

nation would dictate. He is like a tutor who, though generous as far as his own interests are concerned, is jealously concerned for those of his pupil. That, Madam, is my idea of the duty of monarchs, and so that is the basis upon which I act in my own small sphere.

Source: *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, volume XXIV, Berlin, 1854, p.109.

Document 9

Frederick II on war

Letter from Frederick II to Voltaire (in French), 30 July 1774

But I do not know where I stray. Is it for me to suggest ideas to that solitary *philosophe*, who from his study, furnishes the whole of Europe with ideas? I leave you to all those which your tireless imagination will suggest. It will doubtless tell you that it is as much use declaiming against snow and hail as against war; that these are inevitable evils; and that it is not worthy of a *philosophe* to take on lost causes. One asks a doctor to cure a fever, not to write a satire against it. If you have any cures, let us have them; if you have none, show sympathy for our misfortunes.

Source: *Voltaire's correspondence*, edited by T. Besterman, volume LXXXVIII, Geneva, 1963, pp.133-4.

Document 10

Frederick II on foreign policy

Confidential memorandum intended for the use of his heir (in French), 'Political Testament', 1752

An experienced politician should always adopt a flexible approach, adjusted to the circumstances in which he finds himself and the personalities with whom he has to deal. It is a great mistake in foreign policy always to be aggressive, to seek to decide every issue by force, or conversely, always to use gentle and subtle methods. A man who follows a uniform system is soon found out, and one must not be found out. If your method becomes well known, your enemies will correctly predict: 'If we do this, he will do so and so'; while by changing and varying one's tactics, one baffles them, and they make wrong forecasts. But conduct as wise as this requires you to keep a permanent check on yourself, and far from following your personal inclinations, you must pursue meticulously the strategy which your real interests dictate. The main object is to hide your

intentions, and for that you must veil your character and only reveal a firmness moderated and tempered by justice. I have endeavoured to deal with my enemies on this basis. Each set of circumstances, each moment of time, each individual, requires a different approach. If it is time to break off negotiations, it is advisable to declare your intentions firmly and proudly; but it is no use for the storm to threaten, unless the lightning strikes simultaneously. If you have many enemies, you must divide them, isolate the most irreconcilable, attack him, negotiate with the rest, lull them to sleep, make separate peace, even if you have to lose by it; and then once the principal enemy is beaten, there is always time to return and fall on the others, under the pretext that they have failed to carry out their engagements.

Source: *Die Politischen Testamente Friedrichs des Grossen*, edited by G.B. Voltz, Berlin, 1920, pp.51, 54.

Document 11

Frederick II on Prussia and war

Confidential memorandum intended for the use of his heir (in French), 'Account of the government of Prussia', 1776

The geographical position of the State obliges us to maintain many troops: for our neighbours are Austria, Russia, France and Sweden. 220,000 men are kept on a war footing, including special battalions and auxiliary cavalry. Of this number, 180,000 men could be put in the field; but the moment it becomes necessary to raise three armies, it is obvious that we do not have many troops in comparison with our neighbours. I think that the discipline and tactics that have been introduced should remain on their present footing, provided that there is no change in the system of waging war; for then there is no alternative but to adapt to circumstances and change with them. But to equal or surpass the enemy, one must act in an orderly and disciplined fashion and encourage and reward the officers, so that noble emulation spurs them on to surpass the enemy. If the monarch does not personally participate in military affairs and if he fails to set the example, all is lost.

In foreign policy, we should look to the future as far as possible and ascertain future turns of events in Europe, whether to form alliances or to thwart the plans of our enemies. We should not believe that we can shape events;