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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS ON NBC'S MEET THE PRESS WITH
CHUCK TODD**

Chuck Todd: And joining me now is the Chair of the National Governors Association, it's Governor Larry Hogan of Maryland, and the Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio. Gentlemen, welcome back to Meet the Press. Mr. Mayor, I'm going to start with what's going on in New York City. It does appear to be right now ground zero for what the country is facing. You noted on Friday the grim reminder that New York City, I think, now has a third of all cases in this country. What can you tell us this morning? Is there any ebbing of this yet?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Chuck, the truth is – and New Yorkers and all Americans deserve the blunt truth – it's only getting worse. And in fact April and May are going to be a lot worse. Right now we are a third of the cases in the country, that's going to get worse. We're about two-thirds or more of the cases in New York State, that's going to get worse. But Chuck, the President of the United States is from New York City and he will not lift a finger to help his hometown and I don't get it. I don't get it. Right now, I have asked repeatedly for the military to be mobilized, for the Defense Production Act to be used to its fullest to get us things like ventilators, so people who can live who would die otherwise. Chuck, I can't be blunt enough. If the president doesn't act, people will die who could have lived otherwise, senior citizens –

Todd: What is it that you want –

Mayor: – Folks who are members of families, and we can't get action from the President of the United States.

Todd: What is it that you want the military to do immediately? What would be a specific thing you'd want the military to do immediately?

Mayor: Chuck, the military has extraordinary medical capacity of its own that's been honed in fighting wars. They can handle any situation. All military personnel who are medically trained should be sent to places where this crisis is deep like New York. Right now, the military is the best logistical organization in the nation. If there are ventilators being produced anywhere in the country, we need to get them to New York, not weeks from now or months from now, in the next 10 days. And the only force in America that can do that is the military. Why are they at their bases? Why are they not being allowed to serve? I guarantee you they're ready to serve, but the president has to give the order.

Todd: The shelter in place order for New York City – how do you plan on enforcing this next week?

Mayor: Chuck, people really do get – I've been around my city the last few days. They're getting the message more and more. Also, we will use the NYPD and other agencies to go out and remind people, educate them, break up groups of people if they're congregating. It'll take a while for people to truly get it. But right now, I'll tell you one thing, everyday New Yorkers today, Americans are much farther ahead of the curve in terms of understanding this crisis than anything we're seeing from the White House. And that's troubling to think that people who have the power are not using it, when everyday people get right now, shelter in place is necessary to protect our families.

Todd: Governor Hogan, I want to talk to you – you and I believe and Governor Cuomo of New York jointly wrote a letter to the president. I think, number one, you wanted to get FEMA in the lead role. They're now in the lead role. But let me ask you, on this issue of procurement, we already know Governor Cuomo basically admitted he had to get price gouged in order to buy some N95 masks, who should be the lead agency here? Should FEMA be the one both purchasing and doling this out or should the states be competing against each other?

Governor Lawrence Hogan, Maryland: Well, look, so this is a problem that everybody's been talking about for a week, but I don't think just talking about what was done wrong yesterday or last week or last year is really that helpful in the discussion. Governor Cuomo is the Vice Chairman of the National Governors Association, I'm the Chairman. I can tell you that we've been talking with and meeting with all the governors, with the vice president and occasionally with the president, with all the senior team almost every single day, talking about the need. And I believe we've pushed for action and we are getting some progress. Now, it's not nearly enough. It's not fast enough. We're way behind the curve. But let's talk about – you know, we're trying to figure out what we can do to move forward and they are making progress. It's not fast enough. But on all of those things, on respirators, on PPEs, on the masks, on the tests – we're ramping up.

You know, New York has about half of the aid of the rest of the country. They are focusing on the three states that have the worst problem right now. And New York is one of them, but they're really trying to push things out to all the states. But yeah, of course, it's not enough and failures were made and things that should have happened sooner. But you know, I just want to focus on where we go from here because our job is to save the citizens. You know, we had another death here in Maryland last night. We just hit over 500 in the Washington region and instead of just talking about what didn't get done, I just want to get things done.

Todd: I understand that. Let me – that's why I want to ask you is – I mean do you feel as if there is a point person in the federal government that is handling this, the N95 mask issue, or do you feel as if you still have to find different ways to acquire masks?

Governor Hogan: I think it's a little bit of both, Chuck. So FEMA – we pushed to get FEMA in charge of that. I think they are listening to the governors. All 55 governors have stepped up and weighed in. We listed priorities about what had to get done, what they needed to focus on. They're responding to almost all five of those requests. But FEMA has to take the lead, but we also have to just – we can't wait. So we're taking individual actions as well. It's not a perfect situation, but we're trying to ramp up and order things on the open market, get some things

produced here. It's going to take the federal, state, and local governments all stepping up and doing whatever it takes, regardless of, you know, who's supposed to do what. We've all got to jump in and do whatever we can. That's just where we are.

Todd: I want to talk about a regional issue. I want to show you – I'm going to show some pictures to our audience. You can't see this, but this was at the Tidal Basin yesterday in Washington, D. C. Not a lot of social distancing was being practiced there. You've been concerned, I know that Virginia hasn't issued the same level of restrictions that Maryland and D. C. have had. The inability to operate as a region here, is that a problem for you or are you hoping that the Governor of Virginia, in particular, and the Mayor of D. C., that all three of you are going to be on the same page here?

Governor Hogan: Well, so, in addition to meeting with all the governors, that we've been meeting as a region with the Governor of Virginia, with the Mayor of D. C. We talked on Friday, we're going to be talking again I believe tomorrow. We're all taking actions and trying to work together. But yeah, the social distancing is not being enforced and it's a little crazy to see the kind of crowds at the cherry blossoms. I mean, people have to listen, there's people that are out there and you are endangering not only yourselves, but your fellow citizens by not listening to these warnings. We've been getting pretty tough out here in Maryland on folks – limiting people to groups of 10. We were chastising all these spring breakers that came back from partying in Florida and we told them they need to self-quarantine for 14 days, otherwise they're risking the lives of their parents and their grandparents and then their friends. Because this no longer is just about older people. People of all ages, forty-something percent of our cases are under 54 years old and from 18 to 54. We had a 10-month-old, a five-year-old who have gotten this disease. So the people are kidding themselves if they think that they should just go on spring break or enjoy being out there just as business as normal. We've got to get people off the streets and out of these crowds. It's absolutely essential.

Todd: Mayor de Blasio, there's a lot of people who are going to wonder what does progress look like? And because it's an invisible enemy and every day the numbers right now are getting worse, not better – how can just people who are sitting at home anxious to know, when did they get to go back to work, what does progress look like to you?

Mayor: Chuck, first of all, I respect Governor Hogan, for sure, but I just disagree with something he said. It's not about blaming people for what happened in the past. It's about right this minute, the American government is not at full bore right now. The Defense Production Act, it's been activated. We've gotten no indication of any factory on 24/7 shifts. We've gotten no shipments and the U. S. military is at its bases instead of at the frontline. So respectfully, Governor, we cannot be gentle about this point. Right this minute, from this minute forward, our government, our federal government needs to be in this fight instead of on the sidelines. I'm not worried about blame. I'm worried about saving lives right this minute and I don't see the federal government at this moment.

To the point at hand, Chuck, April is going to be worse than March and I fear May will be worse than April. So bluntly, it's going to get worse – a lot worse before it gets better. But what would be progress? Real consistent social distancing being enforced, people living with it, and hospitals

that can function. People seeing that their health care system is actually holding because we have the supplies and the personnel, and I think that's going to be a national reality, Chuck. Personnel – medical personnel are going to have to be taken from one part of the country to another as this crisis deepens. The supplies, the equipment have to go where the need is greatest. If people see the system holding, that will be progress. If it starts to collapse – think about that in the United States of America in the 21st century, if our hospitals can't function because our government wasn't there for them.

Todd: Governor Hogan, what would you give as a prescription of what does progress look like as we sit at home and wait?

Governor Hogan: Well look, nobody knows where the end of this is or when the spikes are going to happen, but progress is going to be if we can somehow bend this curve downward and we can start to stop that spike that's going so we don't overload the health care system, you know, and people are just going to – look, it's very disconcerting. People's lives are disrupted. It's scary. And I understand people out there are concerned about, when is it going to look better. Just know that people all over the place are working as hard as they possibly can to fight this hidden enemy.

And it's going to take all of us, not only the local governments, the cities like the Mayor, and the state governments, all the governors, the federal government, but it takes – every one of our citizens is a part of this and we can't stop it without them cooperating, but it's going to be a while. We don't know how long or how bad it's going to be, but it's going to continue until we can get it stopped and we're just going to keep fighting 24 hours a day until we can get it done.

Mayor: Chuck, it's not true that people everywhere are fighting with all they got because our military is being sidelined and the White House is in denial. It's just not true, Governor. I'm going to respect you but it's just not true.

Governor Hogan: I know we've got military all over our state doing all kinds of great things like [inaudible] helping with hospitals.

Mayor: You've got the National Guard. You do not have the American –

Governor Hogan: – And building new hospital beds. And your governor in New York is doing the same thing. So maybe you ought to try to talk with them and see [inaudible] –

Mayor: I have talked to him. It is not – not everyone is doing everything they could do, Governor. Let's be honest about it.

Todd: And I think we're all – and I'm going to be speaking with the FEMA administrator in a few minutes as well. Governor Hogan, Mayor de Blasio – I know you guys are both fighting the same fight here, at the end of the day. Let's get rid of this virus and let's hope we can get back on track here. Thank you both. I know it's trying times for both of you. So thank you for your service.

Governor Hogan: Thank you, Chuck.

Mayor: Thank you.

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