1568 – San Juan, Mexico The third of John Hawkins voyages to sell African slaves in the Spanish new world ended in disaster when the Spanish attacked the English fleet killing all but 18 men	The Threat – ended hopes of expanding into lucrative markets overseas and increased tension with Spain
1569 Northern Rebellion Catholic Nobles in the north led a revolt to restore the Catholic religion, following the arrival of Mary, Queen of Scots in England and an unsuccessful plan to marry her to the Duke of Norfolk	The Threat – Elizabeth's government believed the rebels wanted to overthrow her as well as re-establish the Catholic religion
1570 – The Pope excommunicated Elizabeth The Pope's excommunication of Elizabeth told Catholics they were no longer obliged to obey her. This made it easier for them to consider plotting to overthrow her by force	The Threat – The Pope was calling upon Catholics, especially foreign rulers, to take action to restore Catholicism in England
1572 – The Dutch Revolt The Dutch rebelled against Spanish control. Philip II sent a huge Spanish force under the Duke of Alba	The Threat – The presence of a large Spanish army across the Channel was a threat to England's security. A great deal of woollen cloth was exported from England to the Netherlands. This important trade was disrupted, with harmful effects on the English economy
1571 – The Ridolfi Plot A Catholic plot to replace Elizabeth with Mary, Queen of Scots and marry Mary to the Duke of Norfolk	The Threat – The plot involved the most senior English Nobleman, the king of Spain and the Pope. It would have resulted in the overthrow of Elizabeth and the restoration of Catholicism.
1580s – Arrival of Jesuit priests from Douai, Belgium Throughout the 1580s, English Catholic priests, trained at Jesuit colleges in Europe, returned to England secretly to save the Catholic religion	The Threat - The priests claimed their motives were only religious, however, their close allegiance to the Pope meant Elizabeth saw them as political traitors who wanted to replace her with a Catholic monarch
1577-80 – France Drake around the world voyage Drake attacked Spanish settlements on the west coast of South America, capturing large quantities of silk and Spanish coins, and seizing Spanish treasure ships	The Threat – A challenge to relations with Spain, but lucrative in terms of new trade routes and captured Spanish silver
1586: Babington Plot A Catholic plot to free Mary, Queen of Scots, which explicitly plotted the murder of Elizabeth	The Threat – It was obvious that as long as Mary, Queen of Scots was alive, then Elizabeth's life was in danger

1585 – War with Spain Elizabeth sent an army to the Netherlands after the leader of the Dutch Rebels, William of Orange, was assassinated. War with Spain was now inevitable	The Threat – England was at war with the most powerful country in Europe and fighting for its existence as a separate Protestant monarchy
1583 – The Throckmorton Plot This plot planned an uprising of English Catholic nobles, supported by French forces and financed by Spain, to free Mary, Queen of Scots and restore Catholicism	The Threat – A combination of a religious crusade with widespread foreign support, resulting in the overthrow of the Queen
1587 – The execution of Mary, Queen of Scots Elizabeth finally agreed to the execution of her cousin and heir	The Threat – The Pope, France and Spain might invade England to avenge Mary. Her son, the king of Scotland, and English Catholics might also want justice and join the attacks against Elizabeth
1587-88 – The Spanish Armada in 1587, Drake attacked and destroyed 24 ships in Cadiz, but only delayed by 12 months, the launch of the Armada, with the aim to land a Spanish army in Kent	The Threat – the Queen and government did not know how many English Catholics would join a Spanish invasion force

Which of these challenges was the most significant and why?