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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE BALLOON INFLATION PRESS CONFERENCE**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Happy Thanksgiving, everyone. Good evening to all. It is just wonderful to be here. This is a really exciting night in this city. I have seen so many families and particularly so many children just looking in awe at these beautiful balloons. This is one of the great nights every year in New York City. It's something we're proud of and something that makes us realize just how great this city is.

And it's not just the amazing balloons and all the memories it brings back – I think for all of us it brings back memories of Thanksgivings going back to when we were kids – but it's also to see these volunteers out here, who brave the cold every year – and they love doing it. They love this experience tonight and tomorrow, and they are part of what makes this parade great – so, a very special moment.

You know, it doesn't matter how old you are, there's a certain wonder you feel with the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade, when you see these balloons coming down the street. And what's amazing is, now, you know, hundreds of thousands of people will come here tonight, millions tomorrow, because it's become such an important thing to everyone in this city.

So I want to thank, of course, everyone at Macy's for what they do for this city, and particularly for this great parade – 89 years – 89 straight years of the Macy's Parade – getting better all the time.

And I have to tell you, this begins a season of joy. This begins a season of appreciation, a season to focus on family and all our loved ones.

And yet, at the same time, there are some in this world who are trying to stir fear. They're trying to make us afraid. They're trying to make us change our lifestyle and change our values, lose our spirit, lose our values. We refuse to do that.

One thing I always say – there are some people trying to intimidate New Yorkers. Well, New Yorkers don't get intimidated. And so in this holiday season, you see the response of the people in New York City – they're out here in droves. And they'll be out there tomorrow in droves. That's how we respond to people who try and undermine our lifestyle.

And I have to tell you, the folks here tonight, there's a lot of joy – people obviously are very, very comfortable being out. Commissioner Bratton's, in fact, predicting the biggest crowd we've ever had potentially tomorrow. And people are out here for a lot of reasons, but I know that people feel safe because of the work of the NYPD.

I know that people who come here tonight and people who come out tomorrow feel a deep appreciation for our officers. You're seeing a lot of officers out tonight. You're going to see a very large contingent – thousands of officers – tomorrow, including hundreds of our specially-trained officers who work on counter-terror activities. You're going to see a lot of officers in uniform, prepared, ready. You're also not going to see some of the

preparations – that’s how we do things in this city. To be careful, there are a number of preparations that you don’t see, but are also very, very important to keeping people safe.

So I want to thank all the men and women of the NYPD who are protecting us tonight, will be protecting us tomorrow, who protect us every day.

This parade is due to the incredible work of everyone at Macy’s. This is an extraordinary effort. It’s just unbelievable how much effort goes into it. What they always say is the minute the parade is finished, they start planning the next one – it takes that much work. And I want to thank everyone at Macy’s – you’re going to hear from the CEO, Terry Lundgren, in a moment, but I want to say a special thank-you to Amy Kule, the Vice President of the Macy’s Parade and Entertainment Group, who’s really one of the driving forces – Amy, thank you and your whole team for the great work.

I want to thank my colleagues from the city government who work closely with Macy’s to put the parade together – my senior advisor, Gabrielle Fialkoff, and our Director of the Citywide Events Office, Michael Paul Carey – they’ve done a great, great job getting everything ready.

Now, again, hundreds of thousands tonight, millions tomorrow – 50 million television viewers tomorrow – 50 million people will be watching this parade tomorrow. What a showcase for all that is great about New York City.

And it is a moment that we appreciate this city. And Thanksgiving is a day when we appreciate all we have. And it is also a time to take stock for a moment and recognize that many, many of us are fortunate, but we know in this city there are a lot of folks who are not so fortunate. I was at a soup kitchen yesterday, and the needs of people all over the city – people are hungry – have grown over the years. There’s a lot of people who, tonight, don’t have enough food, who need our help.

So in this holiday season, I just want to urge all my fellow New Yorkers – help in any way you can. You can call 3-1-1 if you want to donate some food, if you want to volunteer, if you want to make a monetary donation to one of the charities that provides food to people in need. There’s a lot to be thankful for, and it’s good that we share all that we have with those who are not as fortunate.

So, as we get ready for this incredible parade, I want to thank everyone who’s a part of it – and I want to tell you, everyone in New York City gets excited. And in the hours leading up to this parade, there is a palpable excitement in this city. Thank you to all that make it happen.

And now, my great pleasure to introduce the CEO of Macy’s, and the man who has such great responsibility of that firm, but also is a true believer in all that Macy’s does for New York City and around the country to help people and help communities, Terry Lundgren –

[Macy’s CEO Terry Lundgren speaks]

**Mayor:** And now, I just want to say my deepest appreciation to Bill Bratton and all the leadership of the NYPD – amazing preparation, every year. You saw what they did with the Pope’s visit and with the U.N. General Assembly – with huge events year in and year out. Well, they prepare all year for the Macy’s Parade – and that’s why it goes so smoothly, because of the work of the NYPD. Our Commissioner Bill Bratton, and then we’ll take your questions on this topic specifically – Bill Bratton –

**Commissioner Bill Bratton, NYPD:** Thank you, sir. Well, I want to start off first by saying a few thank you’s also, certainly to Macy’s – Macy’s one of our larger employers in the city, but also this incredible event that they sponsor every year, and then the July 4th fireworks that are so much a part of the fabric of New York City. And it’s something I’ve had the opportunity of enjoying many years – over many years. I can remember – last

time I was commissioner in 1994, '95, I lived on Columbus Circle – 240 Central Park South, 7th floor balcony – I could literally touch – reach out and touch those balloons as they came around the circle – an incredible thrill.

I have my family here this year, and we're going to watch this parade tomorrow and see these balloons tonight – a very, very special time. Thank you, certainly, to Chief of Department Jimmy O'Neill, Counterterrorism Chief John Miller for the hard work they've been putting in planning and coordinating with Macy's – traffic control, crowd management, all the things that go into making this a celebratory event.

I don't think we have to encourage people to come, as you can see from the crowds behind us. I'm anticipating that we may have record-breaking crowds. I don't recall a year when we've had such ideal weather – incredible weather. Tomorrow, I think, might actually break a record on that, brother.

So we in the city have been anticipating, and in anticipation of those very large crowds we've increased the number of officers – I think we'll have the largest number of officers we've ever had for this event – over 2,500 – and the thousands of other officers that are on patrol throughout the city.

I want to thank those officers also, because they'll be working to keep all the rest of you safe, to move the traffic, to move the crowds on the subway. They'll be away from their families during the day. While you're here celebrating, they're here working. So a special shout-out to the men and women of the New York City Police Department, Fire Department and emergency services who will be there for you tomorrow.

I'd also encourage people that as they come to this parade, to enjoy – to really enjoy. It's a way of pushing back on some of the events that are going on around the world where there's efforts being made to intimidate. This country cannot, this city cannot be intimidated – particularly for these events.

Let us celebrate this great time of year. Let's celebrate with our families. Let's have a joyous time together.

We, the NYPD, Mayor de Blasio, and the whole city administration will be focused on ensuring everyone's safety. And we are looking forward to having a safe, secure day for each and every one of you that will be at this event. And tomorrow we're expecting there will be millions here for this event.

Thank you.

**Mayor:** Amen. Amen. Alright, we welcome your questions on this topic. Erin.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, you and the commissioner talked a lot about security [inaudible] Pat Lynch was saying today that they don't think the city is prepared to handle a Paris-style [inaudible] somewhere else. [inaudible] opportunity, first, to respond [inaudible].

**Mayor:** I'll just start and pass to the commissioner. I have absolute faith in the NYPD, in the devotion of our officers to deal with any threat to our people. And Commissioner Bratton has said this very powerfully – if someone is threatening a New Yorker, and an NYPD officer is there, they will respond and they will work to protect people's lives. But on top of that, the 500 – 500-plus additional counter-terror officers, who are coming online right now on top of all the other specialized services who could respond in an instant – this is the best-prepared city in the country to deal with a terror incident, and most importantly, to prevent terror incidents, which the NYPD has done successfully now for 14 years.

**Commissioner Bratton:** I'm very sorry to hear those comments from the two union leaders, demeaning of their own membership, the NYPD, the most highly-trained police officers in America. You saw that clearly exhibited last week at the demonstration down on Bowery Street. We are in the process – it's an ongoing process of training them. Over 3,000 have been trained – police officers, the patrol officers you see every day – to deal

with active shooters. We are equipping hundreds more officers and training them to deal with the heavier-vest and long-gun situations. And so, this department is prepared. And, by way of example, in the exercise we did last Sunday, two first-responding officers to that drill neutralized the threat, armed with 9-millimeter weapons. So I'm sorry to hear that the two union leaders are demeaning their own membership by basically saying that they are not capable of handling a threat. I'm sorry, I disagree very strongly with them. I'm privileged to lead 35,000 very brave, very well-trained officers, who always go toward the danger, and I'm very comfortable, going to that danger, they would neutralize any threat that they would encounter. And we're continuing our efforts to equip them in an even better fashion and train them even better than we've done in the past. Okay? Thank you.

**Question:** Last week, the Long Island district announced that they were canceling their trip to New York. Commissioner Bratton spoke to that last week. Are you worried about the same effect at the parade?

**Mayor:** No, I think people are coming here from all over the city, all over the metropolitan region, all over the country to be a part of this parade. I – I found that very regrettable, that a school district would give in to fear and cancel a trip. That's a choice they get to make, but, look, again, we cannot let the terrorists succeed at psychological warfare. That's what it is. They're doing what they do to try and create fear, to try and change us. We were with Jeh Johnson at that very, very impressive anti-terror drill on Sunday. He said something simple – the terrorists can't succeed if we refuse to be terrorized. We have to stand our ground – continue with our lives, continue going about our business. Don't change our lifestyle. Don't change our values. So, you know, I look at people out here – I've been walking around the blocks around here – people are not intimidated. They're going to enjoy this wonderful event. And I think the commissioner said it exactly right – there's such faith – the people have faith. I can't speak for the union leaders, but the people have faith in the NYPD, and know they're being well-protected.

Yeah.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I tell them we have 35,000 police officers in this city – the most highly-trained police officers in the country. And as Commissioner Bratton said, this is the best-prepared city to handle any kind of situation. This is a place where tremendous resources are expended to prevent any such acts. And people should recognize, when that kind of effort is being made, and it's been successful year in and year out – we see these incredible big events in New York City all the time, and they come off without a hitch – well, that says a lot. And I urge people – come here and enjoy this incredible parade. Celebrate something great about America – and for God's sakes, don't let the terrorists dictate the terms to us.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I'll – let me have the commissioner have a shot at that one.

**Commissioner Bratton:** To answer your question, take a look around. Open your eyes. Do they look they're living in abject fear? There'll be hundreds of thousands of people here tonight, most of them coming on the subways you're asking about. Tomorrow there'll be upwards of two to three million people, the majority of whom will be walking or coming in by subway. If they were so fearful, would they be here? This is a safe city. It's going to be an incredibly safe event. I had the opportunity today to go shopping – I actually was in your flagship store, and a couple of others, get a head start on my Christmas shopping, had a couple of hours to myself – damn sure didn't look they were fearful in your store – there was wall-to-wall customers there. So let's stop trying to make something that is not – it is not. We will have a very safe day tomorrow. We'll have a very safe holiday season. And come New Year's Eve, we'll all, when we watch that ball down, we'll celebrate once again that we're privileged to live in the safest and best country in the world.

**Mayor:** Amen. Amen.

Alright, last call – yes, sir.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I hate to [inaudible], but about the homeless issue, Governor Cuomo’s spokeswoman [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Yeah, this is about this topic, as I said. We’ll talk to that certainly in the coming days.

Any other questions on this topic? Going once, twice – happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

**Commissioner Bratton:** All the best. Thank you.

[Applause]

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