



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 10, 2018
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON INSIDE CITY HALL

Errol Louis: Welcome back to Inside City Hall. Tomorrow marks the 17th anniversary of the September 11th terror attacks and as in years past our city will hold a ceremony to remember the lives lost. I'm joined now by Mayor de Blasio to talk about that and more. Good evening Mr. Mayor, good to see you.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good evening Errol, and that's going to be a somber occasion, of course, but we also have a joyous occasion now with the Jewish New Year so I want to wish all of your viewers *Shanah Tovah* and let's think of the good things that are happening too at this moment as we renew for another year.

Louis: It is of course one of the days that, for those of us who were there, you can't help but think, if you never, ever think about it, certainly on the anniversary, you think, and I will ask you – are we safe?

Mayor: Look, I think we're a lot safer. We always have work to do in terms of the war against terror and making sure that this city is safe and this country is safe. But at that moment as we now know a whole lot of warning signs were being ignored. Now, I think it's fair to say we've all – we've all learned a lot from it, certainly in this city, when we say when you see something say something people take it really seriously and we know even recently the incident on 23rd Street a couple years ago, in fact it was an everyday New Yorker who saw something who helped make sure people were safe, because they called something very important in. So I think we're better prepared because the people are more engaged, we're better prepared because we have, in this city, a much stronger anti-terrorism force and our police force that we've built up in over the last few years and I want to believe we're stronger as a nation too because we put some of the time energy we needed into protecting ourselves.

Louis: Are you comfortable with, from all of your briefings whether it's from the federal government or the NYPD, the Intelligence Division, that we're thinking outside the box properly? Meaning it's very easy to prepare for an event 17 years ago, right? You harden the cockpits, you put together your detection systems, based on that specific attack, while the plotters of the future are thinking about that has never occurred to the rest of us.

Mayor: It's a great question. I think in terms of New York City I would say that I am confident that our Intelligence Division at the NYPD is a very creative organization, very thoughtful,

constantly researching. Do I think we're able to see everything that is coming up ahead in the future? That's a tall order. But are we absolutely on top of any new trends, any indications of changes in terrorist activity? Absolutely, it's a constant conversation at 1 Police Plaza, and a much better conversation with our federal partners than there used to be, and this is another difference from 17 years ago. There was a real rift between the different agencies that were supposed to protect us. FBI and NYPD did not get along that well for example. There's now tremendous communication and coordination. Unfortunately in western Europe, for example, they don't have that. The different national forces don't seem to correlate and communicate the way they should and even within countries the different intelligence forces seems to have dissonance. But I can say surely from my experience, the NYPD, in coordination with FBI and a whole host of other state and federal entities, actually communicate constantly, and if something comes up that might be a concern or a threat it's communicated very quickly and adjustments are made on the ground. So that gives me a real hope.

Louis: Okay, since we're talking about gloomy, scary stuff, Hurricane Florence is making its way towards landfall. Where do we stand? Are we in need of some special preparations? This is all going to happen I think in the next 100 hours.

Mayor: We are constantly monitoring – what I'm hearing so far about Hurricane Florence is very, very worrisome in terms of the size of this hurricane but not so worrisome in terms of the impact on New York City. Now this is something we will watch hour by hour. The latest projections from the National Weather Service have the hurricane really focused more to the Southeast, particularly the Carolinas and Virginia. But we all know that, you know, that can change and we have to be ready. It appears to be a pretty consistent reality over the last couple of days that that's where it's headed and there is hope that it will not progress up the coast. But we're in a state of readiness. We're also going to be in state of readiness to help our brother and sister states that are in trouble if they need the expertise of our first responders. At this hour of this day, it looks like New York City will not bear the worst but this is something we need to keep checking in on over the next 48 hours.

Louis: Okay. Let's talk some politics, Mr. Mayor. Help me with this, because I don't think like a politician, even though I talk with you guys—

Mayor: You are a lucky man.

Louis: I've been talking with you guys for thirty years—

Mayor: You're a lucky, lucky man.

Louis: – and I still don't get it. When it comes to the non-endorsement in the governor's race, it seems to me that you could have said eight weeks ago and nobody would have complained or few people would have complained if you said, look, the Mayor of New York City has to get along with whatever governor happens to be sitting on the second floor up at the state house, therefore I'm not in this, you know, pending some dramatic piece of information, that would have brought you to this very same point that you have arrived at.

Mayor: I think each election is particular, I really honestly believe this. I get your question of course but I want to say every election has its own characteristics and I don't think there's a

blanket rule for what an office holder should feel about a case like this. I wanted to see this election play out. Now look, I have chosen to remain neutral in the races for governor, lieutenant governor, but I also want to emphasize I think it's been a very productive primary. I think a lot of crucial issues not only got raised but advanced and now are on the forefront of the agenda. You know it's a lot harder to imagine that we are going to Albany next year and not get some more criminal justice reform, or not get some kind of solution for the MTA. That's a tall order but there's much more energy for it now than there was at the start of this primary season.

There's much energy for reforming our electoral laws and campaign finance laws to make this a more democratic, with a small D, state, and more open and effective democracy. Clearly the reunification of the Democrats in the State Senate came right out of this primary season. So it's been a productive one but I thought it was important to let it play out and see what happened. I came to the conclusion that neutrality made sense. In some other races for State Senate as you know, I believe this is a change moment. I believe that the IDC made a huge mistake breaking away from the Democratic Party. It hurt New York City, it hurt New York State. A lot of people have said enough is enough and we never want to see that happen again. I'm proud to support Jessica Ramos in Queens, Zellnor Myrie in Brooklyn, Robert Jackson in Manhattan. I think all those campaigns really are capturing the imagination of folks, locally who – not just because of Donald Trump, even before Donald Trump, people were asking the question, what does it mean to be a Democrat? They want a more progressive, consistent version of this party and I think people are going to vote that way.

And then with attorney general, look I've gotten to the point where, barring some unforeseen event, I do not intend to get involved in this race. I've known Tish James a long time, have worked with her closely including we worked shoulder to shoulder fighting to stop Bloomberg from giving himself a third term. That was a very important moment in his public life and she was a great colleague in that. Zephyr Teachout I think has done extraordinary work in terms of reforming our democratic system, our campaign finance laws etcetera – clearly someone who could do a great job challenging Donald Trump as well. I have some concerns about Sean Maloney, I've talked about them openly. I am disappointed that he voted for a law that actually reduced some of the protections in the Dodd-Frank bill. I don't think it was ill intended but I will say I think it was bad judgement to – at a moment when Donald Trump is president who is trying to gut regulation – to make that choice.

Louis: I know but, I mean here in this case, you've clearly given a lot of thought, you have something substantive to say, you're basically facing the same choices that all 20 million of us are facing or at least the Democrats –

Mayor: Sure.

Louis: -- going into the primaries. And then your wife goes, as we showed a minute ago, is campaigning tonight in Brooklyn, in Park Slope with Chirlane, with your wife. I mean isn't it – I don't know is it a bit of a dodge to sort of say of well, you haven't made up your mind, however your closest political partner has made up her mind.

Mayor: I think we are in a new world where you can have two people who are very active in public life – I mean it's not Carville and Matalin for God's sakes but you can have two people who are active in public life who have different approaches. Chirlane obviously has made clear

not only does she have her own very strong views on a whole host of issues but she's considering a potential political career of her own and this is something that she wanted to do. I look at the range of people and I've had a lot of experience with the folks involved and I look at my role as Mayor and when I do the composite I think it makes sense to be neutral in that race. But again as I said I respect all of the candidates for attorney general. I know them all. If Sean Maloney is elected I'll certainly work with him. I do want to say I didn't know until very recently that he had voted essentially with Republicans to reduce the protections in Dodd-Frank and I think that was a mistake and I think this job is going to be so crucial in the age of Trump that it's really important to know how a new attorney general is going to set up towards the Trump administration.

Louis: Whoever wins, aren't they going to call you the next day or if you call them to congratulate them, they are going to say Mr. Mayor, thanks for nothing?

Mayor: Look, I've been on all sides of all calls. Right? I've called people who I was with, people I was against. I'll refer you to something I heard Speaker Carl Heastie say just a few weeks ago. We opened a new YMCA, or did the groundbreaking for a new YMCA, in his district. And it's something I've been very supportive of and was right after the election, and as he was speaking at the ground breaking he made a great wry comment, there was a big smile face and he said you know, I want to thank the Mayor for his support which began shortly after the election and he says, despite a minor disagreement we had in 2013. And it was a lovely turn of the phrase with a big smile on his face and obviously he had a different candidate for Mayor. But we move on right? I think if people are respectful it's understood there's going to be differences. The vast majority of people I know in public life move on because we have work to do.

Louis: Okay, very good. Well, we have some more work to do. We are going to do that after a quick break and I'll be right back with Mayor de Blasio. Later on tonight I'll be joined by the four members of our Consultants Corner, stay with us.

[...]

Louis: Welcome back to Inside City Hall. I'm joined once again by Mayor de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, there was this mailer that went out over the weekend. You said, among other things, that it was inexcusable. You were harshly condemning of it. You're saying that it's laughable the notion that they did it by accident. If it wasn't an accident, what was it?

Mayor: I think there's a simple way to square this and I think the media should demand to know everybody who approved that mailer. Get the names. I mean this is what the media is very good at. Demand of the state party, demand of the Governor's campaign – who approved this mailer? Every single name of everyone who approved it, and those people should be fired instantly.

This was right before Rosh Hashanah. It was a vicious attack on someone who happens herself to be Jewish and proud of her heritage, and absolutely inaccurate on top of that. I mean it's disgusting. It take us back to a very base politics that we thought, I think, we had left behind –

Louis: But you know how this works. I mean obviously everybody in the media will try and get to the bottom of all of this but you know that there are really only a couple of levels. There might

be an outside vendor, then there's the executive director in his staff at the party. They answer to an executive board who answers to the chairman, who is appointed by the Governor. It's like three different levels and almost every important piece of mail goes through at least two of them.

Mayor: Sure, I've been through this process many a time. It's really simple. Give us the name of everyone who approved it. I don't care if they are in the state party or the mail vendor or the Governor's campaign or where they are. If anyone approved it, they should be fired. It's unconscionable. It's vicious. I said it was Trumpian because it was appealing to base divisive instincts, and I don't want my money, as a Democrat, used for that. And I don't want my party name used for that.

And I think there's a second part of this Errol which is all over the country the Democrats are saying we do not want our party to interfere in the primary process and weigh in particularly if it's a party that represents the elites – weigh in for a candidate or against a candidate. This has to end once and for all.

I don't care if it's the DNC or –

Louis: I saw that statement from you and at an only slightly lower level, meaning the county organizations, they are very much in the habit of endorsing incumbents. You have benefitted from that. Why is it any different at another level?

Mayor: First of all, the national party – this is where so much of this debate has been – is supposed to represent all of us. It is not the place for the national party – which until recently has been over representative of elites, not of the whole totality of the party – it's not the place of the national party to weigh in on primaries particularly as consequential as for President of the United States.

I don't believe it's the place of state parties either. You can argue – the local level, maybe it's a little bit different because the consequences are not so big but I think the model we should work toward is the party is there to elect Democrats. I mean this is a town obviously that is overwhelmingly Democrat. That kind of changes the equation. But I'd like to see the Democratic Party focus on one thing – electing Democrats not choosing one Democrat over another.

Louis: Okay. Let me switch to climate change. You're going to be out of town this week. I understand the day after the primary you'll be in San Francisco at the Global Climate Change Action Summit – Climate Action Summit. And this came along with your op-ed today in the Guardian newspaper – along with the mayor of London, your counterpart – calling for a full divestment of pension funds both of the London retirement system and New York City's retirement systems from fossil fuel companies.

Mayor: That's right.

Louis: Five billion dollars in the case of New York. You've talked about that before. That's not new. But you're also calling on other cities to do the same. This sounds to me, or it's reminiscent of something I was involved in in college which was the divest movement from companies that did business with apartheid South Africa. This is a little different though and I'm wondering why

you don't – well, I'm wondering what's the endgame here because obviously once you sell off all of your shares the CEO is not going to necessarily take a call from the mayor of New York.

Mayor: So, first of all, thank you that you were a part of that anti-apartheid movement because it worked and I think this is part of why this divestment effort is so important as well. London has made the decision to join with us in New York City and divest fully from fossil fuels. You're right, five billion dollars, we will be taking away from fossil fuel companies and we're never going to investment in them again. We believe cities all over the world can make the same choice. That's going to add up to real economic weight but that cannot be the whole strategy.

We're going to be looking at strategies, of course, to invest positively in green options but we're also going to be looking at the ways that we make fossil fuels obsolete. For example, we are going to an all-electric vehicle fleet with our City vehicles. We are going to have charging stations for electric cars all over the city. That is taking business away from the fossil fuel companies in a way that they need to [inaudible] –

Louis: But you've talked about that before but I mean the City fleet is something like 30,000 vehicles. I think you've done maybe 1,200 at this point.

Mayor: The point being it's not just about divestment in fossil fuels which is a bankrupt industry at this point, an industry that by the way is less and less smart of an investment because so many other assets are going to stay in the ground. There's no question in my mind if we continue to invest in fossil fuels, we would be doing a disservice to the Earth and a disservice to our retirees because those industries are either going to have to change or they're going to die.

But we're also, as I said, we're going to look at the positive new investments we need to make and we're going to start to alter the way that this city uses energy. And that's going to be crucial to the equation as well. You're right we're a major consumer city. We can do a lot more to favor renewables over fossil fuels. But what's powerful about the announcement with London, is we're saying if all of the cities of the world started to do the same thing, and only a handful have now, but the weight of all these cities is tremendous.

It's going to jolt the status quo. The status quo, even after the Paris Agreement, the status quo on this Earth is still a massive use of fossil fuels and we really haven't turned the corner in saying they must be left in the ground and that industry must be considered obsolete –

Louis: But you know what's going to happen, right? There's going to be op-eds probably while you're in San Francisco saying here's the Mayor's gas-guzzling SUV that he takes to Brooklyn to the gym every day –

Mayor: But that's not –

Louis: Here's the other gas-guzzling SUV [inaudible] –

Mayor: It's a ridiculous response to what we're trying to do on a vast level to the tune of billions of billions of dollars in a global movement. I think if people are serious they will look exactly at what we're saying here that two of the world's leading cities have made

a decision that just a few years ago would have been considered impossible, to divest from fully from fossil fuels, leading a movement of cities all around the world I think will do the same –

Louis: But you see know, I think of it as just the opposite. That's the easy part, right? You can renounce tomorrow that you're going sell off your five billion dollars. It's probably a few hours of petro-dollars and some emir in the Emirates will snap it up and there will be no effect on the price of –

Mayor: No, I disagree because what we're trying to do is not just take those resources out of the hands of the industry. We're trying to build an understanding that this industry is soon to be obsolete or else we're going to be obsolete. And that is – you know you change the world through changing consciousness. That is part of why this is so powerful. Yes, it's an economic tool and yes we want to use that money for much more positive investments that are better for our Earth but it's also about creating an understanding that the status quo is too dangerous.

That will spread to the private sector. That will spread to nonprofits and academia. It will keep spreading and this is part of how we make change and it will spread to what everyday people do. Look, after Sandy – I've always said in this city I didn't find a lot of climate change doubters after Sandy hit us.

This is part of how we change the demand on all of our leaders to change the policies that protect us against global warming. All of it connects. The one thing we are trying to say with this action is we cannot do business as usual anymore or we'll be at our peril.

Louis: Okay. We will pick it up again next week on the other side of the primaries. Thanks for coming in tonight, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you.

###