



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** October 24, 2018

**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN**

**Jake Tapper:** Joining me now in New York City is New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Of course, one of the explosive devices was received at CNN's bureau in New York City, addressed to former Obama CIA Director, John Brennan, and NYPD is on the case. Mr. Mayor, thanks for joining us. You've described this as an act of terror. The National Counterterrorism Center has yet to do so. Why the disagreement there?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Look, I feel this and I know the NYPD does as well, Jake, that here was an effort to intimidate, to use violence for political ends. That's terrorism. We take it very, very seriously in this city. This city has experienced terrorism. We don't take it lightly.

But I also have to say, as you can see around me here in New York City, I'm really proud of New Yorkers today. They are going about their lives. They're showing the resiliency that makes this place great. People are now being cowed by this. But we have no doubt that this is an act of terror.

**Tapper:** The situation has been obviously continually evolving in terms of the number of devices we've heard about. Last time I checked it was six devices, including one sent to Congresswoman Maxine Waters on Capitol Hill. Has this situation been contained or is this still ongoing and we don't know how many of these devices are out there?

**Mayor:** We have to assume it's ongoing. Now, I want to be clear – from the perspective of New York City, there is no credible and specific threat at this point to any location in New York City. But that being said, clearly there is a pattern here that we're taking very, very seriously and the message I want to give to everyone in New York and beyond – around the country – is, if you see a suspicious package, take it seriously, don't dismiss it, call the authorities, call 9-1-1, treat it urgently because something is going on here and we need people to act out of an abundance of caution.

Obviously what's happened here is directed for political purposes. And I want to say, Jake, I really give everyone at CNN credit for showing the right professional attitude and continuing programming, continuing to stay focused despite this threat. I think the people at CNN should be very proud of that.

But something is happening here we have to take seriously. We should not assume it's only a one-day thing. There needs to be a sense of vigilance. And one of the things we've learned in New York City is, as good as our first responders are, they get a lot better when they get the full participation of the public. So, anyone who gets a package that arouses their suspicion, they need to alert the authorities right away.

**Tapper:** Law enforcement sources tell CNN that the package sent to CNN in New York City was delivered by courier. Are there any leads there? Does that give more confidence that this will help authorities figure out who did it?

**Mayor:** Look, there's a confidence that eventually our Joint Terrorism Task Force, all of our federal and state partners, and the NYPD are going to get to the bottom of this. The track record's really strong.

I don't think it's going to be an overnight thing. These packages potentially came from a long way away and did not have an easy tracking to them. But historically, we've been able to ultimately put the pieces together. I think people should assume it's going to take at least days if not longer, and that we're not out of the woods here until the perpetrators are found.

Again, that's why that attitude, if you see something say something – I want everyone to take that to heart right now until this is solved.

**Tapper:** Obviously, not only the device sent to [inaudible] CNN in the building right near you, but devices sent to George Soros and Bill and Hillary Clinton in Westchester County right outside New York City. What specific precautions are you taking in New York right now in the wake of this? What are law enforcement officers doing other than investigating the three packages sent to New York?

**Mayor:** Yeah, we're taking a very proactive approach. So, look, obviously, media outlets have been a target so we have our counterterrorism forces very visibly in front of key media companies. Also some prominent political figures have been targets. We have additional anti-terrorism forces in front of their offices as well.

There is going to be a very robust presence. And here's what I find – that New Yorkers find that reassuring. I think that people all over this country find it reassuring. Part of what we have to do in this moment, Jake, is recognize it's a bitter, negative moment in our nation's history. We've had these challenges before. They don't go on forever. They may feel painful and persistent but we're going to get over this. We're going to get past this. Ultimately, this is a very good and decent country full of people who try and do the right thing.

These moments bring us down but what I think is crucial for people to recognize is this is a moment in time, the way we answer this hatred is by being in solidarity with each other, looking out for each other, being vigilant, recognizing that the information that you hear, something that you might not be sure of is important or not but in the hands of law enforcement it may prove to be a crucial clue. And I think that sense of everyone helping each other out is what we need at this moment.

**Tapper:** President Trump said earlier today Americans must unify in the wake of this incident. That's a message you shared earlier today as well but obviously there are a lot of people who look at the list of targets and see that all of them are individuals that President Trump has been very critical of and sometimes it's gone – you know, sometimes they've also been critical of President Trump. And on the right, some of President Trump's prominent supporters at least on social media are suggesting this is all just a liberal hoax.

**Mayor:** Well, talk to the NYPD and the FBI and they'll tell you it's not a hoax. This is the real thing. The bomb that was removed from the building right by here was a serious bomb and that's why it's now at a secure facility of the NYPD and ultimately will be transferred to an FBI facility.

This is the real thing. As to the atmosphere that's been created – look, it would be wrong in this moment to start pointing fingers and calling names but it's right to say creating a peaceful, respectful approach, and a peaceful, respectful society starts at the top.

So, whether you're talking about the President or any other elected officials or prominent voices, people need to start preaching peace right now. They need to start talking about treating each other with respect. Especially the attacks on the media have been corrosive and unfair. Look, you can disagree with the media but there's no place in this society for calling for violence against the people who report the news.

And that – you talk about a founding principle in this country – this is a country unlike probably any other in the world that believes a free press was necessary to a functioning democracy. This was foundational to the documents that built this nation. And I think it's something the President needs to take to heart. Start sending a message of respect for people of different beliefs. If you want to disagree with someone disagree with them politically, disagree at the ballot box but never ever threaten bodily harm. Unfortunately, there are a lot of people keying off the President and keying off other voices of hate, and there's results to that. There's a lot of impressionable people out there. There's a lot of people with mental challenges and other things that inspire them to act when they hear that kind of voice.

You know, there's a more responsible way. And by the way, Jake, for decades you didn't see this kind of thing in this country because leaders set a tone of respect and civility. We can get back to it, we have to get back to it.

**Tapper:** Mr. Mayor, one of the reasons being cited by the President's prominent social media supporters who say this is a liberal hoax – obviously, I do not believe this is a liberal hoax – but one of the pieces of evidence as it were, even though it's not evidence, is that none of these bombs went off.

But you're saying, and the NYPD said earlier, that the device that was sent to CNN was a live explosive device. It was legitimate it just didn't – it just wasn't detonated.

**Mayor:** Unquestionably a legitimate device and thank God it didn't go off. You'll remember a couple of years ago, there was an attempted terrorist attack here in New York City, and there was a pressure cooker bomb that a passerby saw and alerted the NYPD and it was retrieved in time and taken to a secure facility and thank God no one was hurt.

Unquestionably that was an act of terror. Unquestionably that was a bomb placed there to harm civilians, and a live, active bomb. The fact that something does not go off is not the way to grade it. Let law enforcement be the judge. We've got the Joint Terrorism Task Force, it's the FBI, it's our State partners, it's the NYPD, it's the folks who have done an extraordinary job of keeping us safe very since 9/11. They saw with their own eyes, the NYPD Bomb Squad saw with their own eyes a live bomb and got it out of here so no one could be hurt.

**Tapper:** New York Mayor, Bill de Blasio. Thank you so much for your time, Sir, appreciate it.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Jake.

###