**The Decline of the Mongol Empire**

**Unstable Leadership:**

The Empire began to split as a result of wars over succession, as the grandchildren of Genghis Khan disputed whether the royal line should follow from Genghis's initial heir Ogedei, or one of his other sons. Rival councils simultaneously elected different Great Khans, such as when brothers Ariqboke and Kublai were both elected and then not only had to defy each other, but also deal with challenges from descendants of other of Genghis's sons. Genghis's descendants would either challenge the decision of Great Khan, or assert independence in their own section of the Empire. Kublai successfully took power, but civil war ensued, as Kublai sought, unsuccessfully, to regain control. By the time of Kublai's death, the Mongol Empire had fractured into four separate empires, each pursuing its own separate interests and objectives.

**Military Defeat:**

The Muslim Egyptians and Christian Crusaders, though traditionally enemies both recognized that the Mongols were a greater threat, and engaged in an unusual passive truce to take advantage of the Mongols' weak forces. The Crusaders of Acre allowed the Egyptians to advance northwards through Christian territory, and even camp to re-supply near the main Christian stronghold. The Muslim army, under the command of the Mamluk Sultan Qutuz, engaged Mongol forces at the Battle of Ain Jalut, in 1260. The Egyptians won the battle, and The Mongol leader was executed. It marked the western limit for Mongol expansion, as the Mongols were never able to make any serious military advances further than Syria.

**Internal Disputes:**

Following the death of Genghis Khan, Ogedei, and Kublai another conflict over who the next successor should be emerged. Inter-family rivalry combined with the complicated politics of succession, which twice slowed military operations as far off as Hungary and the borders of Egypt, which limited their chanced of success, and the tendencies of some of the leaders to drink themselves to death fairly young, continuing the struggle to agree on a successor contributed to the decline of the Mongol Empire.

**The Decline of the Islamic Empire**

**Unstable Leadership:**

After the death of Ali, the Umayyad family set up a dynasty that ruled the Islamic world until 750. From their capital at Damascus in Syria they directed the spectacular conquests that carried Islam from the Atlantic to the Indus Valley. The Abbassid dynasty who captured Damascus in 750 ended Arab domination and helped make Islam a truly universal religion. Starting about 850, Abbassid control over the Arab empire fragmented. In Spain, Egypt and elsewhere, independent dynasties ruled separate Muslim states. Cairo and Cordoba in Spain flourished as centers of religion, scholarship and trade.

**Military Defeat:**

In 1099, after a long and bloody siege, Christian crusaders captured Jerusalem, a city holy to Christians, Muslims, and Jews. For nearly 200 years the city passed back and forth between Muslims and Christians. The Muslim general, Salah-al-Din, or Saladin ousted the Christians from Jerusalem in 1187. Thy regained it after his death, holding it until l1244. In long term, the Crusades had a much greater impact on Europe than on the Muslim world.

In 1216, Genghis Khan led the Mongols out of Central Asia across Persia and Mesopotamia. Mongol armies returned again and again. In 1258, the grandson of Genghis Khan burned and looted Baghdad kills the last Abbasid Caliph. Later, the Mongols adopted Islam.

**Internal Disputes:**

As the caliph’s power faded, civil wars erupted, and Shiite rulers took over parts of the empire. Between 900 and 1400, a series of invasions added to the chaos. After Muhammad’s death the Islamic empire split between two groups over who the next ruler would be. The two groups namely the Sunni’s and the Shiite’s had different beliefs on how the new leader should be elected. The Sunnis felt that the leader should be chosen by the community as were the Shiites felt that the only option for a successor were Muhammad’s daughter and Son-in-law. Similarly to the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians, the division between the two Muslim groups has listed more than 1,300 years, and still exists today. Examples of this great divide today include the differences between the citizens of Iraq and Iran and their struggle to reach peace. Although the two groups only believe in one true God, and look to the Quran for guidance. But, numerous differences have emerged in such areas as religious practice, law, and daily life. Today about 90% of Muslims are Sunnis. Most Shiites live in Iran, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen.