CONCLUSION

State sovereignty is really in transition. Its classic connotations of total and indivisible state power, and complete political independence in international relations are under tremendous erosion. Changing social and economic conditions have altered the theory and practice of sovereignty. The issues of rule of law, national self-determination and human rights have vehemently challenged the supremacy of the state. Sovereignty has to adapt to the present need for diffusion of power within the state and for responsibilities and compulsions in international politics.

State sovereignty was a symbol to legitimize the legal and political influence of the state but the internal pressures and the growing interdependence in the emerging international system have constrained the unilateral control of the state in formulating its policy and exercising its sovereign rights even within its boundaries. New practical developments in the spheres of economics, communications, technology, social movements and certain legal trends tend to reduce the importance of state sovereignty. Transnational socio-cultural movements, complex world economy, supranationalism challenge existing statist political practice and theories. The modernity in the concept of nation is often identified with the process of abandoning the nation-state. Recent technological developments in the form of television without frontiers, transnational organisations, economic and cultural global interactions defy spatial categorization and the forms of political communities as sovereign entities. Though, there is no single factor responsible for the process of gradual demise of the tree of sovereignty, it is squeezed by the high-rising buildings of the world economy, denuded by excessive human intervention through socio-cultural mobility and dried up by the warm waves of
transnational organizations resulting in the neglect, disregard and damage to the erstwhile state authority. Ultimately, psychological pride attached to the state sovereignty and national independence is also diminishing fast under the force of new circumstances. The close of twentieth century represents a fast process rather than an event of the demise of sovereignty. We are yet to take some time to recognize this great truth of this age.

The theorists define sovereignty as internal supremacy and external independence of the state. But scholars concede that politico-economic developments during the twentieth century reduced the absolute state power in both the aspects of its exercise of sovereign rights. Internally, democratization of the political society established 'peoples' sovereignty' transcending the theory of 'state interests' and replacing it by the rights of the individual and the interests of the society. However, the contemporary criterion is still valid that sovereignty is legal. But it is difficult to maintain it in practice in equal measure.

Similarly, the external aspects of sovereignty, in the legal sense, connote the legal equality of one state with another. State sovereignty presupposes the existence of an international society or international system, the members of which are equally sovereign. But the formal legal external sovereignty of state is not fully consistent with the reality. Real political and economic inequality and a situation of dependence of states reflect their varying degree of sovereignty. The politico-economic situation, rather than the interpretation of legal documents, determine the sovereignty. This fact deprives the state of its traditional sovereignty and in the final analysis virtually negates its sovereign independence in the politics of power. The complex world economy has unleashed immense stress.
and strain on the sovereignty of states. Economic means are likely to replace the military means of settling disputes and exerting influence on others in the international system. But the economic factors are no less jeopardising to the sovereignty of the developing nations than the actual defeat or negation of sovereignty in the battlefield. Recently, Dunkel proposals on imports in developing countries, have really foxed them. The developing nations are enmeshed into the questions of their state sovereignty vis-à-vis their development. Their indecision is likely to result in, ultimately in the negation of their sovereignty. Now, many countries are subjected to severe limitations on their sovereignty without being recognized as the violations of their sovereign rights.

The phenomenon of the transcendence of sovereignty is global. The communist nations with their independent philosophy of politics and strategy for communist construction and maintenance of the system formulated special norms and motives for the exercise of state sovereignty. They evolved new type of international relations with curious concepts of sovereignty in a crisis situation which, objectively viewed, approved the rejection of the argument of sovereignty and supported the concept of "limited sovereignty". But the revolutionary changes in the communist world ended the political and economic isolation of the communist international system. Consequently, the acceptance of universal norms of international relations by the erstwhile communist nations has equally subjected them to the economic and political pressures on sovereignty. New international political environment exorcised their ideological bias. As a result socialist internationalism and
socialist international law, which gave to the concept of sovereignty a special character, lost their meaning. The emerging international scenario universalized the legal and political concepts. The sovereign states now equally confront the issues of global security and are seriously engrossed into the quest for a secure place in the world economy to maintain their sovereignty, at least its facade, till the myth is totally exploded and global interests of mankind becomes the only criterion and the purpose of world polity and of economic and political institutions.

Sovereignty among communist nations had a phenomenal history. Karl Marx envisioned world wide socio-economic revolution by challenging "the existing social and political order of things". Consequently, issue of national sovereignty did not figure in the agenda of world revolution. Rather Communist concepts of the class, state and nation considered it as an impediment in the revolutionary process and in the unity of world proletariat. But the dismal progress in the direction of world revolution and realistic assessment of the prevalent situation prompted V.I. Lenin to evolve the concept of 'socialism in the country'. Hence, issue of national sovereignty and absolute state power emerged as an instrument of communist construction and as a shield for the new social system.

With the emergence of the several communist nations in the post-World War period, the special norms of socialist inter-state relations added new dimensions to the concept of sovereignty. Instead of being a formal legal category, the communist theory of sovereignty was always considered a Marxist - Leninist weapon in all stages of the world revolutionary process. Communist ideology, the interests of world socialist system always dominated the concept of sovereignty. However, the Soviet Union
being the leader of the communist world specially in Eastern Europe, was allegedly misused the ideological fluidity in favour of Soviet interests in the region and in maintaining 'socialist imperialism'.

The concept of sovereignty was shaped by the concrete political necessities consciously subjecting the theoretical formulations. Sovereignty was not considered as a dogma or as an end in itself. It was not only a means to protect "the most advanced social and state forms from a imperialistic encroachment", but also to defend the "poor, weak and exploited against the rich, strong and exploiters", and to "to liberate the oppressed peoples in colonies and dependent territories from the imperialistic yoke". The concept was designed and used by the Soviet Union as a weapon employed for both offensive and defensive purposes. Sovereignty was considered a spontaneous right of the proletariat to struggle for its supremacy. In international politics, the right to national self-determination was invoked to express sovereignty of the people challenging the exploitative systems and to advance communism.

The communist theory of sovereignty was based on the pillars of class-struggle, national self-determination, socialist internationalism, socialist international law and peaceful coexistence with the states having different political systems. The right of nations to self-determination was considered an historical expression of the class struggle. It was not only the exercise of the sovereign right of a nation but also, primarily was concerned with the establishment of proletarian supremacy in the emerging new political society. Hence, right to self-determination of nations was upheld even prior to statehood of the concerned people. In the
multinational state of the Soviet Union, the republics were guaranteed "free self-determination of nations" and "freedom to form an independent national state". However this theoretical and even constitutional provisions could not be invoked in the absence of a realistic mechanism. In addition, the primacy of proletarian internationalist imperatives over the principle of national self-determination nullified it as a potent source of sovereignty within the communist international system.

Principles of socialist internationalism were evolved to determine the exercise of sovereignty in a crisis situation. To prevent resurrection of national sovereignty disregarding the 'higher' Marxist - Leninist values, it was subordinated to the interests of the world socialist system. The principle of sovereignty was viewed from a transnational class perspective within the socialist community. The class content of the sovereignty of a socialist state was coupled with the international responsibility to the socialist community which controlled its independent exercise. The communist theorists sought to substitute the content of the doctrine by crucial ideological considerations so that the wild national sovereignty could be tamed and harnessed into the chariot of international communism.

The ideological considerations subsiding the principle of sovereignty were explicated by evolving 'completely different socialist international legal principles'. Socialist international law gave a new meaning to the socialist principles of respect for state sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs of equality of states and peoples. The 'new type of international relations' among communist countries were claimed to have proved 'the real
possibility of a state's exercising its sovereign rights, of defending state sovereignty. New legal principles reflected a higher degree of socialist international integration which differed from the formal norms of the general international law.

Communist concept of sovereignty was guided by the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. Peaceful coexistence of socialist and capitalist states was an objective necessity. This provided a medium of interaction for the development of the economic cooperation and international security on 'the basis of complete equality and mutual advantage'. Though communists considered this principle as 'a specific form of class-struggle', it provided a platform for both the systems to function on the basis of general principles of international relations. On the other hand, successful cooperation required strict observation of the norms of international law, particularly, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Socialist states could repulse any capitalist interference in their internal affairs and socialist norms in their bloc system could be maintained unhindered. The Soviet Union and her allies could defend military intervention in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 in the name of protecting the sovereignty of the respective socialist states. Thus the principle of peaceful coexistence facilitated the bloc hegemony of the superpowers and increased their undue influence over the sovereignty of the member-states.

These theoretical premises regarding communist concept of sovereignty were fully developed
during the inter-war period and in the process of the emergence of the East European Communist international system in the aftermath of the Second World War. In pursuance with their class solidarity and by invoking the principle of national self-determination Soviet Red Army performed its 'sacred duty' by liberating the East European states from the capitalist and fascist yoke and establishing the communist system in the region. In the name of 'peoples' democracies' the Soviet pattern of communist system was replicated with the dictatorship of the proletariat, dominance of the communist party on the state power. The elites loyal to Moscow were at the helm of affairs in the new East European states. The overwhelming ideological influence and the generous assistance' from the Soviet Union virtually made them 'satellites' of this rising communist power in Europe. The politics of East European regimes, during Stalin period, was centered around the adaptation process to the Soviet model. Thus, the expansion of the socialist system from a single country into one bloc was accompanied by the extension of Stalinism into Eastern Europe. The Stalinization of the Eastern Europe manifested in Soviet insistence on affirmation of the hegemony of the communist party in each system and of the leadership of the communist party of the Soviet Union in relations among parties.

After the Stalin-Tito Split in 1948 and subsequent demise of Stalin followed by the de-Stalinization process, dissent within the Soviet bloc questioning the relations with the USSR gained prominence. Hence, Soviet theorists considered the need for a new theory of relations among socialist states. Communist leaders also emphasized the need for unity by entering into multilateral
treaties and by activating international organizations comprising socialist nations. The Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement in 1955 highlighted the principles of traditional respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and equality among states. During the subsequent declarations, the economic and political relations between the Soviet Union and the East European states were claimed to be based on full equality, mutual advantage and respect for sovereignty. However, fraternal mutual aid was always considered crucial component of these relations.

In order to ensure the unity and maintenance of socialist internationalism, the international organizations as the council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Treaty Organization were revitalized. CMEA was designed to provide intra-bloc coordination of national economic plans, the socialist international division of labour, coordination and specialization of production. International socialist division of labour in the interests of socialist and communist construction in the member states was considered as the combination of the correct practical implementation of the principles of sovereignty, mutual advantage and of the correct organization of socialist integration on these principles. Since, CMEA was disclaimed to be a supra-state agency, socialist division of labour would not infringe sovereignty of the member-states. However the economically developed socialist states deviated from this integration system keeping in view of the possible loss of national sovereignty. And economic nationalism proved to be even more difficult than political nationalism to eradicate amongst East European countries.

In the political and military sphere, socialist integration was institutionalized in the Warsaw Treaty
Organization. The potential threat of NATO, prompted the Soviet Union and its allies to constitute a military organization to "guarantee the integrity of their frontiers and territories and ensure defence against possible aggression". The framework of the Warsaw Treaty Organization as a military-political alliance was declared to be based on collective defence of socialist gains on the principle of socialist internationalism. WTO was also claimed to be based on the principle of equality and sovereignty of its member-states and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Though multilateralism was apparently the mode of interaction among member-nations, the fundamental basis of the military structure was bilateralism strictly enforced and assiduously nurtured by the USSR.

Thus, the East European communist system constituted the core of the world socialist system. The special history, geographical proximity, ideological homogeneity and political experience of these states with deep involvement of the USSR determined the exercise of sovereignty by the East European states. They faced a double task of keeping the system of domination intact and displaying independence before the people to prevent outbreaks of rebellion. Theoretically, the East European system confronted the issue of combining the political and economic interests of independent sovereign states with the international interests of the community of socialist states as a whole. The international economic and military organizations and bilateral treaties among communist nations provided collective control of the system under the leadership of the USSR. Apparent ideological unity, formal recognition of sovereignty of the members, relative isolation from
Global political system, self-maintenance mechanisms and conflict-containing properties constituted the salient features of European communist international system. Conflict-containing process included military intervention in the internal affairs constituting a paradox of protecting the sovereignty of the socialist states and imposing the system interests as decided by the Soviet Union.

Political ecology of the system created a conducive international environment. The core system in Eastern Europe was interacting with the world socialist system including Asian and Latin American socialist states. The communist inter-state system was initially a hegemonic model of Soviet dominance from 1945-56. But the inner contradictions and growing diversity which was inherent among the member-nations made it a consensus model from 1956-68. Further, disintegrative forces and Sino-Soviet conflict converted it into the Polarization model (mainly China Vs. USSR) since 1968. Rumania and Albania asserted their disagreements regarding independence from the Soviet Union under Chinese influence. Declining Soviet ideological global appeal gave rise to national forces in the region. Polycentrism manifested into the emergence of Belgrade, Peking and Tirana as independent sources of ideological pronouncements. Issue of national sovereignty transcended the common interests of the Soviet dominated socialist community of states. However, the global political ecology comprising bloc-politics, cold war, arms race and even detente emphasized on bloc solidarity and increased the conflict-containing capacity of the system. East-West conflict, how sharp it could be, failed to penetrate the inner system to disintegrate it. However, the rival superpower attempted to strengthen and protect the independence gained by satellite countries from the superpower. This was evident in the case of Soviet
support to Cuba and United States' aid to Yugoslavia. But the inner contradictions and urge for independence among East Europeans were the decisive factors which led to the crises in the system.

The theory of 'non conflict' in the socialist community prevented the understanding of the role of national forces. The argument of national sovereignty was brushed aside by highlighting the principles of socialist internationalism. Though Soviet-Yugoslav split of 1948, put the issue of sovereignty in the focus, the contradictions were covered up by hegemonic management of the system by Stalin. Yugoslavia was put to economic and political pressures and was also threatened militarily. Yugoslavia's courageous and successful defiance of the whole Soviet bloc demonstrated that it gained power through domestic revolution independent of Moscow and maintained the military capability with a formidable high national morale. Tito strictly adhered to the fundamental basis of his policy - independence. Stalin failed to resolve the conflict and ultimately made it into a conflict between socialist states. This proved for the first time, that the socialist camp based on a single ideology was not sheltered from contradictions.

Deep political crises in Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and in Poland in 1956, 1970 and 1980 served to show that the issue of national sovereignty threatened the cohesion of the international system and frequently challenged the Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. The conflict-containing process of the system in a crisis situation often resulted in the casualty of the sovereignty of the concerned communist state. In spite of vigorous endeavour of de-Stalinization of
the communist system, and assertions for upholding the principle of sovereignty and independence in Eastern Europe, Nikita Khrushchev militarily intervened in Hungary in 1956 to curb the rebellion aiming at independence. Similarly, political and economic resistance to the Soviet domination securing the domestic sovereignty was suppressed in Poland three times in the post-war period.

The philosophy behind the communist concept of sovereignty came out fully in open in the Czechoslovak case in 1968. The military intervention in Czechoslovakia was criticized within and outside the communist world. The Soviet Union in order to erect credible defence against the charges of aggression promulgated the theory of "Limited Sovereignty" which was known as the Brezhnev Doctrine in the western World. Though this was inherent in the communist ideology that sovereignty was a secondary principle subordinate to the general interests of socialism, but the authoritative assertion of the limits on sovereignty of a socialist state clarified the ground rules of the socialist international relations. The theory of 'Limited Sovereignty' transcended the general legal concepts of sovereignty and accusations of international illegality.

But the policy of perestroika launched by Mikhail Gorbachev in mid 80's initiated a process of the 'new thinking' necessitating the relinquishment of 'old stereotypes' and dogma in international relations. It undermined the principal doctrinal assumptions upon which the Soviet hegemonial system was based. The radical reform through perestroika (restructuring), demokratizatsiia (democratization), glasnost (openness) had deep repercussions on the domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet Union. New Soviet policy in
Eastern Europe was directed toward evolving a relationship free from dictate, pressure and interference in each other's internal affairs and toward strict observance of the principles of equality, respect for national interests and state sovereignty. New policy recognized the need to deideologise foreign policy and relations between states. Recognition of freedom of choice and national independence emerged as a key component of the new political thinking. Similarly, the new detente with the West emphasized the priority of universal interests over narrow state interests and renounced the earlier notion of state-to-state relations as a sphere of class struggle. The 'new thinking on international affairs represented a significant departure from old orthodoxies of the communist international system. Concepts such as interdependence, global problems and non-class values were an integral part of the new policy.

These perceptions resulted in radical revision of the concept of sovereignty in domestic as well as in international sphere. In fact, Gorbachev's reform primarily aimed at de-Stalinization of the communist system. New political thinking relinquished central planning, state ownership of the means of production, and monopoly of the Communist party on political power. Similarly, the new wave of change in international sphere ended isolation of the communist system from the world economy and the hierarchical system that tied Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union. The prominent feature of the new international scenario was the emphasis on the autonomy and equality of East European communist parties and Moscow's convincing disavowal of its 'leading role' in the communist world. The entire process resulted in deregulation of the bloc, encouraging an economic and political -military alliance with the west. Gorbachev
delegitimized state socialism as a viable model of economic development, political stability, national security and international influence. In fact, he ended the Soviet role as leader of the world socialist movement and as the saviour of the East European states.

A comparative analysis of the communist concept of sovereignty and the new concept relying on the universal values serves to show that it amounted to reversal of special claims and traditional norms of inter-socialist relations. Radical revision of the basic assumptions, which transformed the communist concept of sovereignty, include the following.

i) Assumption of class-conflict in society and emphasis upon class-struggle in international community was replaced with the assumption of class-cohesion and emphasis upon inter-state cooperation.

ii) 'Dictatorship of the proletariat' and class rule with the monopoly of the Communist Party on the political power was undermined giving way to democratization of the system with the spontaneous growth of pluralism and multi-party system.

iii) New political thinking delegitimized the class based element of the foreign policy and strategy. A goal structure for Soviet policy emphasized the dominance of nonclass over class
values and interests. Primacy of general human values and interests was recognized;

iv) Communist ideology, claiming superiority over capitalism, was the inviolable base for the communist state's policy and struggle. Recognizing global interdependence of states and conceding the weaknesses of the communist economic system, deideologisation was accepted to confront global tasks of international security and economic development;

v) Antagonism between communist and capitalist systems was abandoned and internationalization and interdependence within and across system boundaries were emphasized to foster international cooperation. As the perception of class struggle declined, collaboration became the most important component of the principle of peaceful coexistence;

vi) Renunciation of Soviet 'model' of socialism and derecognition of the Soviet leadership of the communist world, and the support for CPSU as the 'touch stone' of socialist internationalism. Democratization of international relations undermining hegemonial
vii) Brezhnev doctrine of 'limited sovereignty' was firmly denounced. Socialist internationalism was renounced for free exercise of sovereignty by the communist states. Defence of sovereignty and the socialist system was no longer the collective duty of 'socialist community of states' under the leadership of the Soviet Union. Hence, the policy of 'duteous intervention' in the internal affairs of a socialist state in a crisis to save 'common socialist gains' and sovereignty of the state, lost its relevance. 'Freedom of choice of the socio-economic system and recognition of 'absolute independence' of the socialist states were unequivocally asserted.

viii) Increased faith in universal international law and international organizations delegetimized the principles of 'socialist international law'. Percedence of the universal rules of international law was recognized in the domestic and international relations the socialist states. United Nations was considered the only
organization competent to serve the interests of all nations and welfare of mankind in general. Hence, new thinking aimed at strengthening the UN and enforcement of general international law.

The revised doctrinal communist perceptions were primarily aimed at system maintenance rather than system transformation. Gorbachev's emphasis was on the de-Stalinization of the communist system and to remove deformations and to instill confidence of the people in the process of perestroika. Economic amelioration of the USSR by adapting the old system to new socio-economic conditions was the major objective of the new policy. In order to get rid of the awesome military burden and East European liability he propagated for the mutual cooperation rather convergence of the erstwhile antagonistic capitalist and communist systems and bestowed full freedom and sovereignty to the East European states.

The policy of perestroika and glasnost was basically 'a reform from above' but it unexpectedly evoked an uncontrollable 'revolution from below'. New ideas and conceptual frameworks were evolved by Gorbachev both to legitimize radical changes in Soviet international behaviour and to undercut the arguments of domestic opponents of these changes. But the realism of national-ethnic antagonism and East European readiness to break out of the Soviet bloc, to overthrow Stalinism, triumphed over the Gorbachevian idealism in the Soviet Union and in its sphere of domination-Eastern Europe. International Communist system which guaranteed stability in this region for more than four decades was totally destabilized. The underlying discontent in Eastern Europe, obtaining
conducive climate under Gorbachev's convincing assurances of non-interference, surfaced in formidable forms asserting for independence from Moscow and beginning the process of building capitalism and liberal democracy.

However, the Stalinist leaders in some socialist countries (the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Romania) opposed Gorbachevian efforts to spread economic and political reforms to Eastern Europe. Ceausescu in Romania openly disparaged perestroika as a betrayal of scientific socialism. The party elites which earlier derived their power from Moscow, stopped paying attention to the new reforms and distanced themselves from the Kremlin. They clinged to the old system to remain in Power. Realization of the probable threat of revolutionary political and economic upheaval put them on defensive rather in opposition to Soviet reforms. Veteran East European leaders asserted their independence from Moscow and resorted to the principle of state sovereignty to impede the flow of reforms into their regimes.

By the 1989, an unprecedented mass movement rose to challenge the communist dictatorship in the entire Eastern Europe. The will and determination of the people unleashed a revolution in Eastern Europe. The vast popular actions accelerating the pace of change resulted in collapse of the communist regimes in Poland, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Romania. Ceausescu's hard line, severity of repression of dissent evoked violent revolt against his regime which resulted in his tragic demise and sudden collapse of his government. East Europeans were assured that the USSR was not prepared to lend force to their suppression since Soviet leadership already
affirmed to encourage a process of indigenous political reform in Eastern Europe. In fact, the course of political events in Europe was no longer within the Soviet control.

The revolutionary wave which was allowed to bring forth "freedom of choice" proved to be the death-knell of the communist system and its traditional leadership. Deregularisation of the system led to its disintegration. People's crave for independence also led to the destruction of the system. Soviet political and military withdrawal from Eastern Europe facilitated radical politico-economic changes in the region. Monopoly of the Communist Party on state power was dismantled by promoting political pluralism and democratic institutions. Central planning and state-controlled economy were replaced by privatization and free economy. Free elections and internationalization of the economy evidenced people's total break with the past and unfettered exercise of sovereignty.

Sovereignty emerged as a fulcrum of change in Eastern Europe and a formidable disintegrating force within the international system of communist states. The end of the communist rule, Soviet hegemony, the division of Germany, economic and military alliance system and the protracted cold war in the region came out as the result of the political upheaval in the region. The idea of 'common European home' propounded by Gorbachev, to share in West European progress, resulted in the de-Sovietization and de-communization of Eastern Europe, the unification of Germany in 1990. East European communist states resorted to independent path of political and economic development asserting their sovereignty. They lost interest in the erstwhile powerful international organizations as CMLA and WTO and proceeded to have close relations with the Western economic organizations as EEC, World Bank, GATT
etc. CMEA and WTO were dissolved mainly through assertions of sovereignty by member-states and their endeavour to seek capitalist path of progress by denouncing communism and erstwhile communist international alliances. This process made the disintegration of the communist international system not only complete but also increased their willing dependence on the western systems.

The disintegration process of international communist system had diverse repercussions on sovereignty of the erstwhile communist states. The most prominent phenomenon in the communist world was the rise of demands of independence and sovereignty on national and ethnic lines. The multinational communist states claimed the credit of solving the national question. Their seeming success in superseding nationalism by international communism was widely acknowledged. But now it severely suffered from ethnic conflicts, demands for independence and disintegration of the sovereign socialist states. The USSR, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia evidenced the assertions of sovereignty by ethnic groups by totally dismantling the federal structures of their state. Issue of sovereignty of the Soviet republics in the USSR and ethnic conflicts in other states led to the formation of independent sovereign states. The urge for national sovereignty and to form independent state was not confined to the constitutional breakup but it evinced extreme ethnic violence. This serves to show, the socialist federations and the communist system failed to supress the nationalism and ethnicism in Eastern Europe during the communist rule for more than four decades. The issue of national sovereignty re-appeared in the most formidable forms in the post-communist world.
While almost the entire communist Europe confronted fierce forms of national sovereignties and the devastating disintegration process, the German Democratic Republic was an exception. East Germany almost peacefully joined with the Federal Republic of Germany and formed a sovereign state of United Germany. In fact, the disintegration of the communist international system and the demise of cold-war facilitated the unification of Germany. It is also noteworthy that this unification was achieved with the acceptance of Germany's erstwhile communist neighbours, not against their opposition. Germans gained not only their unity but also their sovereignty in international politics, however they were considered historically latecomers in acquiring modern single-nation statehood in comparison to their counterparts in Western Europe. Merger of United Germany into the western economic and military alliance system proved the total collapse of international communist system and the fall of the Soviet Union - the dominant superpower of the region in the post-war period.

The era of special concept of sovereignty among communist nations is over. But the demise of the international communist system has left a legacy of problem-ridden small sovereign states in the Eastern Europe. The communist ideology reinforced by the dominant Soviet power in this region after the second World War endeavoured to minimize and suppress the traditional centrifugal forces of ethno-nationalism. But the inherent contradictions could not be subsided. As the overburden of ideology was removed by Gorbachev through his innovative policies of perestroika and glasnost, and assurances of 'freedom of choice' and
sovereignty for the East European states, the rocks and ravines of traditional national antagonism and divisive forces became apparent. Peoples in the communist Europe were soon found divided on national-ethnic lines asserting their independence and sovereignty. Insecurity in view of the international political earthquake and the quest for their independent identity explain their vehemency in denouncing the old system and fervency in seeking their linkage with the west to embark on the capitalist path of development. Hence, the republics in the Soviet Union, and ethno-national groups in the region became the formidable champions of sovereignty. A new era of sovereignty in the post-communist Europe has ushered in, challenging all the traditional concepts of communism in contrast with the unification wave in the western capitalist world. While the western capitalist states seek to 'pool' their national sovereignty through European Union and single market, the new East European states have made their independence and sovereignty instrumental to forge independent relations with the west and to drive maximum economic and political advantage enhancing their sovereign power.