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ISIS Releases New Video of Leader Baghdadi

First video of reclusive Baghdadi seen since 2014 Posted on [April 29, 2019](#)
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ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi may not have a caliphate anymore, but he's still got a video camera. The reclusive leader of the group [has shown up in a new video message released Monday](#). It is the first time Baghdadi has been seen in a video since 2014. Baghdadi sought to emphasize that, despite his effective defeat in Syria and Iraq, the group remains active. He promised to see that the group would remain active and fighting until "Judgment Day."

While Baghdadi tried to play up his group being active, not everyone is convinced that the group retains anywhere near the clout it once had. [Defense Priorities](#) Policy Director Benjamin H. Friedman issued a statement in response saying:

"Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's new propaganda video is evidence that he is alive. It is not evidence that ISIS is thriving or that U.S. troops should stay in Syria or Iraq to fight its remnant.

"No true military mission is left for U.S. troops in Syria. Baghdadi does not operationally control the so-called affiliates around the world. And ISIS' losses make others less likely to affiliate in name or to try to travel to Syria or Iraq to fight. The U.S.-led war on ISIS undercut the allure it needs to recruit, inspire, and terrorize. That is a real victory worth celebrating.

"The U.S. does not need to be at the front of the already-long anti-ISIS line. Baghdadi and ISIS are hidden and hunted by an array of actors: the Kurds who did the hard fighting

against them already, the Syrian government, Russians, Iran-backed militias, Iraq, and tribes who were abused by ISIS in its prime.

“To keep America safe, vigilance is required, but endless war is not. U.S. security is best served by a full military withdrawal from Syria. The U.S. military can monitor anti-American terrorist threats with intelligence and attack them with airstrikes and even raids, if necessary.”

The Pentagon, of course, has been trying to play up the ISIS threat to justify a permanent presence in Syria, and ISIS themselves are trying to ensure that US presence for the sake of their own status as a global terror group of note. It’s an arrangement that benefits US hawks and ISIS, but not much of anyone else.