

As Indian independence from Britain approached after World War II, pressing issues arose. How would independent India handle the Muslim minority within the Hindu majority? Muslim leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah wanted Muslims to establish a separate nation, Pakistan. Most Hindus, including political leader Jawaharlal Nehru, opposed dividing India. ♦ As you read, think about the reasons why these men held different views. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.

The Creation of the Nation of Pakistan

Speech by Muhammad Ali Jinnah

It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends failed to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality and this . . . is the cause of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time. Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures. . . . They . . . belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. . . . It is quite clear that Hindus and [Muslims] derive their inspiration from different sources of history. . . . To yoke together two such nations under a single state . . . must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be built up for the government of such a state. . . . [Muslims] are a nation according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homeland, their territory and their state.

Sources: (1) *Iqbal, Jinnah, and Pakistan: The Vision and the Reality*, ed. C.M. Naim (Syracuse University, 1979); (2) *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, v. 14 (Orient Longman, Limited, 1981).

Questions to Think About

1. What are Muhammad Ali Jinnah's main arguments for proposing the creation of the separate nation of Pakistan?
2. What are Jawaharlal Nehru's arguments for not creating a separate Muslim Pakistan?

Nehru and Jinnah, 1946



Speech by Jawaharlal Nehru

I am quite sure that the largest amount of autonomy [self-government] will be given to every distinctive group. . . . [T]here is no reason whatsoever why they should not enjoy complete autonomy in the matter of cultural development. The Congress thinks of the future of India in terms of a federation—a democratically elected federation consisting of autonomous provinces. . . .

If a particular part ultimately and deliberately . . . wants to cut itself away from India and if the secession is practical, it will be allowed to do so. . . . But at the same time, I believe that it is frantically dangerous to cut up India. In the present world conditions small nations have no place. . . . India wants to be independent and not to depend on any other nation. . . . Pakistan inevitably means cutting up of Bengal and the Punjab into two parts. Obviously, Sikhs and Hindus, at least, do not want Pakistan. The Muslims, if they want it, can only have it in those areas where they are in absolute majority. Both Bengal and the Punjab are compact and culturally united provinces. It will be a tragedy if these two provinces are cut into two parts. . . .

3. **Demonstrate Reasoned Judgment** Overall, whose arguments do you find most compelling? Why?