

A rigid moralist will enjoin us to always prefer rightfulness to prudence regardless of consequences. But such rigidity can be suicidal. For example, the morally right thing to do for a nuclear superpower would be to disarm unilaterally--but this would hardly be a prudent course of action. Whenever a conflict between morality and prudence arises, a compromise is called for--though not any compromise but only one where morality is likely to win on balance in the long run. In the case of nuclear armament, the rational solution to the conflict is gradual and universal nuclear disarmament with reciprocal verification.

