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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN WITH WOLF BLITZER

Wolf Blitzer: I'll stay in New York right now – the Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio says the city is now the epicenter of this crisis here in the United States. Mayor de Blasio's joining us now to talk a little bit more about that. Good morning, Mayor. Thanks so much. I know you're incredibly busy. We're grateful to you for joining us. We have several key issues to discuss, but first, can you update our viewers here in the U. S. and around the world on the latest numbers of the cases of coronavirus and the deaths in New York City?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Wolf, over 8,000 cases now in New York City, that's almost a third of the cases in the United States of America. It's over two-thirds of the cases in New York State. 60 people have passed away – and Wolf, this has only just begun. That is the truth. We are – the worst is yet to come, and I hate saying it, but it's true.

Blitzer: Well, what are your experts telling you when you say the worst is yet to come?

Mayor: Right now – I think in terms of the numbers, the human reality, every number represents a human being and a family. April is going to be a lot worse than March, and I fear May could be worse than April. I think that's the honest truth. In terms of our hospital system, bluntly Wolf, I think we're about 10 days away now from seeing widespread shortages of really fundamental supplies – ventilators, surgical masks, the things that absolutely are necessary to keep a hospital system running. And we have seen next to nothing from the federal government at this point. We have seen – we've made this plea publicly, privately, letters, phone calls, you name it. Very, very little has arrived. The military has not been mobilized. The Defense Production Act is not being utilized in any way that I can see. Right now, I have to say, for New York, not just for New York City, New York State, I think for a lot of the country it sure as hell feels like we're on our own at this point. We are not seeing action from the federal government.

Blitzer: Well, speaking of the federal government, I would like you to watch and listen to what the head of FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency just told our Jake Tapper on the president's decision not to use – not to formally use the Defense Production Act to address these critical medical shortages. Listen to this –

***Jake Tapper:** Has the president, as of now, Sunday morning, ordered any companies to make more – to make more of any of these critical supplies?*

***Peter Gaynor, Federal Emergency Management Agency:** No. And we haven't yet. It really is leveraged, I think to demonstrate that we can use it, the president can use it anytime. And it's*

really amazing that – how great America is. All these companies are coming up asking us what they can do to help. And we haven't had to use it because companies around the country, donations, they're saying, what can we do to help you? And it's happening without using that lever. If it comes to a point we have to pull the lever, we will. But right now it's really a great sign about the greatness of this country.

Blitzer: So Mayor, what would you say to the president about his failure to actually use this extraordinary power that he clearly has?

Mayor: Wolf, everyday people are stepping up. It's true, companies are trying their damndest to step up, but the President of the United States is not stepping up. He, right now, this minute, could mobilize the United States military because if they don't get involved, anything that's produced around this country won't get to where the need is greatest. The only logistical capacity that could actually save us in real time is the military. Their medical personnel are sitting on the bench. They don't want to sit on the bench. But that's what's happening because the president hasn't given the order. And if you don't order companies to maximize production of ventilators, surgical masks, all of the things that are desperately needed, and you don't organize that and prioritize where it's going to go, it won't happen in time – and we just have to be clear about this. This isn't something where everyone just makes up their own mind and you hope the stuff arrives in time.

We're not getting shipments, we're not getting the stuff we need. If we don't get more ventilators in the next 10 days, people will die who don't have to die. It's as simple as that and the one force that could do that, the federal government, particularly the military, is not acting. And then, Wolf, on top of that insult to injury, our hospitals are working so hard, our medical personnel putting their lives on the line, they're running out of supplies, they're running out of money. Our states, our counties, our cities are running out of money. We're losing billions of dollars right here just in the last week – billions of dollars, that if it's not replaced quickly by the federal government, if this stimulus bill does not involve direct relief for states, counties, and cities, red states and blue states alike, I'm telling you, Wolf, that localities will not be able to pay the bills, will not be able to serve people in a time of crisis. This has to be in this stimulus bill, support for hospitals. They will not be able to function if they don't get an infusion of money right away.

Blitzer: You know, Mayor, New York City has some of the best hospitals in the country, maybe in the world. And it's hard to believe that at this time, the Javits Center in New York City, which is this huge convention complex that many of us are familiar with, is actually going to be made into a temporary hospital. When will it be ready? Who is doing this? Is that the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers? Could you believe that something like this is actually going to be essential in New York City?

Mayor: Wolf, this is the new reality in the United States of America. It's starting here, but it's going to reach all 50 States. That's the truth. We're going to need our military to do exactly things like this. They know how, under combat conditions, to provide medical care overseas, far from their bases. Of course they can do it here in America. We're getting great help from the State of New York, from the National Guard. I know the Army Corps of Engineers is beginning to help us, but we need a lot more than that and we're going to need it all over the country. This

is why a full-scale mobilization is needed. This is going to be the greatest crisis domestically since the great depression. It is abundantly clear right now. That's why we need a full scale mobilization of the American military and we need the Congress to act like we're on the way to the next Great Depression, do what Franklin Roosevelt did in the New Deal and actually put money in the hands of people and local governments and hospitals, not big corporations. Forget bailing out the airlines right now. Bail out the people, bail out the hospitals, bail out the cities and states and counties that are actually trying to provide for basic human need. That's what they should be doing, but the president just has to sign a document to actually mobilize the military, sign a document ordering factories that can produce ventilators to a 24/7 production line and the military to distribute those ventilators to where the need is greatest. There is no president, Republican or Democrat, in our history who would not have done this already. Dwight Eisenhower would have done it already. Harry Truman would've done it already. John Kennedy would have done it already. Come on, it's time.

Blitzer: Alright, now, Mayor de Blasio, good luck to you. Good luck to all the folks in New York City. Good luck to everyone in the United States, indeed around the world. This is a global crisis, as we know. Thank you very much for joining us.

Mayor: Thank you, Wolf.

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