1956 SUEZ CRISIS

[LaFeber - America, Russia, and the Cold War]

Question: Who was concerned and what was at stake?

Context: decolonization; Bandung Conference (non-alignment); East-West conflict USA worried that Middle East countries become neutral or would even ally with the eastern bloc

* Iranian nationalist movement in early 1950's: Mossadegh (with Soviet economic support) vs. Shah; 1953 - Shah led successful coup supported by USA -- oil fields at stake

* Egypt 1952 Colonel Abdel Nasser overthrows corrupt King Farouk/ 1954 Nasser assumes power with program of economic and land reform; Aswan Dam to develop electricity & agriculture; control of Suez Canal (anti-colonialism)
  Sept. 1954 - negotiations re: canal led to Anglo-Egyptian agreement:
  - British technicians to operate canal
  - British troops to evacuate region by 1956 (expiration of lease)
  (troops could return to defend canal if Egypt or other Arab country attacked by any nation other than Israel).

* 1955 Baghdad Pact to stabilize region against USSR (Britain, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan). Egypt remains 'neutral'; USA led, but not a member

* Feb. 1955 Israeli raid into disputed Gaza Strip (Palestinian refugees) to counter fedayeen/terrorists attacks; Egyptian Army HQ destroyed

* Some consequences: Nasser looks to western and communist powers to modernize military; communists eager to weaken Baghdad Pact
  Czech arms & Soviet experts to Egypt

* Dec. 1955 Aswan Dam - USA and Britain offer to provide initial financing of project with $1.3 billion through World Bank

* May 1956 Nasser strengthens links with communist powers:
  withdraws recognition of Chiang-Kai-Shek and recognizes PRC
  military alliance of Arab states against Israel
  continued support of Arab nationalists in ME and N. Africa

* July 1956 Aid for dam withdrawn in order to force Nasser to abandon reliance on communist gov'ts; or to topple Nasser [US China Lobby joins with US Southern Senators to criticize policy supporting Egyptian cotton (crop-land created by dam) in competition with US cotton]

CRISIS begins:
* End of July - Nasser announces seizure of canal from Britain & France by nationalizing Universal Suez Canal Company and using $25 million in profit from canal revenues to finance Aswan Dam building
Nasser to compensate shareholders and keep waterway open
Response: Br. and Fr. don't trust Nasser to control canal and their supply of oil
(67 million tons in 1955)

Oct. 24 Br. and Israel agree to attack (Israel's goals: topple Nasser and hurt Arab unity; stop fedayeen attacks; open Egyptian blockade of Gulf of Aquaba

USA will not sanction attack; breakdown in talks betw. Dulles & Eden

[At the same moment as Suez crisis is reaching climax, forces unleashed by Khrushchev in his denunciation of Stalin in 1956 speech brings unrest to Poland (resolved with threat, but not use of Soviet military), and Hungary where Nagy demands removal of Soviet troops; tanks move to outskirts of Budapest (Oct. 28)]

Oct. 29 Israelis attack Sinai; Oct. 30 Br. and Fr. give ultimatum to both Israel and Egypt to keep their forces away from canal Nasser rejects ultimatum

[Oct. 31 Nagy calls for Hungary to leave Warsaw Pact; Soviets seize on opportunity (as world watches Br. and Fr. move troops towards Suez canal) to move tanks into Budapest and suppress uprising; now Khrushchev ready to intervene in Suez]

-Khrushchev suggests Russo-American settlement; threatens use of force unless Anglo-French forces withdraw
-USA puts pressure on Br. and Fr. passing UN resolution calling for truce (Br. and Fr. veto but Assembly votes to condemn them whereby world opinion forces settlement); USA also cuts off Latin American oil to Br. and Fr.
-UN Emergency Force restores canal area to Egyptian control (a success for UN)

Consequences:
* humiliation for Br. and Fr./ new balance of power in favor of newly emerging people at expense of older, powerful nations
* Nasser's prestige soars as leader of Arab nationalism
* Egyptians reduce oil exports to W. Europe creating temporary rationing
* Nuri -es-Said of Iraq (pro-British) angers other Arab states; murdered in 1958
* Algerians encouraged in war against French
* Israel damages Egyptian military, but forced to return captured Sinai
* Suez crisis weakens Baghdad Pact; Russian aid replaces USA to Egypt

**Eisenhower Doctrine: expand US economic and military support (including troops) to Middle East if any nation in region requests help against communist- instigated aggression (cf. Truman Doctrine)

[Example of doctrine's application: USA sends $10 million to King Hussein of Jordan against pro-Nasserite attacks in his country; couldn't really claim defense against communist aggression, but rather «preservation of independence of countries of ME]