DBQ Activity on the Ottoman Empire and Tanzimat Reforms

All: Read “Political Change in the Islamic World” (pages 216-217 of *The Human Record*) and answer:
Why are empires created?

Why do they decline and ultimately fall?

After sharing answers to these questions, students divide into two teams for the following activity:

Team 1 reads “An Insider’s View of Ottoman Decline” (pages 217-221) and answer the following questions:

1. Mehmed Pasha cites several examples of how the sultan’s subjects suffer as a result of government policies and practices. What examples does he cite and what are the causes?

2. What, according to the author, are the reasons for the government’s financial problems? What solutions does he propose?

3. What do Mehmed Pasha’s comments reveal about the economic situation in the Ottoman Empire around 1700?

4. Little was done to implement the changes suggested by Mehmed Pasha and other Ottoman reformers. What do you think made it so difficult to achieve meaningful reforms?
All read preface, “Sultan Abdul Mejd, Imperial Rescript” (page 321) and answer the following questions and share their answers in their groups:

Why did reforms fail in the Ottoman Empire?

What was the meaning of “Tanzimat” and its goals?

After sharing answers to the above, Team 2 reads the “Imperial Rescript” (pages 322-323) and answers the following questions:

1. What benefits were the sultan’s non-Muslim subjects to receive as a result of this proclamation?

2. What efforts were to be made to improve the empire’s system of justice?

3. What do the decrees dealing with the economy suggest about the state of the empire’s economic situation?

4. To what extent does this document extend meaningful political rights to the sultan’s subjects?

Teams then share their answers to the questions.