

American Indian Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the supreme power from which all political powers are derived. A nation is sovereign when its people have the power to govern themselves.

Were the Indian Nations sovereign at the time of European contact with the North American continent? Yes! All Indian nations originally exercised the powers of sovereigns. Indian nations recognized the sovereignty of other Indian nations by forming compacts, treaties, trade agreements, and military alliances with one another. All the colonies recognized the sovereignty of Indian nations by entering into treaties with the Indian nations.

Sovereignty, then, was an inherent right of Indian peoples - a right that could not be taken away.