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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN WITH DON LEMON

Don Lemon: Tonight, President Trump, activating the national guard in three of the hardest hit states, including New York, which has over 15,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus. Nearly 10,000 of those cases are in New York City alone – the President, saying that desperately needed medical supplies will reach a city within the next 48 hours. So, let's discuss now with the Mayor of New York City – and that's Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mayor, I appreciate you joining us. Thank you so much.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, Don.

Lemon: So, I said before the break that you just got off a call with the administration – President Trump and Vice President Pence. Is that correct?

Mayor: That's correct. It was both the President and the Vice President.

Lemon: How did that go? What did they say?

Mayor: Don, I was pleased with the call. I have to say, for weeks now, I've been trying to get across to everyone in Washington just how dire the situation is becoming here and how much we lack basic supplies. I do want to say, you know, being straightforward and respectful. I appreciate that the President and the Vice President had a focused, constructive conversation with me directly to talk about what's going on, particularly in our public hospitals, which are literally 10 days away from running out of really basic supplies, particularly equipment like ventilators. I felt that both the President and Vice President heard what I was saying, they heard the details, they talked about specific solutions. Obviously, you know, I want to see this help arrive rapidly and I still think we're going to need the United States military to really make it work. But it was a sea change, Don, and a welcome sea change to see both of them directly addressing the concerns of, you know, a city that's now clearly the epicenter of this American crisis – literally, one-third of all the cases in this nation right here in my city, sad to say, and two-thirds of the cases in New York State, and climbing. So, I was certainly happy to see the focus and the attention, finally.

Lemon: Okay. There's a lot – a couple of things that you talked about there. You said you need the military. Did you tell them that? You told them you wanted the military – what was their response?

Mayor: Yeah. So, look, without getting into a private conversation and respecting the President of Vice President, I would say this simply – I made clear what I've been saying publicly that we, of course, need and welcome the supplies, but I made clear also we have to get these supplies

here very rapidly from around the country. No one does that better than the military and we need the personnel. Right after we get through the supply situation, Don, and we get some improvement there, we're going to be stressed with tens of thousands of cases, potentially quite soon, to have enough doctors, nurses, lab techs, you name it, and the military have some of the best trained medical professionals in the country – and, obviously, quickly deployable. So, you know, I appealed for help on that front, considering that this is going to be, you know, a really tough April and probably an even tougher May. We're going to need that sustained help.

Lemon: Did they – you said you don't – without giving away private conversation, did they at least take it into consideration? Is it a possibility that you may get some military help?

Mayor: Again, I never want to speak for anyone else in government. I think I'll give the President and Vice President credit, they took time to have a serious, detailed conversation. I think they understood that I tried to lay it out, you know, very bluntly, because I said, in about 10 days, our public health care system – the biggest in the country, biggest public health system in the country – if we don't get the equipment, then we're literally go on to lose lives that we wouldn't need to lose, that we could save. But at a certain point, you can imagine, Don, even with the best health care professionals in the country, we're to lose some folks to this disease for a period of time, we're going to have a lot of exhausted folks in a ever-growing need. We have to expand rapidly the number of medical facilities. We've got to get more personnel into this equation. I think they heard it. I don't want to say that they gave me a specific answer yet, but I think they heard it. And further, I talked to them about the legislation in the Congress and I made clear – Don, I've got a city right now has lost billions of dollars in revenue in the last few weeks and has billions of dollars in new need. And I think at least that registered as well as a serious, serious problem.

Lemon: I know I live here, and, you know, I heard the Governor is saying that there were too many people out, but, I mean, when you look at the entirety of New York City, it's like a ghost town comparatively, compared to the way it usually is.

Mayor: That's right.

Lemon: But I've got to ask you, Mayor, half of – which I thought was a surprising number, let me – I want to make sure that I get it right – half of the 500 patients tested at New York Presbyterian Hospital came out positive. One in five are receiving ICU care. The bigger picture that – what you just said just moments ago, is that if you don't get more ventilators, if you don't get more supplies in the next 10 days, you said people will die.

Mayor: That's right. It says plain as that, Don. And Don, it's not – the next 10 days is only round one. It gets harder. It's kind of like we're in a grotesque video game where each level gets harder, except it's real human lives, and thousands of human lives. So, if we can get to April 1st – if we can get to April 1st with enough equipment, the second – you know, the first week of April is hard. The second week in April is harder. It's just like this. And we've got to keep bringing in more equipment, more personnel. Somehow, we're going to have to relieve the personnel who can't keep going at a certain point, because –

Lemon: I guess my question is, Mayor – excuse me for cutting you off, but I didn't give you a question. I know you've appealed to the President and the Vice President, but, I mean, what are you going to do? I mean, what do you do if that does not come through? What do you do?

Mayor: Don, I think the way to look at this is we have a very brief window, you know, a couple of weeks, to create enough momentum where we get supplies, we get personnel, we can stay ahead of it and just constantly resupply, literally like a rolling thunder, if you will, that we just stay ahead of the curve. And if that does not happen, if we don't get that help steadily from the government and we don't get medical personnel to come in from other parts of the country, bluntly, we're going to get to a point where there are people waiting for a bed, where there's people waiting for a ventilator, and some will die who did not need to die. It could be many, but I am at least encouraged this evening, Don. I've been very critical of the President, because I did not feel there was a response to his hometown. I want to be encouraged, Don. I want to see progress. I want to see us all get on the same page. So, at least, tonight, for the first time in weeks, I heard a response that showed me focus and an acceptance and understanding of the sheer scope of the problem. Now, the proof will be in the – you know, the supplies, the equipment, the personnel. If they keep coming, Don, I think we have a chance to stay ahead of it. If they don't, we're in danger.

Lemon: Mayor, that is the most positive I think I've heard you speak in the last couple of days. I appreciate it and I hope you get the help that you need, of course, being in New Yorker, but just being an American. Thank you so much, sir.

Mayor: Thank you, Don.

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