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

Wolf Blitzer: Three weeks of protest demanding police reform continue tonight hours after President Trump signed an executive order on police training and use of force. So, these are live pictures coming in from New York City. You can see folks that are walking down this street there right now. Let's get some more on all of this – the New York City Mayor, Bill de Blasio, is joining us. Mayor de Blasio, thank you so much for joining us. We got a lot to discuss, but let me get your response, first of all, to the president's newly unveiled executive order that he signed today on police reforms. They're seen as relatively modest reforms. We're showing our viewers some of the details. What about you? Are you willing to go much further than what the president is now proposing?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Yeah, Wolf, look it's better he did something than nothing, but relatively modest is the right way to look at it. We've got to go a lot farther. We've got to reexamine the entire relationship between our police and our communities at this point. And what we're doing here in New York is we're taking money out of the police force, putting it into youth programs, social services, going at the root causes, a lot of the challenges that our communities face. We're still going to keep people safe, but it's important to redistribute some of those resources out of policing and into things that will really address foundational issues in communities. We are investing in the amazing grassroots solution to violence called the Cure Violence Movement, also known here as the Crisis Management System. It's grassroots people, community people, some of them folks who in fact themselves used to be incarcerated, who had decided to turn their lives around, stop violence. We're putting a lot of money into that as a grassroots solution.

We're making clear that we're going to be very transparent. I announced today that body-worn camera footage in major incidents will be released within 30 days to show that not only do we have the body-worn cameras, but we're going to make sure that the information is transparent. Our Police Commissioner announced yesterday, getting rid of a particularly aggressive unit called anti-crime unit, which for a lot of people, unfortunately, was exacerbating some of the tensions between police and community. We have to keep people safe, Wolf, but we can do it with different approaches that are more respectful of communities, that listen to community members more. So, there's so much more that we have to do to reform policing, but we've been doing it now for six-and-a-half years. We got rid of stop-and-frisk. We instituted neighborhood policing, reduced arrest, reduced incarceration. It works, Wolf. This is the way of the future.

Blitzer: All right. We'll continue to follow that, but I want to get into the coronavirus pandemic in New York City. You've said your city potentially could move into phase two of reopening on

June 22nd. What benchmarks, Mayor, do you need to reach to move forward with that kind of reopening?

Mayor: Wolf, so far, we've been cautious. We've been all about the data and it served us well. You see that the coronavirus has been receding in New York City, thank God. People have done an amazing job with the face coverings and the social distancing. We need to see data that convinces both the City and the State that we're ready to go as early as June 22nd. I've said, I want to keep expectations a little low, Wolf. It may take, you know, another week or more before we're totally confident, but really it is about the numbers. If we continue to see that the tests we're doing all over the city, bring back very low rates of positive coronavirus infection. We're watching our hospital admissions carefully. We're concerned. Look, we had a lot of protests here. We're going to know in the next, you know, four or five days, what the impact of that was initially in terms of our data. We're watching that carefully too. But if we continue to see really good consistent data, then we're going to move to that next phase. And that's going to be a big one. That's when many hundreds of thousands of people will come back to work.

Blitzer: Was it a mistake to allow those tens of thousands of people to be marching in close distance along the streets of New York City?

Mayor: No. Wolf, look, there are moments in history you got to see what's really going on. There has been an outpouring of frustration, of pain, of anger, demanding change. And this is – a lot of these changes needed – have been needed for decades and generations. So, no, that kind of just grassroots outpouring, spontaneous outpouring, you can't just ignore it. We try to obviously keep reminding people to distance and wear masks, but the most important thing here is it was outdoor demonstrations. It was people authentically talking about the changes we need. We'll know in the next few days, if we see any lasting impact. So far, we have not, thank God. But the real issue going forward is what does the data tell us if it's like what we've seen now over these last weeks – and we've, you know, we've been reopened now for over a week. We like what we see. People are still following the rules in New York City. They're being real smart about the face coverings and the social distancing. And if we can stick to that, we can keep going farther and farther with the reopening.

Blitzer: We saw those images, though, a lot of folks in New York City at bars and restaurants, no face masks. It's a source of concern. And I know you're getting – if you're following the New York city media – a lot of criticism for keeping, for example, the playgrounds in the city closed. Why do you feel it's still unsafe for the kids to go outside and play in the playgrounds as the city takes these steps to reopen?

Mayor: Well, Wolf, if it's all about step-by-step. Look, we got to phase one because we were careful, we were cautious. Already, we've got a couple hundred thousand people who have come back to work. Subway ridership is going up, Staten Island Ferry ridership buses, it's working. We've tried to be smart and careful. That's why we're not going to declare phase two, unless we have the evidence – until we have the evidence. The same with the playgrounds. Once you open up playgrounds, you've got a lot of families, a lot of people in close contact. I want to get there as soon as we get to phase two, but we've got to verify, over these next days, that we're really holding the line. When we do, we can take that next step. The bars, the restaurants, are going to

take a lot of monitoring. When we have to, we'll do enforcement as well. I think that situation will be improved when we start outdoor dining. And that's also to be part of phase two. So, I'm going to be optimistic, Wolf. When we've seen problems that need some addressing, some education, some enforcement, we focus resources and that tends to do the job.

Blitzer: We're showing our viewers some pictures from over the past few days of a lot of folks in New York City, outside of restaurants and bars clearly having a good time. I got to run, unfortunately, but we'll continue, Mayor, this conversation down the road. Thank you so much for joining us.

Mayor: Thank you.

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