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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN

Wolf Blitzer: Joining us now is the Mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio. Mayor, thanks very much for joining us. I know this is a tense time for mayors of a lot of cities, especially New York, which, as you know, has arguably been one of the most desired targets of these terrorists since 9/11. What is the latest information you're getting about specific threats to New York City?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, Wolf, thank God, there are no credible and specific threats right now. That's what our police force understands. That's what the FBI has told us as well. We are in a state of high vigilance, but I have to tell you – and you have spent a lot of time here – for 14 years, we have been a state of vigilance, since 9/11. But what we've done this year is we've added a new Critical Response Command – 500 plus officers who are specifically devoted to anti-terrorism duty; who are trained, and equipped, and armed for that specific duty. They've started rolling out on our streets to reassure our folks and to be in places that are well traveled – you know, busy parts of the city like Times Square and other locations. So we are sending a very powerful message – that New York City is ready. We are doing a lot to prevent the attacks, particularly with our federal partners, but, God forbid we were to confront anything, we have a very large force ready to deal with it.

Wolf Blitzer: I know that you've sent some members of the NYPD to Paris to participate in the investigation. What – what is their mission? What has their role been?

Mayor: You know, after 9/11, we recognized as a city we had to protect ourselves, so we actually established NYPD offices in a number of key locations around the world. We have a standing office in Paris, but we have sent additional officers from our Counterterrorism Unit to work with the French investigators to understand the new approaches that the terrorists are using, because it is our obligation to defend to our people, to put strategies in place that will disrupt these new approaches. You know, there has been a clear model in recent years that is different from what we saw in the past. And after previous incidents – for example, the Mumbai incident several years ago, NYPD went to the scene, and they went to the scene back in January in Paris, which I visited as well. We keep making adjustments, because our job is stay ahead of the terrorists, learn from each attack, and perfect our approach to stopping them.

Wolf Blitzer: Is it your information – because we're hearing it as well – that European officials believe these terrorists used sophisticated encryption software to allow them to communicate without anyone being able to monitor what they were saying? Is that the information you're getting as well?

Mayor: It is indeed, and it is a very troubling reality. And I want to be blunt – there are companies that, in order to make a profit, are providing this software, providing the apps – are, unfortunately, making life easier for the terrorists. I know the Director of the FBI, Mr. Comey, is tremendously concerned about this. He has spoken out powerfully. Our Police Commissioner Bill Bratton has as well. Let's be blunt about the fact that no private company should be doing anything that even inadvertently aids and abets terrorists – and it is time for these

companies to change their approach, to work with law enforcement. We can't have communications among terrorists that law enforcement cannot access.

Wolf Blitzer: How do you stop them from doing that?

Mayor: Look, I am not going to pretend to be an expert on technology. I can tell you this much – we have had issues like this before, where companies were not cooperative originally with law enforcement about the approach they took to their products. I think we have to be very blunt, and if it takes shaming these companies, we have to do that, about the fact they are creating a product that unfortunately creates a stream of information that law enforcement cannot find in real time or even after the fact, that in many cases erases or is unreachable. That inhibits our ability to protect human life. These companies need to take responsibility and work with law enforcement – if they have to reverse engineer, if they have to come up with new counter measures. It is their obligation to work with law enforcement. We can't have terrorists active around the world and being undetectable because of technology created by private companies.

Wolf Blitzer: As you know, ISIS makes no secret of the fact that they have been trying to smuggle in real terrorists among the refugees fleeing Syria, going into Europe and maybe even coming here to the United States. The Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan, he was on the House floor a little while ago, saying, you know what, the U. S. should put a pause on taking in Syrian refugees – refugees from Iraq as well, until U. S. Homeland Security, the U. S. government can do a better job vetting these refugees. Are you okay with a pause?

Mayor: Look, we have a stringent vetting procedure in place. It's quite clear. I can tell you from the New York perspective, the last figure I heard – over the last two years, we've taken in eight refugees from a humanitarian crisis that has affected millions. So, I think it's fair to say, the process right now the federal government employs is deliberative, it's careful, it's multilayered. Obviously, that should continue to be perfected – but here's the problem with a lot of the voices that have said we should shut our borders to refugees in a humanitarian crisis. It sends a horrible message to the world. It means we're turning our backs on people who, in fact, are the victims of terrorism. I mentioned earlier today a study that we should really – or a survey, I should say – we should look at very, very soberly. In 1938, there was a public opinion survey in this country; almost two-thirds of Americans said we should not take in more Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution. So, we cannot turn our back on people in danger, innocent people – I know you've seen this photo, it was on the front pages all around the world, this tragic situation with this young boy – I think three-year-old boy, who died – Syrian refugee boy. This – this photo captured the hearts of the world. We're not going to turn our backs on children and families. It's certainly not the American way. It's not the New York City way. We are – we've been a beacon for immigrants for generations. You can have a strong, careful screening process and still have an open door to people in need.

Wolf Blitzer: Because the CIA director, John Brennan, this morning, he addressed the importance, as you do, of striking a balance between accepting refugees from Syria but maintaining security safe guards to make sure terrorists are not among those refugees. But he also said the U. S. now has to evaluate how best to strengthen the existing system – more should be done. So, I'll repeat the question, if Paul Ryan, the Speaker, and other Republicans – some Democrats as well – say, you know what, let's pause for the time being to make sure the system is perfect, you're not even – are you ready to go along with even a temporary pause?

Mayor: Again, it's been going on for several years and obviously to date it's been a very stringent system. I wouldn't say we need a pause – I would say it a different way: keep improving the system. It should be stringent, multilayered – clearly, if there's any doubt about someone, they should not be let in. But we're talking about, ultimately, millions of people – children, seniors, people who have nothing to do with terrorism are the vast, vast majority. We have to be big enough, as a nation, and smart enough to address both issues simultaneously – to take on one of the worst humanitarian crisis of our time and ward off any attempt to use that pathway for the wrong purposes. I don't think there's a contradiction here. And I have to say, some people, bluntly, are playing

to the cheap seats here – Governor Christie most notably, who, in fact, talked about not letting in young children. What on Earth does that have to do with our security situation? How do we turn away young children who have been orphaned by a humanitarian crisis and then claim it's because of national security? So, I think that was a very sad example of speaking against American values of respecting immigrants and respecting our role in the world as one of the great humanitarian nations.

Wolf Blitzer: Bill de Blasio is the Mayor of New York City. Mayor, thanks very much for joining us and good luck to everyone, obviously, in New York City. We know ISIS has made no secret of their desire to attack targets in New York City. We hope they fail in those efforts. Thanks so much for joining us.

Mayor: Thank you very much Wolf.

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