

Perceptions in Nigeria and United States of America relations

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Abstract

Nigeria and United States of America are colossal and strategic in global security concern. Over the years, a number of domestic and external factors have, individually or collectively, shaped the pattern of relations between the two countries in military and security affairs. These factors include oil, population, military and security capabilities as well as threat posed by terrorism. This paper posits that analysis of perceptions of decision makers is relevant in explaining the factors and in understanding the pattern of relations between the two countries. The paper uses Stimulus-Response Model of Decision-making to examine perception of decision makers of Nigeria and the USA. Using qualitative method of data collection and analysis, the paper establishes that some domestic and external factors such as oil, peacekeeping credentials and threat of terrorism produced either cooperation or disagreement in the relations. The paper concludes that positive perception displayed by the USA against stimuli of oil and peacekeeping credentials of Nigeria promotes understanding in the relations; while negative perception by the USA towards threat of terrorism and population of Nigeria facilitates misunderstanding in the relations. Thus, the paper suggests that the two countries should always emphasize factors that promote understanding in their relations.

Keywords: Decisions, Nigeria, perception, relations, security, USA.

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1. Introduction

A number of factors stand to influence perception of decision makers in relations between Nigeria and the U.S.A. Among them are the intangible factors, which represent psychological variables external to Nigerian domestic political environment. It has been posited that all crisis phenomena give rise to situation of threat and counter-threat, which produce tension within the participant states whether in the form of excitement, fear, anxiety, frustration, dissonance or some other psychic state (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1971). Evidently, during the cold war, perceived threat of communism had been a determining factor of decision in conflicts or cooperation between Nigeria and the U.S.A. In the 1980s, this factor pre-occupied the U.S.A government by campaigning for an end to arms race and nuclear proliferation for global peace and security. Nigeria supported the effort of the U.S.A, in that respect because her embassy in Washington consistently issued press releases that expressed support for America's anti-nuclear and disarmament campaigns (Guardian, 1992). Similarly, in the event of the 11 September 2001, perceived threat of terrorism came to be the determining factor of cooperation or conflict between Nigeria and the U.S.A. President Bush expressed that "every nation in every region now has decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" (Davidson et al, 2006).

Indeed, the Boko Haram terror activities in the Northeastern Nigeria coupled with the activities of oil-producing area of the Niger Delta, which involved kidnappings of the expatriate oil workers, exacerbated fear to the U.S.A decision makers on American oil interests in Nigeria. The Boko Haram terror activities, in particular, have brought into focus fear to the U.S.A on the possible linkage of the activities of the group with global terrorists' networks. The tensions in different parts of Nigeria have been instructive, as they involved national security and economic interests of Nigeria and the U.S.A governments. It has been asserted that fear might emanate as a result of complexity of anticipated consequence of actions (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1971). In the whole, question of perception become critical, for, decision makers in the two countries might choose to pursue pattern of relations that could be determined by the prevailing perception explaining the consequence of the tensions.

It is against this background that this paper posits that some domestic and external factors have, individually or collectively, influenced the pattern of Nigeria's relations with the U.S.A. therefore, the paper explores various ways through which these factors produced either cooperation or disagreement in the relations between the two countries. This would be elucidated by presenting the policies and actions of the governments of Nigeria and the U.S.A. through which bases, contexts and implications of perceptions in the relations would be examined.

2. Objectives of the Paper

The aim of this paper is to point out the relevance of perception of decision makers in understanding the pattern of relations between Nigeria and the U.S.A. Specifically, the paper desires to achieve the following objectives:

- To investigate the factors that individually or collectively produce either cooperation or disagreement in the relations between the two countries;
- To examine the policies and actions of the governments of Nigeria and the U.S.A.; and
- To analyze implications of perception in the relations between the two countries.

3. Methodology

This research was conducted by using both interview and documentary evidences. Face-to-face interview was adopted; however, email has also been used for collection of information. In the course of conducting the interview, unstructured questions were prepared and administered. This was to allow the interviewer's perspective on the subject matter. Thus, the interviewees were engaged with

open-ended questions that encourage detailed response in a neutral manner and listening carefully to the interviewer's response as well as asking follow-up questions and probes based on the responses. Thus, key government officials and experienced personalities concerned with foreign policy making and practice were interviewed. The personalities selected included career ambassadors, scholars and administrators of organizations relating to foreign policy making.

Moreover, documentary materials both published and unpublished in form of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, thesis, dissertations and seminars/conferences papers were consulted. The documentary sources carrying information relating to international relations, general politics, and economics were used to gain insight on theoretical, social, and empirical evidences.

In the process of data analysis, the information gathered was analyzed with the use of qualitative methods of data analysis with the aid of diagrams and illustrations.

3.1. Conceptual and theoretical issues: Explaining the bases of perceptions in the relations

It is important to note that perception is the central concept in this paper. Perception represents the sum total of the background, belief, value and preference of decision makers (Sotumbi, 1981: 16), who take decisions in cooperation or conflict for their countries. It is posited that analysis of the factors that influence the decision makers' perception and interpretation of stimuli is central in the understanding of inter-state relations. In essence, factors such as population, oil resource and peacekeeping record of Nigeria are central in this respect and require clarification. These concepts stand to be the bases of perceptions in the relations between Nigeria and U.S.A.

3.2. Population

Population is a key concept that is relevant in explaining the bases of perceptions in Nigeria – U.S.A relations. Population is the human resources that influence perception of the foreign policy decision makers. It is assumed that large population means a potentially large market into which other states may want to access. Nigeria's population of about 140,003,542 people, obtained from 2006 Census, makes it the most populous country in Africa. It is logical that such population formed the basis of the U.S.A decision makers' perception.

However, two important issues might be mentioned to explain the unique position of Nigeria's population in shaping the pattern of Nigeria – U.S.A relations; one is the character of Nigerian population which demonstrates anti-American sentiments and ethno-religious conflicts; second is the anti-democratic attitude of ruling elites in Nigeria from both military and civilian groups towards transition to civil rule and other political interests of the U.S.A.

Fundamentally, the attitudes of Nigerians were facilitated by the impact of population diversity. According to Paden (2008), the diversity of Nigeria created a set of underlying challenges for the country and the U.S.A relations in achieving what the two countries required from one another. Considering this factor, Mikell (2008) pointed out that American policy makers suggested that Nigeria should be assisted in becoming the regional role-model for demonstrating balance between ethnicity, religion and politics.

3.3. Oil resource

A key concept that shaped perception in Nigeria and the U.S.A. relations is oil resource. It is also a factor that strengthened Nigeria – U.S.A trade and investment relations. Three important foreign policy interests stand to explain the strength or weakness of oil factor in shaping the perception in Nigeria – U.S.A relations; one, need for continued oil exports from Nigeria to the U.S.A; second, U.S.A's need for reducing her focus on source of oil from the Persian Gulf and third, solution for Nigeria's debilitating economic structure.

An Examination of the foreign policy interest of the need for continued oil exports had demonstrated active and continuity the pattern of oil supplies from Nigeria to the U.S.A that rose from N1,645.9 million in 1983 to N3,140,460.9 million in 2007 (Ubandawaki, 2013). Equally, the inflow of U.S.A investments in Nigeria's oil sector gave credence to the relevance of this contention, which in 1986 was estimated at N1,559.2 million; in 2000, it increased to N14,248.1 million (Ubandawaki, 2013).

3.4. Peace keeping record

Nigeria's immense foreign policy potential had also been clearly based on her perceived-record of peace keeping in Africa and globally. Nigeria has played an important role in international peacekeeping both under the auspices of the United Nations and Organization of African Unity (OAU) and later under African Union (AU) as well as the Economic Community of West African States Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Nigeria's pivotal role in the support for peace is remarkable. It provided large troops for the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the African Union Mission in Sudan – AMIS (Interview, Ambassador Ahmadu February 3, 2011). It has been established that out of 51 peacekeeping operations under the aegis of the United Nations between 1983 and 2008, Nigeria had been involved in 25 peacekeeping operations (Ubandawaki, 2013).

In addition, in December 2006, President Obasanjo at a visit to the White House pointed out Nigeria's active role in peacekeeping operations when he explained to President Bush that, "We have dealt with Togo, we have dealt with Guinea-Bissau, we have dealt with Sierra Leone. Hopefully, we are now dealing with Liberia. And things seem to be going fairly well in Cote d'Ivoire. Well, of course, we are keenly watching the situation in Guinea-Conakry" (USSD, 2006). These remarks on peacekeeping operations reinforced President Bush's appreciation of Nigeria's commitment to regional peace.

4. Contexts of Perception in the Relations

Contexts represent settings or foreign policy behaviour in the decision making approach. Three important issues help to explain the context of perception in the relations. These are the domestic political environments in Nigeria and the U.S.A; and the prevailing security situations at regional and international levels as well as sanction measures employed in the relations.

4.1. The domestic political environments in Nigeria and the U.S.A

The most significant factor explaining the relevance of domestic political environment in describing the context of the bilateral ties between the two countries has been the leadership approaches to political transition in Nigeria. On the Nigerian side, the period of military rule from 1983 to 1998 created a context in the perception of Nigeria – U.S.A relations; in this respect, the Nigerian military, as an institution, created a problem in the Nigeria – U.S.A relations. The problem arose essentially from the corrupt and insincere manner with which the military administrators approached the democratic transition programmes in Nigeria. In this regard, the focus of Nigeria and the U.S.A relations was on finding of concrete ways to put a stop to intervention of the military in the political governance of Nigeria. Under General Babangida's administration, the insincerity associated with the regime's approach to transition to civil rule coupled with subsequent annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections almost ruptured Nigeria – U.S.A relations. During the regime of General Abacha, the regime's self succession agenda with accompanying human rights violation, especially the execution of Ken Saro-wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists, damaged the two countries' relations to its lowest ebb.

On the part of the U.S.A, the political environment that suggested the type of government in power also helps in the understanding the context of the perception in Nigeria – U.S.A relations. It could be

argued that Nigeria – U.S.A relations flourish under democrat-led government than under the republican-led (Interview, Ambassador Ahmadu February 19, 2011). This had been demonstrated by the visit of President Bill Clinton to Nigeria in 2000. Indeed, the visit was the first in 22 years, Nigeria hosted an American president. The last time, Nigeria received American President was in 1978, when President Jimmy Carter and coincidentally a democrat, visited the country. In the early 1980s, when Nigeria had for the first time experimented American type of presidential system of government during which in the U.S.A republican-led government was in power, the relations between the two states had not made such tremendous achievement of hosting number one U.S.A citizen. That is to say, President Ronald Reagan had not visited Nigeria, during the period.

Another important domestic political issue that helps in understanding the context of perception is the stability of policies and governments in the two countries. With regard to the U.S.A policies, Ambassador John Campbell maintained that the most important thing for Nigeria – U.S.A relations was the continuity of American policy from one administration to another. This had been strongly demonstrated by the consistency of the financial assistance and support for sustenance of democracy in Nigeria by both democrat and republican-led governments of the U.S.A. Thus, even in the highest period of strained relations, particularly during the Abacha’s regime when the Republicans were in power, Nigeria received financial aid for democracy promotion to the tune of \$7 million (Mikell, 2008).

4.2. The prevailing security situations at regional and international levels

The second context of the relations is associated with the environment external to both Nigeria and the U.S.A. It featured in the regional and global security situations. For the most part of the period between 1983 and 2008, a number of events had set in to explain this context. These included humanitarian disasters and internal conflicts in Africa as well as threat of terrorism across the globe. Most of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Nigeria and the U.S.A for managing crisis in Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Darfur as well as the TSCI for preventing the threat of terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11 and emergence of Boko Haram terror group in Nigeria were pursued within these contexts.

The foregoing demonstrates that perceptions in Nigeria – U.S.A relations operated within two geo-social political contexts; one is the domestic political environments in Nigeria and the U.S.A; second is the prevailing political and security situations at regional and international levels. The two contexts interchange input and output between them and predispose variation in perceptions in Nigeria – U.S.A relations. Indeed, the contexts had far reaching implications on the foreign policy decisions of Nigeria and the U.S.A. Figure 1 demonstrates the interplays between domestic political and economic environments and external prevailing political and economic situations.

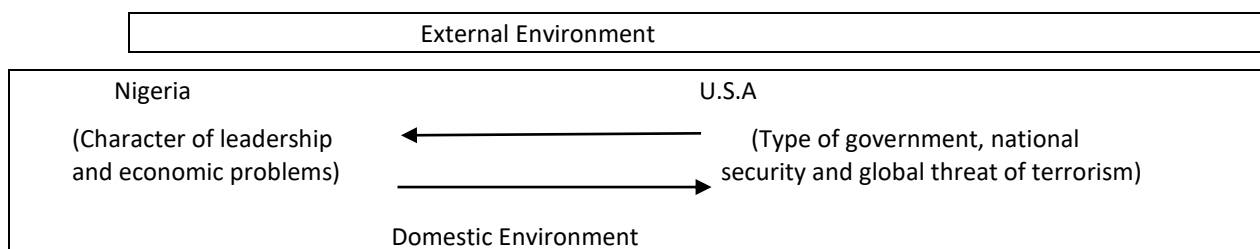


Figure 1. Stimulus – Response Context of Input and Output Swaps in Nigeria – U.S.A Relations

4.3. Sanctions

Essentially, sanctions represent behavioural context in this paper. They are synonymous to perceptions (p), which can be categorized in to two: positive and negative. A positive sanction signifies a permission or approval; while a negative sanction denotes a penalty or disapproval, which was taken to either maintain or compel a change in the status quo in the relations. It should be noted that sanctions taken against Nigeria by the U.S.A regarding the matter of Nigeria’s anti-democratic attitude toward the transition programme were mostly negative. It can be argued that these sanctions are said to be the interpreted stimulus (s); one of the essential phenomena for understanding the Stimulus – Response Model, which refers to strategy and power of the national actors in foreign policy pursuit. From the side of U.S.A, these sanctions suggested planned and implemented responses against Nigeria, which represent phenomenon Response (R), meant to explain actual measures taken by policy makers in the decision making process and has also been taken as Perception (P) in this paper. The model relates perceptions to behaviour (S-r: s-R). The Symbol S is the Stimulus or input behaviour: it is a physical event or a verbal act. The symbol R represents response action. Both S and R are non-evaluative and non-affective; r is the decision-makers perception of the stimulus (S), and s is the expression of intentions or attitude. Both r and s include factors such as personality, role, organization, and system that affect perceptual variables (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, (1971).

4.4. Implications of perceptions in the Nigeria – U.S.A relations

Nigeria	Behaviour (Nigeria)	Sanction (U.S.A.)
S= Military rule S = institutions, attitudes	NFBr (suspension of political transition, human rights abuses, self succession effort)	HpPR (bans on military cooperation, boycott of airlines and sport; decertification of Nigeria on drug matters)
S= Civilian rule S = institutions, attitudes	PFBr (respect for term tenure and rule of law, implementing reform in INEC)	LpPR (cutting back of IMET assistance, condemning tenure elongation, threat of withholding election assistance)

Key

- S = uninterpreted input
- s = interpreted message input
- r = planned response
- R = actual measures taken
- NFBr = Negative Foreign policy Behaviour
- PFBr = Positive Foreign policy Behaviour
- HppR = High proportion perception
- LppR = Lower proportion perception

Note: p is represented in lower case to illustrate negativism in the sanctions.

Figure 2. Variation and Location of Perceptions in Nigeria – U.S.A Political Relations

4.5. Political relations

Figure 2 indicates location and variations of perception in Nigeria – U.S.A political relations. Equally, the figure is meant to explain the flow of perception in the relations, which extended across military and civilian rules, foreign policy behaviour and sanctions. The stimulus of perception included threat of Nigerian military institution to democracy and the agenda of the U.S.A for strengthening democracy in Nigeria. Perception varies significantly into NFBr which included suspension of political transition programme, stepping aside from power by General Babangida, handing over of power to the Interim National Government, execution of Saro-Wiwa and eight others as well as self succession efforts of General Abacha. These were negative behaviours that were against the PFBr, which represent expected foreign policy behaviours by the U.S.A government from Nigeria military regimes. PFBr, in this regards included pursuance of sincere democratic transition, handing over power to elected civilian administration and respect for human rights.

HLiR includes American banned on military cooperation with Nigeria, boycott of U.S.A airlines to Nigerian airports and ban on sport; decertification of Nigeria from drug trafficking free countries, freezing of Nigeria’s assets, restrictions of visa to Nigerians involved in anti-democratization and campaign for the isolation of Nigeria. All these demonstrated high proportion of perception in the relations and also pointed up high level of intolerance in the relations. LLiR includes cutting back of the IMET assistance to Nigeria, condemning and rejecting the idea of tenure elongation and elections’ malfeasances as well as threatening to withhold assistance for elections in Nigeria by the U.S.A. These demonstrated low proportion of perception and also intolerance at a lower level.

Precisely, figure 2 demonstrates changes in the Nigeria – U.S.A political relations from high level of intolerance (by the U.S.A) with Nigeria under military regimes to a lower level of intolerance under civilian administrations; from negative foreign policy behaviour by Nigerian military administrations to positive foreign policy behaviour by civilian administrations; whereas continuity in the political relations is demonstrated by the U.S.A through consistently maintaining the foreign policy priority of strengthening democracy in Nigeria.

Contrastingly, if Nigeria’s political relations with the U.S.A have demonstrated a fundamental change in the response phenomena, the economic aspect of the relations between the two countries manifested a great deal of continuity in the stimulus and response (*S* and *R*) phenomena with some minor changes in the response and stimulus (*r* and *s*). Figure 6.3 indicates valuation of continuity and location of change in the economic relations of the two countries.

Nigeria	U.S.A’s Perception	
s = debt, aid, economic reforms r = Military attitude	SPS (Oil exports and investments is hinged on progress in democracy)	LPR (trade in oil)
s = debt, aid, economic reforms r = Civilian attitude	OPS (upward trend in Oil exports and investments)	HPR(trade in oil)

Key

SPS = Subjective Perception Stimulus

OPS = Objective Perception Stimulus

LPR = Low Perception Response

HPR = High Perception Response

Figure 3. Flow and Location of Perception in Nigeria – U.S.A Economic Relations

4.6. Economic relations

Figure 3 illustrates flow of Perception in the decisions concerning Nigeria – U.S.A economic relations. Equally, it indicates location of perception, which is represented by symbols *r* and *s*. *r* is a planned response stimulus that included the American plan of pulling out Nigeria in the OPEC, Nigeria’s economic reforms aimed at attracting foreign investors and U.S.A financial aid assistance to Nigeria. *s* is the interpreted message input, which could be exemplified with factors that shaped the planned response (stimulus *r*) such as Nigeria’s debt problem, Structural Adjustment Programme, crises that affected oil supply to American from the Middle East, Nigeria’s NEEDS programme and the development programmes of the U.S.A such as the MCA and the AGOA. All these represent changes that cut across different regimes and perceptions in Nigeria – U.S.A economic relations. For instance, on one hand, the issue of Nigeria’s debt problem had been used by the U.S.A as instrument (stimulus) for pulling Nigeria out of the OPEC in the late 1980s. On the other hand, the crises that engulfed the Middle East in the decade of 2000 and affected U.S.A oil needs had also resurfaced the U.S.A plan for pulling out Nigeria in the OPEC.

In the figure 3, flow of continuity is indicated with phenomena SPS, OPS, LPR and HPR. The SPS represents the subjective perception of the U.S.A toward the core stimulus of Nigeria – U.S.A economic relations. The mainstay of Nigeria – U.S.A economic relations is oil. Under the military rule, the U.S.A hinged the smooth flow of Nigerian oil to the U.S.A with progress toward democracy in Nigeria. Nonetheless, U.S.A’s plan for unilateral oil embargo to Nigeria had not been followed through because of the American conviction that such embargo would not make any economic and political sense in the two countries’ relations. The subjectivity of perception to Nigeria – U.S.A economic relations is also deducible from the President Bush’s assurance of U.S.A’s continued trade and investment with Nigeria because of the latter’s embracement of democracy. Thus, President Bush proclaimed that the U.S.A; “*was committed to working with the people of Nigeriain a way that brings more of the benefits of prosperity to people who have embraced democracy*” (Dagne, 2006: 11).

The OPS represents objective perception accorded to Nigeria’s oil by the U.S.A, regardless of regimes and situations in the former. This had been demonstrated by the trends of oil exports and investment flows existing between Nigeria and the U.S.A from 1983 to 2008. In addition, Mrs. Clinton noted the relevance of the oil factor in strengthening continuous relations between Nigeria and the U.S.A; thus, “*I am in Nigeria, a country that produces 2 million barrels of oil a day, has the seventh largest natural gas reserves of any country in the world*” (Akinterinwa, 2009: 22).

The LPR and HPR are successions and proportions of Perceptions, which the U.S.A government demonstrated in its economic dealings with Nigeria. The two phenomena represent responses, which signify interpreted message inputs that included trade and investment relations as well as economic agreements between Nigeria and the U.S.A. Under the military rule, Nigeria recorded a value of trade in oil with the U.S.A an amount worth as higher as N785, 401 million in the 1990 decade; likewise, a value of N10,830.5 highest amount in the decade was recorded in the investment inflows from the U.S.A to Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, 2007). These values are relatively low compared to the values recorded under the civilian rule in the 2000 decade. In the decade of 2000, the highest value of trade in oil between Nigeria and the U.S.A recorded was N3,140,460.9 million; that of inflow of investments amounted to N14,248.1 million (Ubandawaki, 2013). These values demonstrated a high proportion of perception in response by the U.S.A towards economic relations with Nigeria.

Similarly, a critical assessment on the number and achievements of economic cooperation agreements signed between Nigeria and the U.S.A gave credence to this phenomenon of perceptions in response by the U.S.A. For example, the call for external debt cancellation by Nigeria had been placed at centre stage of Nigeria’s decision on quest for resources and sustainable economic recovery since late 1980s (under the military rule). However, a milestone agreement for Nigeria’s external debt cancellation was only achieved in the decade of 2000 (under civilian rule), when the U.S.A helped Nigeria to sign an agreement for cancellation of 60 percent of the country’s external debt with the Paris Club of creditor countries. This demonstrates a high tolerance response compare to the tolerance response recorded on debt rescheduling agreements between Nigeria and the U.S.A under the military rule.

The foregoing demonstrates continuity of phenomenon *R* (Perception) in Nigeria – U.S.A economic relations with minor changes in phenomenon *r* and *s* (planned response and interpreted stimulus). These trends of continuity and change in economic relations may not be too different either, if applied to the sphere of the military and security relations between the two countries. Figure 4 shows the trends of perceptions in Nigeria – U.S.A military and security relations.

Nigeria	Prejudgement (Nigeria)	Perception (U.S.A)
S = Military and security capabilities Military institutions R = ECOMOG, AFRICOM,	Hppr (proposed ACRI, deployment of U.S.A military and security personnel)	SPs (peace keeping credentials hinged on democracy)

ACRI, AU, UN		
S = Military and security capabilities civil – military institutions R = ECOMOG, AFRICOM, ACRI, AU, UN	Lppr (proposed AFRICOM, U.S.A’s issuance of travel warnings and intelligence reports)	OPs (appreciation of Nigeria’s peace keeping records)

Key

Hppr = High prejudged perception response
SPs = Subjective Perception stimulus

Lppr = Low prejudged perception response
OPs = Objective Perception stimulus

Figure 4. Variation and Locations of Perceptions in Nigeria – U.S.A Military and Security Relations

4.7. Military and security relations

Figure 4 indicates that change varies through *r* and *s* phenomena, which represent intolerance and perception in the military and security relations of Nigeria and the U.S.A. Equally, the figure shows flow of continuity represented by phenomena *S* and *R*. *S* included Nigeria’s military and security capabilities as well as institutions that are obvious potentials for determining cooperation between the two countries. *R* represents actual measures taken, which included all the instruments such as initiatives and programmes used by Nigeria and the U.S.A in their military and security cooperation. These instruments for cooperation include ECOMOG, AFRICOM, IMET, ACRI, TSCI, the U.S.A foreign military sales and other military and security initiatives of the UN. For instance through the UN and ECOMOG initiatives Nigeria and the U.S.A continuously cooperated to ensure peace and security in the West African region, especially in Liberia and sierra Leone, regardless of regime in Nigeria.

The Hppr and Lppr signify prejudged phenomena demonstrated by Nigeria towards the U.S.A military and security policies. The Hppr is the high level of prejudged foreign policy behaviour demonstrated by Nigeria in reaction to the U.S.A planned cooperation on defence related issues such as the ACRI, AFRICOM and deployment or presence of the U.S.A military and security personnel and equipment in the Nigerian territory. Nigeria’s perceived fear of the U.S.A’s extension of territorial ambition or setting of military base or pact usually caused this type of prejudgement. For example, the ACRI was created in 1994; the Nigerian military ruling elites rejected the idea. In fact, the intolerance displayed by Nigeria and other African countries was part of the reasons that made the U.S.A government changed the approach of the ACRI to an approach called ACOTA. This level of prejudgement is relatively at high level of intensity, if compared with the level of prejudgement demonstrated by Nigeria towards the U.S.A attitudes of protecting its citizens visiting or residing in Nigeria, which is at a lower level of intensity (Lppr).

The Lppr includes Nigeria’s prejudged responses to the U.S.A issuance of travel warning to its citizens residing or visiting Nigeria, U.S.A security arrangements for its visiting citizens in Nigeria and intelligence reports concerning general security situation in Nigeria. More often, Nigerians and Nigerian government protested against the U.S.A planned security arrangements and policies in Nigeria. Nigeria’s protest over the U.S.A government’s security arrangements during the visit of President Clinton in August 2000 and protests against periodical warnings issued by the U.S.A State Department to the American citizens stand to explain the lower level of prejudgement exhibited by Nigeria. In addition, the prompt response displayed by President Obasanjo in condemnation of the 2005 U.S.A intelligence report, which predicted disintegration of Nigeria by 2015, gave credence to the existence of this prejudgement in Nigeria – U.S.A security relations.

Another phenomenon that demonstrates change in Nigeria – U.S.A relations concerning military and security affairs relates to the perception displayed by the U.S.A towards Nigeria’s peace keeping credentials. In the figure 6.4 the perception is represented by SPs and OPs. The SPs represents the subjective perception of the U.S.A toward Nigeria’s peace keeping records. This subjectivity is

observable from the expressions of the then Nigerian Head of State General Sani Abacha; thus, in 1997, General Abacha argued, "While the U.S accepts our efforts in Liberia, it nonetheless turns around to impose sanctions on us over democracy, human rights and drug problem (Ayam, 2006). This statement demonstrates the basis for the subjective perception of the U.S.A; that is to say, the U.S.A denied the peace keeping credentials of Nigeria because of the latter anti-democratization activities. This perception relatively changed to suggest objectivity of the U.S.A under the civilian administrations in Nigeria. This is observable from the appreciation expressed by Frazer in 2007, when she observed:

Nigeria continues to be indispensable to ending some of the world's most destructive conflicts. Its troops played leading roles in bringing peace to Liberia and Sierra Leone. They have sent three battalions to Darfur and are scheduled to send another soon, and they also may deploy a battalion to Somalia. The tragic deaths of seven Nigerian peacekeepers in Sudan in September serve to underscore the sacrifices the country is prepared to make for the region. As Africa has increasingly taken more responsibility for its own security, Nigeria has been the linchpin.

The foregoing illustrates change of prejudgement by Nigeria towards the U.S.A responses concerning planned security cooperation with Nigeria. The prejudgement vary significantly; from high level under the Nigerian military rule to lower level under the civilian rule. Likewise, change is also observed concerning the U.S.A's perception towards Nigeria's peace keeping records; from subjective approach under the military to objective approach under the Nigerian civilian rule. Moreover, it is also observed that Nigeria's military capabilities remained consistently relevant aspect of consideration to the decision makers of the two countries.

5. Suggestions for Future Research

In suggesting the possible future pattern for researches, it should be noted that certain perceptual issues would likely continue to dominate the focus of research on Nigeria – U.S.A relations. Among these are oil exports, search for solutions to Nigeria's economic problems, democratic consolidation in Nigeria, strategies for handling the potential threat of religious fundamentalism among the diverse population of Nigeria and U.S.A's aspiration for having great security potent over Nigeria. American demand for oil exports from Nigeria is unlikely to decline and so would be its interest in ensuring democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Equally, it is unlikely that Nigeria will reconcile its sovereignty and territorial integrity for the U.S.A's security needs in the West African sub-region; similarly, the U.S.A will not be unconcerned with the anti-American sentiments turning around among the Nigerian populace.

The result from the above argument may be that the U.S.A will continuously show high proportion and objective perceptions to Nigeria for the former's appreciation of the strategic role of the latter in oil exports and peace keeping operations; demonstrate subjective, prejudged and low proportion perceptions for the latter's anti-American sentiments and resistance to any possible military pact in the West African sub-region. Indeed, available evidences in this study have indicated these probabilities. Whatever the future probability looks like, it is obvious that Nigeria – U.S.A relations is at a contest between high and low, objective and subjective perceptions and responses and requires a great deal of theoretical explanation to oscillate the impending complexity that symbolizes the relations between the two countries.

Based on the above probabilities, this study suggests possible relevance of concepts such as High or low proportion perception responses, Objective or Subjective Perception Stimulus, prejudged perception response in inter-state relations and observance of such behaviours by nation states in their relations. These concepts recommend the willingness to cooperate and disagree in inter-state relations depending on the circumstance of the understanding and prejudgement as well as the planned foreign policy interests of nation states. In essence, the concepts of High proportion perception responses and Objective Perception Stimulus emphasize suppression of disagreement and misunderstanding in order to preserve the well-being of the decision making process; while low

proportion perception responses and prejudgement connote pre-eminence of disagreement and misunderstanding in order to enhance success of the intended outcome of the decision making process. For these concepts to be operative, on one hand, a state must have the capacity to withstand the shocks of prejudgement and disagreements and on the other hand, imbibe attitude of cooperation and agreement in its relations with other nations.

Thus, there is need for future researches to explore the factors that call for the High proportion perception responses and prejudged perception responses phenomena in the foreign policy behaviour of nation states. This will help in generating sufficient evidences for generalization in confirming or disproving the relevance of these concepts to the explanation of theory of decision making especially Stimulus – Response Model.

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