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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ATTENDS SUMMER EMERGENCIES  
TABLETOP EXERCISE MEETING**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Alright I'd like to welcome our OEM Commissioner Joe Esposito and our Health Commissioner Mary Bassett. We've done part one this morning of an emergency preparedness exercise. This one was predicated on the notion of a heat emergency. As you know, a few weeks ago, we did an exercise predicated upon the notion of a coastal storm or hurricane. We've also recently, as a city, done an exercise related to a biological agent. We are doing this constantly because we want to be in a state of preparedness for any number of potential challenges we may face. And the dialogue in the room was created to be effectively a real time exercise, a series of events were occurring, the crisis continued to deepen, and all the pertinent agencies around the room – city, state, MTA etcetera – had to respond in real time and make decisions to be able to handle the challenges that kept coming up. I think it was a very productive exercise. I want to thank also First Deputy Mayor Tony Shorris, and Deputy Mayors Alicia Glen and Lilliam Barrios-Paoli who played a key role in the exercise.

The notion here is that we're keenly aware of climate change and what it has meant for this city. The world has had more than 350 consecutive months of above average temperature. I think we understand fully what could be in store for us in the future, especially – an example locally – 2012, the hottest summer ever in the Northeast. Thankfully this summer we've had a little bit of relief, but we've seen situations very recently. We've seen the domino effect that can occur in a heat emergency, what it means for peoples' health, what it means particularly for our elderly and disabled citizens. So we went through a variety of situations and determined the kind of response that we could make.

And it's really a credit to New York City, that so many of the leaders around the table are so schooled in these different dynamics, they were quick to have immediate response – you know, have immediate resources available, they knew the scenarios, they knew how to handle them. There's a great sense of teamwork in the room. Again, I want to thank Commissioner Joe Esposito for leading the exercise and pushing people to make the quick decisions we're going to have to make if, God forbid, we were dealing with a real situation like this. So I'll be happy to take any questions about this exercise, and then we'll go on to other matters. Yes?

**Question:** [inaudible] is it possible for [inaudible] to really treat this like it's an emergency?

**Commissioner Joe Esposito, OEM:** If you were in there, you would see how they treat it like a real incident. The adrenaline is pumping when they're in there. You know, they're very time consuming and everybody's very busy, but when you're in there, they all take this very serious, as if it's a real event. I'll tell you, I've been through dozens of them in my prior life, and I've been through two here, and you're on the edge of your chair. You're on the edge of your chair and, the mayor brought up a couple of points that we didn't prepare for – medication distribution, some food distribution, some of these scenarios – and we said, 'Gee, we don't have an answer to that question.' So we'll get an answer to the question as a result of the drill.

**Mayor:** Right. I want to emphasize that point. We do these drills of course to test what people already know, but the purpose is critical thinking, what have we missed? Or another example, we did a lot of comparison in there about what happened after Sandy. Even though that was a very different kind of emergency, there were some things that did not work properly after Sandy. We talked about in there some of the adjustments we want to make, some of the gaps that we need to fill. And as Joe said, homework was immediately given to each commissioner, and the whole idea of the OEM role and the OEM commissioner is to make each agency come back with better planning all the time – and to be the one central place where that happens. Yes?

**Question:** Can you give us an example of some of the homework that the commissioners got?

**Mayor:** Sure. I'll give an example of something many of you may know I worked on as Public Advocate. We are very concerned that the event, this kind of event, a heat emergency, of course can lead to a lot of seniors and a lot of folks with medical problems being isolated. God forbid, if it has an impact, for example, on the electrical supply, as they saw after Sandy. So we know that we may have a lot of vulnerable folks who need their medications. We don't have a strong enough system at this moment to make sure that we can get the medication to the person even if they live on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of a building that doesn't have power. It's not something that this city has historically done, it's something we have to start doing. So Commissioner Bassett is tasked with other agencies to come up with that plan, and have it ready immediately. Brand new thing, never something we've done in previous emergencies, not something that's part of normal protocol, but something we want to add to the protocol so we can serve people better. On this, once, twice, thrice, other topics?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, the Medical Examiner ruled, obviously, that Eric Garner died, in part because of a chokehold, he was choked. Because chokeholds have been banned by the NYPD, should administrative charges be brought against Officer Pantaleo?

**Mayor:** Well, first of all, I have a lot of respect for the Medical Examiner's Office in New York City. I think it's the gold standard in this country for the work they do, the science they use to come up with their answers, and I think that should be respected in and of itself. Again, there's a full investigation underway. There will be a legal process. For example, the Staten Island DA, and then the Department will also make its decisions on how to proceed. What we've said very clearly is the rules we know well, it's been in place since the 1980s, that a chokehold, except

under the most extraordinary situation, is not allowable. But we're going to get all of the facts together, and then the Department will make its decision in terms of how to proceed.

**Question:** Just before you took the podium, the police unions were holding their own press conference this afternoon, they were [indistinct] the Eric Garner case, and the head of the Sergeant's Union said at one point that they're going to start following the book to the letter of the law, and if there's a slowdown that makes them get to the next call more slowly, then so be it. Does that sound like cooperation to you?

**Mayor:** I think every law enforcement official, every officer, has to serve the people of this city. I think the vast majority of the men and women at the NYPD and all the uniformed services take that very, very seriously. If some individuals don't, that's a problem for us, because we need people to go out there and do their jobs and do them well. There's no contradiction between doing your job effectively and respecting the people you serve, and that's very clear in the rules of the NYPD.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask you where you stand on Israel [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I've been asked many times and I've spoken many times. The most important point here is that Israel came under attack. I've actually been to some of the places that have been under attack. I went to the town of Sderot, which is very near the Gaza strip, has been under rocket attack for quite a while, but the intensification of the rocket attacks in the last month is absolutely unacceptable. What nation in the world would stand idly by while its citizens, its civilians are under constant rocket attack? Israel absolutely has a right to defend itself. That being said, we need this ceasefire to work this time. There's been a huge loss of life. It's tragic, and we've got to pray and hope and do all we can to see this ceasefire work. Clearly, some of the recent loss of life was troubling, and I think every military in the world grapples with this issue, of how do you try to avoid civilians. And it's not easy in Gaza the way that Hamas has used the tactic of putting its military – its soldiers as military assets in the civilian population. But that being said, I think it's clear that there has to be a greater effort to protect civilians. Hopefully the ceasefire holds and thereafter a continued effort to protect civilians.

**Question:** [inaudible] do you have any current plans or future plans or considerations and possibly –

**Mayor:** Not at this moment, it's certainly something I'm always open to. I've been to Israel three times, I certainly intend to go back, but I don't have an immediate plan. Okay, anyone in the back? Dave.

**Question:** If you look at what Pat Lynch and sergeants have said, if you look at the Eric Garner case itself – if you look at the [inaudible] story earlier about firefighters having to intervene and stop police officers from allegedly hitting someone in police custody – if you look at the totality of this and the fact that CCRB is meeting this afternoon to address some of these problems – do we have a problem in the city?

**Mayor:** Well, I want to separate it into pieces. Anything with an allegation you have to take the word allegation seriously. So there's several instances that are being investigated and we have to let those investigations take their course, and due process matters deeply in this society. I think what we're talking about on the broader level is the same issues we've been talking about for the last year or two. We have got to continue to keep this city safe and keep crime low, while improving the relationship between police and community. We've got to create mutual respect. And we've got to do a better job of training our police. And I think Commissioner Bratton is right on the money to say there's going to be a full scale retraining of every member of the NYPD, with a very different approach. And Commissioner Bratton – I think – is the expert on how to improve – constantly improve – the work of police, constantly deepen the relationship between police and community. So that's what we're focused on.

**Question:** Follow up on [inaudible] question, how are you guys going to handle if there is a work slowdown by the sergeants or other police officers? You said it's a problem, but –

**Mayor:** I'm saying that I think the message we want to give to everyone is we have important work to do. We have to protect the people of this city. So, I've long since learned to listen respectfully to the words of union leaders. But what I'm concerned about is the everyday folks who are there to do their job, and I know believe in doing their job. Commissioner Bratton and all the members of the NYPD, I'm convinced will be able to convince to everybody that we have a job to do, we're going to keep moving forward, if some union leaders want to speak out – I've heard plenty from union leaders over the years, but the rank and file are here to do their job and they will do their job.

**Question:** On Dave's question, following up on that, there seems to be a big split between what you're saying are the reforms that are going to take place in the NYPD and what we're hearing today from the police union leadership, who are strongly defending police actions in the case of Eric Garner. So, how do you kind of account for that –

**Mayor:** That's nothing new, Grace. It's nothing new.

**Question:** Isn't that problematic, if the people who are representing the officers on the [inaudible] says we did nothing wrong –

**Mayor:** First of all, first of all, look – let's try and shed some light here. I have immense respect for the men and women of the NYPD. It's a very tough job and they do it very, very well. This is why, crime is down over three percent this year, murders are down, a lot of incredible work is happening every day in every neighborhood because of the dedication of the men and women of the NYPD. Union leaders will say what union leaders say – that is historic, that's been going on for decades. We have a job to do, we're going to do our job. I don't let the rhetoric of union leaders stand in the way of getting the job done.

**Question:** The Daily News had a story yesterday that stop and frisk – I mean, broken windows targets minorities [inaudible]. I wonder what you think of that and is it fair to have a policy – that certain laws are enforced more on certain communities?

**Mayor:** I think the broad point of everything we've been doing over these seven months and everything we talked about last year is to continue to reform, to continue to make adjustments. Let me give you an example of marijuana arrests. This is a very real issue. Marijuana arrests are down about five percent this year compared to last year. I think you'll see them continue to go down. I think this is exactly the example we need to look at about the kind of adjustments we make. Obviously the unwarranted stops that were part of the broken policy of stop and frisk, those stops are down intensely. When you look at the quality-of-life crimes broadly categorized under broken windows – so you see, there's – and I think the Daily News story did a good job of charting all those out – reckless driving. I think we would all agree – I think you'd have a tough time finding a New Yorker who didn't want the police to aggressively deal with reckless driving. Maybe some other areas where we make adjustments – but the notion is proactive, preemptive, preventative policing, and energetic policing, and that's what the people of this city want, because it helps keep crime low. But making sure we're calibrating it right, making sure we're training right, making sure we're making adjustments, making sure we're respecting communities, is part of what we have to do all the time.

**Question:** Just to follow up, some of that, like, energetic policing – that's focused on black communities, and not white communities, so if you're breaking a certain law in a white neighborhood and you're white, then you're not getting arrested for it. I mean, is that fair? If you're –

**Mayor:** Everyone should be treated equally, and that's the whole approach – again, let me, let me clarify. We had a broken stop and frisk policy that has now been addressed with – not only a great reduction in stops – but you'll see that the stops that are being made are more likely leading to arrest and summons, meaning they're more serious stops, if you will. We are moving away from a policy where we had too many marijuana arrests. You're going to see a number of adjustments as we go along. It's meant to create fairness and equality, and all of the moves we've made, including on the oversight front – the new Inspector General, the new chair of the CCRB – all of these moves are to create fairness and equality. So, we've got a question of how we're going to approach quality-of-life crimes. We should approach them the same in every neighborhood. We've got the question of how we're going to treat each kind of crime. That's something we constantly adjust to try and figure out the right balance. We also have to improve the relationship between police and community. It all comes back to the central notion of treating everyone equally.

**Question:** [inaudible] union leaders say [inaudible] how concerned are you about tone – not only of what they're saying, but the tone in the aftermath of this Garner case – are you concerned about the way police and communities are getting along right now?

**Mayor:** I wouldn't overrate any one moment. I really wouldn't. We're on a much bigger track here. We have bigger work to do. I've now been in public life about 25 years in this city. The vast majority of New Yorkers respect deeply the police, rely on the police, want the police around to protect them. There have been some individual incidents, and each time we try and figure out how to do better. And we will do better. We have to do better. But the bigger situation here is what matters. We had a fundamentally broken policy. That policy has been changed. We don't have the right approach to training – we're about to change that approach to training. It's

already started at the academy with the new class. It's now going to be for literally every single member of the NYPD. I don't get lost at any moment in the public debate. And I don't let any one voice pull me away from my vision. I said to the people of this city: we're going to keep people safe, and we're going to create mutual respect between police and community, and we're going to create fairness and consistency. And that's what we're going to do. So, I'm not worried if there's critics. That comes with the territory. Thanks, everyone.

**Question:** Sorry, one last question –

**Mayor:** Oh yes, on Ebola? Absolutely. Let's let the expert – Commissioner Bassett.

**Commissioner Mary Bassett, Health Department:** Well, I assume you're asking about the case –

**Mayor:** [inaudible] give you this, so you have a little – height here.

**Commissioner Bassett:** The famous step up.

**Mayor:** There you go. You're even taller now.

**Commissioner Bassett:** There was a patient admitted to Mount Sinai Hospital, as you're all aware, early on Monday morning, who is – who came – had been in an area where Ebola transmission is occurring, had fevers, gastrointestinal symptoms, as was identified as a possible Ebola case. Looking at his history, we think it's highly unlikely that he has Ebola, but we're going to await the tests from the CDC. I think what we learned from this is that people who are potentially affected with Ebola are rapidly identified, action is taken rapidly to ensure that they're isolated, and the public's health is protected.

**Question:** Sorry, just to follow up on that, would you mind talking a little bit about some of the precautions that are being taken at Mount Sinai, and in general –

**Commissioner Bassett:** Well, in general, when somebody is appeared who potentially has Ebola, they're initially isolated. There are even isolation rooms at Kennedy Airport, which is of course an important portal of entry for people from all over the world, and then there – infection control precautions are taken. That means the people who have contact with them wear protective gear, and so on. It should be really clear that Ebola is not highly infectious. It's not spread through the air. It's not spread by standing next to somebody with Ebola. It's contact with body fluids that are the risk of Ebola transmission – that, and infected wildlife, which of course we don't have in this country.

**Mayor:** Okay. Thanks, everyone.

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