means of disassociating. The sense of underlying cultural difference and superiority often felt by British policy-makers was combined with their self-belief that they knew and understood these men, and also generally disliked them. Neither were favoured to succeed until it became clear that Moi would do so and – as they had in working with KANU and Kenyatta before independence – British officials then sought to side with and cultivate the emerging victor.

Personal Forms of Policy-Making

Kenyan politics was based on individuals. It was not institutional partly because the rules were not firmly defined. Although Kenya had inherited the structures of the colonial state, it was not quite clear how those would work under the very different circumstances of independence. The state was, as Hyden has argued, 'an institution in formation'.¹⁸⁷ Orwa in 1989 argued that 'States are run by people.

¹⁸⁴ C.D. Crabbie to D. Carter, 31 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2322/30.

¹⁸⁵ Leading Personalities in Kenya, 1978, p. 46, TNA FCO 31/2314.

¹⁸⁶ J. A. Robson to Day, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1978', 2 February 1979, TNA FCO 31/2556/3.

¹⁸⁷ Goran Hyden, 'Capital Accumulation, Resource Distribution, and Governance in Kenya: the Role of the Economy of Affection', in Michael G. Schatzberg (ed.), *The Political Economy of Kenya* (New York, 1987), p. 117.

It is their character which makes up the character of the state';¹⁸⁸ but in fact this was a very Kenyan analysis: the character of the British state was institutional. In these circumstances, Kenyan 'policy-makers' were largely individuals pursuing personal advantage and enrichment; they sought power and wealth in what was, in retrospect, a remarkable free-for-all. A new elite was emerging, quickly rising to be very wealthy as their interests embraced both politics and economics.¹⁸⁹ For the well positioned, as those discussed within this thesis mostly were, there was a 'remarkable rise to wealth and prominence'.¹⁹⁰ The factionalism in Kenyan politics both emerged from and contributed to this situation as individuals sought advantage over rivals. Business rivalries played into political contests, particularly between the two succession groups of the 1970s, described by Branch as 'rival investment clubs' as well as competitors for the presidency.¹⁹¹ This personal rather than institutional form of policy-making is further highlighted by the limited reference, even in what little literature exists on Kenyan foreign policy, to how this was made.¹⁹² Foreign policy was not conducted through a regularised set of norms and practices, or with unified ideas of a national interest, but rather on the basis of personal and factional interests.

That Kenyatta preferred to work through individuals rather than institutions was clearly displayed in Kenyan interaction with British civil servants, diplomats and politicians. Kenya quickly established a High Commission in London, one of only eight until 1968.¹⁹³ The first Kenyan High Commissioner was Josephat Karanja, who left the position in 1970 when 'In length of service he is the senior African High Commissioner in London', with a farewell call on the Prime Minister recommended.¹⁹⁴ His successor was Ng'ethe Njoroge, brother of Mungai, of whom Counsellor James Arthur in BHC commented that

¹⁸⁸ Orwa, 'Foreign policy', p. 220.

¹⁸⁹ See David P. Sandgren, *Mau Mau's Children: The Making of Kenya's Postcolonial Elite* (Madison, 2012), pp. 100-10.

¹⁹⁰ Roger Van Zwanenberg, 'Neocolonialism and the Origin of the National Bourgeoisie in Kenya between 1940 and 1973', *Journal of Eastern African Research and Development*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1974), p. 162.

¹⁹¹ Branch, *Kenya*, p. 123.

¹⁹² See Musambayi, 'Moi's Foreign Policy', p. 5.

¹⁹³ Kirk-Greene, 'Diplomacy and Diplomats', pp. 287-8.

¹⁹⁴ E.H.M. Counsell to Tebbit, 27 April 1970, TNA FCO 31/617/1.

he 'was friendly enough in his relations with us, although he never cut a very impressive figure, and I am afraid my first impression on hearing of the appointment was one of disappointment that the Kenyans should not have proposed someone of greater stature'.¹⁹⁵ That a more prominent figure was not appointed, however, was a sign of how minimally Kenya's High Commission in London was used. Njoroge left in 1979 following the presidential succession, replaced by Shadrack Kimalale who again had early meetings with the FCO.¹⁹⁶

However, the Kenyan High Commission in London was not the site of most Anglo-Kenyan interaction. Rather, most communication occurred either with BHC or through Kenyan ministers and intermediaries being sent to Britain and meeting British ministers – Kenyatta's favoured route of policy-making. This was not always the most direct for the British, but when an alternative method was suggested, McKenzie argued:

this was simply not how President Kenyatta worked. He recognised how laborious the procedure would seem to us, but said that the President did not trust the Kenyan diplomatic machine or the High Commission in London; that he greatly valued the direct contact with British Ministers which he felt was available to him; and that in a matter of this importance, given that he could not leave Kenya himself, he would only operate by sending one of his senior Ministers with a personal message¹⁹⁷

Of course, in making this argument, McKenzie was reinforcing his own importance as one of those sent by Kenyatta to Britain. But it is clear that Kenyatta chose not to work through his High Commission in London, and this was shown in the lack of contact between successive Kenyan High Commissioners and British ministers – especially when compared to BHC which had extensive contacts with Kenyan leaders.¹⁹⁸ Kenyatta's view of his High Commission was made clear before a 1970 prime ministerial

¹⁹⁵ J.S. Arthur to E.G. Le Tocq, 21 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/617/19.

¹⁹⁶ J.A. Robson to Private Secretary/Mr Luce, 14 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2602/21. It was notable that Kimalale was Kalenjin, like Kenya's new president. See Branch, *Kenya*, pp. 138-9.

¹⁹⁷ J.B. Johnston to Le Tocq, 6 August 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/18.

¹⁹⁸ For occasions when Kenyan High Commissioners were involved in meetings in London see: Record of a meeting between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Kenyan Minister for Foreign Affairs and Finance at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 6 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1503/177; Record of a call on the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary by the High Commissioner for Kenya, 25 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/604/2; W.J. Bohan to Wright, 'UKPH: Meeting with High Commissioner for Kenya', 1 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1519/64.

meeting, when the High Commission was not informed of the meeting, nor that Njonjo was in the UK.¹⁹⁹

Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also not the most significant site of policy-making. High Commissioner Peck recalled that 'any substantial matters between us and the Kenyan government passed through other channels'.²⁰⁰ Those appointed as Kenya's Minister for Foreign Affairs included some prominent figures but also several who were less prominent or favoured, such as Clement Argwings-Kodhek, a figure well outside Kenya's inner circle of power who died in a road accident in 1969 – one of Kenya's mysterious political deaths.²⁰¹ That someone outside Kenyatta's elite was given this position highlights that it was not of foremost significance. Unlike on the British side, civil servants were not the main 'policy-makers' nor route of contact with the British. Despite the continuing strength of Kenya's Provincial Administration,²⁰² most British contact was with politicians rather than civil servants. This was not exclusive, and British diplomats did have contact with certain Kenyan civil servants. Particularly significant was Jeremiah Kiereini, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Defence from 1970, who had 'good relations with the High Commission and seems well disposed towards Britain'.²⁰³ He had contact with BHC and was often present at ministerial meetings in both Britain and Kenya.²⁰⁴ This was no doubt partly because Minister of Defence Gichuru was by this stage not providing effective leadership, and so Kiereini was the British choice of contact.²⁰⁵ But whilst the British kept track of Permanent Secretaries, who would frequently accompany ministers to formal

¹⁹⁹ B.R. McKenzie to John Johnston, 26 August 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/24.

²⁰⁰ Peck, *Recollections*, p. 219.

²⁰¹ Hornsby, *Kenya*, p. 207.

²⁰² Cherry Gertzel, 'The provincial administration in Kenya', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1966), p. 201.

²⁰³ *Leading Personalities in Kenya*, 1978, p. 35, TNA FCO 31/2314.

²⁰⁴ See for examples: Meeting between Defence Secretary and the Kenyan Minister of Defence at the Ministry of Defence, Nairobi, 22 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1517/28; Record of a meeting between the Secretary of State and Vice-President Moi of Kenya, 8 March 1978, TNA DEFE 24/1634/65; R.J. Harding to J.A. Robson, 21 September 1979, TNA FCO 31/2587/52.

²⁰⁵ *Leading Personalities in Kenya*, 1978, p. 35, TNA FCO 31/2314.

meetings, they rarely sought them out, and rather worked through individual, personal, political contacts.

Establishing relationships was a key role of British diplomats posted to Nairobi. MacDonald argued that 'friendly and trustful personal relations between the Ministers of different countries are at least half the battle in the struggle for peaceful and constructive coexistence'.²⁰⁶ McKenzie in 1970 raised the importance of personal connections, stating that this was not always recognised: 'This is particularly true of FCO personnel, many of whom have not yet learned the importance of locating and contacting the 5 or 6 people in each country who now really run the show'.²⁰⁷ British policy-makers certainly looked to identify these key individuals, and were keen to locate those who might be influential in future, looking for 'ways in which we can cultivate the next generation of leading politicians', with visits to London a key part of this.²⁰⁸ However, High Commissioner Norris' 'First Impressions' despatch in May 1969 took note of some of the problems of contact:

In order to get things done in our day-to-day business we depend to an increasing extent on maintaining close relations with the two effective members of the "inner circle", Njonjo and McKenzie, and with the Vice-President. But tensions and jealousies inside the Cabinet are such that if we are to preserve our relations with these three then we are seriously inhibited from cultivating relations with some other members of the Government who may be important in the future, particularly Tom Mboya. And we are virtually unable to make any overt contacts with the declared Opposition, the K.P.U., under Odinga. This is a problem which concerns me and to which I confess I see no easy answer²⁰⁹

The implication was that a different approach was necessary, with a degree of implied criticism of current methods. However, despite the potential benefits of closer relations with the opposition and future leaders, these were not thought worth jeopardising current relationships for.

²⁰⁶ Malcolm MacDonald to Duncan Sandys, 22 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/45.

²⁰⁷ Note of points made at a private dinner given by Lord Aldington for Bruce MacKenzie, 30 October 1970, TNA T 317/1587.

²⁰⁸ S.Y. Dawbarn to W.L. Allinson, 6 April 1973, TNA FCO 31/1496/5. The use of visits to London was particularly used with Moi around the succession: see Chapter 7: August 1978-1980.

²⁰⁹ Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Kenya: First Impressions', 2 May 1969, TNA FCO 31/350/28.

Personal contact was particularly significant because many Kenyans believed Britain to have influence, and thus sought to use contact for their benefit. One example was Josiah Mwangi ('JM') Kariuki, a 'radical' and vocal critic of Kenyatta's. Kariuki had been detained during the Emergency, was elected in 1963 and had various roles in government, becoming Assistant Minister for Tourism and Wildlife in 1969.²¹⁰ In 1964, he was described by one British diplomat as 'unpleasantly anti-White, although perhaps not strongly pro-Communist'.²¹¹ He was increasingly critical of Kenyatta during the 1970s as the language of 'radical' and 'moderate' was supplanted and mixed with one of loyalty.²¹² British diplomats indicated their disfavour: 'if Mr. Kariuki ever achieved a position of supreme power, he would be a good candidate for the disease so common to African politicians – megalomania'.²¹³ This does not mean however that Kariuki did not seek contact. In 1970, a member of BHC had lunch with an aid to Kariuki, who told him:

Kariuki feels that the High Commission is unfriendly towards him and is deliberately ignoring him ... He wished however to make it clear that he is not unfriendly towards the British or against British business interests (despite his speeches) and that he would like to see more of the High Commission²¹⁴

Some Kenyan politicians, including those self-described as 'radical', saw dialogue with the British as potentially beneficial. A member of BHC spoke to Kariuki at a party who 'said that the British had a great deal of influence in Kenya and that we probably had much more influence than we thought we had'.²¹⁵ Robert Purcell in EAD suggested that Kariuki 'has further to go and is worth doing perhaps rather more to cultivate'.²¹⁶ Despite his 'radical' tag, there was a desire to get to know and 'cultivate' relations from both sides.

²¹⁰ Leading Personalities in Kenya, 1972, p. 38, TNA FCO 31/1192/3; see also Josiah Mwangi Kariuki, *'Mau Mau' Detainee: The Account by a Kenya African of his Experience in Detention Camps 1953-1960* (London, 1963).

²¹¹ H. Gilchrist, 'The Kenya Scene', 9 September 1964, TNA DO 213/65/10.

²¹² Eric Norris to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: The internal Political Situation', 30 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/596/4.

²¹³ E.G. Le Tocq to Smedley, 6 October 1970, TNA FCO 31/597/53.

²¹⁴ R.J.S. Edis to Steele, Bellers, Arthur, 15 September 1970, TNA FCO 31/597/45.

²¹⁵ F.F. Steele to Arthur, 24 September 1970, TNA FCO 31/597/45.

²¹⁶ R.M. Purcell to Counsell, Le Tocq, 2 October 1970, TNA FCO 31/597/44.

This was by no means the only occasion when leading Kenyans believed British influence to be extensive and beneficial. In 1973, Deputy High Commissioner Allinson met Fitz de Souza (former Asian MP until 1969), who argued that any

future leader of Kenya needed two things: Kikuyu support and the support, tacit or active, of HMG [Her Majesty's Government]. Moi, Mungai and all other potential leaders were aware of this. British economic and military support was essential for Kenya and no leader thought he could survive without it²¹⁷

De Souza clearly indicated the strength of his belief that Britain had a significant role in Kenya. Kenyatta too was believed to value this relationship particularly highly, so that '[t]hose who know him well say that the President will ultimately trust two countries only: Britain and Israel; and that nothing will persuade him to take a course of action which will seriously harm Kenya's relations with either'.²¹⁸ These sources may, of course, have been telling the British what they wanted to hear, but it does seem that many Kenyans believed Britain to have a significant role in Kenya, and wanted to use this to their advantage. Moi's successful use of this after his succession will be discussed in a later chapter.

The British were not the only diplomats in Kenya. The Americans, Israelis and Soviet Union in particular sought influence. But British diplomats typically viewed their own contacts and knowledge as superior. In 1969 the High Commissioner recorded that BHC 'enjoys a privileged access to members of the ruling inner circle which is the envy of other Missions'.²¹⁹ When in 1967 a US diplomat suggested MacDonald should 'try to persuade' Kenyatta to resign,²²⁰ head of EAD saw 'so many dangers ... certainly in the notion that we should intervene actively to this end – that not only should we remain inactive on this but should head off our American colleagues from pursuit of it'.²²¹ Clearly, British civil servants viewed themselves as more knowledgeable, and with more accurate understanding and contacts, than others.

²¹⁷ W.L. Allinson to High Commissioner, 16 August 1973, TNA DO 226/13/59.

²¹⁸ B.T. Holmes to Sue Darling, 24 October 1973, TNA FCO 31/1500/6.

²¹⁹ Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Kenya: Future British Policy', 13 June 1969, TNA FCO 31/358/1.

²²⁰ J.E. Killick to E.G. Norris, 29 June 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/7.

²²¹ M. Scott to Edward Peck, 20 July 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/8.

One diplomat recalled that 'it was very much the Americans who were the big cheeses, except in Kenya where I'm happy to say at least up until my time we maintained a strong position'.²²²

Conclusion

British relationships with Kenya were shaped by the emerging system of Kenyan neo-patrimonialism which favoured individuals and personal policy-making. This involved a small group being brought into decisions and an active distrust of formal institutions rather than a wider participatory style of governing. British policy-makers encouraged and strengthened this personalisation, relying on individual contacts in their pursuit of British interests – in ways which also served the interests of Kenya's emerging elite. British diplomats sought links with those Kenyans they perceived to be influential and favoured certain individuals, prepared to collaborate with them in informal exchanges and secret deals – as later chapters will detail. Despite Kenya's more formal institutions – often ones established under British colonialism – and that British personnel operated within an institutional system at home, they did not focus upon this in Kenya. Private, personal relationships were established and privileged. This could lead to misunderstandings or misrepresentations, but it also enabled British policy-makers to feel invested in Kenya and able to exert influence.

Crucially, Kenyatta and his elite came to view their interests as complementary to those of Britain. As Lonsdale has argued, Kenyatta 'believed in order, in stability, as a condition of progress', and these were aims shared by British officials.²²³ For certain leading Kenyans, such as McKenzie and Njonjo, their access to the British appeared useful. Those who felt excluded from these ties, such as Kariuki, regarded them as powerful and worth seeking. Kenyans in a variety of roles – civil servants, soldiers, politicians, businessmen – were seeking to maintain these connections. Britain was favoured by many within Kenya's elite as British connections could prove personally beneficial in the uncertain world of

²²² Leonard Allinson, interview, p. 31.

²²³ John Lonsdale, 'Jomo Kenyatta, God and the Modern World', in Jan-Georg Deutsch, Peter Probst and Heike Schmidt (eds.), *African Modernities: Entangled Meanings in Current Debate* (Oxford, 2002), p. 62.

Kenyan politics and economics, in which individuals sought their own advantage. British decision-makers would clearly have tried to maintain relations whatever the successor state, but were able to have a close relationship only because those they sought to work with were already committed to continuity in terms of the culture and practices of government, which made close relationships with Britain seem natural.

One of the key determinants shaping British assessments was their sense of assumed superiority and, at times, openly racist attitudes. The end of colonial rule did not mean a fundamental reshaping of these underlying British attitudes, and ideas about 'Africa' and 'Kenyans' entailed a series of stereotypes and naturalisations. British personnel had closest links with those who accepted this sense of superiority and shared a cultural affinity. Thus Mboya, who rejected these ideas, was viewed with some uncertainty rather than entirely favoured, whilst Njonjo was seen to be more significant than Moi because he had assimilated British culture more thoroughly. British policy-makers focused on a culturally accessible elite, with Kenyatta, McKenzie and Njonjo central to this.

It is questionable how much British officials ever really 'knew' about Kenya and the Kenyans with whom they worked. British diplomats frequently approached Kenyans with a series of labels which were not as revealing as they supposed. The language of 'radicals' and 'moderates', ideas about the succession, ethnicity, and cultural preferences encouraged contacts with certain Kenyans rather than others. It is clear that British diplomats thought they understood the Kenyans and felt able to make judgements which accurately assessed them. This British self-belief was a potent diplomatic weapon as it gave them confidence in their interactions. But it was also a weakness: their preference for the most familiar members of the elite meant that they simply did not know some things about Kenya and left them potentially open to manipulation by those they found legible. British diplomats were, by necessity, reliant on what they were told, and this depended both on who they talked to and what those Kenyans wanted to share. Those Kenyans the British talked most extensively and frankly to were those most likely to be listened to and supported, whose views were most likely to be taken into

account, and who were most able to make demands. Thus, by affording greater access to some, British diplomats were more inclined to talk to them further. But whilst the British had influence, they were far from being in control.

Chapter Three: 1960-1964

‘even though we may differ about Kenya, we care more about Kenya than any other Colonial Territory’

Iain Macleod, House of Commons Debate, 25 July 1961¹

The early 1960s saw rapid change in British visions of Kenya’s future, with policy changing very swiftly as a result. There was no consistent British plan, and policies were adapted and altered by circumstances and individuals – both British and Kenyan. The negotiations which characterised post-colonial interaction and influence were already a feature of the independence process. This has not always been recognised: Holland argued that ‘late-colonial Kenya is a classical example of how the imperial power used “constitutional progress” ruthlessly to bait nationalist leaders into playing the decolonization game by western rules’;² whilst Kirkman argued that the British government were ‘bludgeoned’ by the Kenyans into setting a date for independence.³ In fact, neither of these interpretations is quite accurate. Rather, this was a process of compromise and negotiation, in which each party sought to influence the other to their advantage, but neither exercised such control as Holland or Kirkman suggested.

British policy was sustained by a desire to maintain British influence; yet policy-makers’ expectations and hopes were repeatedly revised down in recognition that what they had previously hoped for was no longer obtainable. These were not ‘far-seeing statesmen’ with a coherent plan, but rather civil servants and politicians reacting pragmatically to events.⁴ Decolonisation occurred as ‘a consequence

¹ Iain Macleod, HC Deb 25 July 1961 vol 645 c260.

² R. F. Holland, *European Decolonization 1918-1981: An Introductory Survey* (Basingstoke, 1985), pp. 239-40.

³ W. P. Kirkman, *Unscrambling an Empire: A Critique of British Colonial Policy 1956-1966* (London, 1966), p. 67.

⁴ Miles Kahler, *Decolonization in Britain and France: The Domestic Consequences of International Relations* (Princeton, 1984), p. 13.

of a new climate of opinion rather than of a comprehensive cardinal plan'.⁵ In seeking a peaceful, successful 'transfer of power', decision-makers proved flexible and aware of the need to avoid endangering the position of the Kenyans they supported. For the emerging Kenyan elite, there was some common cultural ground with the British, but far more importantly, they seized opportunities to entrench their own positions, and cooperation with the British became a way to do this. As Branch has recently highlighted, Britain 'was able to exert some sway in the region only because of a confluence of interests with the Kenyan Government'.⁶ Rather than a set of unchanging policy goals, the choices of British decision-makers were based on their ideas of the possible, with these ideas shaped by negotiation with Kenyans. Crucially, they were prepared to compromise.

This chapter will focus on the years from 1960 through Kenya's independence on 12 December 1963 and the first year of independence, with Kenya becoming a presidential republic at the end of 1964. These years were when key decisions were taken, in both Britain and Kenya, about what an independent Kenya would look like, and what the relationship between the two countries would be. The existing literature on Kenya's decolonisation is extensive and this chapter will not repeat this, nor focus on the Lancaster House conferences in January 1960, February 1962, and September 1963;⁷ rather it will focus upon some of the more informal negotiations leading to independence.

Ideas in 1960

One individual with particular influence on 1950s British government thinking was Michael Blundell. Blundell moved to Kenya in 1925, was elected to Legislative Council in 1947, and became Minister for Agriculture in 1955. He resigned to form the New Kenya Group (NKG) in 1959 (with McKenzie also

⁵ Dan Horowitz, 'Attitudes of British Conservatives towards Decolonization in Africa', *African Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 274 (1970), p. 18.

⁶ Daniel Branch, 'Violence, decolonisation and the Cold War in Kenya's north-eastern province, 1963–1978', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (2014), p. 2.

⁷ On the Lancaster House conferences see Robert M. Maxon, *Britain and Kenya's Constitutions 1950-1960* (Amherst, 2011), pp. 307-39; Robert M. Maxon, *Kenya's Independence Constitution: Constitution-Making and End of Empire* (Lanham, 2011).

among its members). The group aimed at 'the progressive extension of democracy in accordance with the capacity of the people'.⁸ This was very much in line with 1950s British thinking on multiracialism, and in 1959 NKG argued against a common electoral roll and in favour of continued British control.⁹ Blundell had extensive contacts with British officials, and was viewed as significant by all Colonial Secretaries.¹⁰ Alan Lennox-Boyd described him as 'the outstanding figure among the Europeans';¹¹ whilst Macleod viewed the creation of NKG as 'in 1959 the most important and hopeful thing that had happened in Kenya'.¹² Kahler has argued that NKG held 'a disproportionate influence' on British policy because of its connections with Conservative MPs.¹³ Many British politicians had business interests and personal friendships with Kenya's Europeans, leading to parliamentary interest in Kenya and lobbying by the Europeans.¹⁴ Blundell personified hopes of a 'liberal' multiracial future and had the kind of extensive contacts with British policy-makers that Kenyan nationalists at this time often lacked.

The position of Blundell and NKG was particularly significant during the 1960 Lancaster House conference, at which a common roll was introduced with the idea of majority rule. The Europeans were a key British concern, and London would not abandon them – though what this meant shifted significantly. Ensuring Blundell's support for Macleod's proposals was crucial, and Macleod urged Home Secretary Rab Butler and Macmillan to meet Blundell.¹⁵ Clearly, Macleod aimed to use high-level access to bolster Blundell and encourage him towards acceptance of the terms of the conference, which he did. Blundell was only ever leader of a certain section of the Europeans, and when he

⁸ 'The Challenge of New Kenya: A policy statement for the New Kenya Party', November 1959, TNA FCO 141/6661/15.

⁹ Statement by New Kenya Group, 1959, TNA FCO 141/6661/12.

¹⁰ Lyttelton, *Memoirs*, p. 399, Philip Murphy, *Alan Lennox-Boyd: A Biography* (London, 1999), p. 226-7; Maudling, *Memoirs*, p. 93; Robert Shepherd, *Iain Macleod* (London, 1994), pp. 179-85; Michael Blundell, *So Rough a Wind: The Kenya Memoirs of Sir Michael Blundell* (London, 1964), pp. 185-7. Blundell also had extensive contact with colonial administrators; see Charles Chenevix Trench, *Men who Ruled Kenya: The Kenya Administration, 1892-1963* (London, 1993), p. 225.

¹¹ Alan Lennox-Boyd to Prime Minister, 1 December 1954, TNA PREM 11/2882/35.

¹² Record of a meeting held in Parliament Buildings at Nairobi, 14 December 1959, TNA FCO 141/6661/21.

¹³ Kahler, *Domestic Consequences*, p. 291.

¹⁴ Murphy, *Party Politics*, p. 86.

¹⁵ Iain Macleod to R.A. Butler, 15 January 1960, TNA PREM 11/2882/21; Iain Macleod to Prime Minister, 16 February 1960, TNA PREM 11/3031.

returned to Kenya after Lancaster House, thirty pieces of silver were thrown at him.¹⁶ Among other Europeans in Kenya, the reaction to the 1960 proposals was 'alarm and despondency'.¹⁷ But Blundell's key importance for British policy-makers was that he would deliver some support from Kenya's European population. Later in 1960 NKG had accepted that 'Independence for Kenya is certain and we must plan to make it a success'.¹⁸

Kenyatta's release

Kenyatta's release from detention was the crucial issue of Kenyan politics as both KANU and KADU pressed for this. British decision-makers were not always united on how to deal with this. The debate which led up to Governor Patrick Renison's notorious description of Kenyatta as a 'leader to darkness and death' suggests this struggle over policy.¹⁹ In December 1960 Renison wrote an 'appreciation' of Kenyatta, describing that 'some say [he has] hypnotic powers; likely to dominate all Kenya politicians. Arrogant and unrepentant'.²⁰ Responses from the CO varied – including criticism of Renison's approach – but mostly with agreement that Kenyatta should not be released.²¹ John Martin in CO, however, argued that 'the decision should be taken in the light of the advice of the new Ministers following the election and that, if their advice is in favour of immediate release, it should be accepted'.²² This minority view was not acted upon. But Renison and Macleod agreed that the best interests of the British government had changed: they planned to move Kenyatta from Lodwar to

¹⁶ Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization*, pp. 67-75; Bennett and Rosberg, *Kenyatta Election*, p. 3.

¹⁷ Telegram no. 130, Acting Governor to Secretary of State, 2 February 1960, TNA CO 822/2356/11.

¹⁸ The New Kenya Group Newsletter, 17 October 1960, KNA MSS/115/7/1/21.

¹⁹ Statement by His Excellency the Governor, 'Jomo Kenyatta', 9 May 1960, TNA FCO 141/6769/66. See also telegram no. 427, P. Renison to the Colonial Secretary, 30 April 1960, TNA PREM 11/3413/133; telegram no. 73, Colonial Secretary to P. Renison, 29 April 1960, TNA PREM 11/3413/135; telegram no. 75, Colonial Secretary to P. Renison, 1 May 1960, TNA PREM 11/3413/134.

²⁰ Patrick Renison, 'Jomo Kenyatta. Appreciation of action to be taken', December 1960, TNA CO 822/1910/139.

²¹ F.D. Webber to Monson, 29 December 1960, TNA CO 822/1910; W.B.L. Monson to John Martin, 29 December 1960, TNA CO 822/1910.

²² John Martin to Secretary of State, 29 December 1960, TNA CO 822/1910.

Maralal where he could be visited 'so that one may embark on a process of debunking the legend of Kenyatta'.²³

The British government lacked an accurate appreciation of what Kenyatta would be like once released. Special Branch Nairobi produced a paper on 'The Kenyatta Cult', which argued that 'until the legend has been exploded and the shortcomings of the man exposed, the necessary disillusionment cannot set in';²⁴ Renison still viewed him as a 'security risk'.²⁵ British policy-makers were uncertain as to Kenyatta's intentions: Eric Griffith-Jones in Nairobi 'felt that he could not be reliably assessed while still under restriction and anxious to secure his release by portraying himself as a non-violent moderate'.²⁶ He did not believe Kenyatta was a 'non-violent moderate' and still anticipated that he could potentially encourage further violence. Even the official who had suggested his release believed 'It is too much to hope for a Nyerere to emerge from Lodwar'.²⁷ As this makes explicit, at this time the CO had high hopes about Tanganyika's independence and leadership, and much less positive expectations about Kenya. Nyerere was described as 'possess[ing] a degree of common sense unusual in an African nationalist'.²⁸ The subsequent close post-colonial relationship with Kenyatta was not predicted.

The issue of Kenyatta's release was crucial to the negotiations following 'the Kenyatta election' of February 1961.²⁹ KANU won 67.4 per cent of the vote and nineteen seats to KADU's 16.4 per cent and eleven.³⁰ Both parties resisted forming a government before Kenyatta's release, and the Governor sought to compromise and negotiate. Renison met KADU President Ngala and Vice-President Masinde

²³ Iain Macleod to Prime Minister, 'Jomo Kenyatta', 9 January 1961, TNA PREM 11/3413/87.

²⁴ Special Branch Headquarters, Nairobi, 'The Kenyatta Cult: Its impact on the African Masses', December 1960, TNA FCO 141/5870.

²⁵ Draft Statement, January 1961, TNA PREM 11/3413/89-91.

²⁶ Telegram no. 163, Griffith Jones to Colonial Secretary, 15 June 1961, TNA PREM 11/3413/25.

²⁷ John Martin to Secretary of State, 29 December 1960, TNA CO 822/1910.

²⁸ Special Branch Headquarters, Nairobi, 'The Proposal for an East African Federation and Reaction to it in Kenya', 25 February 1961, TNA FCO 141/7075/12.

²⁹ Bennett and Rosberg, *Kenyatta Election*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

Muliro and KANU's Gichuru and Mboya on 4 March and patronisingly reported that 'They were all in a very responsible mood'.³¹ Renison hoped for a government involving both parties and initially 'it looked possible, even likely, that moderate leaders in KANU and KADU would get together in forming [a] Government'.³² The influential idea of 'moderates' encouraged hopes of splitting KANU, and Mboya and Gichuru were the KANU leaders Renison hoped to attract in 'a Government of moderates, rather than KANU tough boys'.³³ Very quickly, however, this idea of compromise broke down and KANU refused to join the government whilst Kenyatta remained in detention.³⁴

Negotiations dragged on over the following month, with KADU increasingly likely to compromise. The role of NKG was again significant in 'acting as very able go-betweens', and 'first class allies'; McKenzie was already an intermediary.³⁵ Ngala still argued for Kenyatta's release,³⁶ but British policy-makers endeavoured to find a 'formula' so that KADU would join a government.³⁷ Ngala met Macleod in London, who reported that 'We seem with luck to be quite near forming a Government with KADU participation. This would be a great prize and we must put all effort and pressure into succeeding'.³⁸ British objectives had shifted and expectations decreased; Macleod now argued that 'an alliance of K.A.D.U. with the moderate Europeans in a new Government is in Kenya's long term interest'.³⁹ The British were not simply in control, and as certain possibilities were ruled out, what was possible became seen as most beneficial. A government of KADU and NKG was formed.

³¹ Telegram no. 6, Renison to Colonial Secretary, 4 March 1961, TNA CO 822/1911/214.

³² Ibid.

³³ Telegram no. 53, P. Renison to Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1961, TNA PREM 11/3413/52.

³⁴ Telegram no. 9, Renison to Colonial Secretary, 5 March 1961, TNA CO 822/1911/215.

³⁵ Telegram no. 6, Renison to Colonial Secretary, 4 March 1961, TNA CO 822/1911/214; telegram no. 53, P. Renison to Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1961, TNA PREM 11/3413/52.

³⁶ See R.G. Ngala, Memorandum to the Secretary of State, 'Case for the Immediate Release of Mr. Kenyatta', 11 April 1961, TNA CO 822/1911/262.

³⁷ Iain Macleod to Prime Minister, 14 April 1961, TNA PREM 11/3413/49.

³⁸ Colonial Secretary to Coutts, 10 April 1961, TNA CO 822/1911/224.

³⁹ Iain Macleod to Prime Minister, 14 April 1961, TNA PREM 11/3413/49-51.

Kenyatta's release was discussed at the highest level of British government in a way that few later Kenyan issues were.⁴⁰ Many MPs felt strongly and offered vocal support or opposition. In 1961 views varied from Fenner Brockway's insistence that 'the release of this man is absolutely essential', to Biggs-Davison's 'outrageous and utterly degrading'.⁴¹ Kenya's release was problematic for Macleod himself, subjected to a 'character assassination' as 'too clever by half' by Lord Salisbury.⁴² Indeed, Low has argued that his actions as Colonial Secretary 'probably cost Macleod the leadership'.⁴³ Historians have been divided over Macleod's attitude towards Kenya's release. Heinlein argued that Macleod would have liked to release Kenya in 1960,⁴⁴ and Goldsworthy suggested that other issues delayed his release.⁴⁵ More convincingly, Murphy argues that 'Macleod was in no hurry to release Kenya' at the start of 1961; and that Kenya 'represented a powerful bargaining counter for the British in their negotiations with Kenyan political parties, one which they were not inclined to surrender at too early a stage'.⁴⁶ But whilst Kenya's release did become a useful bargaining tool, it is wrong to think that this had always been the British intention: Kirkman wrote of 'Kenya blindness',⁴⁷ and as Holland makes clear, release was a 'gamble'.⁴⁸ British officials came to realise that they could not direct Kenyan politics away from Kenya as they had hoped, and the goal changed instead to finding means of accommodation. Kenya's release was announced on 1 August.⁴⁹

⁴⁰ See for examples: HC Deb 8 November 1960 vol 629 cc823-4; HC Deb 8 December 1960 vol 631 cc1429-30; HC Deb 31 January 1961 vol 633 cc775-6. *The main exception was over Kenya's Asians, discussed in later chapters.*

⁴¹ Fenner Brockway, HC Deb 25 July 1961 vol 645 c270; Biggs-Davison, HC Deb 1 August 1961 vol 645 c1155.

⁴² Shepherd, *Macleod*, p. 226. See also: S. J. Ball, 'Banquo's Ghost: Lord Salisbury, Harold Macmillan and the High Politics of Decolonization, 1957-1963', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2005), pp.89-90; Nigel Fisher, *Iain Macleod* (London, 1973), pp. 171-2.

⁴³ A. Low, 'The End of the British Empire in Africa', in P. Gifford and W. R. Louis (eds.), *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization, 1940-1960* (New Haven, 1982), p. 61.

⁴⁴ Frank Heinlein, *British Government Policy and Decolonisation 1945-1963: Scrutinising the Official Mind* (London, 2002), p. 250.

⁴⁵ David Goldsworthy, *Colonial Issues in British Politics 1945-1961: From 'Colonial Development' to 'Wind of Change'* (Oxford, 1971), p. 370.

⁴⁶ Murphy, *Party Politics*, pp. 190, 191.

⁴⁷ Kirkman, *Unscrambling an Empire*, p. 56.

⁴⁸ Holland, *European Decolonization*, p. 246.

⁴⁹ Statement by Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1 August 1961, TNA PREM 11/3413/5.

British policy-makers remained uncertain about Kenya's future. In a House of Commons debate in July 1961, Macleod argued that 'even though we may differ about Kenya, we care more about Kenya than any other Colonial Territory' – citing the European population as the reason for this.⁵⁰ As Lewis has argued, 'Kenya was the most high-profile and controversial of Britain's African colonies'.⁵¹ But in January 1962, a draft CO memorandum argued that:

The best that we can hope to achieve is the orderly transfer of power to a securely-based and African-dominated Government which is genuinely anxious to see Kenya develop as a modern state, to avoid chaos, civil war and a relapse into tribalism, and genuinely prepared to respect the rights of individuals of any race. Nor is it likely that we shall see in Kenya a Government which is actively pro-Western in its foreign policy. The most we can expect is one which is not committed to either side in the East/West struggle and one which, because it is reasonably stable, does not offer too many opportunities for exploitation and penetration by the Communist powers⁵²

A briefing for the prime minister stated that 'an independent Kenya presents the least hopeful prospect of all the Colonial territories to which we have given or contemplated giving independence'.⁵³

Another problem the British government faced was their own representation in Kenya by Renison. KANU members travelled to London in November 1961 for several meetings with Colonial Secretary Maudling to argue that they should be brought into government. They argued against KADU and NKG, but particularly against Renison, whom they accused of partiality: 'To the Governor, KANU was rotten but KADU consisted of angels whom Britain must protect at any cost'.⁵⁴ Maudling 'wished to make it clear that the Governor had his full confidence and that he could not accept the criticism of his lack of impartiality'.⁵⁵ However, it does seem that Renison was not quite as impartial as Maudling suggested: Renison argued that KANU's 'quarrelling, petty corruption and lack of discipline and control together with Kikuyu background violence, intimidation, subverses [sic] and Mau Mau association has

⁵⁰ Iain Macleod, HC Deb 25 July 1961 vol 645 c260.

⁵¹ Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Oxford, 2000), p. 3.

⁵² CPC(62)3 Cabinet Colonial Policy Committee, draft memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 'Kenya Constitutional Conference', TNA CO 822/2238/289.

⁵³ Michael Cary to Prime Minister, 1 February 1962, TNA PREM 11/3856.

⁵⁴ KANU Memorandum to the Secretary of State, 8 November 1961, TNA CO 822/2244/3.

⁵⁵ Telegram no. 1230, Webber to P. Renison, 8 November 1961, TNA CO 822/2244/7.

frightened moderate thinkers'.⁵⁶ His preference for KADU was apparent and he seemed particularly reluctant to reassess Kenyatta. In extensive comments on a draft cabinet paper, Renison argued that Mboya felt 'growing disillusionment as to Kenyatta's competence and trustworthiness' and believed Kenyatta to be 'incompetent and indolent'; even going so far as to argue that Mboya and KADU were unlikely to want Kenyatta as a minister, but 'would possibly be prepared, therefore, to accept Kenyatta in the nominal position of an elder statesman but with no real substance of power'.⁵⁷ This surely reflected, to at least some degree, Renison's own views, and offered a serious misreading of the tenor of Kenyan politics and Kenyatta. Throughout 1962, other British policy-makers in London and Nairobi came to share frustration about Renison; as the head of EAD tactfully put it, he was 'increasingly afraid that Sir Patrick Renison's qualities do not match up to the needs of this particular Governorship'.⁵⁸ Poynton argued more bluntly that 'he hasn't really the suppleness of mind to cope with the highly charged political situation'.⁵⁹ Renison was informed of his removal, and countered, clearly hurt, that he had 'very good relationships' with 'African leaders'.⁶⁰ But he had shown himself unable to compromise or negotiate.

Renison's replacement by MacDonald led to changes in British thinking, clearly showing the importance of individuals in shaping ideas. MacDonald made much quicker progress on constitutional drafting; and while the British government had previously planned 'to ensure KANU's defeat', he favoured KANU success in the May 1963 elections as 'the best result for Kenya'.⁶¹ By September 1963 MacDonald viewed Kenyatta as 'the effective leader of the Government, the arbitrator in all official or personal Cabinet disagreements, and the supreme maker and pronouncer of policy'.⁶² As Parsons has argued, 'only Kenyatta had the influence and authority to create the pro-Western post-colonial Kenya

⁵⁶ Telegram no. 385, P. Renison to Webber, 9 November 1961, TNA CO 822/2244/15.

⁵⁷ Patrick Renison to W.B.L. Monson, 31 January 1962, TNA CO 822/2238/294.

⁵⁸ F.D. Webber to John Martin, 18 May 1962, TNA CO 967/408/5.

⁵⁹ A.H. Poynton to Robert Knox, 8 November 1962, TNA CO 967/408/27.

⁶⁰ Patrick Renison to Sandys, 7 October 1962, TNA CO 967/408/19.

⁶¹ Malcolm MacDonald, 'Note on Kenya on the eve of the Independence Conference, September 1963', 15 September 1963, TNA CO 822/3052/10.

⁶² Ibid.

that Britain sought'.⁶³ The difference between the two Governors – and the difference Renison's replacement made – was striking.⁶⁴ Kenyatta and MacDonald could see their mutual interests and MacDonald recognised that Kenyatta could provide what British policy-makers desired in a leader: an influential partner who could dominate African politics.

Mboya's June 1963 Visit

In June 1963 several key issues came together in a clear example of the mutually-beneficial negotiation between British and Kenyan decision-makers. Mboya visited London to meet Colonial Secretary Sandys to demand that dates be set for Kenya's final constitutional conference and independence. As Butler has argued, the date of independence was 'a key bargaining counter', and this demand had previously been rejected.⁶⁵ MacDonald recommended Sandys meet Mboya 'as damage could be done if Kenya Ministers should think they have a grievance on this matter'.⁶⁶

Mboya explicitly linked a date for independence to the prospect of an East African Federation. This had been suggested multiple times previously, particularly when Nyerere had considered delaying Tanganyika's independence for federation.⁶⁷ Special Branch Nairobi argued in 1961 that 'Many politicians in Kenya will use the proposal as a lever to secure an earlier transfer of power than had hitherto been envisaged'.⁶⁸ This was indeed the tactic Mboya was now following. Mboya was one of the leading proponents of federation in Kenya, perhaps because of ideas reported after his discussions with Nyerere in 1961 that they envisaged Kenyatta as a 'figurehead' federal president, with Mboya as

⁶³ Parsons, *1964 Army Mutinies*, p. 76.

⁶⁴ See also Patrick Renison, 'Kenya in Transition', *African Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 249 (1963), pp. 341-355.

⁶⁵ Butler, *Britain and Empire*, p. 193. See: Record of a meeting of the Parliamentary Group of the Kenya African National Union with the Secretary of State for the Colonies at Parliament Buildings, 19 February 1963, TNA FCO 141/6909.

⁶⁶ Telegram no. 410, Malcolm MacDonald to Webber, 5 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/5.

⁶⁷ Telegram no. 49, Secretary of State to Governor, 3 February 1961, TNA FCO 141/7075/9.

⁶⁸ Special Branch Headquarters, Nairobi, 'The Proposal for an East African Federation and Reaction to it in Kenya', 25 February 1961, TNA FCO 141/7075/12.

Kenya's prime minister.⁶⁹ On 5 June 1963, East African leaders 'announced their determination to establish an East African Federation before the end of 1963'.⁷⁰ MacDonald was informed that they 'hoped that Federation can come into being either on the day of Kenya's independence, or else "within about a week or so" afterwards'.⁷¹

British policy-makers were positive about the prospect of a federation, which MacDonald described as 'a dream answer to many of our Kenya problems'.⁷² But they recognised that 'Open advocacy on our part would probably be counter-productive'.⁷³ Sandys asked 'is this declaration just a device to bring pressure upon us to give Kenya early independence?',⁷⁴ but MacDonald believed it was genuine: 'No doubt there is an element in all this of putting pressure on us to speed up Kenya's independence; but in my judgement African leaders' zeal to achieve federation at or about the same time is equally sincere and serious'.⁷⁵

Mboya was accompanied by Murumbi, Mbiyu Koinange (Minister of State for Pan-African Affairs), and Njonjo. This was one of the first signs of Njonjo's influence; not yet appointed Attorney-General, he was to be so only weeks later by MacDonald, to the dislike of some in CO.⁷⁶ The delegation met Sandys, who offered an October conference and 'emphasised that [the] British Government had no wish to delay independence any longer than was absolutely necessary to ensure [an] orderly and honourable transfer ... he would like to work to a 1963 date'.⁷⁷ Sandys had accepted the arguments in favour of Kenyan independence and federation by the end of 1963.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Brief for Secretary of State's meeting with Mr. Obote on 8 June 1963: East African Federation, 7 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3194/7. See Julius Nyerere to Harold Macmillan, 7 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3194/11A; Le Tocq to Malcolm MacDonald, 7 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3194/6.

⁷¹ Telegram no. 328, Malcolm MacDonald to Colonial Secretary, 5 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3194/5.

⁷² Telegram no. 336, Macdonald to Colonial Secretary, 7 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/7.

⁷³ Telegram no. 312, FO to Certain of Her Majesty's representatives, 7 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3194/9.

⁷⁴ Telegram no. 525, Colonial Secretary to Malcolm MacDonald, 6 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/6.

⁷⁵ Telegram no. 336, Macdonald to Colonial Secretary, 7 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/7.

⁷⁶ Telegram no. 373, MacDonald to Colonial Secretary, 27 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3114/1. See P.J. Kitcatt to Rushford, Webber, Monson, 28 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3114.

⁷⁷ Telegram no. 552, Webber to Malcolm MacDonald, 15 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/19.

As well as using the federation to encourage British officials towards setting a date, Mboya also had something to offer the British at these meetings. The British had built the Kahawa base in Kenya in the later 1950s and thus, as Nissimi argued, 'precisely when the prospect of losing Kenya became daunting, its strategic importance increased'.⁷⁸ British planners hoped for continued access – this was part of a rationale for supporting KADU – until it became abundantly clear that no Kenyan leaders would accept this.⁷⁹ Military aspirations were downgraded but not forgotten. British officials hoped for a yearlong withdrawal, and Mboya in June 1963 thought this feasible, but

emphasised that the British Government's agreement to a date for Kenya's independence had a direct bearing on the attitude of the Kenya Government to the period during which facilities might continue to be used after independence⁸⁰

A draft communique by the CO set out in vague terms what had been discussed: support for a federation with Kenya's independence 'which it is hoped to effect by the end of the year', a conference in October, and that withdrawal from the base would take some time and 'be a matter for discussion'.⁸¹ Mboya and his delegation refused to 'accept assurance on purely private basis' of a December date,⁸² and, in another negotiating tactic, argued that not having a set date would 'put them to a great disadvantage in negotiating Federation with Tanganyika and Uganda'.⁸³ Webber and Monson, the CO officials who worked most closely on Kenya, went to Mboya to try and resolve this. Together, they rewrote the statement, in which, if Mboya's delegation 'had this sentence about the date, they would be prepared to agree to mentioning the twelve months period for the rundown of the base ... if a date were not mentioned, they would prefer to represent the talks as having failed to reach agreement'.⁸⁴ Withdrawal from the base was now explicitly linked to setting a date for independence, which was already tied to the question of federation. In this way, different benefits

⁷⁸ Hilda Nissimi, 'Illusions of World Power in Kenya: Strategy, Decolonization, and the British Base, 1946-1961', *International History Review*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (2001), p. 841.

⁷⁹ Percox, *Imperial Defence*, pp. 207-8.

⁸⁰ Telegram no. 565, Monson to MacDonald, 18 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/27.

⁸¹ Draft communique, [June 1963], TNA CO 822/3218/29.

⁸² Telegram no. 572, Webber to MacDonald, 20 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/31.

⁸³ W.B.L. Monson to Colonial Secretary, 20 June 1963, TNA CO 822/3218/30.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

and obligations were negotiated together. MOD regarded this as 'not a bad proposition', and Monson argued that 'we have got for the Minister of Defence as good an understanding about the base as we could have hoped'.⁸⁵ Civil servants had achieved acceptable terms for the base, which encouraged compromise over the date, set for 12 December. A parliamentary paper made these commitments and raised the prospect of 'further discussion' on possible future defence arrangements.⁸⁶ This provides a clear example of the negotiation process through which policy was made.

The prospect of federation fell apart – Kyle described it as 'fool's gold'⁸⁷ – but on 12 December 1963 Kenya became independent. British expectations were more positive than they had been, and MacDonald became Governor-General at Kenyatta's request.⁸⁸ By this time, the volte face was complete, and British concern had come to focus not on the threat of Kenyatta, but on what would happen after he was gone, beginning a fascination with the succession. In January 1964, EAD was keen to discover BHC's 'thinking on the subject of the succession', questioning whether Kenyatta was likely to give up power, whether anyone would challenge him, and the position of potential successors.⁸⁹ Deputy High Commissioner Stanley responded that 'Kenyatta is an eminent all-African figure; the father of his country; the creator of independent Kenya; and the only major politician to rise above the tribal maelstrom', unlikely to give up power and hard to challenge.⁹⁰ British diplomats had come to recognise Kenyatta as beneficial for British interests and stability, and to favour his continuing leadership.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Cmnd. 2028, Kenya: *Preparations for Independence, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Colonies by Command of Her Majesty*, (July 1963), TNA CO 822/3218.

⁸⁷ Kyle, 'Politics of Independence', p. 60.

⁸⁸ Malcolm MacDonald to Duncan Sandys, 6 November 1963, MMA 45/1/46.

⁸⁹ N. Aspin to H.S.H. Stanley, 22 January 1964, TNA DO 213/65/1.

⁹⁰ H.S.H. Stanley to N. Aspin, 29 January 1964, TNA DO 213/65/6.

Mutiny

Only weeks after Kenya's independence, following revolution in Zanzibar, mutinies occurred in Tanganyika, Uganda, and on 24 January 1964, in the Kenyan army at Lanet barracks.⁹¹ In a major study of the mutinies, Parsons has argued that during the colonial era, the army had been a relatively desirable occupation, but that soldiers had expected improvements and Africanisation after independence.⁹² In response, leading Kenyans in Kenyatta's 'kitchen cabinet' signalled their alignment with Britain. Independent for only a few weeks, Kenya did not have extensive military connections elsewhere, meaning that 'Britain was the only established military ally on whom she could depend'.⁹³ Nyerere and Ugandan Prime Minister Milton Obote also turned to Britain. The Kenyan decision was taken at a meeting between Kenyatta, Mboya and Murumbi, all of whom were pro-Western in their outlook, with the 'presumably very deliberate' exclusion of Odinga.⁹⁴ For the British, receiving a formal written request was essential before intervening. Hickman in EAD later recalled:

Sandys saying "I will not authorise anything until I have, from the High Commissioners, a request in writing from the Presidents to do it." But he was ready to do it and keen to do it the moment he got a written request⁹⁵

Sandys did not want to face criticism and accusations of neo-colonialism, despite being 'keen' to intervene. On 24 January (before the mutiny at Lanet), Kenyatta requested that the British military in Kenya 'be authorised to intervene with British forces if these were required to restore law and order in Kenya, without prior reference to HMG'.⁹⁶ British troops had remained in Kenya following negotiations with Mboya in June 1963, and 'Kenyatta also reminded [us] ... of the sensitive position of British officers in the Kenya Army'.⁹⁷ Kenyatta recognised the British concern with their own

⁹¹ Keith Somerville, *Foreign Military Intervention in Africa* (London, 1990), p. 24. See also Henry Bienen, 'Public Order and the Military in Africa: Mutinies in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika', in Henry Bienen (ed.), *The Military Intervenes: Case Studies in Political Development* (New York, 1968), pp. 35-69.

⁹² Parsons, *1964 Army Mutinies*, pp. 32-49.

⁹³ Okumu, 'Kenya's Foreign Policy', p. 144.

⁹⁴ Goldsworthy, *Tom Mboya*, p. 229. See also: Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru* (London, 1967), p. 281.

⁹⁵ J.K. Hickman, interview.

⁹⁶ MOD Defence Operations Staff, East Africa Situation Report No. 20, Situation up to 0600Z 24 January 1964, TNA PREM 11/4889.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

personnel, and their potentially dangerous or embarrassing position, and used this to encourage a British reaction.

Kenyatta announced concessions for the Kenyan army to prevent unrest, but was not seen at Lanet announcing this on television as expected, triggering the mutiny.⁹⁸ The mutiny was quickly suppressed, with British assistance given immediately as requested, and by the evening of 25 January this was over, with 'some shooting on both sides but no British casualties'.⁹⁹ Despite the ease with which this had been suppressed, MOD was concerned by the possibility of further unrest. Therefore, 'precautionary measures were taken during the night for vigilance on key points ... a reliable source states that a mutiny is planned for Sunday night 26th January'.¹⁰⁰ The Lanet mutiny was expected to be only a precursor, and forces in Malta were to be put on twenty-four hour alert.¹⁰¹ But by 28 January, there was a more general sense that 'Kenya remains calm', although British forces remained throughout the country.¹⁰²

The mutiny was an immediate threat to British ideas of a 'successful' decolonisation and seemed particularly to pose the threat of communism, with wider Cold War concerns shaping British assessments. The British government was still trying to determine Kenya's position within the Cold War, as well as communism's place in Kenya. As Cooley rightly argued, 'it was these first years of self-rule when they were at their weakest, and thus at their most vulnerable to Communist infiltration'.¹⁰³ On 28 January CRO asked the three High Commissions in East Africa to report on the causes in order 'to assess more positively than we yet can whether we are faced with a widespread communist plot

⁹⁸ Interview with Pte Samwel Makundi s/o Mukua (Kamba), 18130979, 11 Kenya Rifles, 29 January 1964, KNA AG/16/343/8. See also Parsons, *1964 Army Mutinies*, p. 120.

⁹⁹ MOD Defence Operations Staff, East Africa Situation Report No. 22, Situation up to 2000Z 25 January 1964, TNA PREM 11/4889.

¹⁰⁰ MOD Defence Operations Staff, East Africa Situation Report No. 21, Situation up to 0600Z 25 January 1964, TNA PREM 11/4889.

¹⁰¹ MOD Defence Operations Staff, East Africa Situation Report No. 22, Situation up to 2000Z 25 January 1964, TNA PREM 11/4889.

¹⁰² MOD Defence Operations Staff, East Africa Situation Report No. 24, Situation up to 0600Z 28 January 1964, TNA PREM 11/4889.

¹⁰³ Cooley, 'Cold War and Decolonisation', p. 31.

or simply a chain reaction'. They already had the Joint Intelligence Chiefs' assessment that these were 'a spontaneous reaction' with 'no evidence of any communist bloc influence', but clearly wanted confirmation.¹⁰⁴ In British uncertainties about the causes, their 'knowledge' about Kenya was revealed to be more limited than they had supposed. BHC was still uncertain, and although they reported 'No evidence here of Communist plot', diplomats were concerned by the actions of Odinga and Paul Ngei (who had been detained with Kenyatta during Mau Mau, had formed the opposition African People's Party in 1962, then re-joined KANU in 1963), who were 'thought to have been engaged recently in sowing discontent among Kenya Rifles as part of plot to take over Government'.¹⁰⁵

Despite having called upon Britain for assistance, Kenyatta was keen to assert his independence from Britain. At a meeting between Kenyatta, Mboya and BHC:

We had a long and rather chilly talk. It is clear that both Kenyatta and Mboya are frightened of the criticisms they are receiving ... about the decision to ask for British military help. Against this background it is not surprising but unpleasant to have to report that neither of them would agree that the Kenya Government "could" go any further in the public profession of gratitude to the British Government¹⁰⁶

Clearly British officials were keen to be praised for their actions, but leading Kenyans did not want to publicly thank Britain and thereby highlight their own weakness and reliance. Additionally, 'the presence of the British forces here has been at once a source of strength to the Kenya Government and the cause of tension between Britain and Kenya': Kenya had been the centre of military operations, so that when British troops moved to Uganda after Obote's request 'this was characterised as a violation of Kenya's sovereignty'.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, one complaint of the mutineers had been the presence of British soldiers: they were 'very indignant and angry that the British Troops were present and stated that the mutineers would not cease their activities until the British Troops were

¹⁰⁴ Telegram no. 272, CRO to Dar es Salaam, Kampala, Nairobi, 28 January 1964, TNA DO 213/54/1.

¹⁰⁵ Telegram no. 244, Nairobi to CRO, 29 January 1964, TNA DO 213/54/2.

¹⁰⁶ Telegram no. 246, Nairobi to CRO, 29 January 1964, TNA PREM 11/4889.

¹⁰⁷ Geoffrey de Freitas to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 'Kenya's Role in the Revolution and Mutiny in East Africa', 18 March 1964, TNA DO 213/54/19A.

withdrawn'.¹⁰⁸ This indicates something of the frictions of the relationship: to have British troops act in Kenya without consent could open Kenyatta to accusations of neo-colonialism and British interference. All were keen to avoid this. But this also reveals the negotiated nature of the relationship: British officials could not dictate Kenyan policies, whilst Kenyatta sought the greatest advantage, careful to qualify his request for military assistance with some criticism.

British involvement in the East African mutinies was their most extensive post-colonial intervention in Africa.¹⁰⁹ It is debatable how serious a threat these mutinies really posed, whether the mutinying troops could have taken power, or indeed if this was their aim.¹¹⁰ But there was a 'crisis of confidence in Great Britain and the new African governments'.¹¹¹ The British had not predicted the mutinies, though they had reacted immediately, and ensured mutiny did not advance further. The mutiny cemented British distrust of Odinga, whom they believed to have been involved in agitating within the army, even if not directly leading the mutiny as a communist uprising. This also encouraged 'a sense of mutual trust' between Britain and Kenyatta.¹¹² The conflation of British and elite Kenyan interests had already been occurring, but the mutiny made it explicit. It would be a mistake, however, to view this, as Mburu does, as 'a scheme by British praetorians to either bring down Kenyatta's governance or render him so vulnerable that he would have to depend on Britain for post-independence security'.¹¹³ British policy-makers hoped for stability under Kenyatta and did not seek to 'bring down' his government, but rather to prop it up. British military action was unplanned, and revealed limitations to British ability and knowledge.

¹⁰⁸ Capt. Ian Stuart Cameron (P/420588), 11 Kenya Rifles 29 January 1964, KNA AG/16/343/5. See also: No. KO. 71 2, Lt. Daudi Rerimoi Chepkong'a Tonje, 11 Kenya Rifle, 29 January 1964, KNA AG/16/343/4; No. KO 57. Maj. Abdi Rahaman (BEM), 11 Kenya Rifles, 29 January 1964, KNA AG/16/343/1.

¹⁰⁹ Ladun Anise, 'Foreign Military Intervention in Africa: The New Co-operative-Competitive Imperialism', in Ralph I. Onwuka and Timothy M. Shaw (eds.), *Africa in World Politics: Into the 1990s* (Basingstoke, 1989), p. 161.

¹¹⁰ For discussion of how much of a threat the mutinies really posed see: Parsons, 'Lanet Incident', pp. 64-9; Bienen, 'Public Order and the Military', pp. 51-6; Ali A. Mazrui and Donald Rothchild, 'The Soldier and the State in East Africa: Some Theoretical Conclusions on the Army Mutinies of 1964', *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1967), p. 86.

¹¹¹ Parsons, *1964 Army Mutinies*, p. 2.

¹¹² Okumu, 'Kenya's Foreign Policy', p. 145.

¹¹³ Nene Mburu, *Bandits on the Border: The Last Frontier in the Search for Somali Unity* (Trenton, 2005), p. 201.

The Memorandum of Intention and Understanding

Intervention in the mutiny was only a small part of British military interests in Kenya, which the British government acted to secure in 1964. Prior to independence, British politicians, civil servants and soldiers hoped to maintain a military relationship, but their ability to do so was dependent upon the deals they were able to make with the incoming Kenyan leadership, as had been made explicit in bargaining over the base. Military negotiations began prior to independence but were delayed, with Kenyatta, Mboya, Odinga and Gichuru insisting that ‘any agreement [must] be one freely concluded between the two independent states’, and opposing a ‘package deal of British military facilities in return for British aid to [the] Kenya Army’.¹¹⁴

Within the British government there was debate about the military benefits Britain should aim for, clearly shaped both by their sense of the possible and by varying departmental priorities. MOD sought to gain as much from Kenya as possible. On 2 December 1963, John Burlace – the key figure in MOD working on Kenya as head of Defence Secretariat Division 11 responsible for ‘Overseas defence policy and political questions (excluding Europe and North America)’¹¹⁵ – argued that

the important thing, from our point of view, will be to ensure the negotiation of the long-term facilities which we require ... takes place before we have surrendered the bargaining counters which are our best hope of obtaining what we need¹¹⁶

As this makes explicit, this was to be a process of ‘bargaining’ and Burlace hoped to negotiate from a position of strength. Britain’s position was strongest after the mutiny, and MOD was anxious to procure benefits, arguing on 27 January that: ‘we should not be complacent but rather exploit our

¹¹⁴ Telegram no. 620, Kenya to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 November 1963, TNA DEFE 13/333/3.

¹¹⁵ *The Civil Service Year Book 1974* (London, 1974), p. 152.

¹¹⁶ F.J. Burlace to Private Secretary to Minister, 2 December 1963, TNA DEFE 13/333/19.

success to the hilt'.¹¹⁷ Burlace wrote on the day of Kenya's mutiny that '[w]e must give Kenya Ministers enough time to get their breath back but not enough to forget which side their bread is buttered'.¹¹⁸

By contrast, the CO and CRO believed military assistance could serve multiple interests. The Europeans remained a key British concern, and plans for their evacuation existed; part of why Kenya remained militarily significant as it would be a staging point for evacuations across Africa if necessary.¹¹⁹ Aspin, head of EAD, argued to Burlace that: 'their continued safety and welfare largely depends on the ability of the Kenya Government to maintain law and order'.¹²⁰ Aspin thus argued that 'There might be a case for helping the Kenyans to expand their army ... whether or not they were prepared to give us anything in return in the way of defence facilities'.¹²¹ This was an argument unlikely to find favour in MOD, which prioritised their own requirements. But whilst the CO and CRO shared MOD's desire to gain military benefits, they prioritised longer-term, less tangible benefits based upon Kenyan stability. They wanted to ensure that Kenyatta's government was credible and not compromised by a deal which could weaken Kenyatta and thus be detrimental to future British interests.

The key was thus to determine what was 'essential'. Aspin recognised that they may have to compromise in order for the negotiation to be acceptable to the Kenyans. He therefore questioned Burlace: 'How essential are our various requirements? What would we be prepared to throw away, if necessary, in the course of negotiations?'.¹²² British civil servants were uncertain of Kenyan reactions to their requests and could not predict how much they might have to bargain and potentially give up. The CRO clearly did not feel they could force their demands upon the Kenyan state. To establish British priorities, on 10 January 1964 a meeting was held between the CRO, FO, Treasury, and MOD, showing

¹¹⁷ CINC MIDEAST to MOD London, 27 January 1964, TNA DO 213/55/1A.

¹¹⁸ F.J. Burlace to Norman Aspin, 24 January 1964, TNA DO 213/134/10.

¹¹⁹ See Brief for Commonwealth Secretary's Visit to East Africa, March 1964, TNA DO 213/48; Annex B, 'Supplementary directive to Commander British army training team Kenya', 14 December 1964, TNA DEFE 25/121/A66; Briefs for British/Kenyan Ministerial Talks, 5-10 March 1973, Brief no. 13: Defence Interests, TNA FCO 31/1503/180; C.A. Munro to D. Kirk, 'Kenya: Exercises by UK Forces (Mount Gay)', 14 February 1979, TNA FCO 31/2585/16.

¹²⁰ N. Aspin to F.J. Burlace, 6 January 1964, TNA DO 213/134/1.

¹²¹ Defence Discussions with Kenya, Note of a meeting held in the CRO, 10 January 1964, TNA DO 213/134/7.

¹²² N. Aspin to F.J. Burlace, 6 January 1964, TNA DO 213/134/1.

the multiple departments which were involved in planning for, and felt themselves to have a stake in, the continuing future military relationship with Kenya. At this meeting, a list was drawn up of British defence requirements: overflying and air staging rights; facilities for an aircraft carrier, training and leave camp facilities; and a strategic communications centre.¹²³ Percox describes these as 'minimal, if by no means insignificant'.¹²⁴ This was certainly a more limited list than ideas in 1960.

Yet whether Britain would achieve even these more limited requests was dependent upon the attitudes of Kenya's leaders. Stanley of BHC saw Gichuru in February 1964 'at a party' (showing the significance of informal social connections).¹²⁵ Stanley described a 'somewhat disturbing conversation' in which Gichuru suggested that he and Kenyatta 'would like Britain to help Kenya, to our mutual advantage. There were "others" in the Government who would like to get help from, and link Kenya with, "other" countries'.¹²⁶ The Soviet Union was looking to capitalise on its support for decolonisation and establish relations with newly independent African states.¹²⁷ Kenya did receive Soviet and Chinese military offers.¹²⁸ But the conversation with Gichuru shows how Kenyans were able to negotiate: Gichuru was shrewd to point to British concerns about communism and Odinga to encourage them towards the kind of deal most beneficial for his faction. Stanley described Gichuru in this letter as 'one of the most reasonable Ministers and one of our best friends'; he was thus in a strong bargaining position.¹²⁹ As Westad has argued, it is important to recognise 'the key role local elites played in abetting and facilitating these superpower interventions'.¹³⁰ Stanley's response to Gichuru was that 'we had far too much diplomatic experience to indulge in the crude arm-twisting of which he seemed to suspect us'; to the CRO, it was that 'The important thing now is to get our tactics in the forthcoming

¹²³ Defence Discussions with Kenya, Note of a meeting held in the CRO, 10 January 1964, TNA DO 213/134/7.

¹²⁴ Percox, *Imperial Defence*, p. 8.

¹²⁵ H.S.H. Stanley to L.B. Walsh Atkins, 18 February 1964, TNA DO 213/134/18.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ See Zaki Lāidi, *The Superpowers and Africa: The Constraints of a Rivalry, 1960-1990* (Chicago, 1990), p. 9.

¹²⁸ Geoffrey de Freitas to Duncan Sandys, 'Conclusion of negotiations on Defence and Financial Assistance', 10 June 1964, TNA DO 213/136/10.

¹²⁹ H.S.H. Stanley to L.B. Walsh Atkins, 18 February 1964, TNA DO 213/134/18.

¹³⁰ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 397.

negotiations right, so that our friends among the Kenya Ministers – a majority I think – can conclude the bargain which we all know we intend to strike’.¹³¹ This revealing statement shows that Stanley recognised Gichuru’s comments as a negotiating tactic, but was apprehensive about the reaction of leading Kenyans to British proposals, although still confident that the most influential Kenyan ministers favoured Britain.

Sandys visited Kenya in March 1964 for discussions with Kenyatta on future military and financial assistance. Although the Kenyans had at first resisted a ‘package deal’ in which ‘nothing is agreed until everything is agreed’,¹³² this became one, with financial and military benefits and obligations negotiated together. At these high-level discussions, the Kenyans agreed to the British requests, and ‘it is indeed gratifying that the Government should now so readily have accepted virtually all we asked for’.¹³³ High Commissioner de Freitas concluded that as well as achieving direct tangible benefits, ‘agreement reached with Kenya will preserve Britain’s position as the principal influence here’.¹³⁴ At these talks the Kenyans gave details of their requests, including the current costs of the army, equipment and weapons for the military, with the RAF to fly in Kenya’s air force until Kenya had trained its own personnel.¹³⁵ Sandys responded that: ‘In principle, the British Government do not think it appropriate that direct budgetary assistance should be given to another independent country. Kenya’s special difficulties are, however, appreciated, and will be considered’.¹³⁶ Already at this early stage in the post-colonial relationship Kenya was being described as ‘special’, indicating that the British government viewed these military benefits as so important that they were prepared to consider giving much assistance in return for them. This would be an expensive commitment for Britain, but de Freitas argued that ‘Of course they have asked for much more than they have offered’, and a ‘significant

¹³¹ H.S.H. Stanley to L.B. Walsh Atkins, 18 February 1964, TNA DO 213/134/18.

¹³² Berridge and Lloyd, *Dictionary of Diplomacy*, p. 275.

¹³³ Geoffrey de Freitas, ‘Commonwealth Secretary’s Visit to Kenya: March, 1964’, 12 March 1964, TNA DO 213/134/53.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Telegram no. 480, Nairobi to CRO, 4 March 1964, TNA DO 213/134/35.

¹³⁶ ‘Military Assistance by Britain to Kenya’, Summary of Commonwealth Secretary’s statement in reply to Kenya Government’s Aide Memoire of 4 March 1964, TNA DO 213/134/48.

positive response' was needed to ensure the relationship.¹³⁷ British officials were cautious to prevent the Kenyans rejecting outright their military 'requirements', and anxious to prevent the Kenyans turning elsewhere.

A decision with long term consequences was the British reply to the Kenyan request for Hunter aircraft. Sandys' responded that:

we could not afford to equip Kenya to defend herself against an attack backed by a major power nor could Kenya afford to maintain such forces: on the other hand if Kenya was afraid of major attack she should bear in mind the possibility of help from the Commonwealth¹³⁸

Although the Kenyans asked for written confirmation of the availability of Commonwealth support, the British were not prepared to offer this.¹³⁹ In contrast to French post-colonial African policy, British officials wanted 'to avoid formal written agreements'.¹⁴⁰ However, this was a crucial policy choice. Sandys' message that Kenya could not afford to build up a large military – and that Britain would not fund this – was coupled with his suggestion of possible British military intervention. For the next decade, the idea that Britain was committed to Kenyan stability and may be prepared to militarily intervene to underwrite this was a key part of military planning in both countries, further discussed in later chapters.

Issues of training were also significant. In 1959 the first East Africans were sent to Sandhurst and Mons Officer Cadet School in Britain for military training.¹⁴¹ Britain faced international competition for training: the first pilots in Kenya's new Air Force had been secretly trained in Israel, although Britain

¹³⁷ Geoffrey de Freitas, 'Commonwealth Secretary's Visit to Kenya: March, 1964', 12 March 1964, TNA DO 213/134/53.

¹³⁸ Telegram no. 611, Nairobi to Walsh Atkins, 24 March 1964, TNA DO 213/135/76.

¹³⁹ Telegram no. 650, Nairobi to Walsh Atkins, 31 March 1964, TNA DO 213/135/90; telegram no. 822, Walsh Atkins to Nairobi, 2 April 1964, TNA DO 213/135/95. See also later chapters on the Bamburi Understanding.

¹⁴⁰ M. Holton to Norman Aspin, 24 February 1964, TNA DO 213/137/5. See also Anthony Clayton, 'Foreign Intervention', pp. 205-7.

¹⁴¹ Anthony Clayton, *The British Military Presence in East and Central Africa: Research Memorandum* (Oxford, 1985), p. 100.

would 'finalise the training'.¹⁴² A British training team was to be set up in Kenya as part of these negotiations. Following a request by the High Commissioner,¹⁴³ Kenyatta confirmed that:

it is not the present intention of the Kenya Government to seek assistance for training the Kenya Armed Forces elsewhere than in Britain so long as this training is given effectively. We shall adhere strictly to this undertaking but should our interests dictate a different course of action, we shall warn the British Government well in advance¹⁴⁴

Although stipulating his own freedom of action, Kenyatta's preference for working with Britain was becoming apparent as he 'carefully realigned but maintained' the military connection.¹⁴⁵ The agreements on training meant that the British would have an extensive role in shaping the Kenyan military, offering training, equipment, and leadership. This made it likely that the Kenyans would in future continue to pursue a British military connection, used to working with British officers and equipment.

Prior to independence, the CO negotiated a settlement for the 1963-64 financial year totalling 'up to £10.4 million of which £5.1 million is grant and £5.3 million loan'.¹⁴⁶ This set the pattern to be followed thereafter of dividing British aid between 'general development' and land settlement. The additional funding to secure British access to military facilities and overflying rights was agreed on 30 May 1964 and offered 'provision of British aid for both civil and defence purposes amounting to some £53 million, of which about £28 million will be in the form of long term loans'.¹⁴⁷ This was a substantial settlement and hints at the particular quality of the Kenyan relationship British officials were hoping to pursue. Securing military benefits and influence in Kenya was something the British government was prepared to pay for.

¹⁴² Speech to be delivered by the Prime Minister on the occasion of the inauguration of the Kenya Air Force in Nairobi, 1 June 1964, KNA KA/4/9/6. See also Steven S. Carol, *Israel's Foreign Policy towards East Africa*, PhD thesis, St. John's University, New York, 1977, pp. 188-9.

¹⁴³ Geoffrey de Freitas to Jomo Kenyatta, 25 March 1964, TNA DO 213/135/103A.

¹⁴⁴ Jomo Kenyatta to Geoffrey de Freitas, 4 May 1964, TNA DO 213/135/121A.

¹⁴⁵ Clayton, 'Military Relations', p. 207.

¹⁴⁶ Telegram no. 561, Webber to Griffith-Jones, 23 May 1963, TNA DO 166/56/39.

¹⁴⁷ CRO to Nairobi, 30 May 1964, TNA DO 213/135/154.

The final *Memorandum of Intention and Understanding regarding Certain Financial and Defence Matters of Mutual Interest to the British and Kenya Governments* (MOU) was signed on 3 June by Kenyatta and de Freitas. It contained twenty-two obligations of the British government to the Kenyan and seven for the Kenyan government towards the British. As its title recognised, this had been formed by negotiation and was intended to be in the 'mutual interests' of both governments. This offered the British what had become their non-negotiable demands, as well as twice yearly training in Kenya.¹⁴⁸ These were significant benefits, and for MOD especially the right to military training became one of their key priorities. The British obligations towards Kenya were mostly financial, as well as providing a training team in Kenya and courses in Britain, and to advise on creating a navy and air force.¹⁴⁹ The MOU also stipulated that Britain would 'make available British troops stationed in Kenya to assist the Kenya Government in dealing with internal disturbances' – clearly a reaction to the mutiny and suggesting neither government was certain of stability.¹⁵⁰ This gave the Kenyan government an interest in ensuring British forces were in the country – although it also potentially gave the British government an interest in ensuring they were not. This public agreement laid the basis for the Anglo-Kenyan military relationship and offered a clear sign of Kenya's choice of allies. De Freitas summed up:

The direct facilities which we stand to gain may not in themselves seem worth it – although it is not easy to evaluate them. But they are not, by a long way, the whole of the credit side ... In the defence field in particular we stand to gain a continuing and influential presence which will serve to give security to our many other investments and to those who stay behind to keep our influence alive in many other fields¹⁵¹

This was not simply about the direct and tangible military benefits Britain received, nor the influence of the money they would give to Kenya's new rulers, but rather a culture and ethos which would

¹⁴⁸ Memorandum of Intention and Understanding regarding Certain Financial and Defence Matters of Mutual Interest to the British and Kenya Governments, 3 June 1964, TNA DO 213/136/1.

¹⁴⁹ Plan for the Formation of a Kenyan Navy, July 1964, TNA T 317/760/3.

¹⁵⁰ Memorandum of Intention and Understanding regarding Certain Financial and Defence Matters of Mutual Interest to the British and Kenya Governments, 3 June 1964, TNA DO 213/136/1.

¹⁵¹ Geoffrey de Freitas to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 'Kenya: Detailed Discussions on Defence and Financial Assistance', 21 April 1964, TNA DO 213/135/109.

encourage leading Kenyans to look towards Britain – and which this agreement would foster. Despite the end of colonial rule, groups on both sides saw the advantages of continuing a formal relationship.

Continuing Expatriates

Another contribution to the continuing British ethos in Kenya's structures was British technical assistance and the British personnel who continued to serve in Kenya.¹⁵² East Africa was a particularly significant recipient of technical assistance: of the £25m Britain spent on this in 1962-63, £13m was spent in Africa, and almost £11m in East Africa.¹⁵³ Table 10 shows the significant numbers of British personnel financed by the aid programme in these initial years after independence; and table 11 sets out the costs of technical assistance from Britain to Kenya. In November 1963, the Department of Technical Co-Operation encouraged 'the use of British knowledge, technique and experience to assist Kenya to build up its own resources of expert personnel and to promote the economic and social development of the country'.¹⁵⁴ The Kenyans chose to use this and requested the provision of various 'experts', such as midwives, experts on co-operatives and from the Bank of England.¹⁵⁵ The British government recognised the advantages of supplying these personnel, such as potential good management, and cementing their own influence and presence whilst denying that of others: 'It is very gratifying that Kenya are looking in the first place to us for this help'.¹⁵⁶ One of those who worked in BHC recalled being told in 1964:

"You just get on and get as many Kenyans on courses to London as you possibly can." So I took that on. There were no effective budget limitations. We just went ahead and sent large

¹⁵² See Holtham and Hazlewood, *Aid and Inequality*, pp. 62-6; Killick, 'British Aid to Africa', pp. 665-681; J. R. Nellis, 'Expatriates in the Government of Kenya', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (1973), pp. 251-264.

¹⁵³ I. M. D. Little, *Aid to Africa* (Oxford, 1965), p. 49.

¹⁵⁴ Department Technical Co-Operation to Malcolm MacDonald, 29 November 1963, TNA CO 822/3253/6.

¹⁵⁵ B.G. Meara to B. Greatbatch, 2 March 1964, TNA DO 214/69/4; B.G. Meara to B. Greatbatch, 26 February 1964, TNA DO 214/69/5; J.A.M. Oliver to Sharp, March 1965, TNA T 317/591.

¹⁵⁶ J.L.F. Buist to R.B.M. King, 13 July 1963, TNA CO 822/3253/1.

batches of Kenyans to the UK ... The training course in the UK almost became a rite of passage¹⁵⁷

Table 10: Publicly Financed British Personnel in Kenya (excluding volunteers), 31 December 1965 to 1968¹⁵⁸

	1965	1966	1967	1968
Education	479	415	794	851
Development Planning	75	62	30	28
Public Administration	401	343	191	227
Social Services	31	27	13	15
Works and Communications	238	202	136	125
Industry and Commerce	4	5	4	36
Agriculture	155	134	156	141
Health	170	144	67	116
Other	163	136	50	24
Total	1,716	1,468	1,441	1,563

Table 11: Technical Assistance from Britain to Kenya (£m)¹⁵⁹

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
Cost	2.323	4.849	2.604	3.815	4.075	2.733	3.271	2.891

Some of these ‘experts’ were in particularly influential positions. Three key examples will be discussed, all of whom were notably Kenyan requests rather than British impositions. The Kenyans requested a Foreign Service Administration advisor in February 1964.¹⁶⁰ De Freitas wrote personally to the Department of Technical Co-Operation ‘in order to stress the need for the speedy provision of a suitable man’, arguing that the current staff lacked experience and a good department would

¹⁵⁷ Malcolm McBain, interview, p. 17.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Kenya: Some Economic Projections 1967-1972’, August 1968, TNA OD 26/142/3.

¹⁵⁹ Kenya Country Policy Paper, 1975, TNA FCO 31/1898/1.

¹⁶⁰ B. Greatbatch to R.B.M. King, 15 February 1964, TNA DO 214/69/2.

encourage stability and economic development.¹⁶¹ As Orwa suggests, 'How well foreign policy was conducted would depend in turn on the new country's diplomats. Yet in 1963 Kenya did not have professional diplomats and was bound to rely on inexperienced diplomats'.¹⁶² In 1964, Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was still establishing its procedures.¹⁶³ De Freitas felt it was worth investing in the Kenyan relationship and hoped to shape interaction with the new Kenyan government to British advantage: 'A Foreign Service trained by a British Adviser in our administrative procedures will automatically be understanding of our problems and talk "the same language" as ourselves'.¹⁶⁴ If the advisor provided the benefits hoped for, those in Kenya's Foreign Service would become by training and instinct more likely to follow British practices, turn to Britain for advice, and remain aligned to British foreign policy. Despite initial FO reluctance – and perhaps ironically, given that British diplomats were to be complicit in the routine side-lining of the formal Kenyan diplomatic apparatus – they filled this post.¹⁶⁵

Another key individual was the only British Permanent Secretary to remain after independence: John Butter at the Kenyan Treasury. Butter's previous career was in the colonial service in India and Pakistan before moving to Kenya in 1950, becoming Permanent Secretary of the Treasury 1959-65, then Financial Advisor until 1969, paid for by Britain.¹⁶⁶ The Acting Governor in 1962 argued that 'Butter's maximum value will be as the top official in the Treasury, keeping a political Minister of Finance, probably African, on the right lines'.¹⁶⁷ He clearly believed that the British knew better than the Kenyans what 'the right lines' for Kenya were. But Kenyatta chose to retain Butter, 'convinced that your deep understanding and extensive experience of Kenya's financial affairs are great assets to us

¹⁶¹ Geoffrey de Freitas to Andrew Cohen, 28 February 1964, TNA DO 214/69/6.

¹⁶² Orwa, 'Foreign policy', p. 222.

¹⁶³ For example see: L.O. Kibinge, 'Contacts with Foreign Governments and Visitors', 26 November 1964, KNA AE/28/8/2.

¹⁶⁴ Geoffrey de Freitas to Andrew Cohen, 28 February 1964, TNA DO 214/69/6.

¹⁶⁵ B.G. Meara to B. Greatbatch, 25 February 1964, TNA DO 214/69/3.

¹⁶⁶ A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *A Biographical Dictionary of the British Colonial Service 1939-1966* (London, 1991), p. 54.

¹⁶⁷ E.N. Griffith-Jones to Patrick Renison, 13 March 1962, TNA FCO 141/6981/10.

and are needed here'.¹⁶⁸ Butter had an influential role in the Kenyan Treasury, involved in writing budget speeches and development plans, and he recalled in his memoirs that, certainly until 1967, 'the senior officers in the Treasury continued to take my advice, and most matters of importance were referred to me'.¹⁶⁹ Butter's colonial service background, relationships with, and payment by, Britain made it likely he would continue to look to Britain for economic assistance. This seemed beneficial to British officials in both London and Nairobi as they believed they understood and were equipped to work with Butter. After he left, British negotiators found the Kenyans they now had to work with more difficult.¹⁷⁰

The British presence was also particularly significant in military leadership. In November 1964 Stanley informed CRO that 'Kenyatta told me in strict confidence that he had decided to appoint Brigadier [A.J.] Hardy ... as Commander Kenya army temporarily in rank of Brigadier. He would appoint Lt. Colonel [Joseph] Ndolo as Deputy Commander ... until Ndolo was fit to take over'.¹⁷¹ Despite Somerville's argument that 'for most Africans, the presence of foreign troops is unwanted',¹⁷² this request came directly from Kenyatta rather than from British suggestion. This was very different from Uganda and Tanganyika where all British officers were withdrawn, and highlighted Kenya's particular significance to Britain.¹⁷³ In fact, there was some hesitancy within CRO about having a British serviceman in this role.¹⁷⁴ MacDonald 'strongly recommends that we accede to Kenyatta's request. If we reject it we will let down Kenyatta personally, and display lack of confidence in authority of Kenya Government'.¹⁷⁵ The Commonwealth Secretary also judged it 'encouraging that his request should

¹⁶⁸ Letter from Kenyatta quoted in Butter, *Uncivil Servant*, p. 89.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁷⁰ See discussion of aid negotiations in Chapter 5: 1970-1973 and R.W. Munro to W.G. Lamarque, 15 January 1971, TNA OD 26/277/208.

¹⁷¹ His emphasis. Telegram no. 2215, Acting High Commissioner to CRO, 17 November 1964, TNA DEFE 25/20/5.

¹⁷² Somerville, *Foreign Military Intervention*, p. x.

¹⁷³ Bell, 'Military assistance', pp. 15-6.

¹⁷⁴ Telegram no. 2243, Nairobi to CRO, 20 November 1964, TNA DEFE 25/20/7.

¹⁷⁵ Telegram no. 2657, CRO to Acting High Commissioner, 18 November 1964, TNA DEFE 25/20/7.

have been made'.¹⁷⁶ CRO agreed only 'on understanding that this will be temporary', and Hardy remained until November 1966.¹⁷⁷ Hardy would sustain the British presence in the Kenyan military and would also be beneficial in cementing relations with Kenyatta. When Kenya's Air Force and Navy were set up, they were also initially commanded by British servicemen.¹⁷⁸

These few examples highlight the British government's willingness to provide 'experts' to strategically significant positions in Kenya; but critically they did so on the basis of Kenyan requests. As Branch and Cheeseman have argued, those who 'inherited the colonial state ... deliberately ensured institutional continuity'.¹⁷⁹ Kenyan institutions continued to be shaped by British methods and systems, which were not fundamentally altered at independence. As Cowan has argued, the former colonial power 'is at least a known quantity with whom it is easier to negotiate than with an unknown power'.¹⁸⁰ Aluko has agreed that for former colonies 'it is rational and easier to mix, and work closely, with people whose language, and educational, legal and administrative systems one understands'.¹⁸¹ Kenyatta and his elite made a choice to continue this alignment. These 'expert' advisors continued to be requested through the 1970s.¹⁸²

In November 1964, KADU's members crossed the floor, dissolving their party and joining the government, and in December Kenya became a republic with Kenyatta as president. Despite having spent so much time working on the constitution and safeguards, British policy-makers did not object to KANU removing the regional constitution agreed at Lancaster House, nor to the effective establishment of a one-party state. British responses to the single-party state make clear the limited

¹⁷⁶ Commonwealth Secretary to Secretary of State for Defence, 'Commander for Kenya Army', 2 December 1964, TNA DEFE 25/20/12.

¹⁷⁷ Telegram no. 2987, CRO to Nairobi, 8 December 1964, TNA DEFE 25/20/15.

¹⁷⁸ See Hornsby, *Kenya*, p. 180.

¹⁷⁹ Branch and Cheeseman, 'Introduction', p. 10.

¹⁸⁰ L. Gray Cowan, 'Political Determinants', in Vernon McKay (ed.), *African Diplomacy: Studies in the Determinants of Foreign Policy* (London, 1966), p. 123.

¹⁸¹ Olajide Aluko, 'The Determinants of the Foreign Policies of African States', in Olajide Aluko (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of African States* (London, 1977), p. 7.

¹⁸² For example, in 1979 Kenya requested a senior British Police Officer be sent to Kenya to advise the Kenyan Commissioner of Police: B.M. Gethi to W.J. Watts, 'Re-Organisation Kenya Police', 22 August 1979, TNA OD 112/4/13.

priority they afforded to ideas of democracy, preferring a strong government under Kenyatta's leadership. Maxon has argued about decolonisation that 'Multiple parties were synonymous with a parliamentary democracy; stability and a protection of British interests might be better achieved by dealing with a single dominant party'.¹⁸³ By January, Imray in BHC was 'convinced of the advantages which Kenya's unforced adoption of a One-Party State can bring her'.¹⁸⁴ Several KADU members became ministers in December – appointments which had been previously decided between Kenyatta, Gichuru, Njonjo and MacDonald.¹⁸⁵ MacDonald argued that 'creation of a new Cabinet in Kenya should be done not in the British way by prior consultation among all those concerned, but in the African way by a firm, unalterable decision by the head of the Government himself'.¹⁸⁶ He had a clear sense that strong, decisive leadership under Kenyatta was in Kenyan – and British – interests. Partly, this was due to British ideas of African difference and backwardness. MacDonald favoured a one-party state as

a typically African solution to a native African problem ... I felt that perhaps a one-party system could help the Kenyan peoples to move away from an earlier, primitive society bedevilled by inter-tribal rivalries towards the establishment of a modern, coherent Twentieth Century state¹⁸⁷

Stanley also viewed this as 'accord[ing] more nearly with African traditions than the discarded "Westminster model" ... Democracy, of an African kind'.¹⁸⁸ Both viewed this through a set of assumptions about Africans and their 'traditions'.

According to his own reporting, MacDonald played a significant role in encouraging Kenyatta and other Kenyan politicians towards a single-party state. In his 1972 book – partly about Kenyatta as one of the 'distinguished people' he had met in his career – MacDonald declared that 'I made no attempt to intrude into policy-making, nor to question any of the Ministers' decisions when they were reported

¹⁸³ Maxon, *Kenya's Constitutions*, p. 269.

¹⁸⁴ C.H. Imray to S.P. Whitley, 20 January 1965, TNA DO 213/67/23.

¹⁸⁵ Malcolm MacDonald to Arthur Bottomley, 'The Political Situation in Kenya: The Recent Past', 5 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/31.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ H.S.H. Stanley to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 'Kenya: A One-Party Republic', 23 November 1964, TNA DO 213/67/22.

to me'.¹⁸⁹ This seems unlikely, and only pages earlier he wrote that 'Very privately and personally I had suggested' a KANU-KADU merger.¹⁹⁰ At the time he recorded having 'positively suggested' KADU join the KANU government, as well as discussing this with Ngala and Moi.¹⁹¹ MacDonald described Kenyatta as having 'guided events towards our ultimate aim', and it is notable that he equated his own aim with Kenyatta's.¹⁹² MacDonald certainly claimed a large influence for himself and it is difficult of course to know how much he did shape Kenyatta's thinking, and how much he simply persuaded himself that he had done so; Maxon has accused MacDonald of 'seeking to inflate his personal impact on Kenyan affairs'.¹⁹³ But MacDonald's particularly close personal relationship with Kenyatta means he did have influence and may well have made this suggestion.

Conclusion

By 1964, British ideas about Kenyatta had undergone a dramatic shift and had come to focus on him as the guarantor of stability and protector of British interests. Diplomats emphasised Kenyatta's personal role, and stability was argued to depend on his 'continued exercise of firm and skilful leadership'.¹⁹⁴ Renison's replacement by MacDonald had been crucial to this change in opinion, and shows the significance of personal relationships in influencing policy; British policy-makers came to privilege their connections to Kenyatta and his elite. The choices made by Kenyatta's inner elite in independence negotiations with British officials were crucial in establishing this relationship. Kenyans were drawn into this practice of negotiation as the emerging elite saw their interests as linked to stability and prosperity and they sought to ensure their position in a system which benefitted them. The CO was not in control of the process and had to react to Kenyan demands. These negotiations

¹⁸⁹ MacDonald, *Titans and Others*, pp. 9, 268-9.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

¹⁹¹ Malcolm MacDonald to Arthur Bottomley, 'The Political Situation in Kenya: The Recent Past', 5 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/31.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Maxon, *Kenya's Independence Constitution*, p. 160.

¹⁹⁴ H. Gilchrist, 'The Kenya Scene', 9 September 1964, TNA DO 213/65/10.

also established channels of communication. British decision-makers learned who favoured them and who would work with them.

By 1964 the Anglo-Kenyan relationship was not what British policy-makers had predicted or hoped for in 1960. Yet what had emerged generally suited British interests; independent Kenya remained aligned to Britain, with the continuation of British relationships. Independence was not a moment of complete change. Leading Kenyans chose to keep looking to Britain in multiple fields: land transfer and technical assistance, personnel, military support and intervention, army leadership and supply, aid and finance; British officials made it easy for them to do so by being continually willing to negotiate and compromise on terms. A pattern of cooperation and shared interests was thus established and would continue to characterise the relationship thereafter.

Chapter Four: 1965-1969

'I am inclined to think that we shall come to look back on the President Kenyatta-era as the golden age in Anglo/Kenyan relations'

M. Scott to Edward Peck, 20 July 1967¹

In broader British foreign policy, the later 1960s have typically been represented as a time of changing abilities and emphasis, with the decision to leave east of Suez and moves away from the Commonwealth towards Europe.² Parr describes this as a period when 'British interests did shift from a global to a European perspective'.³ British decision-makers thus had to decide where to focus their extra-European efforts; Kenya generally retained its significance in their ranking of British interests. British pessimism about Kenya's future prior to independence had been reduced by the much more successful and pro-British outcome under Kenyatta's leadership. But a sense of alarm had not disappeared and stability did not seem assured. By the start of 1965, key decisions about the direction of Kenya's future politics and relationships with Britain had been negotiated between leading members of Kenya's elite and British politicians and civil servants. Having established what they saw as a beneficial relationship which privileged British interests, British policy-makers' concern was in sustaining this through ensuring stability under Kenyatta's leadership.

'If you were asked what should be British policy towards East Africa at the present time, what would you say?'.⁴ This was the question posed by Leonard Walsh Atkins of EAD in December 1964 to the three East African High Commissions. His letter suggested that, after the mutinies,

there were really only two possibilities open to us: one was to continue to do all we reasonably could to support the fairly moderate Governments which were available ... the other was to

¹ M. Scott to Edward Peck, 20 July 1967, TNA FCO 31/210/8.

² See for example: Kennedy, *Realities Behind Diplomacy*, p. 379.

³ Parr, 'East of Suez and the EEC', p. 405.

⁴ L.B. Walsh Atkins to R.W.D Fowler, David Hunt and Harry Stanley, 17 December 1964, TNA DO 213/73/1.

pull out. Clearly the latter, abdicating our responsibilities, was not really open to us ... I will confess that, on various of the more depressing occasions in the last year, my own answer has been "to slow down the rate of return of the jungle". But this cynical observation at the end of a long day will not quite do and I hope is not generally right⁵

This once more highlights the sense of assumed superiority which at least some British individuals retained. Despite his despondency, Walsh Atkins clearly believed in British 'responsibilities' and retained a sense of colonial tutelage. The response sent in January 1965 from Acting High Commissioner Stanley was considerably more positive, with clear ideas on how to maintain the British connection: 'the right course', he suggested, was 'to offer an unobtrusive shoulder on which the Kenyans can lean if they want to – and I think they will if the shoulder is unobtrusive'.⁶ Stanley, and British policy-makers more widely, believed that supporting Kenyatta offered the best protection of British interests.

The choices of the Kenyan elite remained essential in shaping British aims. British officials could only be involved insofar as this was welcomed or encouraged by Kenya's elite, and they still privileged access to a small group of individuals at the heart of the Kenyan government, from which Odinga was excluded. Bell has argued that 'In any alliance ... it is the weaker partner which makes the crucial choice'.⁷ Although referring to the British in their 'special relationship' with America, this analysis also fits the Anglo-Kenyan relationship: the choice of the Kenyan elite to pursue this was the key decision without which the relationship could not have been sustained. The first US Ambassador to Kenya recalled that Kenyatta 'welcomed cooperation with the West only so long as we supported what *he* wanted for Kenya'.⁸ The choices of Kenyatta's elite on key issues proved to be beneficial for British interests. The Kenyan government pursued an economic policy which welcomed foreign investment and Britain benefited from Kenya's non-aligned foreign policy. Atieno-Odhiambo has argued that for

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ H.S.H Stanley to L.B. Walsh Atkins, 5 January 1965, TNA DO 213/73/3.

⁷ Coral Bell, 'The 'Special Relationship'', in Michael Leifer (ed.), *Constraints and Adjustments in British Foreign Policy* (London, 1972), p. 103.

⁸ His emphasis. William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks: A Personal Adventure* (London, 1967), p. 239.

the Kenyan elite an 'ideology of order' was crucial to state power.⁹ This focus on stability was a goal British officials shared. As Evans argued in 1977, 'On a continent where military coups, civil wars, and other forms of violent disorder have been commonplace, Kenya has appeared an anomaly'.¹⁰

With Kenya's elite looking to Britain, this period makes clear that, from the British perspective, Kenya was becoming a 'special' case as a place in which British interests in Kenya remained protected. As one former diplomat recalled: 'Kenya was a sort of favoured son among the ex-colonial African territories'.¹¹ But Kenya's government also had the potential to damage the relationship and cause problems in Britain. In this sense, too, Kenya was significant, as the threats they held over the British were particularly acute. With extensive British investment in Kenya, the removal of stability or a more serious and active non-alignment could damage British interests. Most significant, however, was the Kenyan Asian population, who became a difficult issue for British politicians as Kenya, unusually, made headline British news and prompted domestic immigration legislation.¹² Kenya was 'special' for offering benefits and incentives, but also potentially the possibility of a more difficult future relationship. This chapter will also examine the two occasions when Kenyatta chose to call upon British support, requesting potential military backing against a possible Odinga-led coup and then against potential invasion from Somalia. Their sense of Kenyatta's importance meant that British officials were unusually prepared to offer military reassurance – the 'unobtrusive shoulder' Stanley had advocated.

African Socialism and investment

In 1965 Kenya's Sessional Paper No. 10, written by Mboya's department, outlined the policy of African Socialism which came to symbolise Kenya's ideology. The Paper described African Socialism as a 'political and economic system that is positively African not being imported from any country or being

⁹ Atieno-Odhiambo, 'Ideology of Order', pp. 177-201.

¹⁰ Emmet B. Evans, Jr., 'Sources of Socio-Political Instability in an African State: The Case of Kenya's Educated Unemployed', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1977), p. 37.

¹¹ David Goodall, interview.

¹² See for example: 'Ministry challenge Sandys remark', *Times*, 19 February 1968, p. 1.

a blue print of any foreign ideology but capable of incorporating useful and compatible techniques from whatever source'.¹³ It nominally rejected capitalism, but actually advocated a managed capitalist economy. Much of the motivation behind this document was internal and political: in debates within KANU it aimed to side-line Odinga's more 'radical' ideas in 'a skilful attempt to present the conservatives' ideology in the radicals' clothing'.¹⁴ As Savage has argued, 'It was a stroke of semantic genius to call this socialism'.¹⁵ With clear parallels to Kenya's non-aligned foreign policy, Kenya's nominally uncommitted domestic economic policy remained pro-Western, and more specifically, pro-British. African Socialism encouraged foreign investment, stating that Kenya would 'borrow technological knowledge and proven economic methods from any country'.¹⁶ Orwa argues that one aim was 'selling Kenya to potential foreign private entrepreneurs', of whom the British were key candidates.¹⁷ The British response to African Socialism was fairly positive. In a despatch on the subject, Stanley wrote that:

Its policies are generally sensible and realistic but Kenya's prosperity and development will depend upon the Government's ability to advance the African masses economically and socially without frightening away external capital and expertise¹⁸

He saw foreign – British – capital as essential for Kenya, and it is clear that British observers thought they understood Kenya's problems, with British involvement viewed as part of the solution.

African Socialism was also partly intended by its authors for consumption abroad as a statement of intent to the international community. This domestic economic doctrine was a roundabout way of distancing Kenya from radicalism, and therefore from Soviet influence. The choice of the elite around

¹³ CAB(65)67: Memorandum by the Minister for Economic Planning and Development, 'African Socialism and its application to Planning in Kenya', 10 April 1965, KNA AE/28/4.

¹⁴ Bethwell A. Ogot and Tiyaambe Zeleza, 'Kenya: The Road to Independence and After', in Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.), *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfers of Power, 1960-1980* (New Haven, 1988), p. 418. See also Atieno-Odhiambo, 'Ideology of Order', p. 196.

¹⁵ Savage, 'Kenyatta and African Nationalism', p. 520.

¹⁶ CAB(65)67: Memorandum by the Minister for Economic Planning and Development, 'African Socialism and its application to Planning in Kenya', 10 April 1965, KNA AE/28/4.

¹⁷ D. Katete Orwa, 'Independent Kenya's External Economic Relations', in W. R. Ochieng' and R. M. Maxon (eds.), *An Economic History of Kenya* (Nairobi, 1992), p. 391.

¹⁸ H.S.H. Stanley to Arthur Bottomley, 'African Socialism', 27 May 1965, TNA DO 213/68/9.

Kenyatta not to foster Soviet connections was more broadly apparent. In a talk to Kenyan students in London in June 1965, the Minister for External Affairs very explicitly stated that 'To us communism is as bad as imperialism'.¹⁹ Clearly this was partially aimed at a British audience, and offered them encouragement. The Soviet Union made financial and military offers, but Kenyatta was reluctant to take these, preferring to continue with British assistance. Kenyan factionalism meant British policy-makers feared that if Odinga gained power, these alternative offers might be taken up. However, the threat of these offered a bargaining tool in discussions with the British, as in the MOU negotiations. High Commissioner Peck recognised in 1967 that ministers 'revert to it as a blackmail in the event of frustration' with British offers.²⁰ For example, in 1969: 'Kenya Ministers have represented to us that there are elements in their Cabinet which would find great difficulty in agreeing to spend money on British aircraft when aircraft which though not quite so suitable were being offered free of charge, from the Soviet Union'.²¹ The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary therefore recommended giving improved credit terms to ensure the purchase of British aircraft. Kenyan politicians were adept at using the threat of accepting alternative offers to encourage the British to greater concessions.

One of Britain's major interests in Kenya was investment, and African Socialism encouraged British officials and business to feel secure. During the colonial period, Kenya had been a regional economic centre and the European population had given confidence to British investors.²² In 1960, there was a flight of capital.²³ In April 1962, the risk for business in Kenya was reassessed and Kenya downgraded from a 'B' to 'C' risk area, a clear signal that investors lacked confidence in the country's future economic ability.²⁴ Kenya's leaders thus came to share the British interest in encouraging investment

¹⁹ Notes for a talk to Kenya students by the Minister for External Affairs, 'Kenya Today', 19 June 1965, KNA KA/4/16.

²⁰ Edward Peck to E.G. Norris, 7 April 1967, TNA FCO 31/228/3.

²¹ Michael Stewart to Prime Minister, 11 July 1969, TNA DEFE 13/581/51.

²² R. M. A. van Zwanenberg with Anne King, *An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda 1800-1970* (London, 1975), p. 196; Okumu, 'Foreign Relations', p. 248.

²³ J.H. Butter to A.M. Galsworthy, 27 July 1960, TNA CO 822/2560/22.

²⁴ A.E. Percival to F.H. Partridge, 'General Departmental Policy Notice Kenya', 4 April 1962, TNA T 312/2229/1.

and a sense of economic and political security.²⁵ In 1963 Gichuru pledged 'firm assurances to the overseas investor'.²⁶ Kenya's pro-Western investment policies were thus already emerging prior to African Socialism. The 1964 Foreign Investment Promotion Act had encouraged and given incentives to foreign capital by guaranteeing the right to repatriate profits.²⁷ The key issue for investors was the safety of their investments, with the prospect of political instability the major concern.²⁸ Kenya's Minister for Commerce and Industry Julius Kiano attended an Overseas Development Institute conference in London in 1965 and strongly advocated further investment, arguing that 'investment itself is a great factor in creating stability'.²⁹ Increasingly, Kenya was viewed as less risky than her neighbours, and thus became a 'focal point for foreign investment in Africa'.³⁰

Kenya's openness to foreign investment and regional stability were beneficial to British investors. British investment in these early post-independence years was particularly significant and in 1965 'accounted for 85 per cent of all the externally owned public debt'.³¹ Part of the colonial legacy was the European owned businesses, particularly multinational companies.³² One key example was Lonrho, which became heavily involved in Kenya from 1967, with profits returned to Britain.³³ Lonrho also came to have some political influence in Kenya with the appointment of Kenyatta's son-in-law Udi Gecaga as the 'first African to be appointed to Lonrho's main board in London'.³⁴ Business and

²⁵ See for example: M. Muliro, 'Why Kenya needs foreign investment', *The City Press*, 5 January 1962, pp. 5-6, KNA MSS/115/18/13.

²⁶ Gichuru speech, 15 June 1963, quoted in Savage, 'Kenyatta and African Nationalism', p. 520.

²⁷ Swadesh S. Kalsi, 'Encouragement of Private Foreign Investment in the Developing Country: Provisions in the Laws of Kenya', *The International Lawyer*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1972), p. 613.

²⁸ D. J. Morgan, *British Private Investment in East Africa: Report of a Survey and Conference* (London, 1965), p. 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³⁰ David F. Gordon, 'Anglophonic Variants: Kenya versus Tanzania', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 489 (1987), p. 102.

³¹ Ikiara and Killick, 'Economy since Independence', p. 6.

³² Steven Langdon, 'The Multinational Corporation in the Kenya Political Economy', in Raphael Kaplinsky (ed.), *Readings on the Multinational Corporation in Kenya* (Nairobi; Oxford, 1978), p. 140.

³³ Suzanne Cronjé, Margaret Ling and Gillian Cronjé, *Lonrho: Portrait of a Multinational* (London, 1976), p. 37.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38. See also as an example: telegram no. 1476, Nairobi to FCO, 5 June 1978, TNA BT 241/3097/13.

investment connections between the two countries encouraged the sense of a significant and beneficial relationship. By 1970:

We have one third of Kenya's market for imported goods and the balance of trade is about £30m in our favour. The book value of UK owned companies is some £45m while loans from UK parent firms to their subsidiaries are worth about £26m ... The value of Kenya stocks on the UK market is £30m³⁵

Table 12 sets out the increasing British investment from 1967-70, after the introduction of African Socialism and with Kenya appearing stable. Britain's economic and investment portfolio in Kenya was substantial and a key part of why the relationship was viewed as 'special'. This was of wider significance as British investors and government sought to protect not only their investments, but also the environment of stability which encouraged and made these profitable.

Table 12: *British Investment in Kenya (£m) (excluding banking, insurance and oil)*³⁶

	1967	1968	1969	1970
Agriculture	17.2	18.0	18.9	19.2
Manufacturing	14.1	15.5	15.8	16.4
Distribution	10.5	12.2	13.1	16.0
Other activities	6.9	6.5	8.2	8.6
Total	50.2	53.7	58.1	62.4

Operation Binnacle

Issues of stability were crucial in April 1965 when the British government responded to a request from Kenyatta to prepare for a potential coup by Odinga, who had become increasingly isolated as a 'radical'. Njonjo, engaged in his role as interlocutor, met MacDonald in April 1965 with 'reports that Mr. Odinga and his associates may attempt some kind of armed or other action to seize power in Kenya'.³⁷ The request brought by Njonjo from Kenyatta was:

³⁵ D.A. Truman to Steel, Mackay, Ryrie, 2 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

³⁶ Department of Trade and Industry, Briefs for British/Kenyan Ministerial Talks 5-10 March 1973: British/Kenya Trade and Investment, 1 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1503/180.

³⁷ Telegram no. 591, MacDonald to Secretary of State, 5 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121.

a strong hope that it might be convenient for a British ship or ships (such as an aircraft carrier) to be in neighbouring waters during this month, as a matter of their routine exercise. If the Government were in serious difficulty here, they would wish to ask for the help of British troops to maintain law and order until the crisis had passed³⁸

Njonjo stressed that this was 'not a formal request', which it 'would be politically inexpedient' to make pre-emptively; though should 'a critical situation' occur, Kenyatta would make a formal request as he had during the mutinies.³⁹ Njonjo also told MacDonald about the 'Russian offer of an arms gift' which became linked to the possibility of a coup.⁴⁰ Cold War considerations were particularly prominent in Kenya at this time, as Odinga had Soviet support and seemed to pose a threat to Western interests.⁴¹ MacDonald conveyed this message to London and John Chadwick of EAD wrote to MOD that 'we should work on the assumption that we would wish to intervene if necessary ... a contingency plan should be made as soon as possible'.⁴²

MOD reacted immediately. The Defence Operations Executive met to consider the requests, setting out potential options for military assistance and sending *HMS Albion* to Mombasa.⁴³ They recognised that another intervention would not be so easily accomplished as that during the mutinies, and argued that British 'troops cannot "reconquer" Kenya for President Kenyatta'.⁴⁴ MOD thus made a distinction between preventing a coup – which they were prepared and even eager to do – and reversing one. They were also concerned that 'forces would not operate outside Nairobi or be drawn into a long guerrilla-type campaign'.⁴⁵ Despite their willingness to intervene, they were cautious about the scale of any military involvement, a caution probably necessitated by the limitations of what British forces were able to do.⁴⁶ By 9 April, four days after Njonjo's request, the Military Chiefs of Staff Committee

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'Plans for a coup d'état in Kenya?', 28 June 1965, TNA DO 213/65/50.

⁴¹ Laïdi, *Superpowers and Africa*, p. 9.

⁴² J. Chadwick to C.W. Wright, 7 April 1965, TNA PREM 13/1588.

⁴³ Annex B, 'Options for Provision of British Military Assistance to Kenya', 8 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121; J.H. Lapsley to VCDS, Head of DS 11, 'Provision of British Military Assistance to Kenya', 8 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121. This kind of 'gunboat diplomacy' was not new: see Percox, *Imperial Defence*, pp. 160-7.

⁴⁴ Brief for Secretary of State, 'Defence and Oversea Policy Committee Kenya', [1965], TNA DEFE 25/121.

⁴⁵ 'Military Assistance to Kenya', 13 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121.

⁴⁶ See French, *Army, Empire and Cold War*, p. 266.

had created a plan for the deployment of troops from Aden.⁴⁷ The plan was approved in MOD on 14 April and codenamed Operation Binnacle.⁴⁸ On 15 April, the Director of Operations in Aden decided 'all binnacle forces within the command should meanwhile remain at 24 hours notice until BHC Nairobi indicates that the situation warrants forces being at the reduced notice'.⁴⁹ These were reduced to 48 hours' notice on 24 April and thus spent nine days on high alert for a Kenyan coup.⁵⁰ On 29 April, Kenyatta asked 'if our troops can remain at 48 hours notice', clearly therefore aware of the Binnacle plan, most likely informed by MacDonald.⁵¹ The plan aimed 'To prevent the overthrow of the present Kenya Government ... Protect the person of Kenyatta and other loyal members of his government'.⁵² This willingness to support the president shows how clearly British policy focused upon Kenyatta personally.

It is questionable how realistic the possibility of a coup was. Subsequent historiography has assumed the threat was not serious.⁵³ Indeed, in Njonjo's initial disclosure he highlighted that 'Kenyatta and his principal colleagues are inclined not (repeat not) to take this possibility too seriously [but] they nevertheless feel that they cannot ignore it'.⁵⁴ EAD considered that 'At first sight it would seem unlikely ... [but] I think we must assume for the moment that there is a real danger'.⁵⁵ MacDonald's later assessment on the nature of the threat highlighted:

the apparent design of some external Communist Powers to aid their stooges in Kenya by supplies of arms for use, if necessary, in overthrowing President Kenyatta's Government ... surreptitious shipments of Czechoslovakian and Polish arms ... students who have returned to Kenya after receiving military training in countries behind the iron curtain, and ... the Russian gift of arms⁵⁶

⁴⁷ Annex B, 'Options for Provision of British Military Assistance to Kenya', 8 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121.

⁴⁸ Chief of Defence Staff to Secretary of State, 14 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121/19.

⁴⁹ Director in Chief MIDEAST to MOD, 15 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121.

⁵⁰ Commander-in-Chief MIDEAST to MOD, 23 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121.

⁵¹ Telegram no. 747, Nairobi to CRO, 29 April 1965, TNA PREM 13/1588.

⁵² Commander-in-Chief MIDEAST to MOD, 15 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121.

⁵³ For example see: Parsons, *1964 Army Mutinies*, pp. 186-7; Branch, *Kenya*, pp. 48-50.

⁵⁴ Telegram no. 591, MacDonald to Secretary of State, 5 April 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121.

⁵⁵ J. Chadwick to C.W. Wright, 7 April 1965, TNA PREM 13/1588.

⁵⁶ Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'Plans for a coup d'état in Kenya?', 28 June 1965, TNA DO 213/65/50.

The key 'evidence' which sparked Njonjo's approach to MacDonald, however, was 'a letter from a conspiratorial colleague' to Pio Pinto (MP 1963-65 and supporter of Odinga), which 'suggests that some sinister action – which the Kenyan authorities interpreted as perhaps a "coup d'etat" – might have been planned'.⁵⁷ It is unclear who sent this letter beyond 'one of Mr. Odinga's friends', exactly what it contained, or even if MacDonald himself saw it.⁵⁸ There is thus limited evidence of a coup plot, and this may have been a case of British overreaction and misreading – as they were occasionally apt to do – or something of a test by Kenyatta who may have wanted to know what British reactions to a coup might be.

MacDonald continued to believe the threat had been real and suggested one reason it had not progressed was Pinto's assassination on 24 February 1965.⁵⁹ Pinto was described after his death by BHC as 'possibly the most dangerous Communist influence in Kenya, because of his acute intelligence and talent for intrigue'.⁶⁰ This opinion of Pinto's importance was, however, notably more frequent after his death than before. MacDonald's reported view was that 'Pinto's death becomes a turning point in the struggle, and from then on, the well-planned coup went astray'.⁶¹ In the light of a possible coup, MacDonald described the assassination as 'despicable but timely';⁶² and his desire for stability and favour for Kenyatta overrode concern for judicial practice, with tacit acceptance of this political assassination.

Arms deliveries to Kenya, allegedly intended for Odinga, were a significant part of the rumours surrounding the potential coup. Russian equipment and a training team arrived, although MacDonald was 'emphatically' assured when meeting Murumbi, Mungai and Njonjo that this did not affect the

⁵⁷ Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'Plans for a coup d'etat in Kenya?', 28 June 1965, TNA DO 213/65/50.

⁵⁸ Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'The Political Situation in Kenya: The Present', 5 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/32.

⁵⁹ See Office of the President, 'Statement by His Excellency the President on the Death of the Honourable P.G. Pinto', 24 February 1965, KNA KA/4/9; Branch, *Kenya*, p. 47.

⁶⁰ H.S.H. Stanley to N. Aspin, 1 March 1965, TNA DO 213/65/21.

⁶¹ Michael Shea minute, 24 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/35.

⁶² Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'Plans for a coup d'etat in Kenya?', 28 June 1965, TNA DO 213/65/50.

position of the British military training team.⁶³ In his despatch, MacDonald later concluded that these arms were intended 'to support, if required, a political overthrow'.⁶⁴ BHC was clearly concerned by the Russian presence, speculating about links to Odinga, investigating the Russians who arrived, and informing Njonjo that three were 'suspected of being intelligence officers. President Kenyatta and his most confidential Ministerial colleagues were very grateful for that information'.⁶⁵ The British government wanted to preserve their influence.

In a clear example of the influence of British policy-makers on Kenyan policy, and the role of Njonjo and McKenzie as informal interlocutors, at the end of April, Mungai, Murumbi and McKenzie inspected the Russian arms, accompanied by Brigadier Hardy and Colonel Landy (Ordnance Commander, Kenya Army). Hardy was to recommend whether to accept or reject the arms.⁶⁶ That the British commander of the Kenyan army was to assess the Russian equipment was perhaps already a sign that it was unlikely to be accepted. More significant than this alone, however, was that

McKenzie and Njonjo asked me [MacDonald] to convey privately and unofficially to Brigadier Hardy that he should give an honest opinion about the utility of the various items of equipment, but with a prejudice in favour of rejecting each and every item as not sufficiently useful. I have no doubt that this represents Kenyatta's own wish, and so I have effectively conveyed this message in strict secrecy to Hardy⁶⁷

This message was passed from Kenyatta, through Njonjo and McKenzie, to MacDonald, and then to Hardy, in a clear indication of the informal and personal networks which were so important within Kenyan politics. The result of this, as widely publicised, was that Kenya rejected the Russian arms supplies and advisors. MacDonald viewed this rejection as 'a serious diplomatic defeat for the Communist Powers', and indeed Communist influence was limited thereafter.⁶⁸ Stanley argued that 'by far the most important way of countering Communist influence in Kenya is for us to sustain

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Telegram no. 741, Nairobi to CRO, 29 April 1965, TNA PREM 13/1588.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Telegram no. 755, Nairobi to CRO, 30 April 1965, TNA PREM 13/1588.

Kenyatta and his moderate supporters in power, and to preserve the considerable influence we have with them'.⁶⁹ This was to be Britain's Cold War stance in Kenya.

Any threat of a coup quickly dissipated and by May, '[w]hatever is the truth about the plan for a "coup d'état", the preparations for it have now gone hopelessly awry'.⁷⁰ The whole affair was seen by MacDonald to have been fairly beneficial for Britain and 'Kenyatta and his principal colleagues' confidence in our wise and effective friendship has been further increased'.⁷¹ The British had demonstrated commitment without having to prove this through actual military action – although they had been, and remained, prepared to do so. In May MOD decided that although they no longer expected an immediate coup, 'the plan should still be issued since a potential threat continues and similar alarms could arise in the future'.⁷² The possibility of a coup was reviewed in January 1966 and considered 'unlikely', but the idea did not completely dissipate.⁷³ High Commissioner Peck recalled in his autobiography that the British *HMS Triumph*

was stationed in Mombasa Harbour for quite a long time. It was a visible token of our support, particularly at moments when Bruce Mackenzie, for instance thought there might be a coup against the Kikuyu government. ('Is your old tin can still there?' was his crudely-coded message to me at one point)⁷⁴

As Peck did not arrive in Kenya until 1966, this cannot have referred to the same instance, but suggests a broader idea of the British presence offering support against potential opposition. If threatened, Britain was Kenyatta, Njonjo and McKenzie's choice of ally. A British plan for intervention in response to internal unrest existed until 1971.⁷⁵ Kenyatta's request for British assistance and the British

⁶⁹ H.S.H. Stanley to R.M. Tesh, 17 May 1965, TNA DO 213/152/91.

⁷⁰ Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'The Political Situation in Kenya: The Present', 5 May 1965, TNA DO 213/65/32.

⁷¹ Telegram no. 755, Nairobi to CRO, 30 April 1965, TNA PREM 13/1588.

⁷² Report by the Defence Planning Staff, Chiefs of Staff Committee, 'British Military Assistance to Kenya', 10 May 1965, TNA DEFE 25/121. See Boubacar N'Diaye, *The Challenge of Institutionalizing Civilian Control: Botswana, Ivory Coast, and Kenya in Comparative Perspective* (Lanham, 2001), pp. 123-44.

⁷³ Malcolm MacDonald to A.G. Bottomley, 'Can It Happen Here?', 31 January 1966, TNA DO 213/70/2.

⁷⁴ Peck, *Recollections*, p. 219.

⁷⁵ N.J. Barrington to P.L. Gregson, 6 September 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/25.

intervention plan encouraged the sense of a particular British stake in Kenyan stability, with Kenyatta viewed as its guarantor.

In another sign of the British role in Kenya's defence forces, at the end of 1965 MacDonald was approached by McKenzie 'with a view to getting confidential British advice on the future size and shape of the Kenya armed forces'.⁷⁶ It was again McKenzie, with his 'certain de facto responsibilities in the field of defence', who was the key figure in communicating Kenyan messages, and only he, Kenyatta and Njonjo knew of this request.⁷⁷ MacDonald was keen for the British military to fulfil this request and 'need not underline the desirability of our assisting the Kenyans in this way, if it is at all possible', writing directly to Commonwealth Secretary Arthur Bottomley.⁷⁸

In March 1966 Peck was formally asked by McKenzie 'to supply a Senior Civil Servant experienced in defence programming to assist the Kenyans in their defence review'.⁷⁹ MOD found it difficult to locate a suitable person, submitting that it was not possible. However, Defence Secretary Healey 'stepped in and said that he was very anxious to give all possible help to President Kenyatta and instructed officials to try to arrange this'.⁸⁰ This is a fairly rare and revealing example of a British minister getting involved in policy towards Kenya, and indicates how significant Healey viewed this to be, prepared to overrule the objections of his civil servants. This also makes clear the importance of informal connections within the British government, as the details of this internal MOD dispute had been passed 'on a personal basis' from Burlace of MOD to Scott, head of EAD.⁸¹ British policy-makers had to negotiate internally as well as with the Kenyans over their policies.

⁷⁶ Malcolm MacDonald to Arthur Bottomley, 30 December 1965, TNA DO 213/128/1.

⁷⁷ His emphasis. Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Telegram no. 554, Nairobi to CRO, 10 March 1966, TNA DO 213/128/17.

⁸⁰ M. Scott to Edward Peck, 23 March 1966, TNA DO 213/128/20.

⁸¹ Ibid.

In April 1966 General John Drew was chosen to lead the review, having previous experience of similar missions in Malaysia.⁸² Following his visit, Peck was complimentary: 'Drew was exactly what was required by the Kenyans'.⁸³ Drew formally sent his report to Gichuru as Chairman of the Defence Review Committee.⁸⁴ At this stage, policy was conducted through formal channels rather than with its initial informality. His report argued that Kenya's 'problem is predominantly one of internal security', including a wide definition of this.⁸⁵ Drew's main recommendations were to create a Chief of Defence Staff, focus on intelligence, coordination between police and military, and coordination between the three defence services.⁸⁶

The most significant recommendation from the British perspective was the creation of a Chief of Defence Staff. Interestingly, 'both Drew and Bruce McKenzie and others here agree that Hardy, although an excellent regimental soldier who has done a splendid job with the Kenya Army, is not really suited to be the rather politically minded and unified command type of officer required'.⁸⁷ Despite this, Kenyatta was 'now cogitating the possibility of replacing Hardy by another white face assuming a suitable one can be found'.⁸⁸ In another example of British assumed superiority, Richard Posnett in the CRO argued that 'while Africans will doubtless come to the top who would be capable of commanding units of modest size, it may be too much to expect men to appear who can exercise broad strategic and administrative control'.⁸⁹ As with Hardy's appointment, Kenyatta and his closest advisors requested that this position be filled by the British military, giving them considerable influence over who was appointed. Hardy was replaced as planned by Kenyan Brigadier Ndolo as Commander of the Army, and the British Major General Bernard Penfold was appointed Chief of

⁸² F.J. Burlace to Major-General J.M. McNeill, 7 April 1966, TNA DEFE 24/660/27.

⁸³ Edward Peck to Michael Scott, 13 May 1966, TNA DO 213/128/48.

⁸⁴ J.A. Drew to J.S. Gichuru, 16 May 1966, TNA DO 213/128/57.

⁸⁵ J.A. Drew, 'Report on the Organisation of Kenya's Defence Services', 13 May 1966, TNA DO 213/128/57.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Edward Peck to Arthur Snelling, 24 May 1966, TNA DO 213/128/50.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ R.N. Posnett to General McNeill, Scott, 17 June 1966, TNA DO 213/128/57.

Defence Staff.⁹⁰ Penfold also took command of the British training team, meaning he was involved in both Kenyan military policy and British military policy towards Kenya. But MOD argued that 'As regards the comment that Penfold might have divided loyalties ... the situation in which senior seconded officers wear two hats is by no means unusual ... but the British loyalty is of course always paramount'.⁹¹ British leadership within the Kenyan military underpinned the military relationship and offered an inside route to Kenyan military thinking.

Operation Binnacle had been designed against a possible threat from Odinga, but in 1966 Kenyan politics changed as Odinga left KANU and Kenya returned, albeit briefly, to a two party state. In February 1966, Odinga left parliament during a debate and MacDonald discussed this with Njonjo and Kenyatta; Imray of BHC opined that 'Njonjo obviously knows more about political trends in Kenya than I do – but I should be surprised if Odinga resigns on this – despite his humiliation'.⁹² As he admitted, Njonjo had a greater understanding of the direction of Kenya's politics. At the Limuru party conference, Odinga was replaced by eight regional vice-presidents, something Kenyatta had informed BHC might be a possibility over a week prior to the conference.⁹³ BHC was kept informed of certain information by the Kenyan leadership, but this was very dependent on what they were told and on maintaining relationships to ensure they were told this. Odinga formed the opposition KPU, and 'Odinga's challenge was now explicitly to the President'.⁹⁴ The KPU was forced to contest the Little General Election of 1966 and performed with fairly limited success in a campaign frequently weighted against them.⁹⁵ But electoral intimidation was not the British priority. Imray reported: 'Afterwards we shall try to examine whether the nasty taste left in the mouth by all these manoeuvres is nasty only to delicate European democratic palates – [or] that in the Kenya African context, once again the end

⁹⁰ J.M. McNeill to Norris, 25 November 1966, TNA DO 213/128/62.

⁹¹ J.H.F. Mermagen to Colonel GS, 18 November 1966, TNA DEFE 24/660/53.

⁹² C.H. Imray to R.N. Posnett, 16 February 1966, TNA DO 213/66/6.

⁹³ Telegram no. 475, Pumphrey to CRO, 3 March 1966, TNA DO 213/66/12.

⁹⁴ Gertzel, *Politics of Independent Kenya*, p. 89.

⁹⁵ See Susanne D. Mueller, 'Government and Opposition in Kenya, 1966-9', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (1984), pp. 399-427.

[might] have justified the means'.⁹⁶ Peck argued that the government's tactics 'may arouse concern for the future of democracy in Kenya. But in Kenya's conditions, a tolerably enlightened autocracy may well be the best prescription'.⁹⁷ Stability under the strong leadership of Kenyatta was viewed as far more beneficial for British interests than democracy.

Bamburi Understanding

In 1966-67, another military agreement was negotiated between the British government and leading Kenyans, this time concerning Somalia. The Somali policy of 'greater Somalia' claimed territory from Ethiopia and Kenya. In 1960 the British colonial government had raised the possibility of the secession of the north east of Kenya to Somalia but then withdrew from any decision, and the incoming Kenyan government firmly rejected this in favour of maintaining colonial borders.⁹⁸ An insurgency known as the *shifita* was fought in the north-east of Kenya, with the insurgents supported by Somalia.⁹⁹ Ethiopia had similar concerns and created a defence agreement with Kenya which stated 'that an armed attack against one of them shall be considered an attack against the other'.¹⁰⁰ Yet this did not entirely quell Kenyan anxiety, and it was to Britain that Kenya's new rulers looked for further reassurance.

In May 1966 McKenzie raised this issue in a meeting with British Defence Secretary Healey. McKenzie asked:

if he was right in his assumption that if Kenya was attacked, the UK accepted an unwritten obligation to come to her assistance ... [Healey replied] that he had no doubt that the position would be considered sympathetically on its merits. He added that while we were retaining the

⁹⁶ C.H. Imray to R.N. Posnett, 31 May 1966, TNA DO 213/188/6.

⁹⁷ Edward Peck to A.G. Bottomley, 'Kenya: "The Little General Election"', 1 July 1966, TNA DO 213/188/13.

⁹⁸ See David E. Kromm, 'Irredentism in Africa: The Somali-Kenya Boundary Dispute', *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (1967), pp. 362-3; Abdirashid Abdullahi, 'Colonial Policies and the Failure of Somali Secessionism in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya Colony, c.1890-1968', Submitted in Fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts, History Department Rhodes University (February 1997), pp. 112-25.

⁹⁹ For details of the *shifita* see Mburu, *Bandits on the Border*; Hannah Alice Whittaker, 'The socioeconomic dynamics of the *shifita* conflict in Kenya, c. 1963-8', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (2012), pp. 391-408.

¹⁰⁰ Agreement of Cooperation and Mutual Defence Assistance between the Imperial Ethiopian Government and the Government of Kenya, TNA DO 213/129/25.

capability to help in such a situation, and HMG was very sympathetic to the present regime in Kenya, “an unwritten obligation” was not a meaningful concept in international relations¹⁰¹

The reason for McKenzie’s assumption was the so-called ‘Sandys Understanding’ allegedly given by the previous Commonwealth Secretary in 1964. The basis for this was referred to in the previous chapter: that the Kenyans could not afford Hunter aircraft, but should consider Commonwealth support if attacked.¹⁰² There were clear differences between the British and Kenyan interpretations of what Sandys had said: to British policy-makers, this was no more than vague support to a friendly Commonwealth state; for leading Kenyans, this was a commitment they counted on. A January 1966 Kenyan military paper made explicit this reliance. This assessment ‘assumed that the British ground attack aircraft would be available to support the Kenya Army within 24 hours and that limited ground forces would start arriving within 48 hours, of Somali regular forces violating our frontier’.¹⁰³ The paper set out very limited goals for the Kenyan army ‘to identify, and furnish our allies with proven evidence of the aggression so that they could intervene on our behalf confidently; [and] to contain the enemy thrust or thrusts for long enough to enable our allies to intervene effectively’.¹⁰⁴ There was no sense of the Kenyan military being able to repel a Somali attack without assistance, and this assumed immediate British support. This made Kenya’s leaders particularly concerned by Healey’s view that Britain was under no obligation to assist.

In the months that followed, leading members of Kenya’s inner elite followed this up, reiterating the Somali threat at high level meetings between Murumbi and the Prime Minister, McKenzie, Gichuru and the Commonwealth Secretary.¹⁰⁵ Njonjo and McKenzie saw the Prime Minister, Commonwealth

¹⁰¹ Meeting between the Secretary of State for Defence and Bruce McKenzie, 24 May 1966, TNA DO 213/129/2.

¹⁰² Telegram no. 611, Walsh Atkins to CRO, 24 March 1964, TNA DO 213/135/76.

¹⁰³ Paper prepared by Kenya government committee convened by President Kenyatta, ‘Nature and Forces Necessary to meet the External Threat’, January 1966, TNA DO 213/129/1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Conversation between Prime Minister and Mr Murumbi, 12 October 1966, TNA DO 213/129/7; Record of a conversation between the Minister of State, Commonwealth Office, George Thomas, and the Kenya Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Mackenzie and the Minister of Finance, Mr. Gichuru at the Commonwealth Office, 13 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/24.

Secretary and Minister of Defence on 11 November 1966, delivering a letter from Kenyatta.¹⁰⁶ At this meeting, Njonjo 'said that he was not seeking a formal undertaking, but an informal assurance that, if Kenya asked for British help if they came under attack from Somalia, this help would be forthcoming'.¹⁰⁷ McKenzie noted that 'apart from President Kenyatta, Dr. Mungai, Mr. Njonjo and himself, the entire Kenya Cabinet believed that there was already such a pact'.¹⁰⁸ Assumptions of Britain's influence and power in Kenya were actually rather ahead of reality.

In the wake of the Kenyan approach, British officials were initially concerned to establish exactly what Sandys had said and whether a 'Sandys Understanding' existed. They searched through records of conversations but found 'no trace of ... an express undertaking'.¹⁰⁹ Walsh Atkins confirmed that 'Mr. Sandys of course said nothing so categorical at all'.¹¹⁰ Anxious to confirm this, the Commonwealth Secretary spoke to Sandys, who stated that he had never made an agreement beyond the broad suggestion that the Commonwealth was unlikely to ignore aggression.¹¹¹ It thus appeared that the 'Sandys Understanding' had not existed as the Kenyans understood it – at least from the British perspective. However, this was based on interpretation and even though a definite Understanding had not been made, this encouraged British policy-makers towards commitment: the Commonwealth Secretary considered that 'it would be unfortunate if we appeared to be less forthcoming than Sandys was'.¹¹² Later British reports indeed referred to the 'Sandys Understanding'.¹¹³

The question for British officials and politicians was how to respond. Given the Kenyan belief in the Sandys Understanding, coupled with high-level approaches from leading Kenyans viewed as Britain's

¹⁰⁶ Record of conversation between the Prime Minister and the Attorney General and Minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry of Kenya at No. 10 Downing Street, 11 November 1966, TNA DO 213/129/21.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ L. Reid to J. Burlace, 13 December 1966, TNA DO 213/129/30.

¹¹⁰ L.B. Walsh Atkins to Norris, 20 October 1966, TNA DO 213/129.

¹¹¹ Walsh Atkins to Morrice James, 5 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/3.

¹¹² Commonwealth Secretary to Defence Secretary, 11 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/14.

¹¹³ See for example: Alec Douglas-Home to Prime Minister, 'Bamburi Understanding', 4 September 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/39.

'friends', they did not want to damage the relationship by refusing this. Peck hoped 'serious consideration can be given to meeting this request of the Kenyans which goes only very little further than the general obligation to come to the help of any Commonwealth country under attack'.¹¹⁴ Ministers were involved, with the Commonwealth Secretary recommending this to the Defence Secretary.¹¹⁵ BHC took the initiative of writing a paper weighing the pros and cons of an informal agreement, discussing the expense and sense of insecurity faced by the Kenyans over the *shifta*, which would likely be exacerbated without an agreement so that Kenyan 'morale might sink dangerously low'.¹¹⁶ The disadvantages were that this 'would be an open ended commitment', with an unknown potential cost, and could encourage Kenya 'to escalate their operations against the shifta to the point of provoking Somalia'.¹¹⁷ If handled badly, it could draw Britain into war. However, although British assessments agreed that Kenya would be unable to resist a Somali attack, they viewed the possibility as unlikely.¹¹⁸ If it was never to be used, this could gain Kenyan goodwill at low cost. British consideration was also explicitly linked to Kenya's stance on Rhodesia. Despite the criticism in public which Kenyans sometimes made about Britain's Rhodesia policy,¹¹⁹ the real business of diplomacy was private, where the relationship was generally much more amicable. As a later High Commissioner recognised, the key was 'to differentiate between private discussions and public statements'.¹²⁰ In directly considering the Somali military threat, officials noted that Kenya 'has taken a leading role among Commonwealth African countries in supporting our Rhodesia policy'.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ Edward Peck to M. Scott, 7 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/9.

¹¹⁵ Commonwealth Secretary to Defence Secretary, 11 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/14.

¹¹⁶ BHC, 'Kenya: Defence Support', 14 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/25.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Major P.J. Wals to Colonel B. Dalton, 3 November 1966, TNA DO 213/129/17/2.

¹¹⁹ See for examples: Address by His Excellency the President at the State Opening of Parliament, 15 February 1967, KNA KA/4/16; Argwings-Kodhek, Speech to the 23rd session of the UN General Assembly, 15 October 1968, KNA AHC/20/38/73.

¹²⁰ Heads of Mission: Record of meetings, 23-27 June 1969, TNA FCO 31/286.

¹²¹ Draft paper, 'Kenya's Defence against Somalia', [1966], TNA DO 213/129/9.

BHC also highlighted the economic and military benefits Britain gained from Kenya and the possibility otherwise of a reduction of British influence:

The British stake in Kenya is substantial ... Because of special facilities which exist at Embakasi – a first-class International Airport – the exceptional rights there are particularly valuable and Kenyan goodwill will be required for these exceptional rights to continue¹²²

Peck personally promoted the idea, and implicitly evoked the Cold War context, recognising that ‘no one in London is going to be very keen’, but arguing that ‘Kenya is a bit of Africa where we have (so far), and we hope to continue to do so, successfully upheld stability in the general Anglo-American interest’.¹²³ This was a reciprocal relationship, and the need to ensure Kenyan goodwill to keep the benefits which made Kenya an ‘exceptional’ relationship encouraged the British government to offer a limited guarantee. This would also encourage and enable Kenya not to build up a large military, and to pursue a military relationship with Britain rather than elsewhere; only months earlier the Israelis had advocated ‘building up the Kenyan armed forces’, no doubt with their own equipment, while CRO argued that ‘Kenya ought not to build up a strong, sophisticated army that might fall into the hands of [an] anti-West government’.¹²⁴ British policy-makers also suggested that, unlike most countries, Israel had ‘a vested interest in promoting a head-on clash between Somalia and Kenya in which they would plan to step in and sweep the Somali board’, and wanted to prevent this.¹²⁵ They perceived an informal commitment which meant Kenya did not build up a larger military to be in the British interest.

Having determined to make a commitment, there was negotiation within the British government on the language, terminology and form this would take. BHC suggested that this should be communicated ‘at least partly in written form’, which had advantages ‘both in putting the record straight historically and also in leaving the Kenyans in no doubt as to our future intentions’.¹²⁶ EAD agreed, and

¹²² BHC, ‘Kenya: Defence Support’, 14 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/25.

¹²³ Edward Peck to E. Norris, 14 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/25.

¹²⁴ Record of Anglo-Israel talks on Africa at the Commonwealth Office, 21 and 22 November 1966, TNA FCO 38/10/3.

¹²⁵ Edward Peck to M. Scott, 28 August 1967, TNA FCO 38/10/21.

¹²⁶ Telegram no. 176, Nairobi to Commonwealth Office, 19 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/29.

recommended a *boute de papier*: 'Anonymous and completely informal'.¹²⁷ Civil servants were trying to achieve the impossible – a non-committal commitment. MOD was concerned that 'we had spent a good deal of last year getting out of open ended commitments', and an MOD meeting 'agreed that the words "outright attack" were not sufficiently specific' and must be amended.¹²⁸ On a further draft, the Defence Secretary again wanted revisions, arguing that: 'We need to be very careful about this'.¹²⁹ That ministers were involved in issues of drafting shows the sensitivity of this commitment. Legal advisors were also consulted about the language.¹³⁰ British policy-makers took seriously the implications of the language they used to try and ensure that what sounded like a commitment did not really bind them.

The wording was eventually agreed and stated sympathy with Kenya's problems with Somalia and the *shifita*, offered to share threat assessments, but highlighted the need for peaceful and political solutions. The text was read and handed to Kenyatta by Peck on 25 January 1967; and simultaneously read to Gichuru and McKenzie by the Commonwealth Secretary in London. The idea of this double reading was to ensure Kenyatta did not receive the text after his ministers, and 'between us [we have] neatly stymied McKenzie, whose inevitable caustic remarks' could have coloured Kenyatta's reception.¹³¹ Despite McKenzie's intermediary position, British officials expected criticism from him.

The key part of the *boute de papier* stated:

any attack on a fellow member of the commonwealth would be of great concern to the British government: Kenya government may be sure that if Kenya were the victim of outright aggression by Somalia, the British government would give the situation most urgent consideration. While, therefore, the British government cannot in advance give the Kenya government any assurance of automatic assistance, the possibility of Britain going to Kenya's

¹²⁷ Berridge and Lloyd, *Dictionary of Diplomacy*, p. 35. Telegram no. 346, Commonwealth Office to Nairobi, 20 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/33.

¹²⁸ Ministry of Defence, Chiefs of Staff Committee, Confidential Annex to COS 3rd meeting, 17 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/28.

¹²⁹ Secretary of State for Defence to Commonwealth Secretary, 20 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/34.

¹³⁰ E.M. Rose to E.G. Norris, 20 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/37.

¹³¹ Edward Peck to M. Scott, 26 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/116/53.

assistance in the event of an organised and unprovoked armed attack by Somalia is not precluded¹³²

This was an extremely limited commitment: it offered nothing beyond consultation, and although not ruling out military assistance, this would not be automatic. It was not very different from the previous unwritten position and shows the balance British policy-makers were trying to maintain between offering something to retain Kenyan goodwill whilst not committing themselves. However, despite government efforts to try and limit the room for interpretation, when given the text, Kenyatta 'made no comments beyond asking me to convey to Prime Minister his thanks for this message, adding that he had no doubts about our intentions or of the friendship between Kenya and Britain and that he relied on us to come to his aid in the event of real trouble'.¹³³ Clearly, this had not limited Kenyatta's expectation that he would be able to rely on British military intervention if necessary. Those British personnel aware of this thereafter suspected that Kenyatta took the commitment more seriously than themselves.¹³⁴

Following the Understanding, MOD created a plan for 'British Military Assistance to Kenya in the Event of Somali Aggression'. EAD considered it 'most unlikely that this plan will ever be implemented', but thought it 'only prudent for it to cater for the widest possible range of eventualities'.¹³⁵ An initial draft was circulated in May 1967, with further revisions until the final agreed plan of 16 February 1968.¹³⁶ Interestingly, therefore, these military plans were made simultaneously with British plans to withdraw from east of Suez, announced in July 1967 and sped up in January 1968.¹³⁷ Rouvez has argued that this was a time of minimising global military commitments and withdrawal from east of Suez

¹³² Telegram no. 374, Commonwealth Office to Nairobi, 23 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/115/41.

¹³³ Telegram no. 245, Nairobi to Commonwealth Office, 26 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/116/49.

¹³⁴ See R.A. Neilson to Campbell, 'The Bamburi Understanding', 14 August 1974, TNA FCO 31/1726/3.

¹³⁵ D.A. Campbell to Reid, 22 November 1967, TNA FCO 16/117/92.

¹³⁶ Chiefs of Staff Committee, Draft Report by the Defence Planning Staff, 'British Military Assistance to Kenya in the Event of Somali Aggression', 19 May 1967, TNA FCO 16/116/74; Chiefs of Staff Committee Defence Planning Staff, Draft Report by the Defence Planning Staff, 'British Military Assistance to Kenya in the Event of Somali Aggression' (Second Revised Draft), 12 December 1967, TNA FCO 16/117/97; Chiefs of Staff Committee, 'British Military Assistance to Kenya in the Event of Somali Aggression', 16 February 1968, TNA FCO 16/117/111.

¹³⁷ See Jones, 'Decision Delayed', pp. 569-95.

‘demonstrated the extent and the seriousness of British disengagement from former colonial and post-colonial duties’.¹³⁸ Yet at the same time, MOD was still making plans for post-colonial intervention in Kenya. Thus, this should not be seen simply as a time of removing all commitments or retreating from a global foreign policy. BHC also encouraged Kenya to press their case at the UN, and according to one first secretary, this was ‘the opportunity to defuse a war’.¹³⁹ The Arusha Memorandum of Understanding in October 1967 brought the *shifita* conflict to an end, after which ‘the situation in the area gradually normalized’.¹⁴⁰

That British politicians were prepared to offer a written understanding was unusual, revealing that Kenya was, once again, seen as ‘special’. From the Kenyan perspective, this highlighted that Britain remained Kenyatta’s choice of military ally. In giving the message to Kenyatta, Peck ‘emphasized that with Britain’s present resources, there were limits to what we could do to help our friends and that we, no more than they, could not be expected to sign a blank cheque. None-the-less Kenya ranked high among our friends’.¹⁴¹ Peck suggested that the *boute de papier* be known as the Bamburi Understanding, based on where he had met Kenyatta, and as it will be referred to from this point.¹⁴² This private and secret negotiation between key figures again highlighted the difference in forms of policy-making between the British and Kenyan states. This was not widely publicised within Britain: it was classified Top Secret in British government files,¹⁴³ and civil servants argued in 1976 that this did not fall into the scope of a parliamentary question on military agreements with Kenya so they did not have to publicly declare it.¹⁴⁴ But departments cooperated. This was in sharp contrast to the Kenyan side of these negotiations, which were conducted by a very narrow elite. Few Kenyans knew of this agreement – in 1973 it was thought ‘quite likely’ that Mungai and perhaps Kibaki were unaware of

¹³⁸ Rouvez, *Disconsolate Empires*, p. 211.

¹³⁹ John de Courcy Ling, *Empires Rise and Sink: 1933-96* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 71-3.

¹⁴⁰ Adar, *Kenyan Foreign Policy*, p. 74.

¹⁴¹ Telegram no. 245, Nairobi to Commonwealth Office, 26 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/116/49.

¹⁴² Edward Peck to M. Scott, 26 January 1967, TNA FCO 16/116/53.

¹⁴³ See for example TNA FCO 31/1504, containing a brief on the Bamburi Understanding as the only ‘Top Secret’ part of this set of files preparing for Anglo-Kenyan Ministerial talks in 1973.

¹⁴⁴ Background Note, ‘PQ 5136B – Defence Agreement with Kenya’, July 1976, TNA FCO 31/2022/6.

it¹⁴⁵ – and those who did were privileged within the Kenyan state. The Bamburi Understanding has received little historiographical attention.¹⁴⁶ All this has obscured its significance, but the Understanding was a key element in the British ‘special relationship’ with Kenya.

Asian Immigration

A much more public issue in the relationship was that of Asian immigration. Kenya’s importance as a colony was partly due to the European and Asian populations. In 1962 Kenya’s population comprised 8.3m Africans, 55,759 Europeans, and 176,613 Asians.¹⁴⁷ This gave the British an additional concern compared to many of their former colonies, and an additional idea of responsibility. Issues around the European presence had been largely addressed with the land transfer programmes. The Asian population became a direct concern in 1967 when Asian immigration became one of the few issues in Kenya after independence which touched on British domestic politics – often the single occasion where independent Kenya makes an appearance in the wider literature on British foreign policy.¹⁴⁸ At independence, Asians and Europeans were offered the choice of British or Kenyan citizenship with a two year grace period. Oonk described this decision as ‘the yardstick of local loyalty’.¹⁴⁹ According to Rothchild, 3,911 claimed citizenship in the year after independence, rising to 9,018 during the second, with around 10,000 further applications between November and December 1965, just ahead of the deadline, with delay in processing these.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ A.J. Cragg to S. Darling, ‘Visit of Kenyan Ministers’, 27 February 1973, TNA DEFE 24/582/15.

¹⁴⁶ There are minimal references in Branch, ‘Violence, decolonisation and Cold War’, p. 6; Branch, *Kenya*, p. 39; Hornsby, *Kenya*, p. 182; Hilton, ‘MacDonald, Kenyatta,’ pp. 46-7.

¹⁴⁷ Maxon, *Kenya’s Independence Constitution*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁸ See for examples: Robert Rhodes James, *Ambitions and Realities: British Politics 1964-70* (London, 1972), pp. 161-2; T. O. Lloyd, *Empire, Welfare State, Europe: English History 1906-1992*, Fourth edition (Oxford, 1993), p. 240; Ramsden, *Winds of Change*, p. 292.

¹⁴⁹ Gijsbert Oonk, *Settled Strangers: Asian Business Elites in East Africa (1800-2000)* (Los Angeles, 2013), p. 178.

¹⁵⁰ Donald Rothchild, *Racial Bargaining in Independent Kenya: A Study of Minorities and Decolonization* (London, 1973), p. 188.

Until 1967, British immigration policy was based on the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. This Act had 'introduced a crucially important distinction' based on whether passports were issued by the British or other Commonwealth government.¹⁵¹ What mattered with regard to the Kenyan Asians was that, following independence, their passports were issued by the High Commissioner – or in other words, by the British government – and were therefore not subject to the controls of the 1962 Act.¹⁵² British officials recognised and accepted that Kenya's Asians 'enjoy ready access to Britain and are exempt from the controls'.¹⁵³ Rates of immigration to Britain seemed manageable and in September 1965, 'it seems doubtful whether in the near future there is likely to be any significant increase in the overall rate of Asian emigration from Kenya'.¹⁵⁴

Africanisation policies in Kenya changed this. Explicitly, these were policies of Kenyanisation based on citizenship, but these tended to be implemented as Africanisation.¹⁵⁵ As later High Commissioner Duff recognised: 'in the eyes of the law, non-African citizens of Kenya have equal rights with African citizens. It is in the implementation of Government legislation that the African citizen benefits from greater rights'.¹⁵⁶ Kenya's leaders sought a balance between Africanisation and economic growth, but they were always aware that there was strong popular anti-Asian feeling.¹⁵⁷ The key pieces of legislation affecting the position of Asians were the 1967 Immigration Act and 1968 Trade Licensing Act, meaning non-citizens needed work permits.¹⁵⁸ Following these acts, East African Asian migration to Britain increased significantly. Home Secretary James Callaghan answered a parliamentary question

¹⁵¹ Ian R. G. Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, 1997), p. 134.

¹⁵² Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post-war Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multicultural Nation* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 170-1.

¹⁵³ J.D.B. Shaw to L.E.T. Storar, 31 December 1965, TNA DO 226/9/84.

¹⁵⁴ J.D.B. Shaw to L.E.T. Storar, 15 September 1965, TNA DO 226/9/81.

¹⁵⁵ Hazlewood, *Economy of Kenya*, p. 188.

¹⁵⁶ A.A. Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Africanisation in Kenya', 26 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1507/2.

¹⁵⁷ Donald Rothchild, 'Kenya's Africanization Program: Priorities of Development and Equity', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (1970), pp. 745-7.

¹⁵⁸ Yash Ghai and Dharam Ghai, *The Asian Minorities of East and Central Africa (up to 1971): Minority Rights Group Report No. 4* (London, 1971), p. 20.

in early 1968 making clear the extent of the increase: 'annual totals of arrivals in the last 3 years have been about 6,150, 6,800 and 13,600 respectively, mainly from Kenya'.¹⁵⁹ BHC's 1968 Annual Review placed the blame squarely on 'Kenyan reluctance to adjust the pace of their Africanisation programme to the rate at which Britain could absorb the British Asians displaced by it'.¹⁶⁰ The implication was that High Commissioner Norris could not understand why the Kenyans did not recognise their interests as he did.

In February 1968 the British government planned immigration legislation to close the loophole of the 1962 Act. Rumours of British legislation encouraged further immigration to 'beat the anticipated controls'.¹⁶¹ This was a rare occasion of Kenya being debated in the UK parliament, and the key debate concerned whether the loophole for East African Asians in the 1962 Act had been intended. Two former colonial secretaries, Macleod and Sandys, clashed over whether pledges had been made, with Macleod arguing that a promise was being broken, and Sandys 'that no such pledge was given, either in public or in private'.¹⁶² Sandys evidently had a particularly selective memory when it came to pledges regarding Kenya. The new Act meant that no longer was it enough to hold a passport issued by the British government to have unrestricted access into Britain; additionally there had to be a familial relationship – 'the notorious "grandfather clause"'.¹⁶³ The debate was inflammatory and impassioned: Callaghan 'envisage[d] the prospect of an invasion ... even though it is not likely'.¹⁶⁴ Some MPs accused the government of 'panic', 'racialist legislation', and 'hypocrisy'.¹⁶⁵ The issue was divisive

¹⁵⁹ Mr Callaghan, HC Deb 15 February 1968 vol 758 cc391-3W.

¹⁶⁰ E.G. Norris to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1968', 27 January 1969, TNA FCO 31/353/1.

¹⁶¹ Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration: Immigration, 'Race' and 'Race' Relations in Post-war Britain* (Oxford, 1992), p. 79.

¹⁶² Duncan Sandys, HC Deb 27 February 1968 vol 759 c1274; see also Randall Hansen, 'The Kenyan Asians, British Politics, and the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1968', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (1999), pp. 809-834.

¹⁶³ Pradip Nayak, 'Kenya Asians: Apportioning the Blame', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 6, No. 18 (1971), p. 924.

¹⁶⁴ James Callaghan, HC Deb 27 February 1968 vol 759 c1247.

¹⁶⁵ For examples see: Andrew Faulds, HC Deb 27 February 1968 vol 759 c1295; Hugh Gray, HC Deb 28 February 1968 vol 759 c1473; Mr Grimond, HC Deb 28 February 1968 vol 759 c1499. For similar views expressed in historiography see James Walvin, *Passage to Britain: Immigration in British History and Politics* (Harmondsworth, 1984), p. 119.

since it set popular domestic anxiety about immigration against express pledges given by government; it was therefore also very embarrassing. Nonetheless, the legislation moved quickly through parliament, receiving a majority of 372 to sixty-two on its second reading.¹⁶⁶ A new categorisation was created: UK Passport Holders (UKPH), and this was how Kenyan Asians were subsequently described.

There was also an annual allocation of 1,500 immigration vouchers for East African Asian heads of households, a figure decided 'more or less by guess and by God'.¹⁶⁷ The aim was, according to Callaghan, 'to regulate the flow of these people to the United Kingdom—that is, to form an orderly queue'.¹⁶⁸ There were a set of priorities upon which applications were judged, aiming 'to accord the highest place in the queue to those who are under the most immediate pressure to leave';¹⁶⁹ but by 30 December 1968, the waiting list exceeded 900.¹⁷⁰ This quota was for all East African UKPH, but BHC in Nairobi coordinated all vouchers, and Kenya, at least initially, received the largest share by far: of vouchers issued in 1968, 1,199 went to Kenya, 269 elsewhere.¹⁷¹

Kenyan and British domestic priorities – on Africanisation and immigration respectively – were what drove these policy changes. Relations between the two governments were not the priority in these policies and were more difficult than over most issues. On 19 October 1968, High Commissioner Norris received a letter from Geoffrey Kariithi (Permanent Secretary, Office of the President) in which, worryingly for the British government, he 'estimate[d] that up to the end of 1969 approximately 9,000 non-Kenya citizens of Asian origin, 90% of whom are U.K. citizens, will have their work permits expiring. Few of these persons will have their permits renewed'.¹⁷² This was exactly the kind of situation the British hoped to avoid; the 'invasion' Callaghan had feared.

¹⁶⁶ HC Deb 27 February 1968 vol 759 cc1241-368.

¹⁶⁷ R.H. Mason to Heddy, 12 February 1969, TNA FCO 50/265/27.

¹⁶⁸ James Callaghan, HC Deb 27 February 1968 vol 759 cc1241-368.

¹⁶⁹ B3 Division to Cubbon, 31 January 1969, TNA FCO 50/265/28.

¹⁷⁰ Telegram no. 4009, Nairobi to FCO, 30 December 1968, TNA FCO 50/265/17.

¹⁷¹ B3 Division to Cubbon, 31 January 1969, TNA FCO 50/265/28.

¹⁷² G.K. Kariithi to Eric Norris, 19 October 1968, TNA FCO 50/265/1.

BHC discussed Kariithi's letter with Njonjo – seeking advice from someone they favoured – and, on his advice, did not inform London 'until he had looked into it, since he said he felt that the estimate of 9,000 must be too high'.¹⁷³ Norris replied to Kariithi on 18 November, a month after receiving his letter, welcoming 'the offer of the Kenyan Government of co-operation to the mutual benefit of the two Governments' although neglecting further details.¹⁷⁴ That Kariithi was communicated with by formal letter whilst Njonjo was privately approached in person makes clear the British preference for certain Kenyans whom they knew and felt comfortable with, and their use of informal channels shows how they reinforced Kenyan neo-patrimonialism. Kariithi's position meant he was occasionally involved in discussions with the British, but he was not someone usually sought out or favoured by them.¹⁷⁵ He had formerly been suspicious of foreigners working in Kenya.¹⁷⁶ BHC did not inform EAD of the letter from Kariithi until 25 November, when they had still not heard back from Njonjo; presumably they previously thought Njonjo would fix this for them, so they did not need to be concerned.¹⁷⁷ London did not, however, take kindly to not being informed.¹⁷⁸ Peck, who had been High Commissioner in Kenya until April 1968 and then became Deputy Under-Secretary for EAD, wrote in his 'first official communication' to Norris as his replacement High Commissioner that:

Though I quite understand your expectation that Njonjo might have come up with a consoling reduction, it is rather a pity we did not get this information sooner ... [we] would be most grateful to be kept informed urgently of any fresh development¹⁷⁹

Although he was conscious not to phrase this too directly, there was a clear sense of Peck's annoyance at BHC for their concealment: immigration's political sensitivity meant increased London oversight. In December, BHC received detailed figures from the Kenyanisation Bureau in the Ministry of Labour –

¹⁷³ J.S. Arthur to B.H. Heddy, 25 November 1968, TNA FCO 50/265/1.

¹⁷⁴ Eric Norris to G.K. Kariithi, 18 November 1968, TNA FCO 50/265/1.

¹⁷⁵ For examples of communications see: Eric Norris to Newman, Ridley, 8 September 1969, TNA OD 26/169/54; Antony Duff to Deputy High Commissioner, Head of Chancery, 2 December 1974, TNA FCO 31/1714/75.

¹⁷⁶ G.K. Kariithi, Draft Cabinet Paper, 'Employment of Expatriate Ex-Civil Servants in Private Sector', KNA AE/22/413/16.

¹⁷⁷ J.S. Arthur to B.H. Heddy, 25 November 1968, TNA FCO 50/265/1.

¹⁷⁸ R.H. Mason to E. Peck, 27 November 1968, TNA FCO 50/265/13.

¹⁷⁹ Edward Peck to E.G. Norris, 10 December 1968, TNA FCO 50/265/14.

in this instance their informal contacts had not been revealing. These were far lower than those given by Kariithi, of c. 3,300 entry permits expiring over the following twenty-one months.¹⁸⁰

Asian immigration was an issue with the potential to damage the relationship between Britain and Kenya, and although Kenyan politicians took a tough public stance and had not been prepared to shift their position prior to British legislation, they also did not want to seriously damage their relations with Britain over this. Norris in January 1969 'fear[ed] that this problem is going to be a cause of strain in our relations with East African Governments for some considerable time'.¹⁸¹ Leading Kenyans such as Gichuru and Mboya publicly criticised British policy.¹⁸² In February 1969 however, Norris highlighted 'a good deal of evidence that the Kenyans are concerned about the sharp differences which arose in London and are anxious not to exacerbate the situation. They do not want to have a row with us if they can avoid it'.¹⁸³ This in fact did not cause the damage to the relationship British policy-makers had feared. It remained, however, a key issue of contention, and on a visit to London Moi refused to meet British ministers about this, although the Prime Minister did raise the topic at their meeting.¹⁸⁴ This was a difficult issue, and it seems that leading Kenyans were reluctant to discuss it openly. Norris argued that British policy should be

to remain on close and friendly terms with the Kenya Government. If our relationship with them turned sour, we should lose such ability as we may have (although this has not yet been put to the test) to influence the rate at which the British Asians are forced out of Kenya¹⁸⁵

This was a bargaining tool for the Kenyans, and British policy-makers were particularly concerned by this threat, seeing no other way of influencing Kenyan actions than focusing on their personal relationships and encouraging conciliation towards Kenya's leaders. By the end of 1969, BHC's Annual

¹⁸⁰ Telegram no. 3940, Nairobi to FCO, 20 December 1968, TNA FCO 50/265/16.

¹⁸¹ E.G. Norris to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1968', 27 January 1969, TNA FCO 31/353/1.

¹⁸² Telegram no. 37, Nairobi to FCO, 7 January 1969, TNA FCO 50/265/20.

¹⁸³ Eric Norris to Edward Peck, 3 February 1969, TNA FCO 50/265/26.

¹⁸⁴ Steering Brief, 'Luncheon for Mr. Daniel arap Moi: United Kingdom Passport Holders in Kenya', 8 May 1969, TNA PREM 13/2744; E. Youde to A.D. Brighty, 13 May 1969, TNA PREM 13/2744.

¹⁸⁵ Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Kenya: Future British Policy', 13 June 1969, TNA FCO 31/358/1.

Review recognised that: 'In the absence of any negotiations or even discussions between ourselves and the Kenyans we have been saved from a direct clash only by Kenyan restraint'.¹⁸⁶ British officials were dependent upon Kenyan actions and could not dictate policy on this issue. Norris described the Asian population as 'a special problem'; as well as particular benefits and advantages for Britain, Kenyans held a specific threat.¹⁸⁷

Kenyan events in 1969 also shaped British views. On 5 July, Mboya was assassinated, which Norris argued 'changed the Kenya political landscape more dramatically than any single event since Odinga's withdrawal from the KANU Ruling Party in 1966'.¹⁸⁸ This was another political assassination, with rumours of Kenyatta's involvement, but Norris was

reluctant to believe that the President or Njonjo were in fact parties to this particular plot ... [Kenyatta] cannot have been ignorant of what was going on and must at least have allowed the organisers to assume his tacit approval. But it would be characteristic of his methods to adopt an equivocal attitude¹⁸⁹

He was clearly unwilling to entirely blame Britain's 'friends'. Eric Le Tocq, head of EAD, was more sceptical, although he did not directly criticise the High Commissioner's judgement.¹⁹⁰ Norris and BHC seemed more consciously willing to turn a blind eye to Kenyatta's demerits. The KPU was banned soon afterwards and Odinga and others arrested. British observers had long disliked Odinga and this removed him as a potential threat to their influence. Norris argued that 'the banning of the K.P.U. has its hopeful and positive side. Questions of electoral morality apart, it creates the possibility of reintegrating the Luo into Kenyan political life'.¹⁹¹ Once again, 'electoral morality' was not the primary concern: Kenyatta's leadership was assured, and this remained the British priority. After his release,

¹⁸⁶ Eric Norris to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1969', 12 January 1970, TNA FCO 31/593/1.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Mboya's Assassination and its Aftermath', 11 November 1969, TNA FCO 31/351/147.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ E.G. Le Tocq to Tebbit and J. Johnston, 26 November 1969, TNA FCO 31/351/156.

¹⁹¹ Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Mboya's Assassination and its Aftermath', 11 November 1969, TNA FCO 31/351/147.

BHC 'have tended to assume that Oginga Odinga is not a serious threat in present circumstances, since if he really starts being a nuisance someone will put him away, this time perhaps for good. I hope this is not being too sanguine'.¹⁹² Democracy was not their focus, and political detention – of someone they disliked – was not criticised. There was no real British reassessment of the value of the Kenyan relationship or their focus on Kenyatta's elite.

Conclusion

A 1968 British paper on future aid policy boldly stated that 'Kenya has been the success story of the newly independent English speaking African states'.¹⁹³ The Cold War influenced ideas in these years, but Kenya had committed to the Western side: Norris argued that Kenya 'has firmly resisted Communist overtures'.¹⁹⁴ In June 1969, Norris sent a despatch entitled 'Kenya: Future British Policy' to the Foreign Secretary; in which he considered that 'prospects for the future are increasingly uncertain. Ought we to continue to be so heavily involved[?]'.¹⁹⁵ His question was rhetorical, and his answers were certain of the value of this relationship:

Britain's policy of generous support for Kenya has so far been a success ... any sudden or drastic reduction in the scale of the British commitment to this country would increase the risk of Kenya becoming a cockpit of conflicting foreign interests ... In almost every field of activity, the Kenyatta Government looks first for help to us, and make no secret of their preference for British advice or their reliance on British professional standards¹⁹⁶

As Norris here argued, the British presence in Kenya was both extensive and welcomed by the Kenyan elite. He viewed Britain's position in Kenya as worth preserving. Donald Tebbit in EAD replied that:

It is a nice matter of judgement, not only in Kenya, but elsewhere in Commonwealth Africa, to know how much of our present involvement is really important to us, how much is to be

¹⁹² S.Y. Dawbarn to Eric Norris, 'Annual Review 1971', 26 January 1972, TNA FCO 31/1190/2.

¹⁹³ 'Kenya: Some Economic Projections 1967-1972', August 1968, TNA OD 26/142/3.

¹⁹⁴ Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Kenya: Future British Policy', 13 June 1969, TNA FCO 31/358/1.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

encouraged, and how much might gradually be allowed to fall away. Kenya is no doubt a special case because of the extent and value of our interests there¹⁹⁷

This period fostered and cemented certain British relationships with leading Kenyans. British policy-makers focused very much on Kenyatta and their diplomacy was all about regular contact with a small number of men around the president – rarely with Kenyatta himself. They wanted to ensure the position of these men and to keep their trust, and they conspired and negotiated in pursuit of that aim, with military and security issues dominating their discussions. The military planning discussed in this chapter was very private, and planned for things which did not occur: Odinga did not attempt a coup, nor did Somalia invade. Yet the plans British decision-makers made on the basis of Kenyan requests were highly revealing. They show how elite Kenyan politics was conducted; with prominent individuals involved in secret and private discussion with the British government, of which most of Kenya was kept uninformed. British policy-makers wholeheartedly committed to reinforcing this neo-patrimonialism, privileging their personal connections at private meetings. These two plans also indicate the degree of British commitment to Kenyatta and Kenyan stability, which would also be beneficial in other areas such as investment and the Cold War. These military plans confirmed the idea amongst both the British and Kenyans that Kenya was ‘special’ to Britain, and that the British military could be prepared to reinforce this.

The other major concern for the British government during these years was very public: Asian migration. British officials had to contend with criticism from Britain and Kenya; through, as their approach to Njonjo shows, they still hoped to recourse to their favoured ‘friends’ and informal connections. The threat of the Asians gave Kenya a specific bargaining chip which again allotted Kenya a ‘special’ position in British thinking. There was no grand plan of designed British influence, but the policies which emerged over these years converged to make Kenya appear particularly important as somewhere Britain had distinctive commitments. There was no single British interest, but a combination of interests, focused on the value of British trade and investment, the European and

¹⁹⁷ D.C. Tebbit to Eric Norris, 25 July 1969, TNA FCO 31/358/3.

Asian populations, Kenya's strategic importance in the Cold War, and the military relationships. The combination of these made British decision-makers particularly involved and invested in Kenya. This was also self-reinforcing: as the British put more into Kenya and made greater commitment, they had more to lose and Kenya became increasingly significant. In this way, multiple British decisions were both made because of the view, and created the impression, that Kenya was 'special'.

Chapter Five: 1970-1973

‘There is a fair balance of interests here and no reason, therefore, why we should not continue to have a mutually profitable relationship’

S.Y. Dawbarn to British High Commissioner in Nairobi, 28 March 1973¹

By 1970 Kenyatta’s primacy was assured. There was some British recognition that he was becoming ‘increasingly autocratic, detached and preoccupied with considerations of personal enrichment ... He remains however Kenya’s undisputed leader and people fear the consequences of his eventual departure’.² The uncertainty around Kenyatta’s succession, which continued to fascinate British decision-makers, meant that criticism of Kenyatta was tempered by the belief that he was still better than the alternatives. Moi and Mungai were the two main succession candidates and British views on both were varied but generally negative. Unwilling to commit to supporting either, they hoped that Moi and Mungai would agree between themselves to some kind of power sharing.³ British diplomats thus aimed to foster connections with both of them and looked to cement relationships at multiple military and political levels rather than backing a single successor.

The early 1970s relationship had stabilised, so that British concerns were essentially conservative. But they were also defensive, aware of the strength of the Kenyans’ position, particularly with the Asian population as a threat. This was a period of multiple negotiations and the British were not, nor did they feel themselves to be, in control of these. Chikeka has argued, partly focused upon Britain and Kenya, that ‘donors are able to manage and manipulate the decision-making processes in the new

¹ S.Y. Dawbarn (for the Secretary of State) to British High Commissioner in Nairobi, ‘British/Kenyan Ministerial Talks, 4-9 March 1973’, 28 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1503/186.

² Eric Norris to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, ‘Kenya: Annual Review for 1970’, 12 January 1971, TNA FCO 31/851/1.

³ D.C. Tebbit to Le Tocq, 11 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/596/12; S.Y. Dawbarn to Smedley, 18 July 1972, TNA FCO 31/1188/5.

African states'.⁴ But although Britain might appear to be in the stronger position, this was not always the case, and Kenyans were able to shape the negotiations and their outcomes. As Staniland has argued about Franco-African relationships: 'objective indicators of inequality cannot predict how power will actually be distributed', arguing that the French 'evident superiority in resources does not of itself shape French policy or enable any such policy to be effective'.⁵ Meerts has also argued that 'countries have comparative power advantages or disadvantages, depending on the subject in question ... Power is not an unchangeable variable'.⁶ This was true of the British in Kenya. British civil servants, diplomats and politicians felt themselves constrained both by their ideas of the possible and by the demands of Kenyans, and there were issues on which they clearly did compromise. Negotiations occurred with multiple parts of the British government: ODM, MOD, FCO, and at prime ministerial level. The idea of the relationship as 'special' had been established but was not shared by all. Many continued to view Kenya as something of a tutelary relationship and this attitude did not always assist negotiations; nor did a lack of recognition that the Kenyans did not always want to be publicly associated with Britain. This chapter uses different negotiations – the Bamburi Understanding in 1970, aid in 1970-71, Asians and arms from 1972, and general talks in 1973 – as a way to explore this negotiated relationship and where power rested at various points, internally within the British government, as well as with the Kenyans.

The Bamburi Understanding Renewed

One example of the continuation of British interests and commitments into the 1970s was the military relationship. In 1970, Major General Ndolo, who had succeeded Penfold to become the first Kenyan Chief of Defence Staff in 1969, wrote to Gichuru about the future of the British training team in Kenya. The planned run-down meant that 'all Europeans of any seniority [will] disappear in December 1972

⁴ Chikeka, *New African States*, p. 131.

⁵ Staniland, 'Francophone Africa', p. 62.

⁶ Meerts, 'Diplomatic Negotiation', p. 81.

except for Brigadier J. R. Anderson or his successor'.⁷ Anderson had replaced Penfold as Commander of the British training team and the highest ranking British serviceman in Kenya – as well as having contact with the Kenyan military. However, Ndolo wanted to retain three advisors, one for each service branch. In a clear sign of the importance of personal connections, he was 'not keen to have him [Anderson] replaced by an unknown Brigadier', suggesting Lieutenant Colonel Michael Harbage, already in the British training team, be promoted to Colonel as Anderson's replacement in 1971: 'we would then have a senior Advisor whom we know and trust for a minimum of four years'.⁸ This letter was copied to the British Defence Advisor in BHC, as well as Anderson, Harbage, and the British commanders of the Kenyan Air Force and Navy. Ndolo clearly wanted to maintain military ties to Britain despite the rundown of the training team.

The response from the British government was mixed. BHC's Defence Adviser thought it 'essential that the British should keep its considerable influence in the Kenya Armed Forces in the foreseeable future'.⁹ The FCO Defence Department, however, was concerned that

the criteria has to be not only that Kenya has a case for continuing to receive that form of assistance but also that it rates priority over that of other countries. Kenya has, of course, already received more than most countries in the form of military technical assistance¹⁰

They questioned whether Kenya merited 'special' treatment, but others favoured this. High Commissioner Norris wanted to 'maintain the excellent relationship which we now have with the Kenyan Armed Forces and continue to have some influence on the standard of training and the equipment used'.¹¹ The training team was intended to facilitate close and friendly relationships and the redrafted terms highlighted this role of 'maintaining and fostering friendly relations between Army personnel and personnel of the Kenya Armed Forces, and more generally ... between HMG and the

⁷ J.M.L. Ndolo to J.S. Gichuru, 'The Future of the British Training Teams', 1 July 1970, TNA FCO 46/545/1.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Colonel B.C.L. Tayleur to Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Griffith, 6 July 1970, TNA FCO 46/545/1.

¹⁰ A.T. Smith to Purcell, 15 July 1970, TNA FCO 46/545/2.

¹¹ Eric Norris to Edward Peck, 11 August 1970, TNA FCO 46/545/3.

Government of Kenya'.¹² The Defence Department came round to supporting this idea, as did MOD.¹³ Harbage remained as requested and thus British military influence was retained following – once again – a Kenyan request for this.

Another key part of the military relationship was the Bamburi Understanding. The Understanding lay largely dormant, and became a concern only when Kenyatta asked for renewals, which occurred with successive prime ministers coming to office. When Edward Heath took office in 1970, McKenzie – once again the most significant person in this – called on Peck, the former High Commissioner who had originally given the Understanding but who no longer worked directly on Kenya, suggesting the importance of these personal connections. McKenzie told Peck that Kenyatta 'hoped that now that a Conservative Government is in power the understanding could be renegotiated'.¹⁴ Peck told McKenzie this was unlikely, but McKenzie 'considered it most important that from the presentational point of view' ministers be received and obtain 'a warm and friendly message'.¹⁵ Peck recommended renewal as 'a reasonably cheap price to pay ... but I would certainly not advise any strengthening'.¹⁶ Norris agreed.¹⁷ There was no desire from within the British government to extend this commitment, which had been given in the full knowledge it was 'deliberately vague and non-committal'.¹⁸

This was an occasion when the benefits Britain received from Kenya were linked with obligations. In preparing for the prime ministerial meeting, the new government was anxious not to appear less 'friendly' than the previous – just as had been the case when the 'Sandys Understanding' had led to the creation of the Bamburi Understanding.¹⁹ McKenzie 'hinted in typically McKenzie fashion that of

¹² Annex A, Directive for the Commander of the British Army Training Team Kenya, August 1970, TNA FCO 46/550/9.

¹³ A.T. Smith to D.A.J. West, 7 September 1970, TNA FCO 46/545/6; R.M. Tesh to R.W. Munro, 24 September 1970, TNA FCO 46/545/16.

¹⁴ Edward Peck to J. Johnston, 13 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/614/1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Eric Norris to E.G. Le Tocq, 21 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/5.

¹⁸ E.G. Le Tocq to Macrae, 7 August 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/12.

¹⁹ H. Smedley to Counsell, 11 September 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/46.

course we still enjoy facilities for the RAF in Kenya and that the Army hold training exercises three times a year; he did not actually mention naval facilities at Mombasa but he might well have done so'.²⁰ The Understanding had been made without reference to British military benefits and Le Tocq, head of EAD, argued that the 'various defence facilities which we enjoy are not of course granted to us in the context of Bamburi and it is quite wrong for McKenzie to suggest that they are'.²¹ Although he wanted to pretend the Understanding was not linked to training facilities, most civil servants were more candid about the reality of this exchange of benefits and explicitly linked the Understanding to military benefits as 'a price worth paying ... [to] help to safeguard our present defence facilities in Kenya and be a useful card to play in the matter of our own defence interests around the Cape'.²² There was a clear sense of bargaining here: giving the Kenyans what they were asking for in return for maintaining British interests and keeping the support of Kenyatta. The Bamburi Understanding remained 'a useful card to play' for the British in other negotiations. On 8 September 1970, McKenzie and Njonjo met Heath. Kenyatta did not ask for extended terms, and Heath confirmed the Understanding.²³ The Bamburi Understanding had become an important part of the benefits exchanged between the two countries and would have been difficult to remove without giving offence and potentially putting British military benefits at risk. But it was such a limited commitment it was not difficult to renew.

Aid Negotiations

Where British resources were more engaged was aid, and in 1970 the British and Kenyan governments conducted a new aid agreement. This negotiation revealed key dynamics in the relationships between

²⁰ Edward Peck to J. Johnston, 13 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/614/1.

²¹ E.G. Le Tocq to E. Norris, 16 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/4.

²² Brief for the Prime Minister, 'Visit of Mr. Njonjo, Attorney-General of Kenya, Tuesday, 8 September', 4 September 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/33.

²³ Kenyatta to Heath, 30 August 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/40; Edward Heath to Jomo Kenyatta, 8 September 1970, TNA FCO 31/613/50.

Kenyan and British policy-makers, involving ODM, FCO and Treasury. These were striking as they began as very formal, bureaucratic negotiations – unlike many other aspects of the relationship – but were resolved by more informal and personal contact. British officials found themselves reluctantly forced to compromise and change their position; they, at least, felt that at times the Kenyans had the upper hand. Britain was an important aid donor to Kenya, though her predominance had diminished: from over 80 per cent of the total in 1964 to under 50 per cent in 1972, with the increasing prominence of the US, West Germany, Scandinavia and the World Bank.²⁴ In 1964 the independence settlement had been £34.2m, with an additional £4m in August 1964, followed by aid in 1966-70 of £18m (see table 15).²⁵ Table 13 shows that Britain was Kenya's largest aid donor, in both grants and loans, over these years, and although their proportion decreased sharply in 1965, they remained the largest bilateral donor. Table 14 shows the place of Kenya within Britain's broader aid framework. As this indicates, British aid was mostly bilateral and spent within the Commonwealth. Interestingly, East Africa received a substantial portion of the aid to Africa in 1964-66; and of this Kenya received by far the largest share. Of Britain's total overseas aid, Kenya also received a significant proportion: 8.57 per cent at its highest, although decreasing. This indicates the priority accorded to Kenya within Africa and more widely.

²⁴ Holtham and Hazlewood, *Aid and Inequality*, p. 49.

²⁵ Briefs for meetings with Kenyan Ministers: British-Kenyan Ministerial Talks: 4-9 March 1973, 'The Aid Programme – Summary', TNA FCO 31/1503/180.

Table 13: External Finance Raised for the Development Budget (K£m)²⁶

	1963/4	1964/5	1965/6	1966/7	1967/8
Grants:					
UK	4.41	3.47	2.35	0.50	0.17
China	-	1.07	-	-	-
Others	0.33	0.26	0.18	0.14	0.04
Total Grants	4.74	4.80	2.53	0.64	0.21
UK as percentage of total grants (%)	93.04	72.29	92.89	78.13	80.95
Loans:					
UK	5.86	6.34	3.95	2.38	3.29
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)	0.27	0.27	0.13	0.36	0.08
International Development Association (World Bank)	-	0.03	0.51	1.42	1.47
US	-	-	2.22	0.70	0.61
Germany	0.73	1.22	0.20	0.53	0.54
Others	-	0.12	0.24	0.23	0.30
Total Loans	6.86	7.98	7.25	5.62	6.29
UK as percentage of total loans (%)	85.42	79.45	54.48	42.35	52.31

Table 14: The British Aid Programme and Kenya's Place in it (£m)²⁷

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Total Gross Aid Programme	191.2	194.8	207.2	200.8	202.8
Of which: Bilateral	175.5	176.2	187.4	181.8	184.2
Of which: Commonwealth Countries	156.1	155.8	163.6	161.3	163.7
Of which: Africa	72.1	71.1	57.7	57.7	63.2
Of which: East Africa	32.3	30.8	24.3	17.9	17.9
Of which: Kenya	14.4	16.7	10.5	7.6	9.7
Kenya as percentage of East African aid (%)	44.6	54.2	43.2	42.5	54.2
Kenya as percentage of African aid (%)	20.0	23.5	18.2	13.2	15.4
Kenya as percentage of gross aid programme (%)	7.5	8.6	5.1	3.8	4.8

²⁶ 'Aid Policy in One Country: Britain's Aid to Kenya, 1964-68', 23 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/609/48.²⁷ Ibid. This data was compiled by the British government in 1970 in preparation for aid negotiations.

At initial discussions between officials on 6 and 9 February 1970, Kenyan officials made their aid requests. These totalled over £43m, as well as requests for £12m of previous loans to be written off; considered 'far in excess of what HMG could provide'.²⁸ Between the official meetings in February and ministerial meetings in April, Treasury and ODM agreed on an offer of £10m over four years, with half for general development, a quarter for land transfer, and remainder for agricultural reforms.²⁹ Frank Brockett of ODM (having previously worked in BHC) thought this likely to 'be a reasonably acceptable offer from their point of view, even though it is far below what they are asking for'.³⁰ Norris, however, disagreed, arguing that: 'Aid on the scale which is at present envisaged will come as a shock to them and could develop into a coldness and a positively anti-British approach'.³¹ This was indeed substantially less than the previous British package. Partly, this was because of the reduction in land transfer funds, and because the UK government had taken over the pensions costs of previous colonial officials; partly it was because of the low level of Kenya's aid disbursements, which meant that there were left-over funds; and it was also due to British estimates of what Kenya needed and Kenya's success at receiving more from others.³²

As well as the overall amount of aid, a key consideration for British planners was the proportion of the loan to be tied to spending on British imports, with the remainder for 'local costs'.³³ In February Kenyan officials had criticised British aid tying, arguing – perhaps somewhat disingenuously – that 'The whole tendency in the public and private sectors in Kenya was to import from UK, and it was unnecessary and meaningless to apply tying restrictions'.³⁴ This argument had not found favour. The

²⁸ Record of meetings held in ODM with the Delegation of Officials of the Kenya Government, third meeting: 10.20am, 9 February 1970, TNA FCO 31/608/26.

²⁹ D.A. Truman to Steel, Mackay, Ryrie, 2 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

³⁰ F.N. Brockett to E.G. Le Tocq, 5 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/608/36.

³¹ Eric Norris to R.B.M. King, 4 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/609/44.

³² General Brief [February 1970], TNA FCO 31/608/23; Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, first meeting: 11am, 6 April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127.

³³ See Barrie Ireton, *Britain's International Development Policies: A History of DFID and Overseas Aid* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 185-90.

³⁴ Record of meetings held in ODM with the Delegation of Officials of the Kenya Government, first meeting: 11am, 6 February 1970, TNA FCO 31/608/26.

‘general development’ part of the 1966 loan had been 60 per cent tied and this was the starting point for the debate. ODM favoured increasing the tied proportion to 75 per cent.³⁵ Le Tocq, head of EAD, wanted this to remain tied at 60 per cent, arguing that any increase would be ‘ill-received’ by the Kenyans.³⁶ The view from Treasury and Board of Trade, however, was that: ‘this is still an extremely generous and unusual proportion ... Any proportion of more than say, 15% untied in the total would be exceptional’.³⁷ The economic departments of the British government intended to gain as much as possible back from the loans given. The Treasury wanted Kenya to be treated more in line with other countries; whereas for EAD in particular, Kenya was a special case, and they did not want to potentially prejudice relationships by attaching too stringent conditions. ODM sought to mediate: Brockett argued to the Board of Trade that ‘whilst an increase in the tying proportion over that for the current loan was certainly justified, to take it beyond 75% would be unreasonable ... and might well prove counter-productive’.³⁸ Nonetheless, the primacy of the Treasury was clear and the starting point for the talks was to be 85 per cent, though with the intention of ‘some flexibility’.³⁹

Ministerial negotiations took place in nine meetings during 6-14 April 1970, led by Kibaki as Minister of Finance. Other ministers attending were McKenzie, Jackson Angaine (Minister of Lands and Settlement 1964-79), and Zachary Onyonka (Minister for Economic Planning and Development 1969-70), as well as the Kenya High Commissioner in London, and Permanent Secretaries of Finance, Economic Development, Lands and Settlement, the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Directors of Personnel and Settlement, and Chief Finance Officer. From the British side were ODM Minister Judith Hart, Norris and one other from BHC, three members of FCO, and eight ODM staff.⁴⁰ These were high-level delegations from both sides, showing the importance attributed to these talks. The meetings

³⁵ F.N. Brockett to E.G. Le Tocq, 5 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/608/36.

³⁶ E.G. Le Tocq to F.N. Brockett, 12 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/608/39.

³⁷ D.J. Halley to Truman, 24 March 1970, TNA T 317/1385; R.K. Paskins to F.N. Brockett, 24 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/609/55.

³⁸ F.N. Brockett to R.K. Paskins, 25 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/609/57.

³⁹ General Note: Kenya Aid Talks April 1970, 31 March 1970, TNA FCO 31/609/62.

⁴⁰ Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127.

themselves, as the British had predicted, were 'tough'.⁴¹ After the opening statements, the British laid out their offer, to immediate disappointment from the Kenyan delegation.⁴² One point of contention was money for land transfer, which would be used to purchase European farms, and was not tied but much of which would end up back in the UK.⁴³ British officials wanted to put a higher proportion of the loan towards this, whilst the Kenyan delegation argued that, with the limited amount Britain was providing, no money could go towards that rather than land consolidation and rural development. On the question of tying, the proportion of 85 per cent was, unsurprisingly, rejected by the Kenyans, who immediately raised the threat of Eastern bloc funding.⁴⁴

British negotiators were evidently uncomfortable at the Kenyan response. Kibaki was not playing along with the British idea that they knew what was best for Kenya. Hart complained of 'slow progress ... caused by the Kenyans raising fresh difficulties at each meeting'.⁴⁵ This proved an effective tactic since the Treasury came 'under considerable pressure to improve on this offer'.⁴⁶ By the eighth meeting on 13 April, ODM had arranged new conditions: the loan would be increased to £11.5m, including a £2.75m grant, and would be 75 per cent tied.⁴⁷ Had they not made concessions, as Hart wrote after the negotiations were concluded, it could 'have led to a breakdown, which was something we all wanted to avoid provided that the price of doing so was not unacceptably high'.⁴⁸ She was not prepared to allow the talks to fail, even at the cost of additional finance. The Kenyan response was not what the British had hoped for: Kibaki immediately reiterated his demand for only tying 60 per cent and wanted a different division of the money, though he 'appreciated' the grant proportion.⁴⁹ Civil servants described his response as 'most ungracious',⁵⁰ but they did change the division of funds

⁴¹ Eric Norris to R.B.M. King, 25 March 1970, TNA OD 26/275/96.

⁴² Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, first meeting: 11am, 6 April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127.

⁴³ Holtham and Hazlewood, *Aid and Inequality*, pp. 55-7.

⁴⁴ Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, second meeting: 3.15pm, 6 April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127.

⁴⁵ Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, seventh meeting: 2.30pm, 9 April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127.

⁴⁶ R.H.J. Steel to Mackay, Carroll, 'Kenya – Aid Talks', 9 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

⁴⁷ Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, eighth meeting: 6.45pm, 13 April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127.

⁴⁸ Judith Hart to William Rogers, 20 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

⁴⁹ Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, eighth meeting: 6.45pm, 13 April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127.

⁵⁰ R.H.J. Steel to Carroll, 14 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

for land transfer, taking this closer to the Kenyan request, so that a memorandum could be signed by Kibaki and Hart.⁵¹

Following the conclusion of ministerial talks, there was reflection within the British government on their negotiating tactics. The Kenyan delegation had been able to substantially alter the British offer and one Treasury official grudgingly acknowledged that 'Mr Kibaki's negotiating method has been very successful'.⁵² William Rogers, also from the Treasury, drafted a letter to Hart 'to raise with you the unsatisfactory nature, which these talks have highlighted, of our negotiating methods ... it was very disturbing to us to be faced with making a series of concessions'.⁵³ From the perspective of these officials, Kibaki had forced them into a series of hasty compromises. Before sending his letter, however, Rogers was thanked by Hart for agreement on the terms.⁵⁴ Rogers' reply was more tempered than his draft, asking instead 'whether you thought our present negotiating procedures were entirely satisfactory'.⁵⁵ Hart agreed they were not and that 'we really must try to avoid such a situation occurring again ... I need to have a substantial degree of flexibility in the position agreed inter-departmentally before aid talks begin so that it is possible to negotiate'.⁵⁶ As table 15 illustrates, these were the aid negotiations at which Britain offered the least money with the greatest tying of project aid.

⁵¹ Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, ninth meeting: 11.30am, 14 April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127; Judith Hart and Mwai Kibaki, 'Agreed Memorandum', 14 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

⁵² R.H.J. Steel to Carroll, 14 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

⁵³ Draft W.T. Rogers to Judith Hart, [April 1970], TNA T 317/1385.

⁵⁴ Judith Hart to William Rogers, 20 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

⁵⁵ William Rogers to Judith Hart, 28 April 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

⁵⁶ Judith Hart to W. Rogers, 15 May 1970, TNA T 317/1385.

Table 15: British Aid to Kenya, 1964-80 (£m)⁵⁷

	1964	1965/ 66	1966	1970	1973	1975	1976	1979
Total aid	34.20	4	18.0	11.50	22	2.5	49.7	80
New aid	34.20	4	18.0	11.50	17	2.5	37.3	65
Carryover from previous					5		12.4	25
Pension loans	13.60							
Land transfer	12.00	1	6.3	3.75	7		9.5	
Land consolidation			3.0	2.75				
General development	8.55	3	8.7	5.00	15		33.6	65
Programme aid						2.5	6.6	15
Tied proportion of general development		42%	60%	75%	50%	100%	50% (Programme aid 100%)	50% (Programme aid 100%)

At the negotiations, Kibaki had seemed unappreciative despite – as the British saw it – their generous concessions. Afterwards, however, Norris wrote to Hart that ‘Kibaki has, moreover, been appreciative in his public remarks ... This is all very gratifying, though it would have been nice if Kibaki had expressed something of this to you before he left’.⁵⁸ Hart responded that Kibaki’s subsequent appreciation ‘goes a long way to make amends for, as you say, a certain lack of grace in the attitude of the Kenyans while they were here!’.⁵⁹ This had not encouraged close personal relations. This was not the end of the process, highlighting that although ministers could play a key role in negotiations, the role of embassies thereafter remained critical in ‘settling, or tidying up, the details’, as British diplomats now had to.⁶⁰ From 3 to 11 June, two ODM staff went to Nairobi for official talks ‘to put some flesh on the

⁵⁷ Kenya Country Policy Paper, 1975, TNA FCO 31/1898/1; Kenya Country Policy Paper 1978, August 1978, TNA OD 67/29/101.

⁵⁸ Eric Norris to Judith Hart, 21 April 1970, TNA FCO 31/609/77.

⁵⁹ Judith Hart to Eric Norris, 29 April 1970, TNA FCO 31/610/85.

⁶⁰ Hamilton and Langhorne, *Practice of Diplomacy*, p. 263.

skeleton agreement' and held eleven meetings over nine days.⁶¹ These talks were less obstructive than those held in London, but still not positive: Brockett recorded that 'the Kenyans were very intransigent and were reluctant to concede any points ... I have no illusions that the further round of talks will find the Kenyans any more amenable, and if I am to take part in them, I shall not look forward to the task with much enthusiasm'.⁶²

As Brockett predicted, subsequent negotiations saw further British frustration. In November, Norris sought to meet Kibaki, but he proved elusive, postponing the two appointments Norris had made and not rescheduling.⁶³ Norris argued that 'we have reached the limit of how far it is desirable for me to chase Kibaki waving a cheque book'.⁶⁴ Deputy High Commissioner Robert Munro could 'only speculate as to why they are so reluctant to agree to reasonable conditions'.⁶⁵ This clearly indicates the continuing sense of tutelage: that the British knew what 'reasonable conditions' were and could not understand why the Kenyans did not recognise their own interests as the British did. Munro compared this to previous talks led by expatriates: 'reasonable people who knew just how far they could go in safeguarding the interests of the Kenyan Government to the maximum extent, without pushing so hard as to reach a deadlock'.⁶⁶ The implication was that Kibaki was 'unreasonable' and not acting in Kenya's best interests. Norris later felt the need to report to EAD 'a peculiarity of negotiations here' which was that:

when the Kenyans themselves are in disagreement about the line they should take in any discussion or negotiation, they will immediately go to ground. Nothing will induce them to meet the other party ... It must on occasion seem peculiar from London when we have to report repeated frustrations over our attempts to see Ministers with whom we are basically on good terms⁶⁷

⁶¹ R.W. Munro to E.G. Le Tocq, 1 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/610/95.

⁶² F.N. Brockett to Thomas, 13 October 1970, TNA OD 26/276.

⁶³ Eric Norris to John Johnston, 'Aid Agreement', 17 November 1970, TNA FCO 31/610/127.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ R.W. Munro to W.G. Lamarque, 15 January 1971, TNA OD 26/277/208.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Eric Norris to H. Smedley, 23 March 1971, TNA FCO 31/861/2.

Here was an occasion of Norris thinking he understood Kenyans and trying to pass on his 'knowledge'. It seems that the internal dynamics of Kenyan elite politics caused some of the behaviour which so annoyed the diplomats – something Norris does not seem to have entirely realised. Contact with the British could be useful for Kenyans in internal factional politics, but it could also be problematic to be seen as too close. As Meerts has argued, the interests of one negotiating party 'often requires that negotiations be strung out and that solutions are delayed because the existence of the current unstable situation offers an advantage'.⁶⁸ This was the situation on this occasion, with Kibaki choosing to delay.

The final resolution of these negotiations in January 1971 stresses again the importance of personal and informal means of conducting politics. It also reiterates Norris' frustration. Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance Philip Ndegwa asked for a meeting but Norris did not want to attend without Kibaki, which Ndegwa 'hope[d] that you will re-consider', suggesting a date and time.⁶⁹ Norris in reply overreacted: he could 'reply in kind, but do not propose to do so, at any rate for the present, because I do not think this is the right way for you and me to conduct our business'.⁷⁰ Norris copied the letters to ODA, with a justification for his response:

it is not my normal practice to insist on talking to Ministers only, but in present circumstances here it seems clear that Kibaki is the only person with whom we can strike the sort of bargain that is clearly necessary if we are to bring these apparently endless stalks to a satisfactory close. I am certainly not going to let myself in for another round of useless wrangling at a slightly higher level. As you will see, Ndegwa's letter to me is quite astonishing in its bland impertinence ... I clearly could not accept it, however charitable an interpretation one might put on it⁷¹

ODA recognised his overreaction. Walter Lamarque, who had been involved in policy-making towards Kenya in CRO before being seconded as head of East Africa Department in ODM, thought 'Sir E Norris

⁶⁸ Meerts, 'Diplomatic Negotiation', p. 87.

⁶⁹ P. Ndegwa to Eric Norris, 'Kenya/U.K. Negotiations: Loan No 4', 19 January 1971, TNA OD 26/277/213.

⁷⁰ Eric Norris to P. Ndegwa, 21 January 1971, TNA OD 26/277/213.

⁷¹ Eric Norris to W.G. Lamarque, 21 January 1971, TNA OD 26/277/213.

is, of course, much nearer to all this than we are, and no doubt has good cause for exasperation, but his reaction to Mr Ndegwa's letter seems unduly sharp. Is it really so impertinent?'.⁷²

Norris' letter to Ndegwa also suggested 'a private talk on where we go from here, what about a beer and a sandwich by my swimming pool next Tuesday[?]'.⁷³ The two men did meet, not at the time suggested by Norris, but informally, and had a 'very useful conversation' at which remaining points of uncertainty were settled.⁷⁴ ODA and Kibaki confirmed these and the agreement was signed.⁷⁵ Norris described the meeting as 'cordial and Ndegwa had the grace to admit that he ought not to have written as he did'.⁷⁶ It is unclear whether their meeting did take place over 'a beer and a sandwich', but this was certainly taken out of the formal context of earlier negotiations which had occurred with larger delegations over multiple meetings. This was now moved from the official into the personal, at a high enough level with two men empowered to make decisions. There was a mutual decision that informality would prove most useful, driven by a lack of consensus on the Kenyan side and the British belief that this would secure agreement – though Norris had wanted to talk directly to Kibaki. Kenyans, particularly Kibaki in this instance, were able to shape both the terms of the aid agreement and the forms of negotiation used to achieve it.

1971 Coup Plot

In 1971 rumours of a coup plot began to circulate in Kenya. In contrast to 1965, there was more evidence of a real plan. Of more interest here than details of the plot itself, which have been covered

⁷² W.G. Lamarque to Thomas, 27 January 1971, TNA OD 26/277. See Chapter 1: Making 'Policy' (1): British Institutions and Actors for more on the dislike between Norris and ODA.

⁷³ Eric Norris to P. Ndegwa, 21 January 1971, TNA OD 26/277/213.

⁷⁴ Eric Norris to Philip Ndegwa, 2 February 1971, TNA OD 26/277/214.

⁷⁵ ODA to Nairobi, 11 February 1971, TNA OD 26/277/217; P. Ndegwa to Eric Norris, 12 February 1971, TNA OD 26/277/218.

⁷⁶ R.W. Newman to W.G. Lamarque, 2 February 1971, TNA OD 26/277/213.

elsewhere,⁷⁷ was the 'UK eyes only' paper written by Norris on 21 April considering the 'possibility of a coup in Kenya'. The paper followed discussions in BHC involving Brigadier Anderson, and 'we drew on secret sources, well placed expatriates and in short all the information available to us. Even so I need not emphasise that much remains speculation'.⁷⁸ Interestingly, this letter was written after the proposed date of the attempted coup, 8 April, though the meeting had been held earlier.⁷⁹ It is thus questionable how much Norris and his 'secret sources' knew about the realities of the coup plot – which became public knowledge later in the year – and it seems rather that much of this was speculation without real knowledge of the actual plan.

Norris thought there was a real threat, particularly because of 'the growing corruption, nepotism and inefficiency of Government (although not yet particularly remarkable by current African standards) and the increasing domination of the Kikuyu'.⁸⁰ Kenya was still compared favourably with much of Africa, but he was aware of problems. Chief of Defence Staff Ndolo was viewed as the potential coup's leader, although with some scepticism about his credibility. Norris and his sources believed 'the momentum in Kenya is now towards, rather than away from, an Army coup'.⁸¹ Regarding its chances of success, Norris considered that: 'An attempt at an Army coup in the near future with Kenyatta still alive and the country not ripe for a coup would probably end in failure' and be 'almost certainly damaging to our interests'.⁸² Thus far, it was unsurprising. In certain circumstances after Kenyatta's death however, Norris argued that a coup 'would be virtually certain of success' and, 'would be likely to produce a Government which would be at least as well disposed towards HMG as the present Kenya administration'.⁸³ This was a startling admission that the British government might favour a coup. In terms of British action about the possibility of a coup, Norris recommended 'discreet advice ... [to] the

⁷⁷ See Branch, *Kenya*, pp. 100-1; Hornsby, *Kenya*, pp. 227-9; Parsons, *1964 Army Mutinies*, pp. 190-3; Colin Legum, *Africa Contemporary Record: Annual Survey and Documents 1971-72* (London, 1972), pp. 131-2.

⁷⁸ E. Norris to H. Smedley, 'Possibility of a Coup in Kenya', 21 April 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/11.

⁷⁹ E. Clay to A.A. Joy, 9 June 1971, TNA FCO 31/856/9.

⁸⁰ 'An Army Coup in Kenya', 21 April 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² E. Norris to H. Smedley, 'Possibility of a Coup in Kenya', 21 April 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/11.

⁸³ 'An Army Coup in Kenya', 21 April 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/11.

Kenya Government to institute reforming measures to make a coup less likely'.⁸⁴ The British SAS was training the Kenyan General Service Unit (GSU), 'the para-military arm of the Police which has been built up to oppose an Army coup'.⁸⁵ However, Norris questioned this: 'If any Army coup should produce, as seems likely, a pro-Western Government, why should we help the force that will oppose them? My present view is that we ought not to strive officiously to help the GSU'.⁸⁶

Even more revealing were ideas about potential coup leaders and their British connections. Norris suggested Brigadier Jackson Mulinge and Colonel Peter Kakenyi as possible coup leaders. Mulinge was Army Commander, his background was in the King's African Rifles, he had undertaken a course in Britain in 1968, and was described as 'Very pro-BATKEN (British Army Training Team, Kenya) and pro-British'.⁸⁷ Kakenyi was Deputy Commander of the Kenya Army, had attended Staff College in Britain, and in 1971 was attending a Royal College of Defence Studies course in Britain, where he wrote a dissertation on 'Soviet and Chinese influence in East Africa'.⁸⁸ Norris believed that 'Mulinge and Kakenyi are already well aware that we are well disposed towards them, and if they did mount a successful coup, their subsequent relations with HMG should be good' and their leadership potentially beneficial.⁸⁹ Norris thought he knew and understood them, and their British training was key to this. The purpose of British training was not to build up a military threat to the Kenyatta regime; indeed one former diplomat described military training as providing 'officers who provided training to help Kenya become a democratic country'.⁹⁰ Yet on this occasion, if there was to be a coup, continued British military connections made this a potentially beneficial outcome. This indicates a successful British investment to build up a cadre of officers who could be trusted. This had not been the case in 1964-65 but seemed so by 1971. In a subsequent consideration of 'Kenya after Kenyatta', BHC argued

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ E. Norris to H. Smedley, 'Possibility of a Coup in Kenya', 21 April 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/11.

⁸⁷ Leading Personalities in Kenya, 1972, p. 69, TNA FCO 31/1192/3.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 34; Colonel P. Kakenyi, 'Soviet and Chinese influence in East Africa', dissertation, Royal College of Defence Studies, 1971.

⁸⁹ 'An Army Coup in Kenya', 21 April 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/11.

⁹⁰ De Courcy Ling, *Empires Rise and Sink*, p. 70.

that Britain's 'first priority is to seek to stay close to the Army ... By so doing we seek to ensure that any military government would turn naturally to us for support and advice on its assumption to power'.⁹¹ Sending Kenyans on military courses in Britain was therefore to be encouraged, although keeping this 'entirely within the boundaries set by Kenyan Government wishes'.⁹² This response to the idea of a coup was part of the broader disillusionment with potential successors: without someone to support in the political sphere, British officials were more willing to consider backing military leadership if this would secure British interests.

When details of the plot emerged a few months later, head of EAD Le Tocq was initially 'not inclined to attach too much significance to it'.⁹³ Allinson of BHC 'was told in confidence by the Assistant Commissioner of Police for Nairobi, Miles Oswald' of potential links to MP Gideon Mutiso, who came to be implicated.⁹⁴ Clearly these kinds of connections provided another route of information. Within a few weeks, however, the plot was 'revealed to have been a possibly serious threat to stability in Kenya', with Ndolo's resignation, although not prosecution.⁹⁵ In Norris' Annual Review he wrote that the plot 'came as a considerable shock, inept and ill-conceived though it was'.⁹⁶ As he had been speculating about a coup at the time, this perhaps suggests Norris' 'shock' at realising that he had not been as aware and knowledgeable as he had assumed. Norris' letter was another misreading by British officials of the Kenyan situation – indeed, another by him after his overreaction to Ndegwa's letter on aid. British diplomats thought that with their 'secret sources' they knew and understood Kenya, but in fact continued to misunderstand and make inaccurate predictions without full comprehension or awareness of Kenya's internal politics.

⁹¹ 'Kenya after Kenyatta', 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/17.

⁹² His emphasis. 'Kenya after Kenyatta', 1971, TNA FCO 31/850/17.

⁹³ E.G. Le Tocq to Smedley, 17 June 1971, TNA FCO 31/856/12.

⁹⁴ W.L. Allinson to E.H.M. Counsell, 2 June 1971, TNA FCO 31/856/6.

⁹⁵ EAD, 'The Conspiracy in Kenya', 1 July 1971, TNA FCO 31/856/26.

⁹⁶ Eric Norris to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1971', 11 January 1972, TNA FCO 31/1190/1.

Norris continued to paint 'a slightly more gloomy picture' in a despatch at the end of the year.⁹⁷ In it, he gave his 'own tentative view is that while the army is still most likely to act effectively against a breakdown of law and order, they might conceivably step in earlier to "save" the nation from corruption, tribalism and the general disrepute of the present régime'.⁹⁸ As this shows, he had not ruled out the possibility of a coup. The response from EAD was an attempt to secure British interests; Le Tocq asked 'Is there any policy of insurance we could take out? (apart from the obvious one of getting the army officers as well-disposed as possible – but the availability of courses and money is likely to put a limit on what we can do in that direction)'.⁹⁹ He laid clear importance on military training as a route to securing future friendly relations if the military took political control. New EAD head Simon Dawbarn suggested actively trying to shape events, wanting greater certainty and stability for the future. He questioned BHC on:

what scope you see in the coming months for a positive policy aimed at bringing about in due course a transfer of power, preferably an orderly one, into the hands of people who are likely to use it in a way that benefits HMG's interests in Kenya and in the wider area. Please do not conclude, on the strength of that sentence, that I am under any illusions as to our power to shape events, I realise that it is very limited and must be used with extreme discretion. Still, it cannot be negligible ... Can we use them to help shape events? If so, in which direction? Can we – should we? – pick our runner now and back him positively? Mungai? The Army?¹⁰⁰

This is one piece of correspondence which appears profoundly neo-colonial, with the suggestion that Britain try to decisively determine the succession in their favour. But this is in fact striking because it is so unusual, with limited support from BHC, and really demonstrates continued uncertainty. Dawbarn had no favoured succession candidate – strikingly Moi was not mentioned – and officials were wary of trying to pick one. Reviews of how the succession might develop were frequent 'to see whether any of these possible regimes would be seriously inimical to our interests, in which case we

⁹⁷ Eric Norris to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Disunity in Diversity', [December 1971], TNA FCO 31/854/38.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ E.G. Le Tocq to E. Norris, 23 December 1971, TNA FCO 31/854/42.

¹⁰⁰ S.Y. Dawbarn to W.L. Allinson, 31 December 1971, TNA FCO 31/854/43.

might think what – if anything – could be done to avert loss'.¹⁰¹ But although talking about this, there remained such uncertainty that little was really done. British diplomats felt unable to predict how the succession would develop or choose their favoured candidate. Thus, policy was intended to keep open and strengthen connections to all possible political and military successors.

Arms and Asians

For British officials, Kenya's Asians continued to be the most problematic issue in their relationship in the early 1970s, with the potential to be domestically damaging. The position of Asians also became entangled with the sale of arms to Kenya, and British fears about Kenyan action over the Asians encouraged their consideration of more generous terms as different elements in the relationship became interdependent, with negotiations occurring simultaneously. The crucial moment came when, on 4 August 1972, Ugandan President Idi Amin announced the expulsion of 'the over 80,000 Asians holding British passports who are sabotaging Uganda's economy and encouraging corruption'.¹⁰² The Ugandan Asians were given ninety days to leave the country and Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Alec Douglas-Home 'accept[ed] a special obligation'.¹⁰³ There followed a large influx of Asians into Britain, as well as some other countries which allowed entry to a certain number.¹⁰⁴ Over the next three months, 'all but a few hundred' left Uganda.¹⁰⁵

Immediately after Amin's announcement BHC sought to understand Kenya's position. The Deputy High Commissioner saw Dawson Mlamba (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) who informed the British that 'Kenyans understand on very good authority that Amin means business

¹⁰¹ Draft, J. Wallace to Counsell and Dawbarn, 1 June 1972, TNA FCO 31/1188/3.

¹⁰² Amin quoted in Hasu H. Patel, 'General Amin and the Indian Exodus from Uganda', *A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1972), p. 17.

¹⁰³ Alec Douglas-Home, HC Deb 7 August 1972 vol 842 c1261.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Carr, Statement, 'United Kingdom Passport Holders from Uganda', 18 October 1972, PREM 15/1973; William G. Kuepper, G. Lynne Lackey and E. Nelson Swinerton, *Ugandan Asians in Great Britain: Forced Migration and Social Absorption* (London, 1975), p. 40.

¹⁰⁵ Jack D. Parson, 'Africanizing Trade in Uganda: The Final Solution', *Africa Today*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1973), p. 59.

about expulsions and is not prepared to negotiate'.¹⁰⁶ This suggests that, uncertain of how serious Amin's pronouncement was, the British consulted the Kenyans. Using the Kenyans as an intermediary in their relationship with Amin was part of why Kenya was significant as a regional ally.¹⁰⁷ BHC also spoke to Njonjo, always one of their interlocutors, who said Kenya would not intercede with Amin.¹⁰⁸ Despite these private conversations with BHC staff, Njonjo 'is strongly opposed to there being any visible contact between British and Kenyan ministers'.¹⁰⁹ Asians were already the subject of Kenyan press criticism of Britain,¹¹⁰ and leading Kenyans did not want to publicise their British connections. This was an indication of the difference between the Kenyan elite's private cooperation with the British and their public desire for distance. By mid-September, 'we have had little direct contact with Kenyan Ministers. They have avoided talking to us about the Asians for fear that the contact would be misinterpreted'.¹¹¹

MP Geoffrey Rippon was quickly sent as a British government envoy to Kenya despite Njonjo's concerns about contact, and 'found a relaxed and sympathetic atmosphere ... they would not be likely to take a lead from President Amin'.¹¹² This did not end British speculation on 'the chances of Kenyatta and Nyerere in fact copying Amin?'.¹¹³ But High Commissioner Duff highlighted the 'pragmatic self-interest of the Kenyan establishment ... they are sufficiently aware of economic facts to understand the harm that would be done to the Kenyan economy by any attempt to follow Amin's example, even in a modified form'.¹¹⁴ BHC recognised that 'the Kenyans are not going to adopt an Amin policy. But there are ways in which they can and probably would make life increasingly difficult for us'.¹¹⁵ Amongst

¹⁰⁶ Telegram no. 1779, Nairobi to FCO, 8 August 1972, TNA PREM 15/1258.

¹⁰⁷ See Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism*, p. 66; Alan Munro, interview.

¹⁰⁸ Telegram no. 1789, Nairobi to FCO, 9 August 1972, TNA PREM 15/1258.

¹⁰⁹ Telegram no. 1844, Nairobi to FCO, 11 August 1972, TNA PREM 15/1258.

¹¹⁰ 'Britain under fire over EA Asians', *Daily Nation*, 9 October 1970, KNA BW/10/9/57; '200 Asians "wait in" for vouchers to Britain', *Daily Nation*, 10 November 1970, KNA BW/10/9/74.

¹¹¹ Telegram no. 2086, S.Y. Dawbarn to Smedley, 18 September 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/4.

¹¹² Visit of Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster to East Africa, Note of a meeting at Chequers, 16 August 1972, TNA PREM 15/1258.

¹¹³ M.M.L. Hudson to D.R. Hurd, 1 September 1972, TNA PREM 15/1259.

¹¹⁴ A.A. Duff to S.Y. Dawbarn, 1 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/15.

¹¹⁵ Telegram no. 1977, Nairobi to FCO, 24 August 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/1.

civil servants and diplomats who were most aware of the situation in Kenya there was no real fear of an expulsion, but the Kenyans held a direct threat over Britain. Indeed, very quickly, Moi asked for an increase in the quota, predictably refused by the Home Office, but showing that the Kenyans were aware of their powerful bargaining position.¹¹⁶ Douglas-Home was keen to confirm in parliament that: 'We have had no indication from the Kenyan Government that they wish to expel such British nationals'.¹¹⁷ To other MPs, however, this was not so apparent, and one argued: 'everyone knows that a similar problem will arise at some time in the future with regard to the Kenyan Asians ... let us prepare to help the Kenyan Asians when they come, as they will'.¹¹⁸ Even in 1974 Furedi argued that 'the implementation of the Ugandan option is a political possibility at any time in Kenya',¹¹⁹ though he overstated this: this was the public projection of leading Kenyans but not their private intention.

How Kenya's leaders chose to react was the key issue. Duff recognised that many Kenyans 'give instinctive and unthinking support to any form of Asian bashing'.¹²⁰ One example was a press conference by Assistant Minister for Home Affairs Martin Shikuku, who supported Amin's actions and announced that 'All non-citizens in Kenya would have to leave the country unless they stopped sabotaging Kenya's economy'.¹²¹ Duff later described Shikuku as 'notorious and insubstantial',¹²² although it is interesting to consider whether he would have been viewed in this way prior to his pronouncement, which was so obviously distasteful and potentially damaging to the British. However, Kenya's inner elite, although publicly encouraging Africanisation and minimising contact with the British, wanted to limit pressure. BHC 'understand from secret sources that as soon as Vice President Moi heard of Shikuku's press conference he warned all news media to suppress the item'.¹²³ This gives

¹¹⁶ Telegram no. 1977, Nairobi to FCO, 24 August 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/1; S.Y. Dawbarn to A.A. Duff, 12 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/8.

¹¹⁷ HC Deb 26 October 1972 vol 843 c419W.

¹¹⁸ Arthur Lewis, HC Deb 6 December 1972 vol 847 c1450.

¹¹⁹ Frank Furedi, 'The Development of Anti-Asian Opinion among Africans in Nakuru District, Kenya', *African Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 292 (1974), p. 358.

¹²⁰ A.A. Duff to S.Y. Dawbarn, 1 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/15.

¹²¹ Telegram no. 1939, Nairobi to FCO, 22 August 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/3.

¹²² A.A. Duff to S.Y. Dawbarn, 1 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/15.

¹²³ Telegram no. 1939, Nairobi to FCO, 22 August 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/3.

a sense of how Kenyan politics was organised, and BHC offered no comment on this suppression of press freedom. Government speeches tried to strike a balance; Moi in September argued that 'Kenya recognises the contributions made in her development by the efforts, skills and investments of the immigrant communities ... it is imperative that such people should cast off their fatalism and contribute sincerely and positively to advance the aspiration of Africans'.¹²⁴ BHC thought this 'should be taken as reassurance'.¹²⁵

Alongside the issue of the Asians, and making clear that different aspects of British policy were connected, was the question of arms sales. BHC informed MOD and FCO in October 1972 – in a request that had gone through BHC's Air and Defence Advisers – that Kenya desired to purchase six Hunter aircraft and other equipment totalling £10m. The issue was less the purchase itself – although it is notable that in 1964 Sandys had rejected selling Hunter aircraft to Kenya – than the terms of the deal, since the Kenyans were hoping for a loan. The Kenyans specifically linked this to wider geopolitical threats from Somalia in the north-east of Kenya and Ugandan bombings of Tanzania.¹²⁶ The key person in the arms negotiations was McKenzie, even though by 1972 he was no longer in government, suggesting once more the importance of his British relationships and the trust Kenyatta placed in him. The arms deal highlighted the limited number of those within Kenyatta's kitchen cabinet who were kept abreast of decisions: like the Bamburi Understanding, this was a private negotiation made with leading politicians. The British were informed 'that a complete ban had been imposed upon any discussion about the project at any level', including with the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, Kiereini.¹²⁷ This was not going through official civil service channels. McKenzie met the British Defence Secretary Lord Carrington and head of defence sales Lester Suffield in October 1972.¹²⁸ By

¹²⁴ Kenya Government Statement issued by His Excellency the Vice-President Hon. Daniel arap Moi, [September 1972] TNA FCO 31/1204/24.

¹²⁵ E. Clay to A. Joy, 6 September 1972, TNA FCO 31/1204/24.

¹²⁶ R.W. Whitney to W.L. Allinson, 12 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/11.

¹²⁷ D.A.I. Sergeant, to Defence Sales 2, 11 December 1972, TNA FCO 31/1211/84.

¹²⁸ R.J. Andrew to A.A. Acland, 26 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1210/25.

November, McKenzie was criticising the British response, but diplomats recognised that 'Whilst undoubtedly there is substance in some of Mr McKenzie's points, I do not think we should – or were expected to – take them too seriously. It is part of the negotiation'.¹²⁹

One key Kenyan negotiating tactic – as so often – was the possibility of turning to other suppliers if British assistance was not forthcoming. However, this was not just a question of the Cold War. Since the rejection of Russian arms in 1965, Eastern bloc military support was fairly unlikely under Kenyatta's leadership, especially whilst linked with Odinga, and the major competitors were elsewhere. By 1972, other countries including France, Germany, Pakistan and Canada had increased their military supplies to Kenya. Munene has argued that 'as long as Kenya sided with the West in the Cold War struggle, Britain was unperturbed by Kenya's diversifying its foreign relations'.¹³⁰ In fact, although Cold War allies were certainly preferable, British suppliers hoped to maintain their dominant influence, and did not want to dilute their military presence except in ways that suited them. This was about Kenya's pro-British rather than just pro-Western alignment, and it was this British policy-makers hoped to preserve. Norris' concern after Kenyatta's death was not 'an anti-Western regime' but 'a change of emphasis, of direction within the West, and our present influence could be replaced by that of, say, West Germany'.¹³¹ A key example of the growth of other influence, about which British officials were unhappy, was the French sale in 1971 of Panhard armoured cars. This was organised by Gichuru, whom BHC reported was 'thought to have had £10,000 credited to his bank account in order to "oil the wheels"',¹³² and about whom they were increasingly critical: he was a 'pathetic wreck' answering questions on this in parliament.¹³³ This was a clear example of individuals pursuing their own advantage through military and political deals. Gichuru's deal with the French almost certainly encouraged increasingly negative British assessments of him. Meanwhile France had 'successfully

¹²⁹ R.W. Whitney to Campbell, Le Quesne, 23 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1210/46.

¹³⁰ Munene, *Colonial Legacy*, p. 75.

¹³¹ Eric Norris to Michael Walker, 28 March 1972, TNA OD 26/270/30.

¹³² B.T. Holmes to R.W. Whitney, 5 December 1972, TNA FCO 31/1210/60.

¹³³ E. Clay to A. Joy, 'French Armoured Cars for Kenya', 2 December 1971, TNA FCO 31/867/42.

broken into what was previously a British military equipment monopoly'.¹³⁴ This seemed possible again over the supply of aircraft, with the French keen to supply Mirage V aircraft, and McKenzie argued that France was 'poised to offer an arms package', although British policy-makers believed that 'obviously the French would be happy to move in but we do not believe that they have a package "poised"'.¹³⁵ This competition helps to explain the British willingness to sell aircraft they had rejected supplying to Kenya in 1964.

British officials took McKenzie's advice, delivered in these arms negotiations, that the Prime Minister write a personal message to Kenyatta about his handling of the Asians.¹³⁶ BHC encouraged 'any opportunity that offers to instil some warmth and a sense of special treatment into our relations with Kenya'.¹³⁷ Diplomats were keen to encourage the idea of a 'special' relationship in recognition of Kenya's threat over the Asians. Heath wrote 'to thank you for keeping the temperature down ... I am afraid that the blunt political fact is that, whatever the rights and wrongs, public opinion here would simply not stand for the arrival of another contingent of Asians on the same scale as the Ugandans'.¹³⁸ This was transmitted via Lord Aldington, Chairman of National and Grindlays Bank, who had multiple meetings over an extended period with leading Kenyans including Kenyatta and McKenzie, and was used on this and other occasions to transmit messages from the FCO to Kenyatta.¹³⁹ He was clearly trusted as a non-official channel by both groups, and highlights the significance of personal business connections. When given the letter, Kenyatta 'showed at once his pleasure that the Prime Minister should have chosen to write to him personally... He seemed also to understand fully the effect of General Amin's measures on the British political and social situation'.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ B.T. Holmes to R.W. Whitney, 5 December 1972, TNA FCO 31/1210/60.

¹³⁵ R.W. Whitney to Campbell, Le Quesne, 23 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1210/46.

¹³⁶ Telegram no. 1619, FCO to Nairobi, 27 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/44.

¹³⁷ Telegram no. 3123, Nairobi to FCO, 28 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/47.

¹³⁸ Prime Minister to Kenyatta, 29 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1213/54.

¹³⁹ See for examples: S.Y. Dawbarn to Whitney, 2 October 1973, TNA FCO 50/468/83; Note of points made at a private dinner given by Lord Aldington for Bruce MacKenzie, 30 October 1970, TNA T 317/1587; E.G. Le Tocq to J. Johnston, 14 October 1970, TNA FCO 31/604/18.

¹⁴⁰ Meeting, Lord Aldington and President Kenyatta, 1 December 1972, TNA FCO 31/1211/90.

Arms sales were explicitly linked to the Asians by both sides. McKenzie 'let it be known that whether or not we are helpful over the arms deal will be a factor which would be likely to have considerable significance for the Kenyan Government in considering their future policy over the Asian UKPH'.¹⁴¹ It seems likely this was why the Kenyan approach on arms purchases took place at this time: they knew they were in a strong position and held a potential lever over Britain. For British negotiators, this encouraged consideration of softer terms: 'Kenya is at present uniquely placed to harm us and we must do all that we can to persuade her not to do so'.¹⁴² Ten year credit was suggested, 'longer than usual',¹⁴³ but Treasury was concerned at setting a precedent, so Dawbarn suggested a partial grant, which was accepted.¹⁴⁴ As the Kenyans and McKenzie had intended, the British government saw Kenya as requiring special treatment.

In January 1973, Carrington had a brief layover in Nairobi. This was intended to foster communication at a high level, with Asians and defence sales the main topics of discussion. Carrington had meetings with Kenyatta, Moi, and Gichuru and made the British arms offer.¹⁴⁵ This was 'an outright gift of £2m towards the cost of the £10m package ... He emphasised the generous and exceptional nature of this offer'.¹⁴⁶ Carrington was therefore 'disappointed' by Kenyatta's reply in which he

appreciated the gesture which had been made. Kenya valued Britain's friendship and had turned to Britain first to meet her arms requirements. The British offer was welcome; but Kenya faced serious economic difficulties and did not wish to be obliged to turn elsewhere. He wondered whether something more could not be done¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ R.W. Whitney to Campbell, Le Quesne, 29 November 1972, TNA FCO 31/1211/73.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ S.Y. Dawbarn to Campbell, Le Quesne, Davidson, Smith, Marshall, 13 December 1972, TNA FCO 31/1211/85.

¹⁴⁵ Meeting between Defence Secretary and the President of Kenya at State House, Nairobi, 23 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1517/27; meeting between Defence Secretary and the Kenyan Minister of Defence at the Ministry of Defence, Nairobi, 22 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1517/28; meeting between the Defence Secretary and the Vice-President of Kenya at Jogoo House, Nairobi, 22 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1517/38.

¹⁴⁶ Meeting between Defence Secretary and the President of Kenya at State House, Nairobi, 23 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1517/27.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Kenyatta's response made clear that he valued his relationship with Britain, but was always keen to gain the most possible from it. This was not renegotiated, and the first Hunter aircraft arrived in Kenya in mid-1973.¹⁴⁸

Carrington's meetings made differences obvious between Kenyatta and Moi over the Asian question. Moi indicated he wanted the quota to be 'substantially raised', which Carrington rejected.¹⁴⁹ Passing comments on Moi's 'usual rather obscure and muddled self' offered a reminder of British doubts over his capabilities.¹⁵⁰ By comparison, views of Kenyatta were far more positive. When asked by Carrington, Kenyatta agreed that 'Kenya would not press for more' than the current quota.¹⁵¹ This guarantee came to guide British thinking over the Asians and Kenyatta's personal assurance was trusted.¹⁵² As this indicates, there was not one national policy all Kenyans were pursuing, and the primacy of Kenyatta was apparent, whilst Moi's ideas were ignored.

General Relationship Talks

Concern over the Asians continued to affect the relationship into 1973 when this formed part of much broader talks on the Anglo-Kenyan relationship. In September 1972 Duff saw McKenzie, who passed from Kenyatta a request for an invitation to send a minister to London 'to discuss how Britain might help Kenya'.¹⁵³ Duff followed this up with Duncan Ndegwa (Governor of the Bank of Kenya), Philip Ndegwa, and Njonjo, all of whom reiterated the idea of broad talks and 'emphasised that what the Kenyans were hoping for was an informal, relaxed, friendly and thorough discussion of Kenyan-British relations, in which each side would state its own self-interest, and explore the other's points of view

¹⁴⁸ See K.P. Jeffs to AUS(AS), 4 July 1973, TNA DEFE 24/659/3.

¹⁴⁹ Meeting between the Defence Secretary and the Vice-President of Kenya at Jogoo House, Nairobi, 22 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1517/38.

¹⁵⁰ A.A. Duff to S.Y. Dawbarn, 31 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1517/37.

¹⁵¹ Meeting between Defence Secretary and the President of Kenya at State House, Nairobi, 23 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1517/27.

¹⁵² A.A. Duff to Alec Douglas-Home, 'The Asian Problem', 16 May 1973, TNA FCO 31/1520/94.

¹⁵³ Telegram no. 2086, Duff to FCO, 4 September 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/2.

and policies'.¹⁵⁴ Duff was 'aware that all this will fall with a fairly dull thud' when the Asian issue was still a problem; 'Nevertheless, life must go on'.¹⁵⁵

Part of the explicit reason for the talks was to encourage connections between British and Kenyan ministers. The impetus came from Kenyatta who thought that his ministers 'knew few members of the present [British] Cabinet ... On the other hand they had every reason to admire a number of them and they would like to know them better'.¹⁵⁶ For British officials, this was about relationships with potential future successors, with Kibaki and Mungai leading the Kenyan delegation. Duff recommended that the talks 'would give a good opportunity to begin to establish the sort of relationship we must have with two men who ... represent an important part of the establishment with which we shall have to continue to do business'.¹⁵⁷ It is notable that Moi was not included; indicative perhaps of the internal factional politics of the time. Around the time the talks were proposed in late 1972 there were multiple rumours that Kenyatta might nominate Mungai as successor,¹⁵⁸ and Mungai was 'still widely expected to come to power one way or another'.¹⁵⁹ McKenzie too was absent, although he had made the initial approach to Duff. By this time, he was not a minister and had no formal position, which might explain why he was not included; Kibaki and Mungai were Ministers of Finance and Foreign Affairs, a more official rather than informal choice. This seems to have been an attempt by one faction in Kenyan politics to develop better personal relations with the UK, and to exclude McKenzie, Njonjo and Moi – although those British involved do not entirely seem to have understood this.

For British policy-makers, the key question of the talks was the 'price' which would have to be paid for future Kenyan friendship. Dawbarn highlighted that:

¹⁵⁴ A.A. Duff to S.Y. Dawbarn, 13 September 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/3.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Meeting, Lord Aldington and President Kenyatta, 1 December 1972, TNA FCO 31/1211/90.

¹⁵⁷ A.A. Duff to S.Y. Dawbarn, 13 September 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/3.

¹⁵⁸ Telegram no. 66, FCO to Nairobi, 9 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1188/1; telegram no. 2056, FCO to Nairobi, 21 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1188/11; telegram no. 2674, Duff to FCO, 24 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1188/12.

¹⁵⁹ A.A. Duff, 'Impressions of Kenya', 18 October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1191/56.

We can probably secure a continuation of our privileged position in Kenya, and count on Kenyan cooperation for example with the Asian problem, if we are prepared to pay the price: a fairly steep increase in aid. It seems clear that we stand no chance of maintaining our position into the post-Kenyatta era, in which Kibaki and Mungai, and people who think like them, will be in key positions, unless we are prepared to pay for it. How much, will be a matter for negotiation¹⁶⁰

These were not simply aid talks, but those in EAD sought to use aid to secure the relationship. The implication is that the British government had decided in advance to use the talks to 'buy' Kenyan goodwill. ODA, although accepting the idea of talks, resisted this:

we should frankly not be willing to negotiate aid in an atmosphere in which we were being looked to not only by the Kenyans but by other Whitehall departments to "pay the price" for securing "continuation of our privileged position in Kenya"¹⁶¹

Despite initial ODA objections, a new aid package was planned. The internal discussions were contested, with tying again the key battleground. ODA argued that there was a case 'for doing something very special' and wanted to reduce the tied proportion to one-third of the total loan including land transfer (using this calculation the previous loan had been 48 per cent tied).¹⁶² For this, Treasury could 'see no justification at all'; they preferred 65 per cent tying, but would offer 50 per cent 'on the clear understanding that it ... will not be quoted against us in discussion in other contexts'.¹⁶³ Treasury argued that aid had to be kept within the overall aid framework, so that 'if you regard it as essential to do something special for Kenya, you must be prepared to do something less in some other quarter'.¹⁶⁴ This was a very clear trade-off that treating Kenya as 'special' meant therefore giving comparably less aid elsewhere. With limited resources, the British government was having to decide its 'special' cases. Tying was still under debate at the time of the talks.

¹⁶⁰ S.Y. Dawbarn to Smedley, 18 September 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/4.

¹⁶¹ A.R. Thomas to H. Smedley, 22 September 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/5.

¹⁶² H.S. Lee to A.R. Thomas, 2 March 1973, TNA T 317/1939.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Plans for the talks made clear British objectives in the relationship. Initial briefs drawn up by EAD, with comments from BHC incorporated,¹⁶⁵ advised:

the purpose of the talks should be to convey to the Kenya government the general impression of a British government which values our keeping in touch and is very willing to be helpful to Kenya on the basis of mutual self-interest ... We think that what the Kenyans want from this visit is to be treated, and be seen to be treated, as old and trusted friends and important members of the international community¹⁶⁶

Clearly these talks were not expected to be purely substantive, but were important for creating an atmosphere of friendliness and establishing ministerial connections. Policy-makers listed British 'objectives in Kenya over the next 12-18 months' as:

- (i) To help the Kenyan Government to resist the pressures for expulsion of Asian UKPH.
- (ii) To use our still considerable influence to help the Kenyans prepare for, and effect, an orderly transfer of power when Kenyatta goes.
- (iii) To maintain as far as possible our share of the Kenyan market and protect our investment there.
- (iv) To try to steer the Kenyans, and the East African Community, towards Option 1 under Protocol 22 of the Treaty of Accession to the EEC.
- (v) To maintain close defence links with Kenya, and deny defence facilities to Eastern bloc countries.
- (vi) To enter into the final stage of buying-out the British mixed farmers.
- (vii) To use our aid programme, in conjunction with other donors, to help the Kenyan Government to develop their economy along sensible lines, to protect British interests and to promote British trade.¹⁶⁷

This summary makes clear British priorities and the benefits they hoped to gain. Although the issues had not changed significantly from the previous decade – with the exception of the EEC – the greater priority afforded to the Asians was crucial, and this had gone to the top of the list. There was a clear sense of paternalism, but a recognition that British aims could only be achieved in conjunction with Kenyan support.

¹⁶⁵ S.Y. Dawbarn to A.A. Duff, 16 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1501/44; telegram no. 529, Nairobi to FCO, 20 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1501/55; P.B. Hall to S. Darling, 21 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1501/93.

¹⁶⁶ Anglo-Kenyan Ministerial Talks, 5-10 March, Brief no. 1: Steering Brief, 21 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1501/72.

¹⁶⁷ Their emphasis. British/Kenyan Ministerial Talks, 5-10 March 1973, Brief no. 1(a): Steering Brief, TNA FCO 31/1503/180.

Mungai and Kibaki attended talks from 4 to 9 March. Duff was keen to 'be as generous as we can' over hospitality, highlighting that 'the Kenyans will set great store by the seniority of the British Ministers taking part'.¹⁶⁸ Thus, the programme included a dinner hosted by Heath, and another by Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Douglas-Home; and lunches hosted by Lord Aldington, Lord Carrington, MacDonald, and the Chairman of the Royal Institute of International Affairs; as well as a reception hosted by the Kenya High Commissioner. The visit included meetings with the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Minister for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Trade, Minister for Overseas Development, and Minister of State at the Treasury.¹⁶⁹ The delegation was being entertained at the highest level of government and meeting people from multiple departments with the aim of encouraging connections. Issues discussed included EEC entry, trade, aid, Kenya's UN Security Council membership, Rhodesia, South Africa, and Portuguese colonies.¹⁷⁰

Asian UKPHs were the key British interest and had the largest potential domestic impact. This was not on the official agenda but was ubiquitous; British officials expected it to be raised and prepared accordingly.¹⁷¹ However, when this was discussed, 'Mr Kibaki's remarks at Tuesday's meeting show that the responsible Ministers in Kenya view the problem of Asian non-citizens rather differently from what we had thought': the Kenyans wanted to quickly remove small shopkeepers rather than 'professional people or industrialists, whom they cannot replace yet'.¹⁷² This was another occasion of British officials thinking they knew Kenyan attitudes, but in fact not understanding exactly what the Kenyans really thought – even on an issue they viewed as particularly important to them. This also suggested that the talks had been successful without the need for an agenda item.

¹⁶⁸ A.A. Duff to S.Y. Dawbarn, 17 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1501/10.

¹⁶⁹ Briefs for meetings with Kenyan Ministers, TNA FCO 31/1503/180.

¹⁷⁰ EAD to Private Office, 'British-Kenyan Ministerial Talks: Summary of Discussions', 8 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1502/144.

¹⁷¹ British/Kenyan Ministerial Talks, 5-10 March 1973, Brief no. 5a: Asian UKPH in Kenya, TNA FCO 31/1503/180.

¹⁷² Brief for final meeting: Asian UKPH in Kenya, TNA FCO 31/1502/166.

The aid package for 1973-76 was announced by ODA Minister Richard Wood at the talks. This was an offer of £22m over four years, of which £17m was 'new money': £7m for land transfer, and £10m for general development.¹⁷³ This was substantially more than the 1970 package of £11.5m. This was influenced by political considerations of 'buying' Kenyan goodwill, but was also due to an increased rate of Kenyan aid disbursements – previously, there had been criticism of Kenyan underspending. M.P.J. Lynch of ODA had argued that unless they increased the amount of aid, 'we shall not be able to undertake our proper role in Kenya', and it is notable that he believed Britain to have such a role.¹⁷⁴ The Kenyans had asked for £28m over three years, and although offered less, this was closer to their request than had been the case in 1970.¹⁷⁵ British planners thought the proposals 'likely to be ill-received';¹⁷⁶ but when offered this, Kibaki 'expressed gratitude for the assistance given by HMG towards Kenyan development. He expressed disappointment in particular that the loans were not on easier terms'.¹⁷⁷ This was still critical, but was a more positive response than he had made in 1970, and EAD's sense was that 'the aid talks, incidentally, seem to have gone very well'.¹⁷⁸

The British government broadly saw the talks as a success: 'we were able to give the Kenyans what they wanted – a lot of flattery and rather more money than they probably expected'.¹⁷⁹ Dawbarn argued that the relationship with Kenya contained 'a substantial degree of self-interest on both sides ... There is a fair balance of interests here and no reason, therefore, why we should not continue to have a mutually profitable relationship'.¹⁸⁰ This was not a relationship the British controlled or dictated, but one in which, as Dawbarn suggested, policy-makers felt what they could gain about

¹⁷³ Aid Talks with Kenyan Ministers: Notes for introductory remarks by Mr Wood, 2 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1502/149.

¹⁷⁴ M.P.J. Lynch to Burr, Ovens, King, 19 June 1972, TNA OD 26/270/46.

¹⁷⁵ A.A. Duff to R.B.M. King, 14 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1509/9.

¹⁷⁶ R.W. Whitney to Campbell, 5 February 1973, TNA FCO 31/1509/7.

¹⁷⁷ EAD to Private Office, 'British-Kenyan Ministerial Talks: Summary of Discussions', 8 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1502/144.

¹⁷⁸ S.Y. Dawbarn to Campbell, 8 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1502/143.

¹⁷⁹ S.Y. Dawbarn (for the Secretary of State) to British High Commissioner in Nairobi, 'British/Kenyan Ministerial Talks, 4-9 March 1973', 28 March 1973, TNA FCO 31/1503/186.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

equalled what they put in, and this made it worth investing in. British officials formed particularly positive impressions of Kibaki, and whilst uncertainties about Mungai remained, he 'put up a good performance and maintained (with almost complete success) a sober and statesmanlike manner'.¹⁸¹ Future succession prospects remained the concern and Dawbarn highlighted the need 'to consolidate our personal relations with Dr. Mungai, Mr. Kibaki and other prominent members of the leadership – in particular Vice-President Moi'.¹⁸²

Conclusion

The early 1970s were a time of substantial and substantive negotiation across many departments. The detail of these makes clear the fallacy of simple neo-colonialist analysis. In multiple and varied discussions between Kenyans and different parts of the British government there was real negotiation, in which British policy-makers did not feel in control and certainly not in a position to entirely dictate terms. British participants imagined this as a tutelary and informal relationship: they wanted to be able to tell Kenyans what was right for them, and they wanted Kenyans to be appreciative of this advice. In some ways, this period saw Kenyans pushing back against this. In 1974, Dawbarn wrote that Kenyans 'have a reputation as hard bargainers. But unlike many other countries they are genuinely and publicly appreciative of the aid we give them, and repay our assistance in tangible ways'.¹⁸³ Both sides had things to gain from their relationship.

British officials aimed to achieve the most beneficial outcome for themselves without prejudicing their relations with the Kenyans. For the British government, the Bamburi Understanding was an easy sign of support to offer, whilst in arms sales and aid negotiations they had to compromise. The threat of turning to other suppliers was a frequently deployed Kenyan negotiating tactic, aware of the British desire to maintain their position in Kenya. The Asians were the main threat from Kenya during these

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ M.K. Ewans to Kerr, 12 June 1974, FCO 31/1718/33.

years, and an issue British officials sought to manage by offering favourable terms elsewhere. The Kenyan response to British offers was often more negative than British civil servants, diplomats and politicians were hoping for, as they typically saw themselves as being generous to Kenya as a 'special' relationship. Those British involved seem sometimes to have simply not understood the problems which Kenyan politicians had in dealing with them. Kenyan politicians evidently valued their relationships with Britain, which they could use in their own factional intrigues, but no one wanted to be seen as too close to the former colonial power, and so sometimes they avoided contact.

Personal relationships remained particularly significant. McKenzie remained ubiquitous, though no longer a minister, involved in many of these negotiations with the notable exception of the general talks. British policy-makers continued to favour and focus upon Kenyatta, with the position of the Asians thought stable whilst he was in power, and the Bamburi Understanding significant to him personally. With the expectation of Kenyatta's death at potentially any time, the succession was still crucial and, with this, the need to know potential successors. Norris' speculations about a coup in 1971 highlighted the absence of any political candidate favoured by the British for succession – if they had had this, they surely would have been less sanguine about a coup – and that they valued and trusted their military connections as much, if not more, as those with Kenyan politicians and civil servants. There was thus a conscious effort by the British to embed relationships at multiple military and political levels as a corollary of a refusal to pick and back a single successor. Kenya was still often viewed as a special case of a close British relationship in Africa, but with a sense that this was potentially fragile: upon Kenyatta's death, the future for British interests did not seem assured.

Chapter Six: 1974-July 1978

‘Everyone is waiting for the old man to die’

High Commissioner Duff, Valedictory Despatch, 20 August 1975¹

During the mid-1970s, the British relationship with Kenya appeared to be slipping. There was greater uncertainty amongst British policy-makers and they no longer had the money or military ability to pursue their former policies. This was particularly apparent in the military alliances, plans and understandings on which the relationship had previously been built. British defence abilities were decreased, and the 1974-75 Mason defence review planned to reduce defence spending as a proportion of Britain’s gross domestic product from 5 per cent to 4.5 per cent over ten years, whilst focusing on NATO and decreasing manpower.² Dockrill described the 1970s as ‘years of relative stagnation in Britain’s defences’.³ This was also a time of British financial weakness. Blank has argued that by 1974 Britain appeared ‘at the very edge of economic chaos ... due primarily to efforts of successive British governments to maintain an international role which was beyond the nation’s capacity’.⁴ Inflation rose from 7 per cent in 1973 to 27 per cent in 1975.⁵ Britain had finally joined the EEC in January 1973, but this had ‘arguably made Britain’s economic position worse’.⁶ These considerations meant that British decision-makers were less willing to invest in their Kenyan relationship.⁷

¹ Antony Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, ‘Valedictory Despatch’, 20 August 1975, TNA FCO 31/1885/97.

² Claire Taylor, ‘A Brief Guide to Previous British Defence Reviews’, International Affairs and Defence Section, (19 October 2010), www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05714.pdf, accessed 24 October 2014, pp. 6-7.

³ Dockrill, *British Defence since 1945*, p. 110.

⁴ Blank, ‘Foreign Economic Policy’, pp. 708, 691.

⁵ Glen O’Hara, *From Dreams to Disillusionment: Economic and Social Planning in 1960s Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 207.

⁶ John W. Young, ‘Europe’, in Anthony Seldon and Kevin Hickson (eds.), *New Labour, Old Labour: The Wilson and Callaghan Governments, 1974-79* (London; New York, 2004), p. 147.

⁷ Edward Peck to E.G. Norris, 7 April 1967, TNA FCO 31/228/3.

Military policies had been largely premised on Sandys' 1964 argument that Kenya should not purchase expensive military equipment but rely on British military support if necessary. This was already being challenged, and in 1974 British policy instead became one of supporting an arms build-up in Kenya and turning the Kenyans away from any potential reliance on direct British intervention. In 1974, as in 1970, the Bamburi Understanding was renewed with little debate or dissent, but in 1978 the idea of ending the Understanding was for the first time seriously contemplated, with gradual disengagement favoured. The key event, however, was Britain's failure to supply Kenya with ammunition following the Israeli raid on Entebbe. This made explicit the global military and financial weakness of Britain, with the emptiness of British commitments and abilities laid bare. From 1974 to Kenyatta's death in 1978, the direct and tangible benefits which had made Kenya such a useful partner for Britain and vice versa seemed in decline. While neither was willing to break this entirely, both sides were reassessing the terms of the security alliance.

The relationship was also slipping because of Kenyatta's decline. Kariuki's murder encouraged British doubts about Kenya's elite. This was by no means the first political assassination in Kenya, but British officials were particularly affected. The murder showed that they were not as knowledgeable as they thought, and were less in touch with events and individuals than they had believed. Kenyatta had for so long seemed to offer security for British interests, but from the mid-1970s he was seen less positively. This led some British diplomats, notably High Commissioner Duff, to be particularly pessimistic, and more inclined to criticise than many of his predecessors. Criticisms included Kenyatta's lack of focus and ability, the growth of corruption, Kikuyuisation, 'an increasingly autocratic style of government', and the possibility that these issues may 'seriously reduce the chance of an orderly succession and will become a major threat to the country's stability'.⁸ Kenya had previously been compared positively with other African states on issues such as corruption, but by 1975 'Kenya

⁸ Antony Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: The Future Prospect', 10 December 1974, TNA FCO 31/1707/20.

loses her status as a shining example of democracy in the African gloom'.⁹ This was also, as Duff stated in 1975, a time in which 'Everyone is waiting for the old man to die'.¹⁰ After so long looking apprehensively to a future without Kenyatta, Duff even came to welcome the prospect: in December 1974 his 'considered conclusion is that it would now be in Kenya's best interests that his Presidential term should not extend beyond 1976'.¹¹ However, not all had abandoned the idea that Kenyatta was still beneficial and the greatest threat was from the succession. Ewans, head of EAD, had 'long-standing misgivings about the country, where there are perhaps more British interests at risk than anywhere else in Black Africa'.¹² He described British policy as one of 'hoping for the best'.¹³

Military Policies

In 1974, two aspects of the Anglo-Kenyan military relationship were considered, one highlighting continuities, the other a change which would come to characterise British policy thereafter. The first was the renewal of the Bamburi Understanding under the second Wilson government in 1974. In July 1974, Duff reported a request for Njonjo and McKenzie to be received by the Prime Minister.¹⁴ As they had been so many times before, these two men were the key figures. One official noted: 'We would not of course wish to take up the Prime Minister's time with a matter such as this, were it not for the fact that this is President Kenyatta's chosen method of doing "sensitive" business'.¹⁵ The Understanding was linked by McKenzie and Njonjo to 'the threat to Kenya and the supply of defence equipment', which they also wanted to discuss.¹⁶ Duff recognised that 'the Kenyan Government are

⁹ D. Wigan to Ewans, 2 January 1975, TNA FCO 31/1892/1.

¹⁰ Antony Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Valedictory Despatch', 20 August 1975, TNA FCO 31/1885/97.

¹¹ Antony Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: The Future Prospect', 10 December 1974, TNA FCO 31/1707/20.

¹² M.K. Ewans to Campbell, 23 December 1974, TNA FCO 31/1707/24.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Antony Duff to M.K. Ewans, 17 July 1974, TNA DEFE 11/652/9/1.

¹⁵ R.N. Dales to Lord Bridges, 26 July 1974, TNA DEFE 11/652/11.

¹⁶ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 23 July 1974, TNA DEFE 24/659/12/2.

increasingly anxious about being surrounded by countries which are better equipped militarily, whose intentions are uncertain, and who are under apparently increasing Soviet or Chinese influence'.¹⁷ As Okumu has argued, Kenya felt 'threatened by what it perceived as socialist encirclement'.¹⁸ Ewans 'consider[ed] that the Kenyan fears are unduly alarmist (but have commissioned a [Joint Intelligence Chiefs'] reassessment of the threat)'.¹⁹ The Kenyans again raised the suggestion of turning to other suppliers and Duff considered this, unusually, a realistic threat: it may have 'began as an ill-considered suggestion, and/or as a possible negotiating tactic. My assessment now is that in Kenyan eyes it is becoming a genuine option'.²⁰

McKenzie met Wilson on 5 August 1974 and passed on Kenyatta's request for confirmation of the Bamburi Understanding.²¹ Wilson 'said he hoped that there was no possibility of any shock decisions on the expulsion of Asians from Kenya'; again, different issues were being linked with the implicit suggestion that this could influence the British response.²² Internally, the British government appreciated the different interpretations placed on the Understanding:

It may be that the Kenyans have come to read more into the Understanding than it contains. We see no advantage however in spelling out its limited nature ... On the other hand, any suggestion that we intended to water down the 1967 commitment could have a seriously prejudicial effect on our relations with Kenya²³

The British government was keen to maintain the benefits this offered in the relationship with Kenyatta himself, who was thought to value this particularly highly; 'There is little doubt that President Kenyatta regards the Understanding as a touchstone of Kenya's "special relationship" with us'.²⁴ From the perspective of British officials, this was also an easy part of the exchange which made up the

¹⁷ Antony Duff to M.K. Ewans, 17 July 1974, TNA DEFE 11/652/9/1.

¹⁸ Okumu, 'Foreign Relations', p. 250.

¹⁹ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 23 July 1974, TNA DEFE 24/659/12/2.

²⁰ Antony Duff to M.K. Ewans, 17 July 1974, TNA DEFE 11/652/9/1.

²¹ R.A. Neilson to Campbell, 14 August 1974, TNA FCO 31/1726/3.

²² Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and Bruce McKenzie at 10 Downing Street, 5 August 1974, TNA DEFE 11/652/7.

²³ M. Alexander to Lord Bridges, 16 August 1974, TNA FCO 31/1726/4.

²⁴ R.A. Neilson to Campbell, 14 August 1974, TNA FCO 31/1726/3.

relationship: it was not too difficult to agree to something which 'only commits us to consultation'.²⁵

Wilson sent a formal letter to Kenyatta, stating categorically that 'my colleagues and I stand by the assurance'.²⁶

At his prime ministerial meeting, McKenzie also asked, rather than for expensive military equipment, for 'the British Government to send two military advisers (in civilian clothes) to Kenya to advise the Kenyan Government'.²⁷ McKenzie and Kenyatta still looked to Britain for this kind of support, and British policy-makers encouraged the request. As had been the case immediately after independence, they recognised the influence they would gain by being in a position to advise on the direction of Kenya's military future. A two-man team, led by Major General Rowley Mans, went in September 1974. The terms stipulated that

the MOD team will not be engaged on a sales drive and though we would naturally hope that the final recommendations would involve the sale of British equipment, the prime object of the exercise is to assist the Kenyans in planning a sensible re-equipment programme and to reassure them that HMG is actively concerned in helping to improve their military capability²⁸

The advisor was to work from the Kenyan Ministry of Defence, not BHC.²⁹ Mans' report concluded that Kenya's defence forces 'are NOT capable of deterring an overt Somali attack ... I am therefore convinced that you should expand your armed forces'.³⁰ He recommended a three-phase, nine-year plan, costing 'between £38M and £55M at 1974 prices'.³¹ This was clearly a very different recommendation from a decade earlier, when a more limited Kenyan military had been encouraged to potentially rely on British intervention if necessary. The British financial and military ability to provide this kind of intervention was no longer assured, and nor would the international climate

²⁵ M.K. Ewans to B.R. Hawtin, 25 October 1974, TNA FCO 31/1725/14.

²⁶ Harold Wilson to Jomo Kenyatta, 5 September 1974, TNA FCO 31/1725/10.

²⁷ Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and Bruce McKenzie at 10 Downing Street, 5 August 1974, TNA DEFE 11/652/7.

²⁸ B.R. Hawtin to Colonel R.M. Begbie, 23 August 1974, TNA DEFE 24/659/56.

²⁹ Record of a meeting between Secretary of State for Defence and the Kenyan Attorney General and Mr McKenzie, 30 August 1974, TNA DEFE 24/659/63.

³⁰ His emphasis. 'Report by MOD Team on Kenya Armed Forces', 14 October 1974, TNA DEFE 24/659/86.

³¹ Ibid.

encourage it. This was also about getting the Kenyans to pay more for their own defence: an expanded Kenyan military could be beneficial in defence sales, and in encouraging the Kenyans to resist Somalia themselves rather than relying on Britain. Encouraging a Kenyan arms build-up, as Mans' report did, was now the British approach to Kenyan military policy.

Aid Policies

In aid too, some British officials hoped not to have to pay too much for their relationship, despite increased economic problems in Kenya. In the years immediately after independence the economy had been one of Kenya's strengths, with almost 7 per cent growth rates during 1964-72.³² From 1972 to 1982, however, this decreased to an average of 4.8 per cent, and whilst 'high in comparison to much of Africa, it was a significant decline',³³ with a deficit in Kenya's balance of payments close to K£41m in 1974.³⁴ In 1973 the rise in oil prices caused problems across the global economy, which Cooper has argued was a more profound economic turning point in Africa than independence.³⁵

The issue of aid revealed again the differing views within the British government about Kenya's importance to Britain. Once again, FCO argued for more aid while ODM and Treasury looked to limit this, and throughout 1974 ODM was reluctant to offer further aid despite FCO's political arguments.³⁶ But in December 1974 ODM agreed to a programme loan for Kenya. Normally, project aid was given, linked to mutually agreed specific projects; by comparison, programme aid was meant for essential imports from Britain.³⁷ As well as offering immediate financial assistance to its recipient, it was thus also 100 per cent tied. ODM would offer these loans to both Tanzania and Kenya, and initially proposed

³² Miatta Fahnbulleh, 'In Search of Economic Development in Kenya: Colonial Legacies and Post-Independence Realities', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, No. 107 (2006), p. 41.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁴ Tony Killick, 'Kenya, the IMF, and the Unsuccessful Quest for Stabilization', in John Williamson (ed.), *IMF Conditionality* (Washington, 1983), p. 383.

³⁵ Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, p. 87.

³⁶ See East Africa Department/ODM, 'Aid to Kenya', 13 May 1974, TNA FCO 31/1717/24; R.B.M. King to Thomas Brimelow, 31 July 1974, TNA FCO 31/1718/50.

³⁷ Holtham and Hazlewood, *Aid and Inequality*, p. 61.

£2.5m for Tanzania and £2m for Kenya.³⁸ However, Duff argued that Kenya's loan should equal Tanzania's as 'in the current low state of Kenyan/Tanzanian relations, the Kenyans would be even more ready than usual to complain at being treated differently'.³⁹ It certainly seems likely that leading Kenyans would have complained about this and, as was recognised here, the Kenyan response to aid was often to request more. Giving the same, or more, aid to Tanzania hints however that aid was not purely a political instrument given only to pursue the closest relationships, with ideas of development also significant. Accordingly, on a visit to East Africa Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Callaghan offered £2.5m each.⁴⁰

Arguments continued into 1975 about the next aid tranche. Although FCO argued for Kenya's specific importance, ODM was less convinced and planned to decrease aid. FCO resisted and Peter Rosling of EAD argued that:

There is almost nothing which we cannot discuss with them [the Kenyans] pretty openly, in the knowledge that our views will be listened to with sympathy and respect. Our influence is strong. There are not so many countries in the region, or more widely, of which one can say that⁴¹

The sense of a special relationship, and interestingly one which was 'pretty open', hints that British civil servants still thought they understood and could work with the Kenyans, and makes clear the regional importance of Kenya. In the negotiated nature of the relationship, EAD believed the Kenyans were willing partners. Ewans argued that 'it would be tragic if, as has happened in Uganda, we were to see the dissipation of all our efforts and interests'.⁴² He clearly saw a direct correlation between the amount of aid and Britain's influence. EAD wanted to maintain the relationship and tried to manoeuvre Treasury into paying to support it. Showing the extent to which aid was a matter for negotiation within the British government, Desmond Wigan in EAD lamented that 'it will become ever

³⁸ EAD to Kirkness, 19 December 1974, TNA FCO 31/1718/77.

³⁹ M.P.J. Lynch to John F. Slater, 10 January 1975, TNA T 317/2129.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ P.E. Rosling to B. Jordan, 4 August 1975, TNA FCO 31/1896/39.

⁴² M.K. Ewans to Kerr, 30 June 1975, TNA FCO 31/1896/36.

harder to put forward political grounds as the UKPH threat diminishes'.⁴³ His revealing comment hints that, despite the problems the Asians had caused, they had been a useful internal bargaining tool for EAD staff to use with ODM and Treasury. Table 16 indicates the British contribution to Kenya's total aid, a proportion which clearly declined over the years around this discussion – though it should be noted that this relative decline was largely due to an increase in other bilateral aid, which increased by 175 per cent over the years 1972-76.

Table 16: Total Kenyan Aid by Sources, 1972-1976 (US\$m)⁴⁴

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Total	72.10	95.70	119.40	128.90	162.70
UK	21.11	21.56	29.63	13.94	29.40
Other bilateral	39.49	54.14	69.77	92.56	108.60
Multilateral	11.50	20.00	20.00	22.40	24.70
UK as percentage of total (%)	29.29	22.53	24.82	10.81	18.07

British officials additionally hoped to encourage Kenya's leaders to look elsewhere and not rely solely on Britain. Duff argued that 'it is in the long run to our advantage to help them help themselves, especially if we can do it with other people's money'.⁴⁵ Michael Hannam of BHC wrote to the Trade Relations and Exports Department trying to gain

some idea of the way the Gulf States are going about disbursing their development funds ... It is in the nature of relations between us and the Kenyans that they look to us on occasions for advice ... we should like to be able to give the Kenyans some good practical advice should the need arise⁴⁶

⁴³ D. Wigan to Ewans, 2 January 1975, TNA FCO 31/1892/1.

⁴⁴ Kenya Country Policy Paper 1978, August 1978, TNA OD 67/29/101.

⁴⁵ Antony Duff to M.P.J. Lynch, 11 March 1975, TNA FCO 31/1895/11.

⁴⁶ M.P.V. Hannam to Trade Relations and Exports Department, 13 February 1975, TNA FCO 31/1892/9.

British diplomats still felt they had a role as advisors to Kenya, but this was also a sign of British financial weakness. The British wanted to maintain influence, but did not want to use their own money, and hoped rather to use that of pro-British governments in the Gulf who had benefitted from the oil shock.⁴⁷ The reply considered it 'no doubt politically desirable that you should be able to make use of the special British relationship with the Kenyans in this way', but in this instance could not because they lacked knowledge; despite trying to act as broker, they had no information to pass on.⁴⁸

BHC was also keen to reassure the British business community in Kenya that they should not disinvest. Though Holtham and Hazlewood argued in 1976 that there was 'precious little contact between the British High Commission in Nairobi and most British businessmen in Kenya',⁴⁹ the recollections of those who worked in BHC in these years suggest otherwise. Goodall, Head of Chancery 1968-70, had 'a great deal to do with' the British business community.⁵⁰ Peter Wallis, commercial first secretary 1974-79, recalled that 'the task was mainly to meet and assist visiting British businessmen and to advise them on the Kenyan market, local companies and local agents ... closely involved with a wide range of British firms in Kenya'.⁵¹ BHC's role was one of providing advice and encouraging the interests and persistence of British firms in Kenya. In May 1975, the Kenyan Sessional Paper No. 4 announced 'the need for a programme of austerity more severe than we have yet experienced' which would 'curtail the quantity of our imports'.⁵² In response, Wallis wrote 'a draft article covering the points of most interest to British industry' to inform the business community.⁵³ Wallis argued that 'if British exports are tailored to Kenya's needs, British industry will still find opportunities as well as challenges in the Kenya market'.⁵⁴ This encouragement was not entirely successful, and in 1975 'old established British trading

⁴⁷ D. Wigan to Southworth, 2 January 1975, TNA FCO 31/1892/1.

⁴⁸ R.G. Marlow to M.D.V. Hannam, 25 April 1975, TNA FCO 31/1895/9.

⁴⁹ Holtham and Hazlewood, *Aid and Inequality*, p. 205.

⁵⁰ David Goodall, interview.

⁵¹ Peter Wallis memorandum, written for Poppy Cullen, 2 December 2013.

⁵² Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1975, 'Economic Prospects and Policies', 7 February 1975, TNA FCO 31/1892/32.

⁵³ P.G. Wallis to G. MacMahon, 14 May 1975, TNA FCO 31/1892/26.

⁵⁴ P.G. Wallis, 'Kenya Government tables Sessional Paper on the economy', [May 1975], TNA FCO 31/1892/26.

companies of MacKenzie Ltd., and Mitchell Cotts (EA) Ltd., both sold control to the Kenyatta family'.⁵⁵ Clearly there was less British confidence in the Kenyan economy, and this also hints at the increasing acquisitiveness of the Kenyatta family. Wallis recognised in July that 'the competition for the market will intensify and British suppliers will be tested ... it will require a considerable effort to regain lost ground and to hold our share of a static or shrinking market'.⁵⁶ The British predominance in Kenya was being challenged, as tables 17 and 18 make clear. Across the 1970s, the British share of Kenyan imports decreased by 10 per cent, and of exports by almost 8 per cent. 1976 was the first year Kenyan exports to West Germany surpassed those to Britain.⁵⁷

Table 17: Kenyan Imports⁵⁸

	Total	UK	Japan	US	West Germany	British percentage of total (%)
1971*	3,682.0	1,124.0	386.0	326.0		30.5
1972	3,552.0	1,011.0	357.0	239.0		28.5
1973	4,060.0	1,013.0	517.0	334.0		25.0
1974**	366.0	64.0	40.0	21.0		17.5
1975	347.3	69.5		24.8	27.0	20.0
1976***	972.9	186.9	107.5	56.4	101.2	19.2
1977	1,289.1	230.9	158.6	77.8	140.0	17.9
1978	1,710.8	377.7	175.7	106.4	227.1	22.1
1979	1,631.2	398.3	138.9		155.3	24.4
1980	2,213.2	478.7	228.9		207.1	21.6

*1971-73 in millions of Shillings

**1974-75 in K£ millions

*** 1976-80 in US\$ millions

⁵⁵ S.J.G. Fingland to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1975', 2 January 1976, TNA FCO 31/2020/1.

⁵⁶ P.G. Wallis to D. Wigan, 16 July 1975, TNA FCO 31/1892/34.

⁵⁷ *A Year Book of the Commonwealth 1978* (London, 1978), p. 654.

⁵⁸ *A Year Book of the Commonwealth* (London) 1973-1982. Includes all figures given for these countries.

Table 18: Kenyan Exports⁵⁹

	Total	UK	Japan	US	West Germany	British percentage of total (%)
1971*	1,463.0	295.0	52.0	98.0		20.2
1972	1,909.0	408.0	42.0	110.0		21.4
1973	2,305.0	404.0	100.0	145.0		17.5
1974**	218.0	19.0	5.0	8.0		8.7
1975	222.4	22.7		8.4	19.2	10.2
1976***	793.1	86.5	15.2	44.0	100.6	10.9
1977	1,186.0	153.4	12.6	66.6	207.1	12.9
1978	1,023.0	148.2	9.9	47.8	147.3	14.5
1979	1,102.0	223.5	22.0		154.0	20.3
1980	1,270.0	156.2	10.7		163.1	12.3

*1971-73 in millions of Shillings

**1974-75 in K£ millions

*** 1976-80 in US\$ millions

J.M. Kariuki's Assassination

In March 1975 the assassination of Kariuki shook British confidence in Kenya. Kariuki had gained popularity as a vocal critic of Kenyatta.⁶⁰ Duff described him in 1973 as 'a rogue politician, a professional enfant terrible of boundless energy, muddled ideas but formidable charisma'.⁶¹ His murder revealed to the British their lack of knowledge, as either their Kenyan contacts were lying to them, or they too were not in complete control when Kariuki went missing. BHC informed London that 'The Kenyan authorities have assured us that they know nothing. Neither we nor the Americans have any information so far to contradict this'.⁶² British diplomats placed a level of trust in their Kenyan associates and this would be proved false. Whilst what had happened was still unknown, MPs Charles

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Nicholas Nyangira, 'Ethnicity, Class, and Politics in Kenya', in Michael G. Schatzberg (ed.), *The Political Economy of Kenya* (New York, 1987), p. 31. See also: Branch, *Kenya*, pp. 105-6; Karimi and Ochieng, *Kenyatta Succession*, p. 97.

⁶¹ His emphasis. Anthony Duff to Alec Douglas-Home, 'Kenya: Rivalry for the Succession', 22 October 1973, TNA FCO 31/1496/14.

⁶² Telegram no. 536, Nairobi to FCO, 7 March 1975, TNA FCO 31/1883/15.

Rubia and Dr Muriuki visited Christopher Hart of BHC. This was not an official meeting at BHC or with the High Commissioner, but with a second secretary at home. Hart reported that Rubia:

was very nervous about being overheard and checked on the reliability of our servants (both JM fans) first. It is vitally important that our various links with the present regime do not enable the Kenyans to discover anything of Rubia's visit ... I think that he preferred to make it at the lowest level because senior officers might feel more compromised in their dealings with Government leaders. He also knows me socially and had been to the house recently⁶³

This makes clear the importance of private and social relationships which were not always at the highest level but which encouraged contact. The concern to keep this private also demonstrates the factionalism of Kenyan politics. Rubia had been accused of complicity in Mboya's murder,⁶⁴ but in this instance was visiting to 'warn the British that the Kenyan Government's version of the JM disappearance appeared to be false ... If JM is killed then Rubia expects the President to be killed by an outraged populace'.⁶⁵ Whilst this idea proved wildly overstated, it encouraged British unease.

Rubia was correct that there was deliberate government misinformation, and when revealed this too was part of the shock for British policy-makers: they had believed they understood Kenyan politics and politicians, and this was now challenged. Their information and knowledge was always dependent upon who they talked to and what they were told, and now their interlocutors kept them misinformed. Duff reported likely government culpability and Kenyatta was widely believed to have been involved; he was less the benign 'Father of the Nation' British civil servants, diplomats and politicians had come to imagine.⁶⁶ Duff suggested the murder might encourage the Kenyan government 'to realise that they must begin to take things gradually out of the President's hands (and it will be our constant endeavour to encourage this)'.⁶⁷ The murder shocked the British into a new understanding, in which Kenyatta was a problem rather than a solution; yet they were aware that there was no ready replacement. The

⁶³ C.T. Hart to Head of Chancery, 10 March 1975, TNA DO 226/15/18.

⁶⁴ See Eric Norris to Michael Stewart, 'Mboya's Assassination and its Aftermath', 11 November 1969, TNA FCO 31/351/147.

⁶⁵ C.T. Hart to Head of Chancery, 10 March 1975, TNA DO 226/15/18.

⁶⁶ Telegram no. 609, Duff to FCO, 14 March 1975, TNA FCO 31/1883/25.

⁶⁷ His emphasis. Anthony Duff to N. Aspin, 18 March 1975, TNA FCO 31/1884/37.

extent of the impact this had on British policy-makers' ideas about Kenya was hinted at by Barry Holmes in BHC, who argued that 'Whatever the truth of Kariuki's murder it could still turn out to be the longterm [sic] catalyst, which ensures that Kenya will never be quite the same again'.⁶⁸ British diplomats and civil servants became acutely aware that they did not know all – perhaps most – of what was occurring in Kenya. The legitimacy of Kenyatta's government was no longer assured.⁶⁹

Kariuki's death encouraged the idea that the government lacked legitimacy and had inherited the behaviours and assumptions of the colonial state; and thus it led people to reflect on the relationship with the UK. This was revealed in Kenyan (and also Ugandan) criticism of the presence of British troops in Kenya.⁷⁰ In March 1975, MPs were 'implying that they were numerous and that [the] Kenyan regime depended on foreign troops'.⁷¹ MP Waruru Kanja was reported as asking: 'Are we unable to defend our own country so as to seek reinforcement from foreign troops[?] ... We have already been under British rule, when those soldiers were a common sight, but we no longer want to go back to that kind of rule'.⁷² A total of 207 British servicemen were in Kenya at the time.⁷³ Duff reported that 'we are regarded by the critics as a sinister eminence grise and by some members of the Establishment as a kind of scaffolding that keeps the building intact'.⁷⁴ Many Kenyans believed the British had substantial power in Kenya.

This criticism led to some internal reassessment of British military training. Philip Mansfield in BHC questioned MOD:

We have been given the impression by certain visiting senior officers from the UK that they are desirable because Kenya is a pleasant country which gives the troops an agreeable break,

⁶⁸ B.T. Holmes to D. Wigan, 25 March 1975, TNA FCO 31/1884/47.

⁶⁹ Hornsby, *Kenya*, pp. 284-6.

⁷⁰ Anglo-Kenyan Defence Relations, [1976], TNA FCO 31/2021/35.

⁷¹ Telegram no. 612, Nairobi to FCO, 15 March 1975, TNA FCO 31/1902/1.

⁷² 'Why are there so many British Soldiers about?', *Daily Nation*, 15 March 1975.

⁷³ D. Wigan to Ewans, 25 March 1975, TNA FCO 31/1902/9.

⁷⁴ His emphasis. Anthony Duff to N. Aspin, 18 March 1975, TNA FCO 31/1884/37.

but that they are certainly not of vital importance for training purposes. It would be helpful if we could know precisely what value MOD put on the present facilities⁷⁵

For FCO, if training was just 'an agreeable break', it was likely not worth such criticism. MOD, however, argued that they 'placed a very high value on Kenya as a training area. Its importance had, if anything, increased'.⁷⁶ It was obviously in MOD's interest to portray training in this way as they wanted it to continue. BHC recommended cancelling the planned exercise Lorimer and, despite MOD desires for this to go ahead, BHC arguments succeeded.⁷⁷ Cancelling British training exercises directly threatened one of the pillars of the security alliance sustained since independence. By August, MOD and EAD were keen to resume training exercises, with BHC still most cautious, but judging this 'a calculated risk we could take' on condition of 'greater emphasis on joint training'.⁷⁸ Mansfield also noted that Kiireini 'would like the training programme to be resumed'; clearly this was not wholly unpopular with the Kenyan leadership.⁷⁹ Military training was a key part of Anglo-Kenyan cooperation and a tangible and specific benefit for the British government.

Kariuki's assassination had shocked British policy-makers and the subsequent criticism of the British military presence brought into question some of the relationship's benefits. Ideas about Kenyatta had been especially challenged. Duff's Valedictory despatch in August 1975 continued his pessimism, and he wrote of his

belief – which was no doubt held also by my two immediate predecessors – that during my term of office President Kenyatta would die and that one would assist at the uncertain and interesting beginning of the next period of independent Kenya's history. I do not know whether my predecessors were disappointed that they left the country with Kenyatta still in the saddle. I am; not because I crave excitement, but because I believe it is bad for Kenya that he has lingered so long⁸⁰

⁷⁵ P.R.A. Mansfield to J.E. Jackson, 8 April 1975, TNA FCO 31/1902/10.

⁷⁶ R.A. Neilson to P.R.A. Mansfield, 25 April 1975, TNA FCO 31/1902/24.

⁷⁷ Telegram no. 10, Nairobi to FCO, 21 May 1975, TNA FCO 31/1902/34.

⁷⁸ P.R.A. Mansfield to P.E. Rosling, 6 August 1975, TNA FCO 31/1902/60.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Antony Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Valedictory Despatch', 20 August 1975, TNA FCO 31/1885/97.

Duff's frustration with Kenyan politics was apparent. Yet not all British official looked forward to Kenyatta's demise; as Wigan in EAD recognised, 'Kenyatta has been Kenya, Kenya is Kenyatta, since Independence'.⁸¹ A more common and enduring concern reasserted itself: that there was no viable replacement to the president.

Arms Supplies – Entebbe

Confidence in the relationship was further shaken in 1976 when the changed military strategy the British government had advocated since 1974, as well as British weakness, was laid bare. The context was the Israeli raid on 4 July 1976 to rescue those held hostage at Entebbe, during which the Israelis were allowed to land at Nairobi airport.⁸² McKenzie was involved in organising this – encouraging the idea he was an Israeli spy.⁸³ Subsequent diplomatic tension between Kenya and Uganda meant the FCO 'received from secret sources a request from the Kenyans for some form of British military presence in Kenya to demonstrate visibly our support for them'.⁸⁴ This was reminiscent of the requests in 1964 and 1965 for a show of British military support. The Kenyans who passed on the message – exactly who this was is unclear – hoped that MOD 'could send a British warship to Mombasa urgently, or, preferably, a squadron of British fighter aircraft to Kenya immediately, ostensibly for joint exercises with the Kenyan air force'.⁸⁵

It was not just the British who were approached as a potential military ally – a change from the 1960s. America was asked, and agreed to send a ship; the Israelis 'have promised military assistance'.⁸⁶ British officials were informed not by the Kenyans but by the Americans of their involvement, hinting at the multiple diplomatic channels of contact used. However, Ewans considered that 'The Kenyans would

⁸¹ D. Wigan to Ewans, 1 September 1975, TNA FCO 31/1885/97.

⁸² Karimi and Ochieng, *Kenyatta Succession*, p. 71.

⁸³ Hornsby, *Kenya*, pp. 318-9.

⁸⁴ C.A. Whitmore to Private Secretary to Secretary of State, 9 July 1976, TNA DEFE 13/1252/12.

⁸⁵ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 9 July 1976, TNA FCO 31/2022/1.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

however prefer help from the UK. They take the view that this would not be regarded as provocative or embarrassing since they reckon that Amin already believes that British forces are present in Kenya more or less permanently'.⁸⁷ This was an interesting use of Ugandan arguments of British neo-colonialism which a year earlier had encouraged the suspension of British military training exercises in Kenya. A few months previously, High Commissioner Fingland highlighted a contradictory attitude between Kenyan

sensitivity about any possible criticism by other African countries of the facilities given to British troops in Kenya ... [and] the Kenyan fear of the greater military capability of some of their near neighbours, which from time to time tempts them to let it be known in various ways to these neighbours that Kenya has arrangements with powerful friends, such as Britain, who would help her if she were threatened⁸⁸

This evidences the shrewd use made by leading Kenyans of their British relationship; choosing both to distance themselves from, and to evoke, the British as suited the situation.

The British government considered the Kenyan requests. MOD informed FCO it would take seven to ten days for an air squadron to be in position or fifteen for a ship.⁸⁹ Ewans therefore recommended refusing as 'provision of a naval vessel to Mombasa could be presented as unprovocative, but it is physically impossible to get one there in reasonable time', whilst if they sent aircraft 'the Ugandans, but other African governments as well, could regard such an act as provocative, which in the circumstances would not we think be helpful to Kenya'.⁹⁰ MOD agreed this was 'the right response'.⁹¹ This was in some ways a reduced commitment since 1964 when intervention in the mutiny had been quickly initiated; and this may also have been partly about making excuses to avoid the cost of military action. Yet had a ship been nearer and the logistics more feasible, it seems MOD would have at least seriously considered sending this.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ S.J.G. Fingland to N. Aspin, 31 March 1976, TNA FCO 31/2028/36.

⁸⁹ C.A. Whitmore to Private Secretary to Secretary of State, 9 July 1976, TNA DEFE 13/1252/12.

⁹⁰ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 9 July 1976, TNA FCO 31/2022/1.

⁹¹ C.A. Whitmore to Private Secretary to Secretary of State, 9 July 1976, TNA DEFE 13/1252/12.

The Kenyans also requested military equipment, particularly ammunition as their supplies were low, and British civil servants recommended that this be provided – a seemingly easier and less provocative commitment. Earlier in 1976 the British had agreed credit for Kenyan arms purchases totalling £39m.⁹² A Defence Sales representative flew to Kenya to determine what was required, and by 14 July had received ‘a letter of intent in respect of the supply of the ammunition and a payment of £40,000 as a first instalment’.⁹³ The British government was thus prepared to sell ammunition, but not to bear the cost of an intervention. MOD was immediately willing to supply this and ‘provisionally booked two RAF Hercules aircraft’ – which the Kenyans would also have to pay for – to transport the supplies.⁹⁴ However, overflight clearance was needed to fly ammunition over each country and Turkey refused, as did other countries on alternative routes, due to the international climate in the aftermath of the Entebbe raid.⁹⁵ The transport was put off with hopes of rescheduling, but the problem of overflight clearance remained. In early August, Kiereini came to London to meet Foreign and Commonwealth Minister of State Ted Rowlands, who ‘wished to emphasise that there was no lack of political determination on HMG’s part to help Kenya in every way we could’.⁹⁶ Kiereini said that ‘previously Kenya had expected British assistance in times of trouble’.⁹⁷ Coming from a civil servant, this hints at the extent to which leading Kenyans felt militarily reliant on Britain, and made their plans taking this into account. Rowlands’ comments show too that British policy-makers did not wish to deny this sense of commitment. But the British government remained unable to organise air transport and the ammunition was sent by sea, arriving in October.⁹⁸ This prompted a broader assessment of the British ability – or lack thereof – to face a similar situation elsewhere, with recognition of ‘the rundown of

⁹² S.J.G. Fingland to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, ‘Kenya: Annual Review for 1976’, 6 January 1977, TNA FCO 31/2120/1.

⁹³ C.A. Whitmore to Private Secretary to Secretary of State, 14 July 1976, TNA DEFE 13/1252/16.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ ‘Kenya: The Arms Supply Problem’, 30 July 1976, TNA FCO 46/1384/2.

⁹⁶ Record of conversation between the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Kenyan Ministry of Defence, held at the FCO on 30 July 1976, 2 August 1976, TNA FCO 46/1384/3.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ P.J. Weston to K.R. Stowe, 20 August 1976, TNA PREM 16/1733/36.

the worldwide British military presence'.⁹⁹ This was a symbol to both British and Kenyan leaders of the limit to Britain's abilities and her declining global military capability.¹⁰⁰

British politicians, civil servants and diplomats quickly sought to limit the damage caused by letting down the Kenyans at a time of apparent crisis. Philip Weston in FCO recognised that 'we have lost a good deal of prestige in Kenya and we are no longer regarded there as a foul-weather as well as a fair-weather friend'.¹⁰¹ Although this had not been a conscious policy choice of disengagement, Ewans wrote that 'some even believe that our failures are a deliberate act of policy and that we are trying to ease ourselves out of any obligations to assist Kenya when she is in trouble with her neighbours'.¹⁰² This sense of support had been part of what the relationship was built on, and if members of Kenya's elite now doubted British commitment, this could be damaging. Fingland, however, questioned the lesson the British should encourage leading Kenyans to draw, arguing that 'there were obvious limitations on what we could do at short notice' and Kenya should therefore maintain a stockpile of armaments.¹⁰³ Fingland was making explicit what had been becoming British military policy: Kenya should not rely on British intervention. Fingland's argument was adopted, and Ewans suggested there was 'an opportunity to introduce greater realism in Kenyan expectations'.¹⁰⁴ British decision-makers thus reacted pragmatically and sought to alter Kenyan expectations to be more 'realistic' about what Britain would or could provide militarily.

However, Ewans was still concerned 'to reassure the Kenyans of our continual goodwill'.¹⁰⁵ EAD thought reaffirmation of the relationship was best done through a ministerial visit, making clear their awareness of the importance of high level submissions to the Kenyans. ODM Minister Reg Prentice

⁹⁹ W.J.A. Wilberforce to Moberly and Sykes, 4 October 1976, TNA FCO 31/2032/7.

¹⁰⁰ See Dockrill, *British Defence since 1945*, pp. 105-10; Ann Lane, 'Foreign and Defence Policy', in Anthony Seldon and Kevin Hickson (eds.), *New Labour, Old Labour: The Wilson and Callaghan Governments, 1974-79* (London; New York, 2004), pp. 154-67.

¹⁰¹ P.J. Weston to K.R. Stowe, 20 August 1976, TNA PREM 16/1733/36.

¹⁰² M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 2 November 1976, TNA FCO 31/2021/33.

¹⁰³ S.J.G. Fingland to M.K. Ewans, 29 September 1976, TNA FCO 31/2021/27.

¹⁰⁴ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 2 November 1976, TNA FCO 31/2021/33.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

was planning a trip for a UN conference in Nairobi, but Fingland did not think Prentice best placed to address questions of defence, and his visit focused on aid.¹⁰⁶ MOD suggested a visit by Defence Secretary Fred Mulley, but EAD were initially concerned that 'it may not really be in the Kenyans' best interest (of which the Kenyans are not necessarily always the best judges) to have such a public demonstration of Anglo-Kenyan defence solidarity'.¹⁰⁷ This patronising attitude hints again that British policy-makers still saw themselves as those who knew Kenya's 'best interest' better than the Kenyans. Mulley did visit in January 1977, and had meetings with Kenyatta, Gichuru, Kibaki and Munyua Waiyaki (Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1974-79), as well as a lunch hosted by the Government.¹⁰⁸ His visit was described by Ewans as a success, 'particularly in reaffirming the warm Anglo-Kenyan relationship, in disabusing Kenyan suspicions that the ammunition episode of last summer was due to a lack of will on our part, and in encouraging the Kenyans to take a more realistic view of our relationship'.¹⁰⁹ By January, 'bitterness has largely passed ... nevertheless Kenyan faith in the British defence connexion has been bruised', particularly with 'manifestations of US support in visits by aircraft and ships'.¹¹⁰ The British position as leading military supplier was being undermined and the security alliances which had been so significant to underwriting the relationship were less automatic; whilst the confidence of leading Kenyans in British support and military backing had been dented. Notably, the next time the Kenyans wanted a review of their defence forces in 1978, similar to Mans' 1974 study, they turned to the Americans rather than the British.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ M.K. Ewans to S.J.G. Fingland, 21 September 1976, TNA FCO 31/2021/23; S.J.G. Fingland to M.K. Ewans, 29 September 1976, TNA FCO 31/2021/27; S. Fingland to Anthony Crosland, 'Visit to Kenya by the Minister for Overseas Development', 10 November 1976, TNA FCO 31/2035/103.

¹⁰⁷ M.K. Ewans to Aspin, 2 November 1976, TNA FCO 31/2021/33.

¹⁰⁸ Programme for visit by Fred Mulley, British Secretary of State for Defence, [January 1977], TNA DEFE 24/1634/2/1.

¹⁰⁹ M.K. Ewans to B.M. Norbury, 'Visit to Kenya by the Secretary of State for Defence', 26 January 1977, TNA DEFE 24/1634/12.

¹¹⁰ S.J.G. Fingland to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1976', 6 January 1977, TNA FCO 31/2120/1.

¹¹¹ L. Salthouse, to Private Secretary to Secretary of State, 8 March 1978, TNA DEFE 24/1634/61.

The Moi-Njonjo-Kibaki-McKenzie Group

With Kenyatta ever aging and seen less positively, his succession continued to cause British speculation. The failure of the 1976 Change-the-Constitution movement, spearheaded by Mungai's supporters, established Moi's primacy over Mungai. From then on, British assessments tended to view Moi as the front-runner. By early 1978, British diplomats believed he would succeed, and so were more willing to be seen to cultivate him. In January of that year Kenyatta planned for Moi to lead a delegation to London. In 1973, when Kibaki and Mungai had been guests of the government for general talks, Moi had not been included, but was now to lead the delegation, a clear sign of his increased position over Mungai. EAD immediately suggested offering government hospitality as 'a valuable gesture, as a demonstration of the importance we attach to our relationship with Kenya and to discussions with Kenyan Ministers'.¹¹² This suggests the importance they now placed on personal relations with Moi himself and that they still, despite growing pessimism, viewed Kenya as a particularly significant relationship. Moi was now 'expected to succeed' by EAD; after so long speculating, they had finally picked the most likely successor and decided to throw their weight behind him.¹¹³

A 'large and impressive' Kenyan delegation visited in March 1978 as official guests of the government, including 'all those whom we would expect to be influential in a future government led by Vice President Moi', including Kibaki and Njonjo.¹¹⁴ Prime Minister Callaghan hosted a lunch at which he highlighted the reciprocity and 'special' nature of the relationship:

that spirit of co-operation and mutual support which lies at the heart of the close friendship between Kenya and Britain. This will I am sure continue to be a hallmark of our friendship. Be assured that our close relationship with Kenya is very important to us¹¹⁵

¹¹² A.G. Munro to Mansfield, 23 January 1978, TNA FCO 31/2331/3.

¹¹³ Briefs for the visit of Vice-President Moi of Kenya, 5-8 March 1978, Brief no. 12: Political Background, TNA FCO 31/2334.

¹¹⁴ A.G. Munro to Mansfield, 22 February 1978, TNA FCO 31/2331/18.

¹¹⁵ J.S. Wall to B.G. Cartledge, 'Prime Minister's speech at lunch for Vice-President Moi – 6 March', 3 March 1978, TNA PREM 16/2149.

Clearly this speech was designed to encourage Moi to continue with a close British relationship after his anticipated succession. The Kenyan delegation met the Prime Minister and Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. Moi and Callaghan also had a tete-a-tete meeting, at which Moi claimed 'he now enjoyed the support of 90% of the Kikuyus as President Kenyatta's successor'.¹¹⁶ Although an unlikely proportion, Moi was looking to secure British backing for his succession. In this it seems he was reasonably successful: after the visit Callaghan 'had a clear impression that Vice President Moi was fully in command of the situation, despite his tendency to allow his colleagues to do the talking (the Prime Minister commented that this could in itself be a sign of confidence)'.¹¹⁷ Though Callaghan's final point perhaps indicates some wishful thinking, it appears that British officials were actively looking to make a more positive assessment of Moi.

The focus of the visit was regional politics and the Ogaden war between Somalia and Ethiopia which began in 1977. This was a key Cold War battleground and the British were concerned following the switching of Soviet support from Somalia to Ethiopia.¹¹⁸ For Kenya, 'geopolitical logic outweighed ideological considerations' as they continued to back their longer-term Ethiopian ally against Somalia for regional rather than Cold War reasons.¹¹⁹ The British government was considering supplying arms to Somalia, hoping to benefit from Somalia entering the Western sphere of influence. However, the British aim of the talks was to highlight that 'Our links with Kenya remain our first priority in the area'.¹²⁰ Kenya remained the closest and most useful regional ally, although 'there is a limit to how far we can tailor our policy towards Somalia to Kenyan susceptibilities'.¹²¹ Moi also requested arms finance and highlighted that 'Kenya wished to improve her military capacities so that she could stand

¹¹⁶ Private Secretary to J.S. Wall, 'The Prime Minister's Talks with Vice President Moi of Kenya and his Delegation', 6 March 1978, TNA PREM 16/2149.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Samuel M. Makinda, 'Conflict and the Superpowers in the Horn of Africa', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1982), pp. 98-101. See Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, pp. 143-64.

¹¹⁹ Gordon, 'Anglophonic Variants', p. 95.

¹²⁰ Briefs for the Visit of Vice-President Moi of Kenya 5-8 March, Brief no. 1: The Horn of Africa, 28 February 1978, TNA FCO 31/2334.

¹²¹ Briefs for the visit of Vice-President Moi of Kenya 5-8 March 1978, TNA FCO 31/2334.

on her own feet. Kenya recognised that the United Kingdom could no longer come to Kenya's aid at 48 hours notice, as she had once been able to do'.¹²² Moi thus displayed recognition of the policy British officials had been seeking to promote since 1974, and particularly following Entebbe, in encouraging Kenya to build up her military capability. As well as encouraging, the British also enabled this policy: following the visit, in June 1978 they offered £27m for arms purchases, 'which we understand was well received'.¹²³ This was notably a much larger amount than the £2.5m emergency aid given in 1975.

On 24 May 1978, McKenzie was killed returning from a mission to Amin, when his aircraft was destroyed by a time bomb. Expressing condolences was a British priority. Fingland wrote to Njonjo and McKenzie's wife 'expressing my personal condolences', and planned to attend the funeral.¹²⁴ EAD thought that although McKenzie was no longer a minister, 'some official expression of regret would be appropriate'.¹²⁵ The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary sent condolences, and Callaghan sent a personal message to Kenyatta in which he was 'profoundly shocked ... I know he was an invaluable guide and trusted friend of yours, and a good servant of Kenya. I was very glad to have been a friend of his for 25 years'.¹²⁶ Clearly politicians and civil servants felt that the British government needed to officially acknowledge this at the highest level, and to focus on the personal. At McKenzie's London memorial service, Foreign and Commonwealth Minister Rowlands represented the government.¹²⁷

British observers were immediately keen to assess how and why the plane crashed and the 'rumours of sabotage'.¹²⁸ In a sign of how close technical relationships remained, the Kenyans turned to the British for assistance. A UK Civil Aviation Authority official was already working within the Kenyan

¹²² Record of plenary session of talks between the Prime Minister and the Vice-President of Kenya in No. 10, 6 March 1978, TNA PREM 16/2149.

¹²³ Visit to Nairobi for the funeral of President Kenyatta, 31 August 1978, Brief no. 4: Anglo-Kenyan Defence Relations, TNA FCO 31/2317.

¹²⁴ Telegram no. 1398, Fingland to FCO, 26 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/2.

¹²⁵ Telegram no. 324, FCO to Nairobi, 26 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/3.

¹²⁶ Telegram no. 325, FCO to Nairobi, 27 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/4.

¹²⁷ J.S. Wall to J. Meadway, 6 July 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/24.

¹²⁸ David Carter to Munro, 25 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/1.

Department of Civil Aviation and assessed the crash site.¹²⁹ Nairobi Criminal Investigation Department also asked the British for 'assistance in determining the type of explosive device employed'.¹³⁰ The British government displayed a willingness to help – provided the Kenyans would pay.¹³¹ A British official visited and evidence was taken to Britain for analysis, with the report concluding that the crash 'resulted directly from the detonation within it of an explosive device', but not explaining where this had come from.¹³² Rumours were rife and potential assassins included the Israelis, Palestinians, Amin, Obote, Ugandan communists, Mungai's group or other Kenyans.¹³³ The Ugandan government has typically been blamed.¹³⁴

The key issue was the impact of McKenzie's death on Kenyan politics. A leading intermediary, his death might have been expected to herald a change in British opinion or policy. Fingland believed that 'whatever his faults and controversial activities in recent years, [McKenzie] had made a considerable impact on the Kenyan scene'.¹³⁵ His business interests had been central and 'although McKenzie's commercial activities were not always to our liking or advantage there is no denying that he was instrumental in promoting some major export deals by British firms'.¹³⁶ He had played a key role as a 'high level interlocutory' in many countries, often with British diplomats, and in this 'he will be difficult to replace ... McKenzie's death will leave a vacuum which it will take some time to fill'.¹³⁷ Fingland also thought McKenzie's position in the group around Moi was significant: 'This is not to suggest that the grouping will fall apart; but it may be less effective, particularly should a crisis arise in the near

¹²⁹ Telegram no. 1398, Fingland to FCO, 26 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/2.

¹³⁰ Telegram no. 1460, Nairobi to EAD and Defence Department, 31 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/8.

¹³¹ Telegram no. 340, FCO to Nairobi, 1 June 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/10.

¹³² MOD, 'R.A.R.D.E. Branch Memorandum 56/78 (EM2/EM4): An Investigation into the loss of Piper Aztec aircraft 5YACS, which occurred over Ngong, Kenya on 24 May 1978', July 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/36.

¹³³ See for examples: telegram no. 1398, Fingland to FCO, 26 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/2; S.J.G. Fingland to Munro, 31 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/9; M.K. Ewans to Airad, 12 June 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/16; D.F.B. Le Breton to P.E. Rosling, 18 July 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/29.

¹³⁴ D.F.B. Le Breton to A.J. Longrigg, 21 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2555/41/3.

¹³⁵ S.J.G. Fingland to Munro, 31 May 1978, TNA FCO 31/2555/9.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

future'.¹³⁸ This was in fact an overstatement of McKenzie's impact, and his death made remarkably little difference to British policies.

The Bamburi Understanding Reconsidered

The Bamburi Understanding had long demonstrated the particular value of the Anglo-Kenyan relationship and had been further reconfirmed by new Prime Minister Callaghan to Njonjo orally on 14 May 1976.¹³⁹ But in 1978 the British government seriously posed questions about the viability and continuation of the Understanding for the first time since it had been made over a decade earlier. These questions were prompted by MOD, whose defence plan 'requires revision ... before initiating such a review it seems appropriate to question the concept of armed intervention'.¹⁴⁰ Captain George Hayhoe viewed it as 'hardly conceivable that we would allow ourselves to become involved in a war in East Africa'.¹⁴¹ This discussion occurred shortly after Moi's visit, and Moi had encouraged policy-makers in their belief 'that the Kenyan authorities wish to stand on their own feet militarily and are under no illusions as to our willingness or ability to assist them with forces in the event of a Somali attack'.¹⁴²

This opened debate within the FCO on the very existence of the Understanding. Fingland believed Britain needed to maintain a military plan as long as the Understanding existed and the Kenyans were potentially relying on it, but he argued that:

If we had to explain the limitations on action open to us only when the Bamburi Understanding were to be invoked by the Kenyans, we would appear in their eyes to be letting them down at the most difficult time, when they were under a real threat, and this could bring about a crisis in our relations ... however difficult the process of disengaging from the Bamburi

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Background note: The Bamburi Understanding, [1978], TNA FCO 31/2317.

¹⁴⁰ Captain G.G.W. Hayhoe to P. Yarnold, 31 March 1978, TNA FCO 46/1582/1.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² P.E. Rosling to H.C. Byatt, 14 April 1978, TNA FCO 46/1582/2.

Understanding I would suggest that this is a position towards which we ought consciously [and] deliberately to be moving'.¹⁴³

This was part of changing British geopolitical and military realities: 'the Understanding reflected our overseas defence philosophy and capability in the 1960s'.¹⁴⁴ It was increasingly obvious among British decision-makers that there would be no British military intervention under the terms of the Understanding. Despite this, Colin Munro of the FCO Defence Department argued that some Kenyans 'must believe that our troops are training to meet some specific contingency in Kenya' and would still expect intervention.¹⁴⁵ Thus, he 'agree[d] generally that we should seek to disengage', but not 'that we should now ... [which] might cause a country that is supposed to be one of our best friends in Africa to conclude that far from stepping up our effort we are planning to abrogate an important existing commitment'.¹⁴⁶ The possible damage to the relationship was his priority, with the Understanding part of the special relationship which made Kenya 'one of our best friends in Africa'.

Other considerations were also raised by head of EAD Munro. He argued that policy-makers could not 'dismiss entirely' that Kenya might turn to the Soviet Union for an alternative commitment; and thought the Understanding was significant to Kenyatta personally, who 'might take our changed line particularly hard', so actively seeking change whilst Kenyatta was alive was likely to damage the relationship.¹⁴⁷ Munro suggested rather 'to aim at a situation where the Understanding is increasingly down-graded in Kenyan eyes, ideally to the point where it may not be necessary formally to terminate it'.¹⁴⁸ BHC thought Moi as incoming president was likely to ask for a renewal, 'if only for reassurance ... Our response will have to be carefully worded'.¹⁴⁹ In one sense this would be the ideal time to move away from the Understanding, as they were reluctant to do so whilst Kenyatta was alive, but the British

¹⁴³ S.J.G. Fingland to A.G. Munro, 17 May 1978, TNA FCO 46/1582/4.

¹⁴⁴ Visit to Nairobi for the funeral of President Kenyatta, Brief no. 5: Bamburi Understanding, 31 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2317.

¹⁴⁵ C.A. Munro to D.J. Carter, 19 July 1978, TNA FCO 46/1582/7.

¹⁴⁶ His emphasis. Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ A.G. Munro to Mansfield, 27 July 1978, TNA FCO 46/1582/8.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ P.R.A. Mansfield minute, 1 August 1978, TNA FCO 46/1582/9.

government would also want to establish support for Moi, and not to suggest a more limited relationship.

The Bamburi Understanding was an issue on which politicians had substantial involvement. On 18 August Foreign Secretary and Commonwealth David Owen gave a clear recommendation:

I do not disagree with the burden of the argument but now is a bad time. I believe the understanding will wither at the vine ... I see no need to rid ourselves of all commitments. Meanwhile, the MOD should relax. They do not need to plan anything either. The vital issue is our relationship with Kenya. Now is not the time to tamper with this issue¹⁵⁰

Foreign and Commonwealth Minister Rowlands agreed, arguing that 'the Bamburi understanding is a part of our special relationship. It hasn't been "onerous"!'.¹⁵¹ Despite potential problems, the Understanding remained a significant part of the relationship and sign of British commitment. It was also, because it would likely never need be acted upon, inexpensive. Munro reported to Fingland: 'we now have clear ministerial endorsement for seeking to let Bamburi gradually lose significance, but without our taking any initiative'.¹⁵² This meant they would continue to encourage the Kenyans to build up their own military and not rely on Britain – as policy had been for the previous years. The Defence Department replied to Captain Hayhoe that 'I doubt very much if you need maintain anything like the detailed 1973 plans', but there was a need for some military planning whilst the Kenyans were potentially reliant on this.¹⁵³ This was the only time the Understanding was seriously debated since it had been created. The renewals had proceeded fairly easily, with limited question of the premise itself – British decision-makers had always thought it unlikely they would have to honour the Understanding. But this reconsideration did not aim for a substantially changed relationship: the view of all involved was that the British military would not intervene and the question was really one of whether to actively try and move away from the Understanding in case it proved embarrassing as

¹⁵⁰ His emphasis. Owen minute, recorded in J.S. Wall to Munro, 16 August 1978, TNA FCO 46/1582/14.

¹⁵¹ Rowlands minute, recorded in K.D. Temple to Stephen, [1978], TNA FCO 31/2325/9.

¹⁵² A.G. Munro to S.J.G. Fingland, 18 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2325/14.

¹⁵³ C.A. Munro to Captain G.G.W. Hayhoe, 14 September 1978, TNA FCO 46/1582/16.

Finland feared, or whether to do nothing definite as the Understanding was useful and there was little risk of any real commitment. The latter was the course recommended by ministers.

Conclusion

This was a period of greater British pessimism about Kenya. Britain's future influence seemed less secure with the expected death of Kenyatta and declining military ability. Personal relationships remained significant but more uncertain. Kenyatta still symbolised, as he had since independence, the close Anglo-Kenyan relationship, but decreased confidence in him meant that long-standing uncertainty about British interests under a future successor was coupled with pessimism about Kenyatta and the current situation. Duff's unusual hope for Kenyatta's speedy demise highlighted this change and the pessimism which had come to BHC. Diplomats increasingly believed Moi would succeed and the group around Moi contained many of Britain's 'friends' within Kenya. Moi was no longer seen as the unintelligent compromise unlikely to last long, but increasingly as a viable future president who should be cultivated with visits and personal contact. British policy-makers encouraged him to keep looking towards Britain as Kenyatta had done, hoping to maintain their interests through his succession. Views were minimally affected by McKenzie's death. But diplomats and civil servants were uncertain and remained unable to predict how the succession would in fact play out. These years did not fundamentally challenge British paternalism, or their sense that they best understood what Kenya's interests were and how to achieve them. But Kariuki's murder did shake British self-confidence with the realisation that they did not have as much knowledge or awareness as they had previously thought, and that their relations with Kenya's leaders were not as open as they had believed. It seemed leading Kenyans were lying to them, or themselves did not have the influence which the British thought they did.

The sense was that what had made the Kenyan relationship so 'special' in earlier years – the close personal contacts and military relations – was slipping away. This change seems to have been due to

a new sense of military and financial realities: the UK government could not afford to maintain the military assets which had underwritten their intervention in the mutiny or the plans for Operation Binnacle. British politicians, civil servants and diplomats no longer wanted Kenya's leaders to rely on them, as they could not provide the same level of military support. But they did not want someone else to replace them. The Treasury did not want to pay for the relationship with increased aid, although the FCO still hoped for this. Internal debates in 1978 over the Bamburi Understanding highlighted this desire to limit exposure, but it was retained because it was both beneficial and free.

The military relationship was crucial for British policy-makers. With this declining, it was more difficult to envisage a positive future relationship. The failure to deliver ammunition swiftly, or to provide an obvious show of military support, and the brief cancellation of British training, made it clear to all involved that things had changed. The relationship had been built on these military connections; the MOU had been the first major agreement with independent Kenya and was thereafter referred to and relied upon. But this was becoming less certain, and British abilities were hampered by changed circumstances and geopolitical weaknesses. Military policy would now encourage the Kenyans to spend money on British equipment – thus bringing money into the British economy rather than having to spend on costly interventions. Their hope was to maintain influence without bearing the costs.

Chapter Seven: August 1978-1980

‘Your assumption of the highest office is an encouragement to us all’

Prime Minister Callaghan to President Moi, 17 November 1978¹

In August 1978 Kenyatta died and Moi succeeded to the presidency. British diplomats, politicians and civil servants had long harboured anxieties for the post-Kenyatta future and what this would mean for British interests. But rather than the feared instability, political in-fighting and chaos, Moi consolidated his position quickly and without serious challenge. Yet this alone did not secure British interests. Kenyatta had chosen to pursue a close relationship with Britain: ‘The British, who imprisoned him, remained those to whom he turned first for friendship and help’.² This had been based on personal relationships and deals negotiated with Kenyatta and his interlocutors, and it was the fear of losing these which so exercised British observers. They could not be assured of the benefits of the relationship if Kenya’s leaders sought to deny them; Moi’s attitude towards them would thus be crucial. The sense of a declining relationship which characterised the years immediately prior to 1978 could have seemed the start of a decline, and with the deaths of both Kenyatta and McKenzie in 1978, two of the key individuals who had sustained the Anglo-Kenyan relationship even before independence were removed.

Yet in fact, Moi’s constitutional succession at Kenyatta’s death and his choices in the immediate years thereafter reinvigorated the relationship. Khapoya in 1979 suggested that ‘Kenyans and others who were contented with the previous regime will find much to rejoice about with Moi’s regime’.³ This certainly appeared true from the British perspective. Moi recognised, as had Kenyatta and other

¹ Jim Callaghan to Daniel arap Moi, 17 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/26.

² Stanley Fingland, ‘The Death and Funeral of President Kenyatta’, 6 September 1978, TNA FCO 31/2319/196.

³ Khapoya, ‘Politics of Succession’, p. 19.

Kenyan politicians previously, the potential benefits he could gain from a close relationship with Britain. Negative and derogatory British assessments of Moi had not disappeared, but Moi came to seem much more assured and shrewd than British policy-makers had previously imagined him. His biographer Morton – who notably received assistance from Moi himself, and whose biography was intended in at least some measure to rehabilitate Moi from his 1998 image of ‘a dictator as corrupt as he is malevolent’ – argued that ‘For much of his life he has survived by disguise’.⁴ Russell also argued that Moi’s ‘naïve country boy routine was merely a brilliant act’.⁵ He certainly convinced the British of his ‘disguise’ prior to his succession and it is clear that British officials had underestimated Moi, who was quickly able to take control of Kenya’s leadership.

The British were not king-makers: they had not foisted Moi onto Kenya, and they came to back him with some hesitation. But the idea that the British had this role, coupled with Kenyan ideas such as those in 1975 that the British army was in Kenya to back up the Kenyan state, could encourage the idea amongst Kenyans that Moi was the chosen British successor and had their – potentially military – backing. Moi sought to use this to his advantage, cultivating this image and relationship with a series of visits to Britain. These followed his successful visit in March 1978 as vice-president. Barston has argued that personal diplomacy and visits to major powers ‘may facilitate political transition’ and this was Moi’s aim.⁶ Kenyatta had rarely travelled abroad and preferred to work through intermediaries such as McKenzie and Njonjo who would transmit his messages to foreign governments. Moi chose to visit himself. He made a series of overseas visits during 1978-80, including to France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, China, and America, as well as multiple visits within Africa.⁷ Moi was clearly keen to cultivate the image of himself as a world statesman with international support. As Musambayi has argued, ‘foreign policy has been used as a

⁴ Andrew Morton, *Moi: The Making of an African Statesman* (London, 1998), pp. 4, 8-9.

⁵ Alec Russell, *Big Men, Little People: Encounters in Africa* (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 72.

⁶ R. P. Barston, *Modern Diplomacy* (London, 1988), p. 98.

⁷ S.J.W. Musandu to Permanent Secretary Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, ‘The President Abroad 1978-1980’, KNA AHC/18/8.

means of regime consolidation and entrenchment'.⁸ This also meant that British interests were sustained through the transition.

Succession

On 22 August 1978, Kenyatta died and Moi was immediately sworn in as president by Njonjo. Kenyatta's succession was seen in the years thereafter as positive and stable compared to elsewhere. Tamarkin argued that 'few African countries can boast Kenya's outstanding record';⁹ Khapoya described it as 'stunningly smooth'.¹⁰ This raises the question of why this was so 'smooth', particularly as peaceful leadership transitions in Africa were uncommon during the 1970s-80s when, as Hughes and May have argued, these were often viewed 'as a "crisis" of stability and survival'.¹¹ The potential for 'crisis' was what British policy-makers were so concerned by in the years preceding Kenyatta's death. Hodder-Williams has suggested the succession 'hid considerable internal divisions and, indeed, an abortive coup in the making';¹² although the head of EAD does not recall viewing this as a threat at the time.¹³ According to Karimi and Ochieng, Mungai planned a purge of the Moi faction to be executed upon Kenyatta's death, with lists of an initial fifteen and total of around 300 to be killed; but Mungai was taken by surprise by Kenyatta dying in Mombasa rather than Nakuru, and Moi's supporters acted immediately to propel him to power.¹⁴ Although it is unclear quite how exaggerated some of this may have been, some sort of plotting was clearly occurring.

⁸ Musambayi, 'Moi's Foreign Policy', p. 1.

⁹ M. Tamarkin, 'From Kenyatta to Moi: The Anatomy of a Peaceful Transition of Power', *Africa Today*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1979), p. 21.

¹⁰ Vincent B. Khapoya, 'Kenya under Moi: Continuity or Change?', *Africa Today*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1980), p. 21.

¹¹ Arnold Hughes and Roy May, 'The Politics of Succession in Black Africa', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1988), p. 1. See also for examples: Ladun Anise, 'Trends in Leadership Succession and Regime Change in African Politics since Independence', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (1974), pp. 507-524; Lanciné Sylla, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, 'Succession of the Charismatic Leader: The Gordian Knot of African Politics', *Daedalus*, Vol. 111, No. 2 (1982), pp. 11-28.

¹² Hodder-Williams, 'Kenya after Kenyatta', p. 478.

¹³ Alan Munro, interview.

¹⁴ Karimi and Ochieng, *Kenyatta Succession*, pp. 157-72.

On the day of Kenyatta's death, High Commissioner Fingland described 'an atmosphere of rather stunned calm'.¹⁵ Fingland also immediately telegraphed MOD that 'visits by military personnel to Kenya at this time should be avoided', and the planned recce party departing the next day should be suspended, with troops in Kenya for an exercise to remain in their base.¹⁶ This suggests concern that the presence of British troops could be misinterpreted or expose them to a potentially volatile situation if stability was not maintained. Communication over the immediately following days between BHC and London took place through flash telegrams, with speed the priority in sharing information. Rosling in EAD considered that 'the immediate aftermath of Kenyatta's death was one of the potential danger periods. And the first indications are therefore encouraging'.¹⁷ A cautious optimism emerged, but British officials were still uncertain about an uncontested succession.¹⁸ In the following days, Moi gained multiple declarations of support from key political figures, including previous opponents,¹⁹ and by 11 September, 'the pro-Moi bandwagon is now rolling at full speed'.²⁰ Moi was described by BHC as having 'perceptibly come to personify a widespread longing for stability' amongst Kenyans, although probably also amongst British policy-makers, who had come to see Moi as the candidate of stability and continued benefits, and thus to support his succession.²¹ Moi adopted a philosophy of 'Nyayo' (footsteps) with the idea he was following Kenyatta's.²² Publicly, he highlighted continuity: 'foreign policy ... has served us well in the past. It will therefore continue unchanged'.²³ Moi was consciously intending to portray an impression of continuity, stability and support.

¹⁵ Telegram no. 1746, Fingland to FCO, 22 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2315/11.

¹⁶ Telegram no. 221445Z, Fingland to MODUK, August 1978, TNA DEFE 24/1634/71.

¹⁷ P.E. Rosling to Stratton, 23 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2315/31.

¹⁸ Telegram no. 1753, Nairobi to FCO, August 1978, TNA DEFE 24/1634/73.

¹⁹ Telegram no. 1767, Fingland to Deskby 251800Z, 25 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2316/112.

²⁰ C.D. Crabbie to EAD, 11 September 1978, TNA FCO 31/2323/53.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Khapoya, 'Politics of Succession', pp. 18-20.

²³ Speech by Daniel arap Moi on the occasion of his installation as President of the Republic of Kenya, 14 October 1978, KNA KA/4/21. During his presidency, Moi did make changes to Kenya's foreign policy, moving 'from its

Kenyatta's funeral was the first occasion when the post-Kenyatta relationship with Moi was to be exhibited, both to Moi and a wider public audience. In preparing for the funeral, which the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Prince Charles would attend, civil servants expected that 'the Kenyan Government, and indeed Kenyan opinion generally, will doubtless see the British presence and attitude as evidence of our wish to maintain the friendliest of relations'.²⁴ British officials were now optimistic about their relationship: 'if as seems likely, they [the Moi-Njonjo-Kibaki group] continue to hold the reins of Government, Anglo-Kenyan relations will prosper'.²⁵

The relationship was immediately reinforced at the highest level with messages between Callaghan and Moi. The Prime Minister's condolence letter offered that: 'If there are matters in which you think Britain can be of assistance to Kenya during this transitional period, I am sure you will not hesitate to inform me either directly or through our High Commissioner'.²⁶ This was a striking declaration of support. This message was sent on the day after Kenyatta's death, and makes clear how quickly and definitively the British government was seeking to back Moi. Callaghan and Moi had met multiple times and their political friendship appears the closest prime minister-president relationship of the period. Lane has argued that Callaghan's 'long career had enabled him to establish good working relations' with many Commonwealth leaders.²⁷ Moi wrote personally to Callaghan in reply that:

The assistance and understanding we have received from Britain, in the traditional style of a good old friend, was particularly welcome. I have no doubt that as we face the difficult years ahead, the people of Kenya can rely on such trusted friends for assistance when needed. I hope to pursue further the areas of co-operation already so well established between our two nations²⁸

quiet conservative pro-western nature, to a buoyant conservative and pro-western orientation': Musambayi, 'Moi's Foreign Policy', p. 1. See also Gordon, 'Anglophonic Variants', pp. 98-9.

²⁴ Visit to Nairobi for the funeral of President Kenyatta, Brief no 1: Steering Brief, 29 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2317.

²⁵ Visit to Nairobi for the funeral of President Kenyatta, Brief no. 3: Anglo-Kenyan Relations, 31 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2317.

²⁶ Prime Minister to Moi, in Nick Sanders to Margaret Turner, 23 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2315/35.

²⁷ Lane, 'Foreign and Defence Policy', p. 164.

²⁸ Moi to Callaghan, 22 September 1978, TNA FCO 31/2323/63.

In his first official presidential communication Moi was aiming to assuage British fears of a change in policy with his presidency and highlight the close relationship; whilst simultaneously conveying that he would look to Britain for continued 'assistance'. Although not specifying details, Moi was making clear that Britain would continue having to put resources into Kenya to maintain the relationship. This personal, high level communication was continued in Callaghan's congratulatory message after Moi was elected president in October: 'For a long time I have thought that your succession was inevitable and right', wrote Callaghan in a particularly selective remembering of British ideas.²⁹ Callaghan had changed the FCO suggested text of this message 'in order to make it more personal'.³⁰

In November 1978, Moi planned an informal trip to London following a visit to Brussels, saying this was about shopping, but 'he hoped it would be possible for him to see "his friend Mr Callaghan"'.³¹ Moi was demonstratively displaying his British support. High Commissioner Fingland suggested that 'President Moi himself seems pleased that [the] opportunity has arisen of coming to London on his first overseas visit since becoming President'.³² London was informed of this trip only ten days prior to its occurrence, but head of EAD Munro argued that: 'In view of the importance we attach to our relations with Kenya it is clearly desirable that we should meet President Moi's expressed wish to see the Prime Minister and Secretary of State if at all possible'.³³ The briefing for this visit suggested that Britain had 'long enjoyed good relations with the new President and his principal associates'.³⁴ Although more true of his 'associates' – and Njonjo and Kibaki were included among those visiting – by this point uncertainties about Moi were being conveniently overlooked in favour of pragmatically focusing on the positive relationship British officials hoped to maintain.

²⁹ Prime Minister to Daniel arap Moi, 9 October 1978, TNA FCO 31/2324/67.

³⁰ Private Secretary to J.S. Wall, 9 October 1978, TNA FCO 31/2324/67.

³¹ J.S. Wall to B.G. Cartledge, 8 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/7.

³² Telegram no. 1915, Fingland to FCO, 7 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/1.

³³ A.G. Munro to Private Secretary, [November 1978], TNA FCO 31/2336/5.

³⁴ EAD, 'Private Visit of the President of Kenya to London, 17-10 [sic] November 1978', TNA FCO 31/2337.

Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Owen met Moi at the airport and discussed regional foreign policy, with Owen commenting that it 'was a useful opportunity for contact'.³⁵ The Prime Minister was in Cardiff, but 'would like a personal message from him, conveying his regrets, and making any political points which may be appropriate, to be handed to President Moi on his arrival'.³⁶ This letter read that: 'Your many friends here have admired the way in which you have led Kenya since the sad death of Jomo Kenyatta ... Your assumption of the highest office is an encouragement to us all'.³⁷ Callaghan, and by extension the British government, was cementing support for Moi. British policy-makers were privileging these personal connections, and politicians were particularly involved in meeting Moi during this transition period. A lunch hosted by the Lord Chancellor was arranged, and his speech stated that 'The closeness of our relationship has brought great benefits to both sides'.³⁸ The idea of a mutually beneficial relationship had long been important, and was highlighted to encourage Moi to continue this.

One of the few substantive issues raised at this visit was political detainees in Kenya. Human rights and democracy had rarely been British priorities in Kenya so long as British interests were protected.³⁹ The specific concern was due to 'considerable public concern in this country, especially over the case of the writer, Professor Ngugi [wa Thiong'o]'.⁴⁰ Fingland argued that 'the Kenyan whose views really matter about detention is Njonjo', and suggested the Lord Chancellor talk to him informally rather than Moi, although doubtful of the impact, having already raised this with Njonjo.⁴¹ This suggests the informal and personal nature of the British relationship with Njonjo: they felt they could approach him on this issue, even if not expecting him to take their advice. Njonjo was an intermediary British policy-

³⁵ Telegram no. 613, FCO to Nairobi, 20 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/34.

³⁶ B.G. Cartledge to J.S. Wall, 9 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/8.

³⁷ Jim Callaghan to Daniel arap Moi, 17 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/26.

³⁸ Notes for the Lord Chancellor's speech at lunch for President Moi, 18 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/28.

³⁹ See Edward Peck to A.G. Bottomley, 'Kenya: "The Little General Election"', 1 July 1966, TNA DO 213/188/13.

⁴⁰ J.S. Wall to Ian Maxwell, 17 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2336/31. Ngugi wa Thiong'o had been arrested in December 1977, see Branch, *Kenya*, pp. 124-6.

⁴¹ Telegram no. 1947, Fingland to FCO, 14 November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2337.

makers felt they had access to, as well as being a close advisor of Moi, accompanying him on all his visits to London. With the deaths of both Kenyatta and McKenzie, Njonjo had become even more significant as a British ally. The brief for the Lord Chancellor was: 'We fully recognise that this is a matter for the Kenyan Government to make its own decisions, that detentions are very few and strictly constitutional ... If there is anything the Kenyan Government can do to reassure opinion, it would of course be very welcome'; however, 'The government has ruled with much greater restraint than elsewhere in Black Africa'.⁴² This was a very mild brief, and does not suggest officials intended to put any real pressure on Njonjo or Moi. As before, positive personal relationships with Kenya's leaders were more aligned with British interests than pressure on human rights. The impact of British influence is debatable; however, it is notable that less than a month later Moi did announce the release of political detainees.⁴³

State Visit

In January 1979, only months after his succession and previous informal visit to Britain, Moi was keen to organise another trip. He hoped for a formal visit and 'wishes to be able to let it be known soon that he has an official visit to the UK pending'.⁴⁴ As this suggests, for Moi, a key consideration was not just to have discussions with British ministers but to publicise in Kenya that he would be visiting. Moi recognised the benefits of using widespread assumptions of British influence to his advantage. FCO 'welcome[d] Moi's desire to demonstrate the priority he attaches to relations with us', and BHC was to inform Moi that 'he is always welcome here'.⁴⁵ As British civil servants recognised, 'It has been and still is in our interests to encourage the Kenyans in the value they attach to their special relationship

⁴² Brief for the Lord Chancellor, 'Political Detainees in Kenya', November 1978, TNA FCO 31/2337.

⁴³ Speech by Daniel arap Moi, on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Kenya Independence Celebrations, 12 December 1978, KNA KA/4/21.

⁴⁴ Antony Duff to Permanent Under-Secretary, 24 January 1979, TNA FCO 31/2563/13.

⁴⁵ Telegram no. 59, FCO to Nairobi, 6 February 1979, TNA PREM 16/2149.

with us'.⁴⁶ FCO suggested that, because of a scheduling gap, Moi was 'an excellent candidate' for a state visit.⁴⁷ Kenyatta had never made a state visit and this would clearly fulfil the role both Moi and FCO staff wanted of publicising British support for Moi. Young has described state visits as 'an important element in "promoting Great Britain PLC"'.⁴⁸ Moi was invited and 'obviously delighted', and planned to delay his visit to China until after this.⁴⁹

As well as demonstrating personal relationships, tangible issues would be discussed at the state visit, and British decision-makers sought to prepare their policies in the months leading up to it. Aid was always a key part of the relationship and Kenya remained a British priority in Africa: by now 'the Kenyan Aid Programme is Britain's largest in Africa'.⁵⁰ At aid talks in Nairobi in October 1978 the British aid offer was £80m for the next three years.⁵¹ Although at first sight this appears a substantial increase from the 1976 aid package, inflation meant that it was the same amount in real terms; and it was in fact a smaller proportion of the overall aid budget.⁵² ODM planned this because of the difficulties in getting Treasury approval for an increase – they preferred not to fight for this.⁵³ This remained a negotiated relationship and the strength of the Kenyans as aid negotiators was clearly recognised. Hart, in FCO Research Department, argued in a consideration of Kenya's balance of payments that:

The long term trend seems to be towards increasing trade deficits and an insatiable appetite for aid. The Kenyans know how to operate their give and take relationship with us in which we give them more aid per head than any country except the Seychelles and they take it and come back for more⁵⁴

⁴⁶ J.A. Robson to Williams, 4 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2592/21.

⁴⁷ Telegram no. 66, FCO to Nairobi, 12 February 1979, TNA FCO 31/2564/25.

⁴⁸ Young, *Twentieth-Century Diplomacy*, p. 171.

⁴⁹ Telegram no. 94, Fingland to FCO, 16 February 1979, TNA FCO 31/2564/32.

⁵⁰ State Visit of the President of the Republic of Kenya, 12-15 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2572.

⁵¹ Agreed Minutes: UK/Kenya Aid talks, Nairobi 24-25 October 1978, TNA FCO 31/2592/1.

⁵² M.P.J. Lynch to Fogarty, 21 September 1978, TNA OD 67/79/38.

⁵³ P.S. McLean to Minister, 28 September 1978, TNA OD 67/79/43.

⁵⁴ C.T. Hart to Rosling, 10 January 1979, TNA FCO 31/2589/13.

The wry feeling apparent in his comments was part of his more negative assessment of Kenya's economy. But as he made explicit, the British were not in control of this relationship and leading Kenyans had a significant ability to shape this.

Economic concerns were tied into Kenya's armament programme as Kenya's 'Military expenditure rose from less than 1 per cent of [Kenya's Gross National Product] in 1973 to 4.6 per cent in 1978'.⁵⁵

This coincides exactly with changed British military policy towards Kenya in 1974, when they committed to supporting a Kenyan arms build-up. As tables 19 and 20 show, it was after 1976 – when Britain did not supply ammunition or a gunboat following the Entebbe raid – that Kenyan military expenditure dramatically increased as a proportion of her budget, and that the size of her army increased. By 1979, Britain had offered support for:

the massive military re-equipment programme which amounts to some £425 million over the next 7 to 10 years, of which nearly half is for contracts placed in the UK largely financed by credits on favourable terms ... If we do not offer help in the form of programme aid, the Kenyans may seek to cancel or renegotiate existing contracts with UK defence suppliers⁵⁶

British policy-makers had supported this Kenyan arms build-up, yet were now left with the difficulty that the Kenyans could not afford it – as, incidentally, the British had argued in 1964. Debt was increasing, and Kenya's debt service ratio almost doubled from 4.0 per cent in 1976 to 7.9 per cent in 1978.⁵⁷ Whitehall estimated Kenya's 1978 deficit at US\$539m.⁵⁸ As table 21 makes clear, British projections of Kenya's future economy were not optimistic.

Table 19: Military Allocations as Percentage of Central Government Budgets⁵⁹

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Percentage of budget	4.9	4.4	5.4	6.1	6.4	6.5	5.7	10.8	13.7	15.6

⁵⁵ Orwa, 'Foreign policy', p. 237.

⁵⁶ J.A. Robson to Williams, 'Programme Aid for Kenya', 4 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2592/21.

⁵⁷ Visit of President Moi: Briefing for Prime Minister, Kenya: Vital Statistics, 18 February 1980, TNA FCO 31/2834/21.

⁵⁸ C. Haley to Longrigg, 2 November 1979, TNA FCO 31/2591/84.

⁵⁹ Paul B. Henze, 'Arming the Horn 1960-1980', Working Paper No. 43, International Security Studies Program, The Wilson Center (1982), p. 22.

Table 20: Size of Armed Forces (thousands)⁶⁰

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Size	7	7	7	8	9	9	9	13	13	13

Table 21: British Projections of Kenya's Future Balance of Payments (US\$m)⁶¹

	1978	1979	1980
Debt Service Payments	-93	-101	-112
Balance of payments	-295	-94	65

Because of their financial difficulties, in May 1979 the Kenyans requested a programme loan of £30m, preferably additional to the £80m already offered, although they would delay some projects to enable funds to be transferred if necessary.⁶² Deputy High Commissioner William Watts suggested the Kenyans were 'not expecting a lot but they will be disappointed if they do not get some additional assistance'.⁶³ Yet again this caused inter-departmental debate. FCO argued in favour of switching £15m of the aid already committed to programme aid, but despite 'very strong political arguments' ODA was hesitant because the general aid budget was to be cut by £50m.⁶⁴ This was due to the new Thatcher government's foreign policy focus on America and the Cold War, and Thatcher's 'relatively low regard for aid'.⁶⁵ Munro, head of EAD, recalled that 'the different style and mood came with Mrs Thatcher, who didn't have as much time for Africa, or sense of engagement'.⁶⁶ Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Carrington, however, wrote to the Treasury that 'this is a clear example of

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

⁶¹ Gordon Hall to P.E. Rosling, 'Kenyan: Balance of Payments', 2 February 1979, TNA FCO 31/2590/32.

⁶² Telegram no. 278, Nairobi to FCO, 29 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2592/28.

⁶³ W.J. Watts to Robson, [May 1979], TNA FCO 31/2591/65.

⁶⁴ Peter Preston to Hurd, 6 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2593/40.

⁶⁵ Killick, 'British Aid to Africa', p. 674. See also: Brian Harrison, *Finding a Role?: The United Kingdom, 1970-1990* (Oxford, 2010), p. 44.

⁶⁶ Alan Munro, interview.

aid, not as an exercise in charity or a dubious operation in support of exports, but as an essential instrument of British foreign policy in the real world of today'.⁶⁷ This followed a 1978 government report which had argued that British policy should 'focus our resources on those countries where our interests are greatest and where our efforts will pay the greatest dividend'.⁶⁸ This was a very explicit acknowledgement that aid was intended to serve British interests. The £80m agreement had previously been thought 'ready for final signature';⁶⁹ but Nigel Lawson, financial secretary to the Treasury, was 'sure it would be wrong to sign a formal agreement with President Moi, which would commit us to implementing our predecessors' £80 million pledge, before we have completed that [spending] review'.⁷⁰ This was an occasion when British politics at the highest level had an impact on policy towards Kenya. The offer of £80m had already been made, and Lawson's implicit suggestion that Britain might renege on this would surely have damaged the relationship. Others in the Treasury 'did not envisage that we should go back on this pledge', but did not want this to be signed at the state visit.⁷¹ As a compromise, there was authorisation to offer £15m of programme aid and £65m of project aid, making up the £80m and following FCO's preference – although a long way from the Kenyan request.

Another issue which came under scrutiny in preparation for the visit was the Bamburi Understanding. Following debate earlier in 1978, the consideration was how to address this under Moi's presidency. Before Kenyatta's funeral, EAD hoped not to have to renew it, but argued that 'It would undermine Kenyan confidence in their relations with us and run counter to our interests if we were simply to say that the Bamburi Understanding died with Kenyatta'.⁷² Thus, policy was simply to 'hope the Kenyans

⁶⁷ Carrington to Treasury, 'Aid for Kenya', 8 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2593/41.

⁶⁸ Cmnd. 7308, *The United Kingdom's Overseas Representation* (London, 1978), p. 4.

⁶⁹ R.A. Burns to Permanent-Under-Secretary to Martin Vile, 16 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2566/113.

⁷⁰ Nigel Lawson to Lord Carrington, 12 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2593/42.

⁷¹ J.V. Kerby to Lynch, 14 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2593/45.

⁷² Visit to Nairobi for the funeral of President Kenyatta, Brief no. 5: Bamburi Understanding, 31 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2317.

will not raise the subject'.⁷³ In preparation for the state visit, however, officials considered whether the Understanding should be pre-emptively raised and explicitly removed. FCO Defence Department saw this as 'a unique opportunity to get this matter clarified' and end the commitment.⁷⁴ But EAD and BHC were more cautious of this, 'for fear of damaging Anglo/Kenyan relations' which were their priority.⁷⁵ Fingland agreed with EAD that 'the Bamburi Understanding should not be discussed with Mr Moi unless he takes the initiative ... on balance, it seems likely that Mr Moi may not seek a specific renewal of the Understanding. It is impossible to be sure, of course'.⁷⁶

Civil servants agreed they would not raise this, and would hope the Kenyans did not. If Moi did ask, and if pushed, they would explain that it was now 'unrealistic to assume that direct British military intervention in a situation in Africa could be part of our response'.⁷⁷ Although not intending to simply deny the Understanding, they would emphasise that the Kenyans should not rely upon it. Head of EAD John Robson suggested that 'if the subject is not raised by either side in the first meeting between new leaders in both countries, this could justifiably be taken as an indication of tacit acceptance by the Kenyans that the Understanding in its present form had lost much of its relevance'.⁷⁸ Moi and his delegation did not raise the Understanding. But there is, of course, another explanation for Moi's choice not to discuss this: he thereby avoided the possibility that it might be cancelled, and if a situation arose in future when he wished to call upon it, he would truthfully be able to say that it had never been revoked.

The state visit itself consisted of large amounts of ceremonial: inspecting the RAF Guard of Honour, a welcome from the Lord Mayor, state banquet, as well as talks with the Prime Minister and lunch with

⁷³ P.E. Rosling to Stratton, 'Briefing for Governmental Representation at Kenyatta's funeral: Bamburi Understanding', 25 August 1978, TNA FCO 31/2316/92.

⁷⁴ B. Watkins to Robson, 16 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2580/3.

⁷⁵ J.A. Robson to Williams, 23 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2580/4.

⁷⁶ Stanley Fingland to P.E. Rosling, 18 April 1979, TNA FCO 31/2580/2.

⁷⁷ Draft brief: 'State Visit of President Moi of Kenya, 12-15 June 1979, Bamburi Understanding', TNA FCO 31/2580/2.

⁷⁸ J.A. Robson to Williams, 23 May 1979, TNA FCO 31/2580/4.

the government.⁷⁹ The Kenyan delegation was extensive and consisted of twelve in the official party, an unofficial party of thirty, five officials, a fifteen man security detail, seven man presidential escort, thirteen members of the press and two from Kenya Airways.⁸⁰ The visit was written up in a Kenyan booklet on Moi's overseas visits intended to be circulated to missions abroad,⁸¹ and described as 'a living testimony of our friendly relations with Britain'.⁸² This kind of reaction was clearly part of the reason for bringing so many journalists, and shows Moi's shrewd use of this visit to cement his position, which was widely reported in the Kenyan press.⁸³

British policy-makers were increasingly recognising Moi as an ally. Briefing for the Queen described Moi as 'a sincere, intelligent but rather modest man'.⁸⁴ This second quality is particularly interesting given earlier views of Moi as unintelligent, and the 1979 Annual Review did still highlight 'his intellectual limitations'.⁸⁵ Moi's meeting with Thatcher highlighted the close relationship. Thatcher commented that the 'relationship between Kenya and the U.K. was a very special one'.⁸⁶ Moi 'agreed with the Prime Minister that Kenya's long relationship with the U.K. had a special character; the two countries belonged to one family. He was very grateful for what the U.K. had done for Kenya in the past'.⁸⁷ Both leaders were explicitly highlighting the 'special' nature of the relationship and seeking to convey that this had survived the succession.⁸⁸ This was also a way of using the relationship to their advantage from both sides: it cost nothing to describe this as 'special'.

⁷⁹ Programme, State Visit of The President of the Republic of Kenya, 30 April 1979, TNA FCO 31/2576.

⁸⁰ The President's State Visit to Britain, 12-15 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2567/166.

⁸¹ S.J.W. Musandu to Permanent Secretary Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 'The President Abroad 1978-1980', KNA AHC/18/8.

⁸² 'President Moi's State Visit to Britain 12-14 June 1979', KNA AHC/18/8.

⁸³ See for examples: Clare Dover, 'Kenya is helped to prosper by British aid', *Daily Nation*, 12 June 1979, p. iv; 'It's a Royal Welcome', *The Standard*, 13 June 1979, p. 1; Joe Rodrigues and Keith Martin, 'Thatcher hails Kenya progress', *Daily Nation*, 14 June 1979, p. 1.

⁸⁴ State Visit of the President of Kenya 12-15 June 1979: Topics of Conversation, TNA FCO 31/2572.

⁸⁵ J.R. Williams to Lord Carrington, 'Annual Review: Kenya 1979', 14 January 1980, TNA FCO 31/2829/1.

⁸⁶ Note of a tête-à-tête discussion between the Prime Minister and President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya at 10 Downing Street, 13 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2587/49.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ His Excellency the President's State Visit to Britain, 12-15 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2567/166.

At his meeting with Thatcher, Moi reiterated his desire for additional aid: 'I need your assistance'.⁸⁹ Moi requested grants to repay British loans for military expenditure.⁹⁰ Thatcher 'thought that the British Government should do what it could to help President Moi ... [and] suggested that, if necessary, the financial help which we are giving to less friendly countries in Africa should be diverted'.⁹¹ This was a continuation of the idea that Kenya was 'special', with a particular significance to Britain worth preserving and putting more into than elsewhere. Another suggestion Thatcher made was 'the possibility of using additional UK assistance of this kind as a means of encouraging Kenya to be helpful over Rhodesia'.⁹² The idea of aid as part of an exchange was very clear, with the suggestion that this could be used to 'buy' Kenyan support over Rhodesia-Zimbabwe – finally resolving that situation was a major concern of British policy at this point.⁹³ In fact, as previously, Kenya was broadly helpful towards Britain on Zimbabwe, and contributed to the Commonwealth Monitoring Force set up later in the year.⁹⁴

Following the state visit, Moi's requests were considered. Robson argued there 'would be a good case' for additional programme aid 'were it not for the constraints on the aid programme'.⁹⁵ Those in Treasury and ODA were opposed,⁹⁶ and Treasury remained reluctant for the aid agreement to be signed, although as Thatcher had committed to £80m when meeting Moi it was 'not at risk'.⁹⁷ Treasury won the argument, and the decision was taken not to offer further aid, nor to change the terms of military loans.⁹⁸ The British had encouraged an arms build-up in Kenya, yet when Kenya's government could not afford it, were not prepared to offer further assistance. Additionally, because of the

⁸⁹ Daniel T. arap Moi to Margaret Thatcher, 14 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2586/40.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Brian Cartledge to J.S. Wall, 'The Prime Minister's discussion with President Moi of Kenya at 10 Downing Street on 13 June 1979', TNA FCO 31/2587/49.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ See Onslow, 'Man on the Spot', pp. 68–100.

⁹⁴ J.R. Williams to Carrington, 'Annual Review: Kenya 1979', 14 January 1980, TNA FCO 31/2829/1.

⁹⁵ J.A. Robson to Williams, 2 July 1979, TNA FCO 31/2594/60.

⁹⁶ J.L. Moore, 'Notes of a meeting on 19 June 1979 to discuss Kenyan defence payments', 26 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2587/51.

⁹⁷ J.A. Robson to Williams, 19 July 1979, TNA FCO 31/2594/64.

⁹⁸ Telegram no. 286, FCO to Nairobi, 23 July 1979, TNA FCO 31/2594/70.

spending review, Treasury suggested that disbursements of project aid be slowed to allow for programme aid without too much additional British spending.⁹⁹ Watts in BHC argued strongly against this: 'Our offer of £65m project aid is little more than pie in the sky if ... we can spend only £2.3[m] of this before April 1981'.¹⁰⁰ High Commissioner Williams argued that 'the Prime Minister made the offer of programme aid personally ... We would not wish to expose her to a complaint from President Moi'.¹⁰¹ This was intended as an internal negotiating tactic to encourage a response from ODA and Treasury, as diplomats in BHC argued for Kenya's continuing importance. But the primacy of the Treasury was clear and spending was limited.

Thatcher personally conveyed to Moi that Britain would offer no further aid when they met again in Lusaka in August 1979 for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. At their bilateral meeting Thatcher told Moi that she

wished very much that the UK could have done more: but the most that could be done was to accelerate the £15 million in programme aid which had already been agreed. The UK had massive debts of her own and, despite all her own efforts, the British Government could not possibly do any more¹⁰²

Moi did not seem to react too negatively, saying that an acceleration 'would be of great assistance to Kenya. It might be that, in time, additional resource could be made available'.¹⁰³ As this suggests, he had not entirely given up on the prospect of further aid. Robson commented that 'the Kenyans were no doubt disappointed but had decided to roll with the punch'.¹⁰⁴ For Moi, securing his position and personal relations were still his key concerns.

⁹⁹ K.G. Bloomfield to W.J. Watts, 25 July 1979, TNA FCO 31/2594/71.

¹⁰⁰ W.J. Watts to J.A. Robson, 24 July 1970, TNA FCO 31/2594/74.

¹⁰¹ J.R. Williams to Fogarty, 2 August 1979, TNA FCO 31/2595/84.

¹⁰² Note of a conversation between the Prime Minister and President Moi of Kenya at Lusaka, 3 August 1979, TNA FCO 31/2560/11.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ J.A. Robson to Aspin, 26 September 1979, TNA FCO 31/2595/105.

In February 1980 Moi made another visit to London, again with little notice, and between visits to Germany and America.¹⁰⁵ As on the previous meetings, he met the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Prime Minister. Moi was clearly still seeking to use this connection to his advantage, and the fact of the meetings was more significant than their substance: ‘the President would like a tour d’horizon with the Prime Minister but has no specific problems to discuss’.¹⁰⁶ The conclusions sent from Robson to BHC were that ‘the arrangements went well, and that nothing of great substance emerged’.¹⁰⁷ This visit was not intended as a means of working out substantial developments in the relationship, but was rather to highlight Moi’s access and connections, something both sides were keen to encourage. Moi’s succession had reinvigorated the relationship, and in a clear sign of this, a November 1979 report by Williams argued that:

Three years ago our predecessors took the view that the United Kingdom’s direct interests in Kenya would decline slowly but steadily. This has not proved to be the case. There is still a good deal of substance to the network of relationships which have been built up over the years from the colonial period onwards and in some areas, notably trade, aid and defence, the involvement is in fact greater than it was¹⁰⁸

As Williams’ report makes clear, British interests in Kenya had been protected and advanced by Moi’s succession and were benefiting from his leadership.

Conclusion

British pragmatism was clear in their new-found commitment to Moi. Despite the personal nature of their relationship with Kenyatta, the benefits Britain received in terms of military agreements, economic benefits, and a geopolitical ally were not substantially challenged. In fact, Moi’s succession reinvigorated some of the more positive assessments of the relationship as continuity and stability

¹⁰⁵ President Moi’s visit 15-19 February 1980, 11 February 1980, TNA FCO 31/2834/9.

¹⁰⁶ Their emphasis. Visit of President Moi: Steering Brief for Prime Minister, 14 February 1980, TNA FCO 31/2834/21.

¹⁰⁷ J.A. Robson to High Commissioner, 27 February 1980, TNA FCO 31/2834/35.

¹⁰⁸ P.J. Streams and R.D. Williams, ‘Inspector’s Report on Kenya’, November 1979, TNA FCO 31/2605/28.

remained. Indeed, there were reasons to be positive about Moi following the stagnation of Kenyan politics in Kenyatta's final years: Moi released detainees, wanted to visit Britain, and made some attempts – though recognisably focused on his enemies – at combatting corruption.¹⁰⁹ This was a negotiated relationship, and prior to Kenyatta's death, British officials had been concerned that any future president would fundamentally transform this. But Moi chose not to, and rather, 'The new Government of President Moi has stressed the priority it attaches to good relations with the UK'.¹¹⁰

British diplomats, civil servants and politicians had consistently underestimated Moi as vice-president. Until the late-1970s they had typically viewed him as unintelligent, a compromise and someone who, if he ever achieved the presidency, would have a limited term. In fact, as he demonstrated once he became president, Moi was much shrewder and more politically astute than British policy-makers had anticipated. He was able to cement his position in power and use the British relationship to his advantage. The visits Moi made to Britain were intended to convey his international support to a Kenyan audience. Lots of Kenyans believed that the British somehow were the king-makers and would back their chosen candidate. For Moi, this provided an opportunity. Uncertain of his position, he believed – rightly – that showing that the British were on his side would dissuade plotters and rivals. Even if he did not achieve much from his repeated visits to London, they were read in Kenya as a demonstration of British support. Moi thus used the relationship to his advantage, harnessing ideas of British power and influence.

Visits to Britain were crucial in these years, and both sides saw these visits as a way to highlight – to one another and more widely – that the relationship was still viewed as 'special'. The succession reasserted the value to the British government and a Kenyan elite of the negotiated relationship. But significantly, these outward signs did not cost too much. Very notably, it was with the US that Moi made an arms deal, offering America naval facilities and the use of Kenya's airfields, and receiving

¹⁰⁹ See C.D. Crabbie to EAD, 22 February 1979, TNA FCO 31/2557/7.

¹¹⁰ State Visit of the President of the Republic of Kenya, 12-15 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2572.

US\$27m of military assistance and US\$50m of economic aid in return.¹¹¹ Previously, Britain had tended to be the partner of choice for Kenyan arms deals, and this was a clear sign of the movement away from a predominant focus on Britain to Kenya becoming 'an American client'.¹¹² When it came to the tangible costs of the relationship, British diplomats, civil servants and politicians sought to move away from the Bamburi Understanding. Thatcher's incoming government also made changes to aid policy and, despite her support for this at the state visit, thereafter did not offer additional aid or credit for arms as Moi had requested. What Britain offered was therefore decreased, as they sought to maintain the relationship but limit the costs. This was to be influence on the cheap – but influence nonetheless.

¹¹¹ Hornsby, *Kenya*, p. 337.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 337.

Conclusion

‘the very special position we still have in Kenya means that we have a point of advantage which we should not lightly weaken, or still less abandon’

Eric Norris to S.Y. Dawbarn, 2 February 1972¹

During the years between 1960 and 1980 British foreign policy moved away from empire. In 1960 Macmillan spoke of the ‘wind of change’; by 1980 even Zimbabwe had become independent under majority rule. Britain also moved closer to Europe, failing twice in applications before becoming a member of the EEC in 1973. The Cold War overshadowed foreign policy, and the American ‘special relationship’ was privileged, whilst the Commonwealth proved less valuable than anticipated. Yet as this thesis shows, British foreign policy did not simply neglect former colonies. Kenya proves an instructive example of a relationship British officials actively pursued after independence and from which they drew benefits. The complexities of post-colonial relationships with Britain have often been overlooked, but this was not a simple neo-colonialism or dependency, nor an interest based solely on the European population, military training, or aid. Instead, this was a nuanced and negotiated relationship with multiple and sometimes competing priorities and abilities; a relationship which was not conducted at the top of British politics but which was nonetheless significant to British civil servants, and sometimes to politicians, and valued as part of their attempt at a global foreign policy and world power role.

In many ways, these twenty years were a period of strong continuities. Independence from colonial rule did not end British influence, and Kenya continued to maintain multiple connections with Britain. As policy-makers had hoped prior to decolonisation, Britain continued to receive benefits from Kenya. British diplomats, civil servants and politicians feared changes to the nature of the relationship,

¹ Eric Norris to S.Y. Dawbarn, 2 February 1972, TNA FCO 31/1190/3.

concerned firstly about Kenyatta's assumption of the presidency, and later about his removal from it. This was typified by their ideas about the succession, with officials fearing that the positive relationship they had established with Kenyatta was dependent upon him personally and would not outlast him; and that any successor would challenge the British role and prominence, disadvantaging British interests. This concern underlay many of their attempts at cultivating individuals. Yet in fact, both independence and the succession were surmounted with relative ease and limited change to the British connection. In the early 1960s decision-makers from both countries created the relationships and set up the agreements which protected and promoted British interests in Kenya, based on a negotiated sense of shared interests. The later 1960s and early 1970s confirmed these relationships and interests under Kenyatta's leadership. It was in the mid-1970s that decision-makers, typified by High Commissioner Duff, became increasingly pessimistic about events in Kenya and even Kenyatta himself – for so long highly valued as the source of stability and British influence. With Moi's succession, and in the initial years of his presidency, the Anglo-Kenyan relationship was once again reconfirmed and rehabilitated.

The major shift in British policy was in the military strategy the British government advocated for Kenya. In 1964, this encouraged Kenya not to build up a large military and to rely on potential British intervention. Such intervention occurred in the 1964 mutiny, was planned against the possibility of an Odinga coup, and the Bamburi Understanding made some – however vague – commitment to providing this if required. This altered a decade later when British policy shifted to encourage an arms build-up in Kenya and a move away from reliance on any British intervention. Partly this was due to Britain's more limited abilities, of which the failure to supply ammunition after Entebbe was the clearest sign. Changed British policy was not simply about a declining commitment to Kenya, but an inability to maintain the military capabilities to intervene and a preference to sell arms instead – benefitting the British economy in the process. By 1980, Kenya was heavily indebted to Britain and elsewhere from this arms build-up.

There was no single concern which made Kenya matter to British politicians, diplomats and civil servants, but the combination of multiple and overlapping interests encouraged them to place a high value on this relationship. Britain's broad aims towards Kenya were remarkably consistent. The overriding British aim was to cultivate 'friendly' Kenyans and thus ensure the country stayed 'friendly' to Britain. Although this was a seemingly simple aim, it was a very flexible idea which could be redefined as events and pragmatism dictated, and encompassed multiple aspects of the relationship. The economic connections were extensive as Kenya was a centre for investment and trade within the region. The position of the Europeans and Asians gave the British government a particular interest, while these could be useful for Kenya as a bargaining threat. The military and strategic relationships were crucial, with the military training facilities Britain received from Kenya one of the most unusual benefits. Kenya also maintained foreign policies which were advantageous to Britain, and which enabled British predominance; while leading Kenyans, at least in private, offered diplomatic support over issues such as Rhodesia. Kenyan stability was supported by the British connection and British officials were concerned to maintain this. Personal relations with leading Kenyans were thought by British diplomats to be close and useful. Kenya was viewed as a 'special' relationship by the British government for all of these reasons, both specific and intangible.

The language of Kenya being 'special' and requiring distinct treatment is one which contemporaries in the British government used with notable frequency and for multiple purposes. This could be a negotiating tool used internally to encourage outcomes – such as a greater aid proportion – that certain departments or individuals hoped for.² EAD typically used this with Treasury, with ODM more hesitant about whether they viewed Kenya as a 'special' case or not. This language was also used as part of a regional comparison, as Kenya could only be 'special' by comparison; in 1969: 'Kenya is to some extent the odd man out in East Africa by reason of the very strength of the residual British links

² See for examples: J.H. Butter to A.M. Galsworthy, 27 July 1960, TNA CO 822/2560/22; Record of meetings on future British aid to Kenya, eighth meeting: 6.45pm, 13 April 1970, TNA OD 26/275/127; H.S. Lee to A.R. Thomas, 2 March 1973, TNA T 317/1939.

... we should seek to make tactful use of our special position in Kenya'.³ British policy-makers also used this language in direct communications with Kenya's leaders in order to encourage them towards what saw as a profitable relationship, such as by Thatcher to Moi at the 1979 state visit.⁴ It was also occasionally used by leading Kenyans in order to try and gain the greatest possible advantage from their relationship: Kibaki in 1972 was 'hinting strongly at our continued special relationship with Kenya' in order to encourage extensive aid.⁵ In so often talking, both to the Kenyans and each other, about Kenya as 'special', British officials came to understand Kenya as an especially beneficial relationship. In 1972, High Commissioner Norris highlighted that 'in so far as our interests in Africa as a whole are important, the very special position we still have in Kenya means that we have a point of advantage which we should not lightly weaken, or still less abandon'.⁶ There was a self-reinforcing circularity in Kenya's importance to Britain: as the British government put more resources into the relationship, in terms of aid, military supplies, and other tangible factors, they came to view Kenya as increasingly significant, as a place where Britain had a greater stake they wanted to protect, and this encouraged them to invest further. By treating Kenya as a place of importance to Britain, British officials thus made it even more so. This then became part of the accepted logic of policy, as Kenya came to seem a 'special relationship'.

The close post-colonial relationship with Kenya had not been predicted, and still sometimes seemed to surprise British diplomats long after independence. In 1973, High Commissioner Duff wrote that

at this distance from the heady days of independence, the Kenyans do genuinely want our friendship and our support ... The Kenyans' post-colonial façade occasionally slips to reveal the depth and strength of the relationship which they enjoy with us, and which they will occasionally confess is a special one⁷

³ D.C. Tebbit to J. Johnston, 21 August 1969, TNA FCO 31/353/3.

⁴ Note of a tête-à-tête discussion between the Prime Minister and President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya at 10 Downing Street, 13 June 1979, TNA FCO 31/2587/49.

⁵ EAD to R.B.M. King, 'Kibaki's visit to London', October 1972, TNA FCO 31/1201/12.

⁶ Eric Norris to S.Y. Dawbarn, 2 February 1972, TNA FCO 31/1190/3.

⁷ A.A. Duff to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 'Kenya: Annual Review for 1972', 17 January 1973, TNA FCO 31/1497/1.

Duff thought this unexpected, but Kenya's leaders also pursued this relationship. This was indeed why the relationship did and could outlast independence and Kenyatta's presidency, as leading members of Kenya's elite chose to pursue it and recognised the benefits they could gain. This alignment of interests meant that the relationship appeared mutually beneficial to leading decision-makers in both Kenya and Britain.

Policy was made through negotiations which the British did not control. Negotiations during the late colonial period established a pattern whereby both sides had something to offer, as well as threats held over one another. Negotiations took place formally in large delegations over issues such as aid, but also informally in private discussions. Leading Kenyans were adept at using the British relationship to their personal or factional advantage – if not always national interest. In formal negotiations the Kenyans gained a reputation for 'hard bargaining', able to achieve more than the British government had planned to offer. Kenyan negotiators used threats of turning to other suppliers to encourage the British to the best possible terms in order to ensure their dominant position, and the Asian population was a powerful bargaining chip held by the Kenyans. British officials were thus prepared to consider offering more to Kenya than they might otherwise have done as they sought to ensure that the threat of turning elsewhere, or particularly expelling the Asians, never became more than bluff. Negotiation was a process in which neither side was in complete control, and both the Kenyans and British sought always to achieve the most beneficial outcome for themselves and to protect their own interests.

British diplomats and civil servants, especially those in BHC, often claimed knowledge about Kenya, and this was indeed one of their functions. British diplomats were sometimes uncertain as to how much value they placed on this knowledge and experience. More significant, however, was how frequently misguided British ideas about Kenya were. British diplomats thought they understood Kenyans but were often proved wrong, with succession predictions a key example of this. British officials had a sense of self-confidence and believed they best understood Kenyan interests. The continued sense of superiority and racism British policy-makers sometimes displayed was a clear part

of this retained sense of tutelage. One diplomat described that he: 'enjoyed the responsibility of British neo-imperial rule in Kenya ... There was nothing to be ashamed of in continuing the process of developing Kenya which had begun before independence. Indeed, there was an important element of philanthropy in our policy'.⁸ He may well have felt this to be true, but it indicates the role some British personnel felt they had in their continuing sense of superiority towards Kenya. British officials also tended to overlook the colonial past, and the British side of the relationship was sustained through their self-belief despite their misunderstandings.

This lack of real knowledge was clearest in prior ideas about Kenya's first two presidents, both of whom British policy-makers misread before they assumed office. Colonial officials lacked a realistic appraisal of Kenyatta prior to his release from detention in 1961, despite believing they knew him, and tried to prevent him gaining Kenya's leadership. Once British politicians, civil servants and diplomats found Kenyatta to be someone they could profitably work with, and who was willing to work with them, their ideas dramatically shifted, and supporting Kenyatta became a key feature of policy. Their previous colonial history with him – and more widely with Kenya during Mau Mau – was conveniently forgotten. Moi, however, provides the most obvious example of British officials entirely misreading someone. Diplomats thought he was unintelligent, a possible but unlikely compromise, and waited for another presidential candidate to emerge, before finally coming to realise that he would succeed and offering support. During his decade as vice-president British observers did not ever seem to see the political shrewdness which would enable Moi to retain the presidency until 2002; nor did they see his ability to entirely outmanoeuvre Njonjo in 1982 – whom they also thought they understood as a bastion of British influence.⁹ Yet when Moi assumed the presidency in 1978 the British found that, like Kenyatta before him, he too was willing to work with them, and indeed keen to highlight his British connections.

⁸ De Courcy Ling, *Empires Rise and Sink*, pp. 79, 76.

⁹ See Branch, *Kenya*, pp. 154-9.

The British and Kenyan systems of government were widely different and how these two systems interacted was crucial to forming 'policies' and establishing relationships. Britain's bureaucratic system was based on structure and hierarchy. Decisions may have been disputed within Whitehall and between government departments, but most of those involved were imbued with a civil service culture and ethos which meant a broadly shared conception of British interests. Plans could be contested and priorities conflicted, but this was always within known and adhered-to boundaries. In the British system, positions were more important than the people occupying them, and channels of communication remained the same regardless of who was occupying posts in BHC or in London. Changes to the party in government, or to civil servants in post, made remarkably little difference to policy.

By contrast, the Kenyan neo-patrimonial state meant that individuals were seeking their own benefits in a system which was fractious and in which the rules were not always clearly defined. Kenyan foreign policy was not directed through the Kenyan High Commission in London or Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but through personal contacts. Individual Kenyans sought power, influence, and wealth, for which links to the British could be beneficial. British connections could also be useful within Kenya's factional politics. McKenzie and Njonjo emphasised their importance and position to the British, making themselves appear more significant than they potentially were. For Odinga, a rejection of greater British influence was part of his claim to an alternative 'radical' politics. Moi in particular saw the benefits of using the British connection and used multiple visits to London as he became president to project an impression of British support. Although the British were not the king-makers in Kenya, the idea of British influence and power could prove beneficial to leading Kenyans, both personally and in the projection to potentially hostile neighbours that Kenya had a powerful ally in Britain who might offer military support.

Despite the differences in these systems, British policy-makers did not find it difficult to work with Kenya. Indeed, rather than challenging Kenya's neo-patrimonialism, the British reinforced it. British

diplomats sought out those they knew and believed they understood, and those whom they viewed as favourable to their own interests. Certain individuals were privileged, assumed to have knowledge and to be passing this on to Britain in beneficial ways. Cultural connections made Njonjo and McKenzie more legible, and thus British officials preferred to work with them. Those who were not so culturally similar were less advantaged in their connections. McKenzie was the key example of an individual being privileged regardless of position, and losing his ministerial post made little difference to the amount of contact he had with British diplomats and politicians, or the issues they discussed. Kenyatta's favoured way of communicating with the British was to send these emissaries to Britain or BHC to discuss key issues. British decision-makers rarely questioned whether this was the best way of understanding Kenya, but rather congratulated themselves on their favoured and frequent access. British diplomats, politicians and civil servants were happy to collude with their Kenyan 'friends' in keeping information away from the Kenyan High Commission in London or secret from rival Kenyan factions. They were willing to meet secretly with Kenyans they favoured and to conclude private negotiations and agreements – of which the Bamburi Understanding is the prime example. By choosing to work with specific individuals rather than through official channels, British policy-makers reinforced Kenyan neo-patrimonialism.

Appendix: British Diplomats and Civil Servants working in the East Africa Department and British High Commission, Nairobi, 1960-1980

This list contains all those included within the analysis in Chapter One: Making 'Policy' (1): British Institutions and Actors.

Allen, Roger; Deputy Under-Secretary of State 1965-67 (DSL 1970, pp. 155-6)

Allen, (William) Denis; Deputy Under-Secretary of State 1967-68 (DSL 1970, p. 155)

Allinson, (Walter) Leonard; Deputy High Commissioner, Nairobi 1972-74 (DSL 1986, p. 98; *Who's Who 1994* (London, 1994), p. 29)

Arthur, James Stanley; Counsellor, Nairobi 1967-70 (DSL 1973, p. 162; *Who's Who 2000* (London, 2000), p. 59)

Aspin, Norman; Head of East Africa Political Department 1963-66 (DSL 1980, p. 110; *Who's Who 1994* (London, 1994), p. 62)

Avery, David Robert; First Secretary (Consular), Nairobi 1972-76 (DSL 1980, p. 111)

Beaven, John Lewis; First Secretary, Nairobi 1966-68 (DSL 1975, p. 175)

Beckmann, William George Erin; First Secretary (Consular), Nairobi 1967-70 (DSL 1973, p. 174)

Bellers, Timothy John; First Secretary, Nairobi 1970-72 (DSL 1975, p. 176)

Bevan, Leonard; Principal Trade Commissioner and First Secretary (Economic), Nairobi 1964-68 (DSL 1970, p. 169)

Bottomley, James Reginald Alfred; Assistant Under-Secretary of State 1967-70 (DSL 1978, p. 169; *Who's Who 1994* (London, 1994), p. 201)

Brown, Douglas James; Head of Chancery, Nairobi 1967-68 (DSL 1970, p. 178)

Buist, John Latto Farquharson (Ian); East Africa Department 1956-61 (John Latto Farquharson (Ian)

Buist, interview by Malcolm McBain, 8 April 2008, BDOHP)

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