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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN

Chris Cuomo: Let's bring in the Mayor, Bill de Blasio. New York City Mayor – on the scene yesterday giving people the comfort and confidence that Halloween would go on, the parade would go on, life would go on. How are we doing this morning, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well Chris, it was amazing last night. Almost a million people came to the Halloween parade in Manhattan. And Chris, you know New Yorkers. The attitude was one of strength, perseverance. People are not going to have their lives changed by some who is trying to undermine our society.

And I was so impressed by my fellow New Yorkers. They're going to go about their lives. We're not going to let the terrorists ever win. And also, the NYPD deserves incredible credit. The response – immediate. A young officer, five years on the force, steps in, stops this terrorist. You know, New Yorkers are very proud of how the NYPD handled this situation.

Cuomo: No question about that. The concern on one layer, Mayor, is it's too easy. One guy with a truck, hops a curb, and is able to do all this even in a part of the city that we presume is the safest. You know, it's surrounded by all the law enforcement headquarters. I don't have to tell you about the police presence. You make sure that it's kept in place. So, what do you say to people who are just worried that this could happen anytime, anyplace?

Mayor: Chris, the worry is natural. It's a very painful incident and our hearts go out to the families of the eight people whose lives were taken – and people are feeling it. Obviously, the closeness, physically, to Ground Zero means even more.

But at the same time people in this city see an intense NYPD presence every single day. We've added 2,000 more officers on patrol in this city in the last two years. We have the strongest anti-terrorism capacity we've ever had and that includes, Chris, a lot of officers out with long guns, with heavy gear that New Yorkers see and are reassured to see every single day – and you will see increased police presence over these next days as well.

I think it's painful for us but at the same time, people know the NYPD is the finest police force in the world and knows a lot about stopping terrorism. And you're going to see that presence and I think people are going to know that it's there for them.

Cuomo: The world has changed. I've heard you talk about it with your kids and we were talking to young people this morning. When you and I were growing up, Mr. Mayor, if we saw the long guns and the police presence like we see today, it would have freaked us out. But today there is a reassurance in that but there's also a new dynamic. Who does this? And you saw the President weighing in this morning. He's blaming the presence of this man for seven years in this country on what they're calling an open border policy, essentially. Yes, he came in legally through a process, through an airport, and had been here many years, as so far we understand without incident or any flags to authorities, but there's blame here. This is about Muslims. This is about people wanting to get us. This is about Democrats like you letting them in too easily. How do you respond?

Mayor: Look, the last thing the President or anyone else should do is politicize this tragedy. We have to find out what happened here. That work's going to be done by the FBI, by the NYPD, and all of our partners to determine exactly who this man is, what moved him to this horrible act, what's going on here, is there any bigger ramification? That's what we should be focused on.

But, look, in the end the last thing we should do is start casting aspersions on whole races of people or whole religions or whole nations. That only makes the situation worse. The bottom line is we – anyone who wants to come in this country should be very thoroughly vetted as an individual but the minute you start generalizing it, especially to a whole religion, then unfortunately, we're sending the exact negative message that a lot of our enemies want and the terrorists want to affirm – that this nation is somehow anti-Muslim.

We've got to do the exact opposite. We've got to show we respect all people in America. That's about as American a value as there is. Our Constitution says it. Our history says it. We respect all faiths. When we send that message it helps us in this country, in this world – it helps us fight terror, it helps us have the high ground.

So, no, this should not be politicized. We should stand shoulder to shoulder with the FBI, the NYPD, get to the bottom of this, figure out if there's additional measures we need to take to keep people safe, and move forward, and never let the terrorists have the high ground.

Cuomo: And take care of these families who were affected down here, obviously.

Mayor: Amen.

Cuomo: Look, that's the big discussion. The micro-discussion, Mr. Mayor, is how do you harden up soft targets like this? As you know this guy was able to jump a curb at West Houston and get onto the park path. Do you think you need better barriers?

Mayor: Chris, we're going to go immediately and see what changes we need to make in that area. You know we had an incident in Times Square some months ago.

Cuomo: Yes.

Mayor: It did not turn out to be related to terrorism. We made a number of physical changes there. We made physical changes in some other locations. Let's face it, in the modern world, the age that we're dealing with now, we, literally every single month, change our tactics to strengthen ourselves against terrorism. We used to, for example, we have these big parades like last night the Halloween parade, the Thanksgiving parade, we have New Year's Eve – we used to allow vehicles to cross the parade path at certain intervals. We don't allow that anymore. We put up big blocker trucks. We put up blocker cars. We stopped that because of what we saw in Nice, because of what we saw in Berlin. We are adjusting every time.

We're going to make an adjustment here too. We're going to decide some places that need additional hardening [inaudible] don't have the illusion that we can be everywhere all the time but we do know we can keep improving our defenses, and most especially, a strong, visible NYPD presence. And as you said earlier, those officers with the long guns and the gear, yes, maybe once upon a time people would have been unsettled but now they're reassured to see that strong presence and we're going to keep it out there at key points all over the city.

Cuomo: What a month. We started October out in Las Vegas – the deadliest mass shooting in modern history, and now at the end of the month here we are right back the site of 9/11 with the most deadly terror attack since then in New York City.

Mr. Mayor, thank you for being on the show this morning. We know you're very busy. Appreciate it.

Mayor: And Chris, thank you for your reporting. I just want to tell you – our hearts go out to these families but one thing I can say is, New Yorkers are going to stay strong through this no matter what.

Cuomo: They are here, they're out in numbers, and they're telling me to get out of the way, as all New Yorkers would.

Mayor: That's New York.

[Laughter]

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