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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND U.S. SENATOR SCHUMER CALL ON WHITE HOUSE TO FULLY RESTORE CRITICAL ANTI-TERROR FUNDS**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everyone. Our message today is both simple and urgent – we need the Congress to step up and protect the people of New York City against terror and protect the people the United States of America against terror. On behalf of the people of New York City, we call on the Congress to fully fund the Urban Area Security Initiative, as has been done in the past. This initiative provides crucial funding to the NYPD, the Fire Department of the City, the Office of Emergency Management – all of the key pieces of our anti-terror response that has kept this city safe for so many years.

As a city and as a nation, we cannot afford to reduce our commitment to fighting terrorism. This is a time of increased threats. It's a time of more complex threats. Therefore, the tools we use to prevent terror are more necessary than ever.

I want to thank all the leaders of the NYPD, FDNY, and OEM standing with me today. You'll hear from several of them in a moment, but let me state the obvious – New York City is the nation's top terror target, one of the world's top terror targets. We live with this reality every single day. We know that we are a target for many reasons. We are the economic hub of this country. We are the cultural hub of this country.

But we're also a beacon of freedom and tolerance and inclusion, and for many people in this world and causes in this world that sow hatred and division – the very fact that New York City stands as a beacon in this way is – that's part of why we are a target because our profound commitment to democracy and tolerance is the exact opposite of these terror movements that try and sow hatred and division. So they want to try and take us down, and we need every tool we can to protect ourselves.

In the past, we've been able to rely on the federal government to be a true partner and a strong partner. But we're troubled by what we see in this new budget proposal. Senator Schumer, who has led the way on this, will talk about this in a moment. It is so important that we let the people of this country know that the Congress must step forward to protect not only New York City, but all the places in this country that may be a key terror target.

I want to say the NYPD has done an amazing job, and it has to be taken full stock of. Since 9/11, fourteen years ago – soon it will be fifteen years – the NYPD has successfully thwarted many, many terror plots directed at New York City. But the NYPD has been able to do this, in large measure, because of support and cooperation from the federal government. This is no time for that support to be cut back.

We particularly know in the wake of the Paris attacks and the San Bernardino attacks that we have to be more vigilant than ever, more prepared than ever. And that's why this federal support is so crucial. We will be vigilant. The people of this city know to be vigilant. All of our first responders know to be vigilant. We need the Congress to be equally committed to the safety and security of New Yorkers and all Americans.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

As I said, Senator Chuck Schumer has led the way protecting not only the interest in New York, but led the way in ensuring that we had a strong anti-terrorism effort nationwide. He's spoken out, and it's our honor to have him here with us – our senior Senator, Senator Chuck Schumer.

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator. And over these last two years, Commissioner Bratton has prepared this city as never before, and strengthened our counter-terror apparatus. Again, he understands how we need stronger efforts to fight terror, and we need the resources to do it. Commissioner Bill Bratton.

**Police Commissioner William Bratton:** Thank you. It seems to me that it's indefensible for the federal government at this time to be proposing not only cuts, but extraordinary cuts in monies allocated for Homeland Security, hometown security. Several weeks ago, I appeared before the Senate Homeland Security Oversight Committee to testify about the continued need to deal with the growing threat. As recently as last week, the intelligence leadership of this country – Mr. Clapper; Director Brennan, the FBI director, Mr. Comey, who's here in New York today to also, again, talk about the concerns about terrorism – testified before Congress about the growing threat – not the declining threat, but the growing threat. On CBS 60 Minutes, Sunday night, the director of the CIA, Mr. Brennan, talked about the growing threat.

The growing threat – the response – we're going to cut the money that is used to defend against this by almost 50 percent. What does it mean to New York? Based on the preliminary information that we've received, the UASI funds, which amount to about \$180 million for this city, will be cut to about \$90 million. So, that's an approximate \$90 million cut to the Fire Department, Police Department, Office of Emergency Management.

What does that \$90 million fund? We have an extraordinary foundation that's been built up over the last 14 years in this city – you know it, you report on it – Joint Operations Center. In the back of the building, we have a lot of the equipment that we've acquired that's on display. But what we need, going forward, is the ability to maintain and grow it to meet the new threats. Our ability to do the exercises – as recently as the subway exercise – active-shooter – that Homeland Security funded in December, we would not be able to do that. We recently acquired eight new vapor weight dogs – we seek to expand that program. We would not be able to do that. So much of the training, so much of the overtime that pays for so much of the security – would not be able to do that.

We have, over these last 14 years, similar to what London has done – we have created a Domain Awareness System. Almost 9,000 cameras, thousands of license plate scanners, thousands of radiation detection devices. We [inaudible] need funds to expand that, to maintain that, to ensure we protect this city. A \$90 million cut is unconscionable – and I'm just speaking about New York City, because this city – we put a lot of our own resources. This is a shared responsibility. The Mayor recently, last year, authorized 1,300 additional police officers – more than half of those officers are going directly into counter-terrorism capabilities to do our share in meeting the threat against this city. Smaller cities and towns don't have some of the resources that we have built up over time. So, the impact on us is huge, but it's also profound around the rest of the country.

So, I want to applaud the Senator's leadership over the weekend. He brought the country's attention to this issue – certainly brought it to our attention and, as a result of several phone calls we made yesterday, we're all here today. The Mayor has clearly shown his support in this area by allocating city resources to this effort, but we cannot let these cuts stand – it's that simple.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Commissioner. You know, we saw an attack on our shores on 9/11 – no agency gave more that day than the FDNY, and we depend on them profoundly to help us prevent terror and deal with the effects of any incident. Commissioner of the FDNY, Dan Nigro.

**Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro:** Thank you, Mayor. And thank you, Senator Schumer, for standing here with Commissioner Bratton, Commissioner Esposito, and I to call on Washington to reverse these proposed cuts. All of the reasons have already been eloquently stated – what I can add is very personal.

15 years ago, just a few minutes away from where we are right now, more than 400 first responders died defending our country. I responded that morning with Commissioner Esposito, responded that morning – we survived. A few days later, standing beside Senator Schumer, I was sworn in as Chief of Department – and I might add that Senator Schumer has stood beside us every day since, and his support is much appreciated.

Since then, we have, with the help of these funds, worked diligently to prevent attacks and prepare ourselves for any and all eventualities. The loss of this funding would be quite crippling to all first responders, to all New Yorkers, and to all Americans. It's not just important, it's an absolute necessity. The fire boats that protect New York, protect our area, our ability to respond to the Ebola crisis, the training and equipment that our department has – thanks to these funds. So, I will add my voice to the voices here today to say, I don't understand the proposed cuts at a time like this, and I thank the mayor, I thank Senator Schumer for supporting us.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Commissioner. Finally, as you heard, another veteran of that tragic day, and someone who's served our city so well for so long, our Commissioner for the Office of Emergency Management, Joe Esposito.

**Commissioner Joseph Esposito, Office of Emergency Management:** Thank you Mr. Mayor and thank you Senator Schumer for working to bring this much needed Homeland Security funding back to the city here. More than half – actually almost two-thirds of New York City emergency management funding comes from these grants, the Urban Area Security Initiatives. We'd have to almost close our doors if this was cut, which supports so many of our initiatives. It funds our planning initiatives for man-made hazards such as terrorism, active shooter, and other instances.

We work with our agency partners, including state and federal partners, to ensure that these plans are coordinated. When something happens, you have to have plans that are coordinated and that's what we do at emergency management.

It also helps us to conduct multiagency training, and exercises to test and improve our plans. We run [inaudible] exercises on a regular basis, many of which at the direction of the mayor for a host of situations to ensure that the city's response is as comprehensive as possible. We do them at our Emergency Operations Center over in Cadman Plaza East, where our headquarters is located.

Our public education information programs – this is one of our main missions to educate the public on how to best be prepared in case of an incident and how to keep them updated about the event. We do very much outreach to the public and information is power. We really have to get information out there.

Cutting the funding would reduce our capacity to coordinate multi agency responses to complex and large-scale emergencies. That's response and recovery. Recovery is very, very important. Our Emergency Operation Center stays open until the situation has been completely mitigated, until the last piece of the plan has been functionalized and the event is being reduced.

Lastly, we have the city's emergency supply stock pile. Something as new – came about, for the most part, after 9/11 we have to the capabilities to supply 70, 000 people for seven days with basic necessities such as food and water and those supplies are redone as needed. So that's something that is totally funded by this grant and if it

was reduced we wouldn't be able to have that capacity. So it is critical that we received the proper level of funding to keep New York City safe and prepared and I urge Washington to reconsider these cuts. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank You, Commissioner. So the bottom line is we're going to fight these cuts. We won't stand for them. We're going to stand shoulder to shoulder with Senator Schumer to reverse these cuts so we can protect the people of New York City. With that we want to take questions on this topic of anything terrorism-related specifically. Yes –

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Senator Charles Schumer:** Well look, I would always rather spend my energy doing good things rather than preventing bad things. But this is just how it is in Washington. Things are a little better now that we have a budget agreement, so there is more room in the budget, which makes it all the more confounding that this vital program was cut. But that's just how it is. That's the job I've been given to do. And, I will do everything I can to protect my fellow citizens in New York.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Senator Schumer:** Right.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Senator Schumer:** Well, you know these were private conversations with some high up people. The only explanation they used to give is that, well, they're not all spent – the funds that we allocated last year were not all spent. That's true because when you buy a complicated piece of machinery or even set up a training program, some of that money is spent in year-two. Not all of it is spent in year-one. All of it is allocated and accounted for and it's sort of a bureaucrat's trick, if you will, to say, "Well, here's where we can save some money. Let's allocate the money where they've already been allocated for next year." That's not a good explanation. We beat that explanation back in the past and in fact until this year they stopped using it. They did in 2010 as was mentioned. They did in 2011, and then we stopped them from using it. It came back this year. And I would say this – just from my perusings, or calls, and poking in the federal bureaucracy there – I think this, somehow, some bureaucrat came up with this idea and it rose to a top level without it being stopped. Now it's our job to stop it. It's a mistake. As I said, I think this administration does a very good job on terrorism. I think they're very cognizant of the need and of given resources. But, here they made a big mistake and the mistake shouldn't stand.

**Mayor:** Let me jump in for a second just to clarify. Hold on one second.

Look at what the NYPD, FDNY, OEM have to do every day. And, this gets to this point about how this money has been spent well year in and year out. Look at the events just in the last months. We had the papal visit at the same time as the UN General Assembly. We had more world leaders in the city at the same time than ever in our history before, and the pope. And massive resources were expended to protect everyone involved. It went seamlessly. That was a national, in fact, an internationally important event. And, it was our obligation to protect everyone involved. All those resources we've received from the federal government over the years, allowed us to build a framework to do that. The same with the Thanksgiving Parade, the same with New Year's Eve and the ball drop in Times Square. These are events— the eyes of the world are on New York City, and the reputation of the United States of America is on the line. And, when push comes to shove it comes down to the NYPD and the other city agencies to protect everyone. So those resources we've received over the years have given us the capacity to do such extraordinarily complex initiatives, again, on a global scale, in effect, to do them the right way. That's why there's no room for cutting back especially as terror threats are growing and becoming more complicated.

Yes?

**Question:** [Inaudible] is there some sort of [inaudible] deadline where [inaudible]?

**Senator Schumer:** Yes.

**Question:** And my second question is, do you [inaudible] severe as New York City and [inaudible]?

**Senator Schumer:** Okay, no, okay – answer your first question, we have a Homeland Security Appropriations Bill. It's voted on by committee in May or June, so we have a little time. And then it goes to the full Senate, the full House over the summer. The deadline is October 1st to get this restored before the next federal budget begins. Second, this cut will not just affect New York it'll affect the whole country.

As I mentioned earlier, I worked very hard to get them to change the formula so New York gets a high percentage of funds. I'm trying to get the number here but just yesterday the administration announced \$178 million in UASI funding through the end of this fiscal year. We get a high percentage of it. We deserve it. We're the number one target. And most of my colleagues agree with that, that it shouldn't, you know, in the early days, it looked like they took an airplane and just spread the dollars over the country but now it's focused. So, everyone will be cut but we'll feel it the most since we do the best in this program.

One other thing I'd mention – the mayor mentioned all these other things. This UASI funding which helped training and emergency exercises proved very, very, very helpful in Sandy because our police and fire did an amazing job and were right on the scene. And some of the training they have to do to be on the scene for a terrorist incident and to be on the scene for a natural disaster is quite the same. So, it helps us in a lot of ways not terror-related – although the number one reason for it is terror.

**Mayor:** Amen. Marcia? Hold on, hold on. You got a couple, let's spread it around.

**Question:** [Inaudible] call the president and ask them to do [inaudible].

[Laughter]

**Question:** What arguments would you make to him to do [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Well, I'm certainly going to let the president know that we care deeply in New York and we need this money restored and that the common sense thing to do here is to recognize that we're the number one terror target and we need this support. And, look, there's clearly time to get it fixed as Senator Schumer said but the Senator made a very important point a moment ago. This used to be a pork-barrel item on the – in terms of the fact that money was spread all over the country according to different political priorities, different leaders. Well, you know what, people sobered up and realized that we have a serious terror threat directed at this nation and we're the number one target and we have to prevent those terror attacks. So, my message to the president is – I agree with Senator Schumer, President Obama has done an outstanding job in fighting terrorism but let's fix this problem right now and make sure New York City has the resources that we need to keep fending off these terror attacks.

Yes?

**Question:** At some point [inaudible] administration, [inaudible]. Do you foresee in the future ever [inaudible] these kind of funds or having to, sort of, streamline the ability to pay for the [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I'll just editorialize that. In the next eight years, I think we're going to have an administration with a New Yorker leading it in Washington. So, I don't think we'll have that problem in the short-term. But let's face

it, we're going to be the number one target for as long as there is an international terrorist movement and we're going to have to be vigilant. I say all the time to people, this is something that we're going to live with for a long, long time and we're going to need federal support. By the way, the federal government depends on the NYPD and the FDNY and OEM – they say it. You talk to federal leaders they say that the only way they can stop terrorism at the local level is with strong local forces that can handle the job and the job is toughest in New York City.

**Question:** [Inaudible] how much New York actually get [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** What's projected is a \$90 million cut.

**Question:** What are the exact figures and was all of it appropriated last year [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Just let me, let me answer this core point because I was actually in the middle of these discussions with Secretary Johnson. Every single dollar is being used. As Senator Schumer said, some things that we spend anti-terror dollars on take a while to actually arrive, like some of the high-quality equipment that we need, some of the vehicles, etcetera. They don't show up overnight, so the money gets spread out to pay for them when they're actually ready. But every single dollar is being used to very high effect. And anyone who says otherwise doesn't understand the reality of what's happening here in this city. Every single federal dollar is being used to fight terror.

**Senator Schumer:** And let me just say, they have not found – no one has been able to point to dollars being misspent. The only problem, which is a false problem, is some of these expenditures, you allocate them in year-one but it takes years two and three to spend them out. And they say, "Oh, well, that means you didn't spend it all in year one. We're taking it back." That's bunk.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** In effect –

**Senator Schumer:** No, well, it's in a sense money that – the hundred eighty – we just got \$187 million. What they would do next year, if they did this same again, they say, "Well, you spent \$120, we're taking \$60 back and using it for next year." And we get cut.

**Mayor:** And this – hold on, one more second, let me just get this point across.

I want to go back to the point I made about these major international events. The pope in New York City, at the same time as I think, Commissioner, it was 170 world leaders or some extraordinary number – that falls to NYPD to do all of that. There's not a federal police force on the ground, it's the NYPD doing that work, obviously working closely with FBI, Secret Service, etcetera, but the core of that effort is here. Massive amounts of overtime get expended, a lot of equipment is necessary – the equipment we need has to be improved all the time. We're dealing with greater threats, more complicated threats, more insistent threats than ever. So, you can't stand pat, you can't say, "Well, we got some equipment, now let's go home, we're all ready." No. We have to constantly improve our capacity, which is why under Commissioner Bratton's leadership we started the Critical Response Command, which is the first time we've ever had a full-time, highly-trained, highly-equipped anti-terror force. That is something the entire world will envy as it becomes fully operational. But that's necessary. So, the point is, we have to keep upping our game all the time and that's why we always need additional resources.

**Question:** [Inaudible] control Congress. I was just curious if any Republican members from New York [inaudible]. And secondly, [inaudible] Secretary Johnson [inaudible].

**Senator Schumer:** Yes, okay. Let me say two things. First, Peter King has always been a great ally and, he and I have worked to restore this funding when it's been cut before. He'll be there again. He's already spoken out against these cuts, and so I think this will be bipartisan, in the past it has been bipartisan, and it will continue to be. I have enormous respect for Secretary Johnson. He fights very hard within the federal agencies to get every dollar he can.

**Mayor:** Yes?

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Senator Schumer:** I would not blame him. No. Absolutely not.

**Question:** [Inaudible] question that's terror-related, with this decision from the magistrate ordering Apple to help the FBI, essentially break into [inaudible]. I know you released a statement this morning. If you could reiterate some of the things you said in your statement. And also, you're asking Congress, as well, [inaudible] and Senator Schumer if you could follow-up as well –

**Commissioner Bratton:** The issue of encryption – the concerns that law enforcement have of being locked out even with court orders that would allow us, under our system of government, to get access to devices, is of great concern. Director Comey has spoken out on it, Cy Vance, our District Attorney, myself, major city chiefs. So that case that's been so much in the news – the magistrate's decision, ordering that Apple work with the FBI to get access to that particular phone from San Bernardino – the later models of those phones, if I understand it, the "i7" or whatever the latest version, have been custom designed so that you cannot get access to them, or so they claim – Apple. Earlier versions, my understand is that there is an ability to get into those devices, and so the issue in this instance is, my understand is that the phone may be an earlier model that would allow access if Apple works with the federal government, with the FBI in particular.

So, if it worked for this particular instance, in terms of that particular device – but as the senator knows all so well – because he's been championing the issue also – going forward, we are increasingly blind for terrorism purposes, and for general law enforcement purposes, with the new devices and the continuing effort to make them even more secure against even court-orders authorizing law enforcement to have access. So, I'm very pleased that this magistrate, in this particular case, has created an instance in which we can, once again, bring it to light to the American public about how critically disadvantaged law enforcement is in dealing with terrorism or dealing with traditional crime because of the continuing effort on the part of the technology companies to arguably respect the right to privacy. That right to privacy is not a total right in the sense that if it is being used for criminal purposes, that's where the courts come into play, and that's where this particular court has now come into play.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** Hold on, hold on, hold on, hold on. He asked – excuse me, he asked –

**Senator Schumer:** I'll just say – look, I think that what we need done here – first, there's an individual case but you can't just litigate this on a case-by-case basis. It takes too long. It hampers law enforcement. We need a solution and we need a solution that protects privacy rights but at the same time gives law enforcement the tools they need. When we had land lines we had a solution that everybody was happy with – new technology, the ability to hack, the ability to encrypt, means that we need a new technological solution. And I have urged the head of the internet companies to sit down with Comey, Bratton, many of the others, and come up with a solution, and Congress will pass it. We need to get that done. And need to get that done quickly. We cannot litigate these things case-by-case.

**Mayor:** Let me just add – hold on, hold on. Let me add on this one.

Look, these are private companies. They are profit-making companies. If they put their desire to make profits ahead of the safety and security of the American people, there's something wrong. Let's be very clear about this, we all respect Constitutional rights. We all understand the sensitivities around privacy but in the end, these companies, whether they mean to or not, are unfortunately making it easier for terrorists to do their devilish acts. And it must be stopped. The bottom line is they have to put a larger public interest ahead of their profit motive, and they have to work with law enforcement to resolve this issue.

Who is over here? Go ahead.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Commissioner Bratton:** I'm sorry, what was the message that –

**Question:** That basically this decision [inaudible].

**Mayor:** Threatens the security of their customers –

**Commissioner Bratton:** I think the terrorist threats and criminal threats threaten their customers much more – being quite frank with you, and this is the crux of the issue. We need to get this issue resolved – the profit-motive, under the guise of protecting the interest of their customers, over the interest of government to protect the lives of those customers.

**Unknown:** Time for one more, folks. Please.

**Mayor:** Oh, Rich? Go ahead.

**Question:** [Inaudible] restore the funding. Is that a moral argument, a pragmatic argument, and what's the leverage [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Its – well, I'll start. I'll just say, it's absolutely a moral argument. Look, nothing would be more devastating to this country than a successful attack on its biggest city. And it would be wrong in every sense if we had not looked for every possible way to prevent that attack. So, the Senator is exactly right, and thank God he's leading the charge here. We can't reduce funding to stop terror, at a point when the terror threat is greater than ever. It makes no sense.

**Senator Schumer:** I would just say yes to all of them. It's every kind of threat. It's a moral issue. The government has a moral obligation to protect its citizens. It is an economic issue. We remember after 9/11, it wasn't just New York City or New York State that was affected economically – it helped push us into a recession, and it's an issue of comity. The federal government is the number one agency in charge. New York City has a tremendous burden and the tax payers of New York City actually pay a disproportionate amount to prevent our city from terror but that helps protect America from terror since we're the number one target. So, on – I don't know if any basis that you can argue against this, any. And the funds, as I said, go to where they're supposed to go. There may have been an argument five years ago – they didn't. That was straightened out when Secretary Napolitano, at my urging, changed the formula to focus on the high-terror targets. I don't know of any good argument for cutting these funds. None.

**Mayor:** Okay, thanks everyone.

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