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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 12, 2020, 6:15 PM

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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S THE SITUATION ROOM

Wolf Blitzer: It's been more than a week since the election and several days since it became clear that President Trump lost his bid for a second term, but he still won't concede the race. And many top Republicans are happy to enable his denial. Let's discuss this and more with the Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio. Mayor de Blasio, thanks so much for joining us. I want to get to the coronavirus and what's going on in New York City in a moment. But the president right now, he's digging in his heels refusing to concede. What sort of damage does that do potentially at a dangerous moment like this, this transition, and what kind of damage does that do to American democracy?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Yeah. Wolf, we have to take it real seriously and be vigilant here. I mean, this is a president who clearly is becoming even more unglued because he can't accept an obvious defeat. I mean, for God's sakes, Joe Biden now has the highest victory margin since Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932. Come on. It is sad to watch, and I don't take it lightly at all because we don't know what he's capable of doing with the powers of the presidency.

Blitzer: His national popular lead, Biden's, is now more than 5.2 million – 5.2 million votes ahead of Trump's right now in the national popular vote. During the campaign, Mayor, many leading progressives set aside differences with Joe Biden to help get him elected. That was priority number one for the progressives, for the moderates, the conservatives, the Democrats. We're already seeing some fissures, though, within your party re-emerge. Do you, as a progressive, trust that the president-elect, Joe Biden, will prioritize progressive policies?

Mayor: Yeah, I really do, Wolf. One thing I appreciate deeply about Joe Biden, you could see it in his victory speech, he understands working people, he cares about working people, and this is where the Democratic Party has always been at its best. When we think about the working men and women of America and what they need and focus on things like health care and making it more universal and focus on things like making sure people actually get paid for the work they do at a fair level. This is the kind of thing that Joe Biden, I think, is all about. He said to people that, you know, he really is looking at the model of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and what he did to bring the country back. And that's the best model any progressive has ever seen in this country's history. So, I feel very good about where his heart is. I think he's got a lot of great people in his team, including a lot of leading progressives that are important to him. So, I think you're going to see a lot more unity going forward than people imagine you. Remember there used to be so much talk about, oh, the progressives wouldn't show up in this election. No, in fact, you're exactly right, progressives really went to bat for Joe Biden. He won the primaries fair and square. We wanted him to win and now we want him to succeed with a progressive agenda.

Blitzer: Yeah. They showed up and they voted. Let's turn to the pandemic, which is getting worse and worse and worse. New York City's positivity rate, as you well know, Mayor, stands now at 2.6 percent. You say the schools will close when that reaches three percent. At the rate the city is going, and the country is going right now, is it inevitable that you'll be forced to close the schools again?

Mayor: I don't say inevitable, no. We are ready for that possibility. But in fact, here in New York City, what we're doing in response is more and more testing. We're going into the areas like Staten Island this week, that we're having an upsurge in with a lot more education and mask distribution. And when we did that, Wolf, you know, we had a problem in Brooklyn and Queens a few weeks ago, we did the exact same approach and it brought those numbers down really quickly. So, this ball game ain't over. We are going to go out to every part of the city with more and more testing, more and more masks. And New Yorkers proved – after March, April the city came back. The worst situation in the country came back strong. Brooklyn and Queens just came back. We can do it again.

Blitzer: But if it goes above three percent, will you close the schools?

Mayor: I've been very clear. That's a standard we set, we're going to stick to that standard. And if God forbid that happened, then the goal is to get them right back as quickly as possible. But right now, we still have a chance of holding our school system. We have a second wave bearing down on us, but we can stop that second wave. And I got to tell you it's different. Some other parts of the country have not experienced a comeback like this before. We've done it multiple times already. We've proven there's a formula for beating this virus and getting the people fully engaged because when people decide they're going to change their behavior, that's when you beat back the virus and we're telling them no holiday gatherings of big size, do not travel for the holidays, stay home with close family. Put that mask on. These are the things that will protect this city.

Blitzer: As you well know, Governor Cuomo just announced new restrictions, cutting hours on restaurants and gyms, limiting gatherings to 10 people. Is that going to be enough do you believe, to make a difference? Are you with the Governor on his decision?

Mayor: Yeah, he and I have talked about this a lot. I think he's in the right place. I think it will help for sure. And the additional work that's being done in Staten Island in particular, I think is going to help a lot. Look, the goal here is to turn this around. We're still at one of the lowest levels of positivity in the country. We can drive it down again and to still respect the fact that look, people are trying to make a livelihood after all those tough months. We want to respect that, at the same time we want to balance these factors. So, I think the City and the State are in agreement, we can turn around if people participate. And we've seen it before. New Yorkers were heroic in the spring, just heroic the way they fought back the disease. They know what it takes, now is a chance for them to do it again.

Blitzer: Cool. A quick, final question, before I let you go, Mayor. Senator Bernie Sanders yesterday told me he'd be interested in becoming the Labor Secretary. Would you support that?

Mayor: He's an extraordinary leader and, you know, one of the greatest progressive voices in this country unquestionably. Any role he serves in, he's going to do a lot to improve this country. And he would certainly be an asset to the administration. No question about that.

Blitzer: Are you open to serving in the incoming administration?

Mayor: I got a job to do right here, as we just talked about, Wolf. We got a lot more to do to protect this city and move it forward. So, that's where I'm at.

Blitzer: Is that a no?

Mayor: It's a focus, a focus on New York City.

Blitzer: It's a diplomatic answer. That's what it is. Mayor, thank you so much for joining us.

Mayor: Thanks, Wolf. You take care.

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