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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S TONIGHT WITH
DON LEMON**

Don Lemon: New York City, one of the biggest hotspots in the coronavirus crisis – there are at least 849 people in intensive care across the city tonight. Joining me now, the Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio. Mayor, thank you so much. I appreciate your time. I know it's a very busy one for you. So, listen, the president talked about New York City, in his briefing today, I want you to take a listen and then we can discuss.

President Donald Trump: I've seen New York streets and I see it in the morning. I've watched all my life, New York streets, and you can't even see the pavement, there's so many people. And you take a look this morning, you take a look, even on Friday morning, I looked at it. I saw it through a camera. There wasn't a person on 5th Avenue. There wasn't a person on Madison Avenue. I've never seen anything like it because people have really listened to instructions and they've listened to what we've had to say, and the professionals they've listened. And those people should – people should really give them a lot of credit, including people like you because you just don't have the sense to understand what's going on.

Lemon: People really should give New Yorkers a lot of credit. I will agree with him on that. He's talking about people listening. He says that he has never seen the streets like this. On the other hand, he's also saying – also speaking positively of these protesters, right, against the stay at home orders. How do you square that circle? What gives here?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Don, you know, it's another one of these situations with the president where you just can't even begin to make sense of what he's saying. He's praising and he should be praising the people in New York City. I have said for weeks and weeks, New Yorkers have done something miraculous. This is the hardest place in the whole country to practice social distancing and shelter in place. And yet my fellow New Yorkers have done it in an amazing way and it's helping to drive back to the disease. But meanwhile Trump is tweeting out, you know, 'Liberate Michigan' and 'Liberate Virginia'. It's idiocy to suggest that we should be jumping ahead when we're dealing with a pandemic, that if you are not careful, it reasserts itself, and sets us back further. Don, I've had this conversation with the president. I've said, look, you already are taking a huge risk if you do not make sure that this disease is fully controlled before you restart, but here's what could happen, you could have a boomerang effect that the disease reasserts and then any recovery is put off much, much longer. He did not, in my view, understand this disease in the beginning. He didn't respond to it. He was never realistic about it. He didn't get us the testing we need. And now, even though he's saying nice things about New Yorkers, he's leaving us high and dry at a point where we are not going to be able to get back on our feet and restart if we don't get help from Washington.

I have directly implored him. I've said, if we can't get help, how are we going to go from a city that's the epicenter of this crisis, to restoring ourselves to the place of being the economic leader of this nation if there's no federal help to make up for the billions and billions of dollars we've lost, if we don't get a helping hand, we can't restart our economy. And I think sometimes, Don, I think he thinks somehow America's going to recover without its largest city, which is absolutely impossible.

Lemon: And without the largest economies. If you look at New York – New York City, New York State, and also California as well, but he's also doing something that's very dangerous, which is for another conversation. He's tying the Second Amendment, especially to Virginia, directly or indirectly, when it has nothing to do with the coronavirus. Listen, this conversation – the conversation in this country is focusing on how to reopen, but you know, let's talk – and this goes into what you were just saying before, but New York City, it is still an epicenter. Is it really in its own category in terms of this ongoing crisis, Mayor?

Mayor: Don, we have obviously had it a harder hit than almost any place, but what we have to be really smart about is understanding this disease which has ravaged the world. You know, it's ravaged big cities and small towns in every kind of country. You let it in the door, it's going to cause you endless trouble. So, in fact, what we've learned here is, be smart, be careful about when you take your foot off the gas. So, yeah, New York City has gone through hell. It is true. And we're going to need some real special help to get back on our feet. But I'll tell you something, so many other parts of the city have either gone through this – excuse me, the country. So many other parts of the country, they've gone through a lot already, or they're starting to see upticks right now.

And that's the danger. The human costs, but also where is this happening – in a lot of the places that this entire country depends on to fuel our economy. And I fear that the president in sort of his endless desire, sort of rah, rah, let's restart, is ignoring the facts, ignoring the science, and he's going to lead us into something that will boomerang back on us very harshly. And, Don, he's only got one chance to get this right. He really blew the first part of this crisis and now he's saying there's enough testing when there isn't. I can tell you for a fact we're nowhere near the kind of testing we need for our city to make a comeback. He's not even lifting a finger to help cities and states around the country that must get help if they're going to recover. He's in some kind of dream state acting like if he just wishes there would be a recovery, it's going to happen. If he's not careful, he's going to have city after city dealing with this disease, the human costs, and then no possibility of a proper restart.

And the only way it works is for the federal government to actually take control to say, okay, we're now – we, the federal government, are responsible for making, every city and state that needs testing to restart, gets the amount they need. In our case, hundreds of thousands of tests per day. As much as the country is using now, we are going to need per day to restart. And you've got to make cities and states whole. If we have billions and billions of dollars of budget gaps, we will not be able to provide basic services, we won't be able to take care of our people, we won't be able to restart our economy. I mean he is literally engaging in magical thinking if he thinks

that the American economy can recover without the places that actually are the economic engines.

Lemon: That's a good message for the rest of the country, what you said. Remember the places with the economic engines and also don't take your foot off the gas. Thank you very much, Mayor. Appreciate your time.

Mayor: Thank you, Don. Appreciate it.

Lemon: Thank you and good luck. Be safe.

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