

July 15, 2015

David Harsanyi says it is odd every antagonist of Israel is happy with the Iran deal that has the ostensible purpose of protecting Israel.

Isn't it odd how every pundit and politician who's been antagonistic towards Israel is also super excited about an Iranian deal that's allegedly going to help protect the Jewish State from the threat of nuclear Iran?

All the peacemongers love it.

"We are satisfied that the solution found is based on the principle of phasing and mutuality which our country has been consistently supporting at every stage of these complicated negotiations," says Vlad Putin, the leader of the country that made Iranian nuclear power a possibility. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad says he's confident his ally in Iran will now step up its efforts to back his "just causes" after the nuclear deal is wrapped up. And really, why wouldn't it?

The backing of a war criminal doesn't necessarily mean we have a bad deal. The "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" is a bad deal because it's the first time the United States has offered extensive concessions to a nation that openly seeks to destabilize our interests. It's the first time we will be offering an oppressive theocracy (one that still holds American hostages) hundreds of billions of dollars to menace our (former) allies via its proxies throughout the Middle East. For the first time in history a president has legitimized an openly anti-American state with expansionist aims to help him expand political legacy at home.

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... Turns out everything those conspiracy theorists were claiming about the president's policy of generating conflict with Israel was probably right. One point of the deal—or, at the very least, the unintended outcome—is to dramatically alter the balance of power in Middle East. Who do you think Obama believes is a bigger threat to peace in the region? Likud or the Supreme Leader? Put it this way. The Obama administration has called Javad Zarif a patriot and Netanyahu a chickenshit. ...

James Kirchick reviews Michael Oren's new book.

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It wasn't long ago, Oren writes, that Obama was telling the Atlantic's Jeffrey Goldberg, that he's "got Israel's back" and "I don't bluff" when it comes to threatening military action against those countries that threaten the Middle Eastern status quo. Many Israelis were willing to believe that, Oren says, until September 2013. For years, Oren told me, there was "acrid debate" in Israel about whether Jerusalem should preemptively strike Iran's nuclear facilities, with well-respected

figures like former Mossad chief Meir Dagan arguing publically against such a move. "That debate ended on one day," however: September 4, 2013, when Obama not only failed to enforce his self-declared red line on Assad's use of chemical weapons against his own people but denied ever having set one. While many Israelis still believe a solo strike against Iran's nuclear facilities may be inadvisable, "no one is [any longer] saying that we don't have to act because we can trust" the United States, according to Oren.

Merely for pointing out these facts, Oren has had to endure a series of withering personal attacks from the White House and its surrogates. "Instead of just trying to explain the policy, they're trying to delegitimize me," he says. But he sees this as standard operating procedure for an administration for which "ad hominem attacks are just a way of operating." When a senior administration official called Netanyahu "chickenshit" and "a coward" last year, it wasn't just playground antics, it was "dangerous for America," Oren says, sending a signal to the world that purportedly close American allies can and will be treated with mocking and disdain should they stand in the way of the coming "grand bargain" with the ayatollahs. ...

Deroy Murdock says it's hard to keep up with this administration's incompetence. *People ask me if I ever lack ideas for opinion pieces. Au contraire: Like a Malibu firefighter encircled by blazing brush, I can't decide where to aim my hose. I spent most of Wednesday trying to pick which of that day's Obama-fueled infernos to douse.*

I awoke to the news that Obama has fallen way behind on his promise to train moderate Syrians to fight ISIS. After budgeting some \$500 million to instruct and equip 3,000 anti-ISIS troops by year's end, Obama, in fact, has unleashed 60 such combatants. That's 2 percent down, 98 percent to go. But, hey, what's the rush?

Even before the advent of ISIS, Obama originally touted this effort as a bulwark against the brutality of Bashar Assad, the dictator of Damascus. "We are particularly interested in making sure that we are mobilizing the moderate forces inside of Syria," Obama declared at a presidential debate on October 22, 2012. Thirty-two months later, Obama's moderate Syrian force boasts a whopping five dozen members. ...

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Unable to focus on one executive-branch outrage from among the many that arose on Wednesday alone, I remain astonished at how much incompetence, corruption, and hyperactivity Obama can pump out in just 24 hours.

At least we have late night humor from Andrew Malcolm.

Conan: Chris Christie's campaign slogan is "Telling it Like it Is." In contrast to Hillary's slogan, "Explaining Why This Is Not What It Looks Like."

Meyers: TBS announced plans for a competition show where the winner becomes a weatherman on CNN. And the loser will also become a weatherman on CNN.

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The Federalist

Obama's Nuke Deal Makes Israel The Enemy And Iran Our Ally

You can pick the Islamic Republic or the Jewish State. You can't pick both.

by David Harsanyi

Isn't it odd how every pundit and politician who's been antagonistic towards Israel is also super excited about an Iranian [deal](#) that's allegedly going to help protect the Jewish State from the threat of nuclear Iran?

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"We are satisfied that the solution found is based on the principle of phasing and mutuality which our country has been consistently supporting at every stage of these complicated negotiations," [says Vlad Putin](#), the leader of the country that made Iranian nuclear power a possibility. Syrian President [Bashar al-Assad says](#) he's confident his ally in Iran will now step up its efforts to back his "just causes" after the nuclear deal is wrapped up. And really, why wouldn't it?

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We just handed Iran everything it wanted in exchange for a promise to keep [the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation](#) it already signed back in 1968. Good work.

To our neighbours: Do not be deceived by the propaganda of the warmongering Zionist regime. [#Iran](#) & its power will translate into your power

— Hassan Rouhani (@HassanRouhani) [July 14, 2015](#)

The above tweet from the Iranian president was sent out after the deal was reached, by the way. Yet, many in the media have already framed Obama's Iranian deal like so: Are you with the United States or are you with Israel? (When a confused *chief* foreign correspondent for NBC News [asks](#) whether it is even legal for Israel to lobby Congress on the deal, you're getting a taste of the underlying antagonism the press often has towards Israel.)

The real question, as Rouhani understand well, is this one: Is the United States going to stand with the Jewish State or with Iran? We know where Obama stands.

Obama is now locked in no matter how poorly implementation goes and no matter how uncooperative Iran will be. Otherwise, it is another political failure. And most Democrats are probably locked in to supporting the deal for a number of partisan and ideological reasons. Signing it, they will argue, proves that diplomacy, not war, can work. Liberals have been offering this false choice for so many years, so it's doubtful they can back away from it now.

Others will claim that conservatives have an ideological predisposition to opposing any foreign-policy agreements, as Jonathan Chait [and others have already done](#), so this hostility can only be vacuous, as well. That sure makes debate easy.

Or maybe, it'll be Netanyahu's fault for opposing an Iranian deal that pushed the president to allow Iran to become a nuclear power.

I wonder if Israel could have influenced the Iran deal if it had a prime minister who didn't spend his entire tenure antagonizing Obama.

— Spencer Ackerman (@attackerman) [July 14, 2015](#)

Even if you have an unfettered belief in diplomacy, what's the point of being a superpower if you're going to negotiate with enervated regimes as if they were equals—or worse? What's the point of creating leverage through years of sanctions, if we don't demand Iranians stop, at the very least, using technology that can be quickly re-engineered to enrich uranium? There are a number of possibilities, among them: 1) The administration doesn't really care if Iran becomes a nuclear power one day. As long as it's not today. 2) The administration does care if Iran becomes a regional nuclear power, but it doesn't really mind at all.

Turns out everything those [conspiracy theorists](#) were claiming about the president's policy of generating conflict with Israel was probably right. One point of the deal—or, at the very least, the unintended outcome—is to dramatically alter the balance of power in Middle East. Who do you think Obama believes is a bigger threat to peace in the region? Likud or the Supreme Leader? Put it this way. The Obama administration has called Javad Zarif [a patriot](#) and Netanyahu a [chickenshit](#).

There's little doubt Obama desires to see Iran as a counterbalance to Israeli power in the region. There's little doubt this deal would accomplish that goal. Yes, there is a relationship in place with the Jewish State that can't be discarded by the administration for legal, practical, and political reasons. But the same administration that has no compunction demanding Israel stop building neighborhoods was unable to extract anything but the most rudimentary concessions from Iran. Not even snap inspections. And though Netanyahu has already claimed that [Israel is not bound by this deal](#), attacking the Iranian program itself becomes far more perilous—if it's even possible without our help—as Iran is essentially under the protection of the United States and six other nations.

If the new Iranian deal doesn't significantly change the Jewish vote in the United States, then Israel really isn't as an important issue as we think. Very soon, it will be entirely partisan.

At least, we have a better idea when the Iranians will possess the nuclear weapons that will allow them to function with impunity in the region: Around ten years from now. By that time, Tehran will be securely situated on the threshold (if they uphold their end of the deal) of spurring a nuclear-arms race in Middle East. Although a ban on trading ballistic missiles will expire after only eight years, unless the IAEA says Iran can have them earlier. "All the sanctions, even arms embargoes and missile-related sanctions... would all be lifted," President Hassan Rouhani [correctly notes](#).

Why? Did you think Iranians were spilling into the streets to celebrate access to a new source of energy?

World Affairs Journal

[The Impossible Dream: Obama, Israel, and Iran](#)

by James Kirchick

Ally: My Journey Across the American-Israeli Divide **Michael B. Oren (New York: Random House, 2015)**

Early in *Ally*, a memoir of his tenure as Israel's ambassador to the United States between 2009 and 2013, Michael Oren, who was born and raised in the US, recounts playing the title role in his New Jersey high school's production of *Man of La Mancha*. Decades later, he self-deprecatingly writes about how he felt he was regularly reprising the role of Don Quixote while working as envoy of the Jewish state. Whether it was trying to speak over the cries of anti-Israel hecklers disrupting a lecture at UC Irvine—an experience replayed in late June when someone set off the fire alarm at a book talk in Philadelphia—or replying to hostile questions from the media, Oren has often found himself tilting at windmills.

After finishing *Ally* and interviewing its author, I can't quite get the allusions to these quixotic pursuits out of my head. Maybe it's because I recently saw (twice) the Washington Shakespeare Company's acclaimed production of the 1965 musical, so popular in the nation's capital that [rumors began swirling](#) of a Broadway revival. But in reading the voluminous commentary that has poured forth over Oren's tome since the former ambassador took to the pages of the [Wall Street Journal](#), the [Los Angeles Times](#), and [Foreign Policy](#) to promote his book, it has occurred to me that it isn't so much Oren's diplomatic career that has been "[The Impossible Dream](#)" but President Obama's Middle East policies.

Now a member of the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset) with the centrist Kulanu party, Oren has come under ferocious attack from the Obama administration and its allies in the media, in addition to prominent figures in the American Jewish community. The American ambassador to Israel, Dan Shapiro, [accused](#) Oren, an award-winning historian who lectured at Harvard and Yale (where I took his course on America and the Middle East), of being nothing more than "a politician and an author who wants to sell books." Writing in the *Atlantic*, Leon Wieseltier [compares](#) Oren (who chided Wieseltier for his "pathological" antagonism to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu) to Inspector Javert, the lawman who pulls out all the stops in hunting down a poor father who steals a loaf of bread in *Les Misérables*. The Anti-Defamation League's Abe Foxman, meanwhile, has [assailed](#) Oren for "veer[ing] into the realm of conspiracy

theories” and engaging in “amateur psychoanalysis” for speculating in *Ally* about how Obama’s childhood relationship to Islam might have affected his present-day attitude toward America’s role in the Middle East. Interestingly, many of those assailing Oren for psychoanalyzing Obama have no problem putting Netanyahu on the couch, speculating about how his relationship to *his* late father—a historian of Spanish anti-Semitism whose expertise endowed him with a tragic view of Jewish history—informed the younger Netanyahu’s view of the Jewish predicament.

That Oren would be caricatured as some sort of anti-Muslim obsessive—not least by Foxman, who vocally opposed the construction of a mosque at Ground Zero in New York—can only come as a surprise to anyone familiar with his scholarly work and diplomatic career. A longtime proponent of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Oren has been a leading public intellectual and a darling of the American Jewish community for years. Ever since publishing his bestselling and critically acclaimed history *Six Days of War*, he’s been one of the most popular speakers on the synagogue and seder circuit. As the Jewish state’s ambassador to Washington, he hosted the embassy’s first Iftar dinner, inviting prominent Muslims from across the country to break bread. In his book, he displays a nuanced understanding of Muslims and their faith, certainly more so than the American president, who, from the very beginning of his first term, has attempted to address the “Muslim world” as if it were a monolithic entity, rather than a diverse and disputatious religious community of many different sects and tribes.

Indeed, it is this simplistic and somewhat patronizing attitude by the current administration toward Muslims that Oren finds so troubling. From the beginning of his first term, he notes, Obama has warmed to Muslim political leaders—no matter how authoritarian, thuggish, or anti-American—provided they were “democratically” elected, seeing them as “authentic” representatives of Islam. An early, troubling sign of this predisposition was the affection Obama displayed for Turkish Prime Minister (now President) Recep Erdogan, who hosted Obama’s first overseas visit as president. Asked about the Turkish leader’s 2009 eruption at Davos, where he shouted at his Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres, “You know well how to kill” and stormed off the stage, Obama coldly replied, “I wasn’t there.” For years, Turkey has imprisoned more journalists than any other country on earth, but that did not stop Obama from [telling](#) the journalist Fareed Zakaria that Erdogan is one of the five foreign leaders, alongside Angela Merkel of Germany and David Cameron of Britain, with whom he’s closest. “We could do much worse than have a bunch of Erdogans in the Middle East,” Oren reports the president telling Netanyahu in 2013.

This embrace of leaders and movements antagonistic to American interests and values, Oren argues, is emblematic of a broader strategic incoherence. When large-scale protests erupted against the rule of Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak, Obama quickly insisted that Mubarak, a three-decade ally of the United States, leave “now.” Mubarak’s hurried departure not only brought about the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt; it sent shockwaves across the region. “Obama’s just killed the Israeli peace camp!” Oren recalls a left-wing member of the Knesset yelling at him. Meanwhile, in Syria, where a tried and true enemy of the United States—Bashar al-Assad—faced the first serious revolt against his rule, Obama dithered, as he has continued to do for more than four years now. “This is the most fucked-up thing I’ve seen in my entire political career,” Oren reports Senator John McCain saying in the aftermath of Obama’s decision not to launch airstrikes against Assad, after the Syrian leader crossed the president’s self-declared “red line” by using chemical weapons against his own people. Putting on his historian’s cap, Oren likens Obama’s approach to the Middle East to that of Dwight Eisenhower’s knee-jerk opposition to the French-British-Israeli attempt to stop Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser’s nationalization of the Suez Canal. “When dealing with the shifting loyalties of Middle Eastern autocrats, stick with your stable, democratic allies,” Oren writes, advice that’s as good now as it would have been six decades ago.

The most consequential revelations in *Ally* involve Oren's account of the administration's attempt to distance the United States from Israel (and its traditional Sunni Arab allies) as it desperately seeks a rapprochement with Iran. Driving this policy is a belief that the United States is militarily and diplomatically overstretched and that the revolutionary Islamist regime in Tehran can serve as a "stabilizing" presence in a post-American Middle East. In our talk, Oren pointed me to a telling statement Obama made in 2010. "Whether we like it or not, we remain a dominant military superpower," the president said at a nuclear security summit.

"That's an extraordinary line," Oren remarked. "We [Israelis] wake up in the morning and say a little blessing that the world's leading superpower also happens to be the world's greatest democracy."

Ceding the region to the mullahs was always going to create tension between Washington and its traditional allies in the Middle East, and so, Oren argues, the administration early on set about preparing Israel's allies in the US for this about-face. In his first presidential meeting with American Jewish leaders, Obama told the assembled *machers* that he would seek to establish "daylight" between the United States and Israel. The White House then proceeded to launch secret negotiations with the Islamic Republic, keeping its ally Israel in the dark.

Oren is a historian, and what gives his memoir heft is not just his lucid and entertaining writing style, but his analytical prowess. He goes back into the past, looking for the documents, speeches, and overarching themes that help inform the present. He brings to readers' attention a little-known 2008 paper authored by a variety of future, senior Obama administration officials arguing that the Iranian nuclear program ought not be "overhyped" and that the US ought seek out "more moderate elements of political Islam." He reminds readers of Strategic Communications Adviser Ben Rhodes's declaration that a deal with Iran would be "the biggest thing President Obama will do in his second term on foreign policy," all but foreclosing the possibility of any military action against Tehran should it reject a deal, military action that the president and his various surrogates had repeatedly stressed was always on the table. Oren notes the four letters Obama has written to Ayatollah Khamenei, practically begging him to become friends with the United States. The president's affections, needless to say, remain unrequited.

Today, we've come to the point where—as part of a doomed strategy against the Islamic State—the United States has formed a de facto military and diplomatic alliance with Iran, and is even [sharing an airbase](#) with Iran in Iraq. Last month, Obama [told](#) Israeli television that there's no military option to stop the Iranian nuclear program, signaling to the Iranians that they have nothing to fear from the US Air Force while explicitly turning his back on statements he has been making to the contrary since he launched his campaign for the presidency.

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Merely for pointing out these facts, Oren has had to endure a series of withering personal attacks from the White House and its surrogates. “Instead of just trying to explain the policy, they’re trying to delegitimize me,” he says. But he sees this as standard operating procedure for an administration for which “ad hominem attacks are just a way of operating.” When a senior administration official called Netanyahu “chickenshit” and “a coward” last year, it wasn’t just playground antics, it was “dangerous for America,” Oren says, sending a signal to the world that purportedly close American allies can and will be treated with mocking and disdain should they stand in the way of the coming “grand bargain” with the ayatollahs.

As I wrapped up my conversation with Oren, I was reminded of his previous book, a sweeping history of American involvement in the Middle East called *Power, Faith, and Fantasy*. Those three words capture the variety of America’s enchantment with the region, and it is the last that aptly describes this current administration’s quixotic obsession. “At the end of the day, perhaps the most influential factor is the fantasy,” Oren says. “And the fantasy is the one that gets America in the most trouble.”

National Review

[You Can’t Keep Up with Obama’s Incompetence, Corruption, and Hyperactivity](#)

By Deroy Murdock

People ask me if I ever lack ideas for opinion pieces. *Au contraire*: Like a Malibu firefighter encircled by blazing brush, I can’t decide where to aim my hose. I spent most of Wednesday trying to pick which of that day’s Obama-fueled infernos to douse.

I awoke to the news that Obama has fallen way behind on his promise to train moderate Syrians to fight ISIS. After budgeting some \$500 million to instruct and equip 3,000 anti-ISIS troops by year’s end, Obama, in fact, has unleashed 60 such combatants. That’s 2 percent down, 98 percent to go. But, hey, what’s the rush?

Even before the advent of ISIS, Obama originally touted this effort as a bulwark against the brutality of Bashar Assad, the dictator of Damascus. “We are particularly interested in making sure that we are mobilizing the moderate forces inside of Syria,” Obama declared at a presidential debate on October 22, 2012. Thirty-two months later, Obama’s moderate Syrian force boasts a whopping five dozen members.

“The number 60, as you all recognize, is not an impressive number,” Defense Secretary Ashton Carter told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday. “The number is much smaller than we hoped for at this point.”

Obama exhibits little urgency. His policy recalls what a Jamaican waiter might say after your conch fritters remain unserved after 45 minutes: “Soon come, mon. Soon come.”

Apparently, placing non-American boots on the ground is not so important in the battle against ISIS.

“Ideologies are not defeated with guns,” Obama explained Monday. “They are defeated by better ideas and more attractive and more compelling vision.” If only we had deployed copies of

The Federalist Papers on Omaha Beach, rather than GIs. We could have crushed Hitler in a jiffy.

Senator John McCain (R., Ariz.) told Fox News Channel's Martha MacCallum Wednesday, "In all the years that I have observed different conflicts and American conduct of foreign policy and national-security policy, this is the most bizarre."

Also, bizarre is the IRS political-harassment scandal. Former IRS official Lois Lerner initially blamed "our line people in Cincinnati" for subjecting conservative and tea-party groups to excessive scrutiny, stifling paperwork demands, intrusive interrogations ("please provide the percentage of time your organization spends on prayer groups"), and endless delays in their applications for tax-exempt status.

Wednesday's headlines revealed a far broader and darker abuse of power.

"The FBI and Justice Department worked with Lois Lerner and the IRS to concoct some reason to put President Obama's opponents in jail before his reelection, and this abuse resulted in the FBI's illegally obtaining the IRS files of innocent Americans," said Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch. The conservative watchdog group uncovered an IRS document that shows how the agency furnished the FBI with 21 computer disks bearing 1.25 million pages from some 113,000 tax records. This transfer included the improper disclosure of "confidential taxpayer information," which is covered by two laws that carry criminal penalties: Internal Revenue Code Section 6103 and the federal Privacy Act.

Given Team Obama's Chinese-style stonewalling, congressional investigators are unlikely to solve this mystery. They also lack police power to do much about it. Thus, it's time for a special prosecutor.

Fitton correctly wonders: "How can the Justice Department and FBI investigate the very scandal in which they are implicated?"

Meanwhile, if you like Obamacare and Obamanet, you will love Obamahood. Having wrecked the medical industry and nationalized the Internet, Obama now wants Washington to dictate the socioeconomic and demographic makeup of America's neighborhoods. The Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule is a 377-page federal regulation unveiled Wednesday. Federal ethnocrats now will dragoon local communities into adjusting their racial compositions, housing density, zoning, and other matters according to the whims of America's masters on the Potomac.

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IBD

Late Night Humor

by Andrew Malcolm

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Meyers: TBS announced plans for a competition show where the winner becomes a weatherman on CNN. And the loser will also become a weatherman on CNN.

Conan: Greece defaulted on its nearly \$1.8 billion loan payment. Who would've thought the country that invented the philosophy major would be broke?

Fallon: In a recent interview, Vladimir Putin said the West has "no need to be afraid of Russia." Although Putin said that as he was petting a tank.

Conan: Hillary Clinton's files show she emailed her secretary: "Heard on radio of cabinet mtng Can I go?" In another, Hillary said she learned of the nation's debt ceiling from smooth jazz 94.7.

Meyers: It was announced today that printed physical copies of Wikipedia will soon be on sale. Of course, I'm not sure that's true because I read it on Wikipedia.

Conan: For the first time in 24 years, Jupiter and Venus appeared almost on top of each other. So, the gay marriage ruling is having more of an impact than we thought.

Conan: The man who helped create the text message has passed away. His final text was 'YOLO' [with a frowny face.](#)

Conan: In the new Terminator movie 'Genisys,' Arnold Schwarzenegger's cyborg character goes back in time to fight a younger version of himself. The two tried to talk it out, but neither could understand what the other was saying.

Meyers: Emerson College plans to offer students a major in comedy. Or you can just take your tuition money and burn it in front of your parents.

Conan: The Greek economy, of course, is in turmoil these days. The Prime Minister of Greece assured citizens that their wages and pensions are completely safe. Then, he stuffed The Parthenon in a duffel bag and fled the country.

Meyers: Donald Trump is now a presidential candidate. And based on the amount of bronzer he uses, he's running for president of the Spokane NAACP.

Conan: 55% of millennials say they'd consider leaving the United States to move elsewhere. Most of the millennials said they'd like to live in either Middle Earth or Winterfell.

Conan: I love Comic-Con. It's the only place where you can meet a Superman whose Kryptonite is his allergy to nuts.

Conan: Have you noticed it seems every business in San Diego jacks up its prices this week? It's so bad, the NFL team has changed its name to the San Diego Overchargers.

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IT'S A DEAL!



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