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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S AM JOY**

**Joy Reid:** Good morning and welcome to AM Joy. Just three weeks ago, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio responded in real-time on this show to the first New York City fatality from COVID-19. As we've all learned by now, three weeks in the age of the coronavirus can feel like an eternity. Since then, there have been more than 7,000 deaths nationwide, nearly 2,000 in New York City alone, and, unfortunately, we're about to reach a somber milestone. More New Yorkers will soon have passed away from COVID-19 than from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the first of which hit New York City. And unlike the 9/11 attacks, which instantly became a national crisis, not a New York crisis, the current president's refusal to nationalize the coronavirus response has contributed to what can only be described as chaos.

We have these disparate state responses. Some governors issued stay at home orders right away and others much later or not at all. And unbelievably for most Americans, it's still really hard to get tested for coronavirus in most states until you're already sick. For those who do get sick, we're seeing shortages of protective equipment for the doctors and nurses who are treating them while trying to also not get sick themselves and major shortages of ventilators nationwide, meaning governors to basically bid against each other to try to buy them like they're on eBay. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who's become the face and the voice of desperate governors in this country, expressed on Thursday just how imminent the danger is.

***Governor Andrew Cuomo:** At the current burn rate, we have about six days of ventilators in our stockpile. Meaning if the rate of usage, the rate of people coming into hospitals who need ventilators, if that rate continues in our stockpile, we have about six days. Now if the apex happens within that timeframe, if the apex increases, if the apex is longer, we have an issue with ventilators.*

**Reid:** And joining me now is the Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio. Mayor de Blasio let's – first of all, I just want to give you an opportunity to talk about just the scale of the losses just for New York City thus far. And I know that there've also been losses inside of the New York Fire Department.

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Yeah, Joy, we have lost so many of our public servants, police department, fire department, health workers. People are feeling it very personally here. Every New Yorker at this point, pretty much every New Yorker either knows someone we've lost or knows certainly someone who's suffering right now from this disease. 56,000 cases, 1,800 people have lost their lives, we're almost a quarter of the cases in the entire United States of America right here in New York City. We're the epicenter and it's very painful. New Yorkers are fighting

back with everything they've got, but we still don't have the support we need, particularly from the federal government for what's coming ahead. Because the clip you just played from the Governor, the worst is actually ahead. And I don't – I don't like telling you that, but it's true. The next few weeks and maybe even longer are going to be the toughest time and we need the federal government fully mobilized to address this crisis. There's too many folks in Washington acting like it's peacetime when it feels like wartime right here in New York and a lot of other cities around the country.

**Reid:** Well, what is it that you, you know, as Mayor want to see the federal government do? I know you've talked about even invoking a military response here. What specifically would you want the federal government, the Bush – the Trump administration to do?

**Mayor:** Joy, the single biggest problem we're going to have going forward is having enough doctors and nurses and health workers. The folks who have been fighting on the front line for this last month, they are worn thin right now. They have been giving their heart and soul. So many of them have gotten sick themselves from the disease. We've lost health workers who are never coming back. We need as many health workers as possible right here, right now. I've called for the creation of the national enlistment system that the federal government has to create, the military could help facilitate, for doctors, nurses, for the technicians that we need for those ventilators. We could do this. There's over a million doctors in the United States of America. There's over 3.8 million nurses and yet we're running out right now. I need 45,000 more trained medical personnel to get through April into May. And we're doing everything we can to find them here, but you know what, this is going to be a problem in cities and states all over the country. And again, this country is not on a wartime footing.

Think about this – think about something as awful as Katrina. That was one place and we could focus energy for around the country on helping New Orleans, and of course our federal government failed New Orleans there. Well, this is going to be like having many Katrina's. This is going to be a reality where you're going to have many cities simultaneously, many states simultaneously in crisis needing health care professionals, needing ventilators. There is no national structure to address this right now. The military are at their bases. They're not at the front. They have not been called up by the President. The personnel, there are doctors, nurses, medical personnel all over the country who are doing their normal – going about their normal lives and they want to help, but there's no process to get them to the front to where they're needed most.

And there's literally days, Joy, days in which if the federal government doesn't create something brand new for our time, this is like the equivalent of being in a war. This is the biggest health crisis since the 1918 flu epidemic, which took untold hundreds of thousands of lives. This is a chance in these next days for our national government to actually address the crisis before it's too late. If they don't create a national mobilization, literally in a matter of days, you're going to see a lot of dominoes fall and cities simply not be able to handle the crisis.

**Reid:** I, you know, just listening to Donald Trump over the last, you know, week or, or more, it's fairly clear he is not prepared to do that. That, you know, he's now put Jared Kushner in charge and Jared Kushner has described the national stockpiles of things like ventilators as “ours”, as if

the states don't have access to them. They've – he's throwing it back on the governor much the way you heard a lot of people doing during Katrina to those in Louisiana who were fighting to try to save lives and saying, well, it's their problem, they need to deal with it. And there's even a sense that Donald Trump is saying – is trying to decide who gets help based on who's friendly to him. So, if he is not going to do anything, have you had conversations with the Governor of New York about whether states could actually act on their own and form sort of organized ways of sharing resources themselves? Like are, is it possible for the sort of the federalist solution here where States just get together and form networks and try to share hospital resources PPEs and that kind of thing?

**Mayor:** Joe, I think you're making a great point. I would say what states certainly could do is each state right now should be creating its own enlistment structure for civilian medical personnel. Every single state could be doing that right now. Getting all the medical personnel who are available, who could be in those ICUs and emergency rooms and fighting this battle at the front, getting them registered, ready to go, and hopefully able to move them around the country where they're needed. But we don't even have that basic approach in place at the state level in any state or at the federal level. That would be actually a really great start of every state would get that going. Now, could they perfectly or even helpfully share among each other? I think to some extent, yes, Joy, I think it's a very good idea, but I would put it in the category of, you know, certainly better than nothing but not what we actually need to see and we need to put the pressure on President Trump.

We need to put the pressure on the Congress, everyone to move here. How is it that for so many cities in this country, is not just New York, you're seeing it now. Look what's happening in Florida, Louisiana, Michigan. It's for – when you're at those hospitals, when you're seeing what they're dealing with, it feels like the exact same reality as a war. As if there was fighting going on, the casualties were being brought to those hospitals. They were trying to save lives. People who they knew they could save if only they had enough medical personnel, enough equipment. That's the reality and it's just begun. So I agree with you, we have to innovate, but I would say we should actually not let President Trump or anyone in Washington off the hook. Why is there not a national mobilization? And if enough Americans, Democrat and Republican and independent call for it, it puts pressure on the President to move. He had got pressure to move the Defense Production Act. He finally did to some extent, not enough. He's gotten pressured to have to get ventilators and supplies around the country. At least it's causing some action. We need more pressure. We need a national consensus that there has to be a mobilization that it is a war. Let's treat it like a war.

**Reid:** Yeah, absolutely. Just to note for our viewers it appears that at this point, one in four FDNY EMS workers, you know, EMS workers are on medical leave. So, you know, you're seeing first responders getting sick. I mean, you know, Donald Trump was born in New York. He was raised in Queens, his – you know, he sent Rudy Giuliani, he used to be Mayor of New York City, to Ukraine to try to sort of do dastardly acts, but he's doesn't seem to be interested. So, we'll hopefully the call from the current Mayor of New York City will change his mind, but we'll see. Mayor Bill de Blasio, thank you very much for your time. Wishing New Yorkers all the best.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

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