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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO MEETS WITH MAYOR OF JERUSALEM NIR BARKAT

Mayor Bill de Blasio: I want to welcome Mayor Barkat, and let him know that he is in his second home now – New York City. And I'd like to say that it has been a joy spending this time today getting to know each other. We've spoken together on several occasions. You were one of the first mayors –

Mayor Nir Barkat: – to congratulate –

Mayor: – around the world to congratulate me – I'll never forget that – when I was elected – and I thank you for that. And we spoke, sadly, after the tragedy a few weeks back – the attack on the synagogue in Jerusalem. But we obviously feel a great deal of connection – a great deal of connection between our two cities and our governments and our people.

And I have had the honor of going to Jerusalem three times – and undoubtedly one of the most important cities in the world, one of the most historical, one of the most beautiful. I can only imagine the joy of leading it in all of its extraordinary nature – that you, you know, are now the steward of – all those centuries of history that you now build upon.

And I can say that it's obvious Jerusalem is in very good hands. The mayor has a real passion for serving the rich diversity of people in his city. We talked a lot about what it means to lead people of all different backgrounds in a unified vision – it's something we both think about a lot. We have a point – I won't say a point of disagreement, just a point of recognition – that he has the largest city in his country, I have the largest city in my country, but my city has a larger Jewish population, so I just wanted to –

Mayor Barkat: We agree.

Mayor: We agreed. So, yeah – that's why I say it's not disagreement – it's just – I like to be very proud of that fact, and –

Mayor Barkat: Must be more difficult to manage two million Jews.

Mayor: Well, I'll leave that for you to determine – [laughs] – but it's a wonderful community and a huge part of what makes this city great. I just want to note, before I turn to the mayor, that I think you were in Paris within a few days of when I was.

Mayor Barkat: Day after you.

Mayor: And, you know, it's a moment – we certainly both feel this deeply – it's a moment to not just acknowledge what's happening around the world, particularly in Western Europe, but to demand some real

changes. And I knew before the trip to Paris just how troubling the situation was in Europe, and in some other parts of the world where Jewish communities have come under attack, but it was eye-opening to speak to Jewish community leaders in Paris after what they had been through, and to hear just how much more has to be done. And I think it's important for leaders around the world to hold up good examples while making the demand for change.

Jerusalem is a place where – again, extraordinary diversity. It is managed and supported in a very positive and creative way under this mayor's leadership. We here in New York City, we're very proud of our embrace of all communities. We're very proud, in particular, of the way we protect the Jewish community. The NYPD has been extraordinary. I say to people all the time – when there's – tragically, when we see an incident anywhere – Paris, Buenos Aires, Brussels – wherever we see an incident in the world – the NYPD goes on alert and reinforces Jewish community locations. That is the level of support and embrace of the community. I think that should be the model in Europe as well.

I don't think Jewish communities should have to beg for protection – I think it should be a given. And that is something that should really be synonymous with what a pluralistic society is – and by the way, not just for the Jewish community – for any community that's under attack. Pluralism is not a passive act – it's an active concept. Protection and embrace is what really shows that you're serious about a multicultural, multi-religious society – and that's what we work on every day here.

So, I just want to say to the mayor that I am thrilled to finally – after having heard so many wonderful things – thrilled that we are finally meeting, that our governments are working together to try and help each other on issues of how to manage our cities well. And I can say safely – what I heard from President Rivlin when he was here last week, that there's a sense among so many Israelis that a second home is not just in America, but in New York City – and we're very proud of that fact. So I hope you also consider this your second home, and I welcome you.

[Mayor Nir Barkat speaks]

Mayor: Well said.

Mayor Barkat: Thank you.

Mayor: He – he could run for office in America, his English is so good – [laughs] –

Mayor Barkat: No, thank you – no, no, no – I have no intentions.

Mayor: Thank you, everyone.

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