

The
Economic
Club of
New York

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The Economic Club of New York

116th Year
736th Meeting

Raymond Kelly
Chief Executive Officer, Guardian Group
37th and 41st New York City Policy Commissioner

November 29, 2023

In-Person/Hybrid Event

Moderator: Robert K. Steel
Vice Chair, Perella Weinberg Partners
Vice Chair, ECNY

Introduction

Vice Chair Robert K. Steel

My name is Bob Steel. And to those in the room and those who are joining us virtually, welcome. Today is the 736th meeting of The Economic Club of New York. My name is Bob Steel. I'm fortunate enough to be a Vice Chair of the Club and also Vice Chair and Partner at Perella Weinberg Partners.

As all of you know, the Economic Club is seen as one of our country's leading nonpartisan forums for discussions on economic, social, and political issues. And since we've begun the Club, we've had over 1,000 prominent guest speakers before the Club, over the whole history of the Club, which is more than 100 years. I think, too, we always want to say welcome. We're excited, in addition to us in the room, that we have a younger cohort from Rutgers University and the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham who are joining us today too. And also the largest Class of Economic Club of New York, Class of 2023 Fellows, who are really the next-gen business leaders that we're excited to offer the perspective to hear our various programs.

Today, it's my honor to welcome our guest of honor, Ray Kelly. Ray, I got to know when we worked together for Mayor Bloomberg. He was with the administration when I joined as the leader of the police department and a key advisor to the mayor. Today, Ray is

the CEO of Guardian Group, and he has over 50 years of public service, including, as I just said, 14 years as Police Commissioner for the City of New York.

Ray was appointed Police Commissioner in 2002 by Mayor Bloomberg, making Ray the longest-serving police commissioner in the history of New York City, as well as the first to hold the position for a second separate term. He also served as Police Commissioner, in addition to Bloomberg, for Mayor Dinkins. And he then served as Senior Managing Director of Global Corporate Security at Bear Stearns, a commissioner of the U.S. Customs Service, Under Secretary at the U.S. Treasury, and Vice President for the Americas of Interpol, a Director of the International Police Monitors in Haiti.

Ray holds a BBA from Manhattan College, a JD from St. John's University School of Law, an LLM from New York University Graduate School of Law, an MPA from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. In addition, Ray served as a Colonel from the Marine Corps Reserves after 30 years of service, retired as a Colonel from the Marine Corps Reserves after 30 years of service.

Today, he's a Visiting Fellow, Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and serves on several advisory boards. In 2016, His Eminence Cardinal Dolan named Ray to the Board of Directors of the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation.

Today, we're going to have a conversation, and since it's being recorded, everything is on the record and we'll move forward. I think, Ray, it's really an honor for me and I think it will be a real treat for all our guests.

Conversation with Raymond Kelly

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: Let's start maybe, since we're here in New York, tell us about how do you feel about the state of public safety in New York City today.

RAYMOND KELLY: Okay, first let me thank the Economic Club for having me. Thank you, Barbara. This is a very prestigious group, and I'm honored to be here. Bob Steel has an amazing resume himself. Thirty years at Goldman Sachs, Under Secretary of the Treasury Department. Did a little bit different work than I did in the Treasury Department. And, of course, Deputy Mayor for Mike Bloomberg. But very, very impressive indeed. And I know, I was there. I know what a great job that he did.

The state of safety in New York City, well, it's problematic. I have concerns. And probably equal to the problem of crime is the problem of disorder. It is the quality-of-life issues that I think have really become major problems in the last couple of years. You know, when you try to cross the street, you have scooters coming down, all over the sidewalk, that sort of thing. You've got the subway problem. People are still reluctant to

ride on the subway, certainly with the numbers that we had pre-pandemic. We have homeless people. We have people obviously who have mental health conditions walking on the street. So I think that, as much as crime, quite frankly, drives people away from the city.

As far as crime is concerned, last year was the first year of this administration, Adams' administration. Crime was up over 30%. Now, this year, crime is roughly at that level, so it stayed. You can look at the numbers and they'll say, oh, gee, crime is not bad, it's what it was last year. But last year it was up over 30%.

So, it is problematic. I had made recommendations a long time ago with this administration, things that I think could make a difference. Number one, you have to recapture the subways, and they're still in the process of doing that. The subways are the lifeblood of New York. We need to have people have a much higher comfort level to ride on the subways than they have now.

I also recommended that anti-crime officers be deployed. What are they? They are police officers in plain clothes. I did this work 100 years ago. But they use taxi cabs and perhaps FedEx uniforms, that sort of thing, to observe crime-prone locations. And they are very effective in addressing street crime. This administration has not done that. They have sort of a knock-off of that approach by having police officers wear sort of a

semi-uniform that says NYPD police officer. It's not the same by any means.

And, of course, stop, question, and frisk. It's controversial. I understand. But it's perfectly legal. It's supported by a Supreme Court case – Terry v. Ohio. We had a lawsuit here that we can certainly talk about. I can talk about it for a long time. But it impacted on the willingness of police officers to conduct stop, question, and frisk actions.

There was a monitor put in place by Judge Shira Scheindlin who tried the case. By the way, no jury, just Judge Scheindlin. She held onto the case for almost 14 years, which is contrary to the Southern District rules and regulations. But she wanted this case, and I think it was something that would have been overturned if the appeal that the Bloomberg administration put in place was allowed to go forward. But Mayor de Blasio killed that appeal.

But we have some stop, question, and frisk. I know it's a pejorative term. Nobody wants to be frisked. I'd like to call it something else, but that's what it is. That's how people know it. Some of it is going on, but it's a much lower level than I think is appropriate. It should be a tool in every police officer's toolbox. This is the type of thing that we want our constable to react to if suspicious activity, reasonable suspicion, we want them to react.

So I don't see things changing very much in the near or intermediate term of this administration. Let's face it, it's pretty difficult to defeat an incumbent. So I think we're going to have roughly the tactics and strategies that are being used now for the foreseeable future.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: One of the things that we hear a lot about is that Albany has really made it more difficult for the police department to do their job with some of their more progressive perspectives, with treatment of criminals, and rules of evidence, and engagement between law enforcement and the public. Is that fair to think of them as an important aspect to this issue?

RAYMOND KELLY: Yes, the city is a creature of the state. In Albany now, both the Senate and the Assembly are veto-proof. So they can basically do whatever they want. They made changes, actually during the de Blasio administration, Criminal Justice Reform Act. But probably the biggest change was the bail reform legislation.

Now, bail reform makes sense in the abstract. It shouldn't be based on people's income as to whether or not they can get out from an alleged crime that they committed, whether they can be bailed out. So it was a movement that sort of swept the country. And it basically says that cash bail is eliminated. And for minor violations, meaning misdemeanors, there'll be no bail. You will not be released on bail. You will just be

released.

The difference here in New York is that in 49 other states the judge has the ability to make a determination on dangerousness, on who can be held based on a totality of the information that they've gathered about their backgrounds, what they've done to commit that particular crime. That does not exist in New York. They've done a little tinkering of it, but basically it still doesn't exist. And that's why you have the people, the turnstiles coming and going. It's the same basically day after day.

The Legislature looked at this issue and they decided not to change it. The only change that they put in place; in the legislation it says that judges should use the least restrictive restraint on holding people. That has been removed from the law. Whether or not that's significant, nobody really knows. It was just done recently. But, yes, I think it's fair to say that the State Legislature has not been kind to law enforcement in the state, because everything they do, of course, applies to the state.

And the City Council also has been quite problematic. In the aftermath of the death of George Floyd all sorts of restrictive, some would say punitive, legislation was passed throughout the country, about 150 pieces of major legislation, to – a lot of people say – punish the police. Well, the City Council joined in on that as well. They did things such as eliminating qualified immunity, which is a defense for every civil servant in America,

except New York City police officers. Basically, it's a good faith defense. You know, you're doing your job type defense. They've done a lot of other things.

For instance, if you stop someone you have to tell them that they don't have to cooperate with you. I mean it's got to be illogical to request that, you know. But don't forget, cops are wearing cameras now, every police officer on patrol has a camera. So the City Council and the State Legislature with the assistance of Mayor de Blasio have done an awful lot to – in my judgment – adversely impact on criminal justice in New York City.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: Let's stay, one last question with New York and then we'll expand a bit. But are there two or three policy things that you feel like the police department should initiate or pursue that would really be a difference maker, that there are two or three specific things?

RAYMOND KELLY: Well, as I said, I think anti-crime is roughly 600 officers that would be assigned to anti-crime if they moved forward with that. That, in my judgment, would make a major difference as far as street crime, and that's what's going on now. Now, let me say this. The numbers of murders and shootings are down significantly in New York City. And certainly, I'll credit the administration. However, it is a national phenomenon. Murders and shootings are down in virtually every major city in America. Difficult to

explain. Criminologists, some think it may have to do with the availability of ammunition. I don't know. It's only half-year statistics that are in so far, so they're not going to make any difference. But, you know, give credit where credit is due. Murders are down and shootings are down and that's a good thing.

In terms of policy, you know, they have empowered a Civilian Complaint Review Board to basically investigate in an unfettered manner anybody in the police department, de facto, that's the truth. They keep giving them more power. When it started in the 70s, 80s, it was actually in the police department. Now it is a separate entity with its own investigators and cops don't think it's fair. And, of course, we know, everyone knows now, I'm sure, about the exodus of police officers from the New York City Police Department. Not only NYPD, but it's happening across the country. But, of course, this is the biggest police department in the country. So the numbers are, maybe as many as 12,000 police officers have left in the last three years.

Now, why? Why is that happening? Difficult to say. Some people say it is forced overtime. You know, they can't get a day off. They have to work seven days a week. There is a lot of overtime being put in place, officers on overtime, in the subway system. And as I say, we have to get people to have a much higher comfort level in the subways than they have now. So, you know, I think this is, you've got to block and tackle. These are basic things that I think can make a difference.

And the stop, question, and frisk, now it is such as cumbersome situation. It takes quite a while to conduct it. You have to keep the person. You have to call the sergeant or the captain. And it's clearly made that way so cops don't do it. The powers that be don't want them to do it. But I think it's a valuable tool. I think in the court case, the judge did not accept, I think, very significant information. For instance, the highest number of stops is 600,000. That amounted to less than one stop a week per patrol officer. It amounted to a pat-down once every two weeks for a patrol officer. So the numbers were eminently reasonable if you take a look at a city of 8.5 million people and what goes on. And the judge did not accept that information.

In that case, by the way, there were 19 stops that were at issue. She found that 10 of the 19 met constitutional mustard. There was an expert on the case from the plaintiffs. This individual found that, looked at about 4 million stops over a decade, he found that 96% of them met the constitutional criteria. Yet, the judge found that, and used a disposition that nobody had heard of before, unconstitutional as applied. Obviously, she couldn't say it was unconstitutional because of the Supreme Court case – Terry v. Ohio – that governs this case.

So we appealed. Mayor Bloomberg appealed and rightly so. The judge was taken off that case by the Second Circuit because of pre-trial publicity. This is after her decision. Obviously, there's motions and things that follow. They removed her from that case.

Now, we were pretty confident that if the appeal went through, that the city would have won, but that didn't happen. So the cops are sort of hog-tied with that type of approach by the department. I think it would make a big difference as far as crime is concerned.

Also, the enforcement of these petty violations, you know, these scooters have no licenses. I was in London a while ago and I looked out the window of the hotel and I saw a group of bicycles stopped, and I thought it was an accident. No, it was a red light. It was actually a red light. I mean it's a different world out there in Europe as far as etiquette and civility and as far as bicycles are concerned.

I think serious thought has to be given, and I'm not sure it will be, to license the motorized vehicles. They are dangerous. People get killed every year with them. They have lithium batteries that burst into flame. So that's not a policy for the police department to implement. It's a policy for the City Council to look at.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: Thank you. Let's pivot a bit. When I first met Ray post-9/11, he built a capability here in New York where at One Police Plaza, Ray organized to build a team that really understood the threat that New York was facing. And there were people that Ray brought in from the CIA and other places where all of a sudden New York, the NYPD wanted to have their own hand on these things. So he has a perspective on these issues.

Ray, I'm going to turn to the Middle East and first invite you to comment on what your reaction is with regard to Israel's preparedness, surprise, and things like that, and what your perspective is. And then we're going to come back to more local issues here.

RAYMOND KELLY: Well, we do a fair amount of work with the Israelis, and I was totally shocked by their apparent lack of preparation. They relied, over-reliance on technology. That was clear. They had automatic machine guns that weren't manned. Things like that, that were just shocking.

As far as the anti-Semitism is concerned, I did an examination, a project for Ronald Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress. He asked me to look at anti-Semitism in Europe and to make certain recommendations – if possible – to address some of it, some of the aspects of it and use some of the approaches that we use here in New York City. And I can tell you that it was an eye-opener to me. Anti-Semitism in Europe, as said by many people, is as high as it's been since World War II. I wore a yarmulke in Paris and people shouted out something. I don't know what they shouted out, but they clearly were saying something that wasn't complimentary.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: It wasn't "have a good day."

RAYMOND KELLY: So the level of anti-Semitism that's in the world, I sort of had a

preview of it. And I know I'm not talking about the Middle East per se. And then we looked at schools, colleges, and again it was an eye-opener. Anti-Semitism was so entrenched and carried out by multiple student organizations. One in particular, Students for Justice in Palestine, it's been around since the 90s. They changed their name a couple of times.

But their mission in life, and we interviewed a lot of people, their mission was just to harass Jewish students. Bump into them. If they had an event, to perhaps picket. Or if they had pamphlets, throw them on the floor. Trying to goad them into a fight. And the administration, and this is in several schools, would do nothing about it. They simply stayed away from it. They wouldn't recognize it. I talked to security people. It was just allowed to go forward. It was this fear, I guess, of being labeled as Islamophobia, something along those lines.

But anyway, as far as the Middle East is concerned, yes, I think it increases the threat level here. We have to operate under the assumption that New York is a number one target. This is the capital of the world in a lot of people's minds. You have 10 million people a day. We've had two successful major terrorist attacks here. The horrific events of 2001, but I was Police Commissioner for the first World Trade Center attack in 1993. We knew nothing about it, there was no heads-up. The FBI did not warn us in any way. And the same, of course, for the 9/11 attack.

So that's one of the reasons that the mayor and myself made a determination that we have to do a better job of protecting ourselves. This is the biggest police department in the country, one of the biggest in the world. We are probably the most diverse. We have police officers, after our recruiting efforts, born in 106 countries. It gave us tremendous language capability. But we were not looking to supplant in any way the federal government's efforts. We wanted to supplement. We wanted to add to law enforcement's ability to better protect the city.

We did a lot of things. Just as Bob has said, we brought in a lot of, cops are great, they'll do what you tell them to do, but they did not have the expertise, the training that we thought we needed right away to sort of hit the ground running in 2002. So we reached out to both active and retired FBI, DIA, DEA, CIA people. And we brought them in to the department. We created an analytic group, a cadre that was said to be one of the best there is.

Now I also brought in David Cohen, a 35-year veteran of the CIA, the only person to be in charge of sort of the operational side and the analytical side. And he did a terrific job. I also, I have a history with the Marine Corps and I wanted to get a Marine Corps general because I wanted that persona. I knew what it would be like, having seen many Marine Corps generals. So I was able to attract Frank Libutti, who had just retired as a Marine Corps Lieutenant General. He was in charge of Marines in the Pacific. And he

did an excellent job. I wanted him sort of to be the face of counterterrorism and he was. And David Cohen also helped in the recruitment of people from the federal government.

So we did a lot of things. We put people overseas in 12 countries to act as trip wires and listening posts. What's going on over there? Can they help us in any way? Is there something they're doing that we should adopt? And that was very helpful. We also put in a much larger uniformed presence, kind of the wow factor early on, where you'd see maybe 20 police cars come in, their lights on, go to certain locations in the city. We operated under the assumption that we're being observed and people, if they could, wouldn't want to do something significant here. So we did that, and there were 16 plots against the city.

One other thing we did, which I thought was terrific, we created a Deep Undercover Program, and David Cohen was particularly helpful in this. We would look at the eligible list. By that we mean people who took the police examination, written test, but nothing more. Take a look at them. Did they have any language capabilities that interested us? What was their background? And they would be approached to see if they would be willing to act in an undercover capacity. Now, obviously we promised them accelerated promotions, that sort of thing.

So we took the volunteers and we trained them in a hotel. Never went to a police

building. But had various people train them through a television monitor for about a year. And they were very, very good, very effective, particularly helpful. And, of course, when they sort of graduated from that, they went into the regular ranks as detectives. They had been promoted to detective. And that was, I think, something...obviously, it mirrors the federal government somewhat. But NYPD is the biggest department in the country. We should be able to do these sorts of things, and we did.

But we had 16 plots against the city under the Bloomberg administration. Some of them were thwarted by good work on the part of the FBI, good work on the part of the NYPD, and sheer luck. But it worked. We had, as I say, 16 plots. Since then we've had incidents here. Down where my wife, Veronica, and I lived down by Battery Park, we had an individual from Pakistan, rented a truck and killed eight people on a bicycle path and injured eight more. That was not on our watch. That was the next mayor's watch. So I believe that New York is a constant target, and we have to operate as such.

Rebecca Weiner is someone I recruited from Harvard. I went to Harvard and convinced her to come to New York and work as an analyst. She's now in charge of our counterterrorism operation. She's been there now for a good 14, 15 years. So she's experienced, and I think we're in pretty good shape as far as that leadership is concerned.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: Let's turn, stay with this, though but we're now seeing lots of organized efforts of protests. And this is a fine line, when America, one of our fundamental beliefs is the ability to offer different perspectives, to be respectful to different points of view. But yet it seems a bit challenging now, and how do you referee and manage that as you see these well-organized groups presenting in a way that's disruptive to the city. It seems to suggest that they're not focused, they're not interested in public safety and respect for others. What's the right way for the policy and then the police to think about this? And I'm going to ask you, in the city, I think we also have an issue that you alluded to on campuses. And so maybe if you could comment on those, that would be appreciated.

RAYMOND KELLY: Well, that's a good question. And I'm not certain there's an absolute right way. I think you have to be flexible. I think it depends a lot on what the demonstrators do, of course. You know, I don't think you should be allowed to take over a bridge. I don't think you should be allowed to block the FDR, which they've done. They did that under the past administration. You have to be willing to make arrests when they're clear violations of other people's rights.

You know, there's a battalion of lawyers that go to these demonstrations on both sides. So there's a lot of legal advice as to what to do and when to do it. But there are recent court decisions, by the way, I think it's been finalized. And it requires, first of all, it puts

in place an oversight committee of five people, only one from the police department, on how to handle demonstrations. Just by definition, it's going to be problematic, because it's going to slow down the reaction.

One of the issues was kettling. It's an expression that was probably made up by a plaintiff's lawyer. I've never heard it before. But kettling is basically going behind demonstrators and moving in and arresting them. And if you want to arrest someone, let's say you've got observation posts and you say, look at that guy, he just threw a Molotov cocktail, we want to arrest that guy, that guy, and that guy. You have to come around behind them. You just can't let...so kettling is forbidden. You can't go around them, which makes no sense, because ultimately you're going to have to at least have the capacity to take certain people into custody.

So it's not an easy area. It is something that requires judgment on the part of the field commanders. I think we have, lately, allowed demonstrators to go too far. If you're trying to get to work and you're tied up for five hours, something like that, in traffic, I mean those people have rights.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: Well, I think everyone should feel comfortable. When I worked in the same administration as Ray, I saw Ray one morning in City Hall, and this was during the time of Occupy Wall Street, and they had taken over the park

downtown. And so I said to Ray, how many people were in the park last night, and what's going on? And Ray said, well, there were about 160 people, 16 or 17 of them were our people that I put into the Occupy Wall Street group to know what was going on. And so that gave me a real sigh of relief to know that he had his hand on the pulse, and that's kind of the equivalent of being behind them as being among them. So I thought that was an example of smart policing that I felt more safe because of it, and kind of be on top of things.

RAYMOND KELLY: As I said, there are a lot of lawyers at these demonstrations and certainly the police department has their cadre of lawyers. So there's a lot of that type of discussion that goes on at a demonstration. Are they allowed to do this, what about blocking that.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: I'm going to ask one more question and then I'll invite others. But I think, I think another one of these, I like the word you said, is there's not a cookbook. You have to be flexible and kind of monitor the situation and see what's required at the time. How about campuses today and what's going on there? Because as you said, there are certain things that we shouldn't have. You shouldn't block bridges. You shouldn't block highways and impede people's daily lives. How about on campuses? How do you feel about that?

RAYMOND KELLY: Yes, it's a real problem, and I talked about it before. I'm not going to name them specifically because I did this study three years ago. They may have changed, they may have gotten, I'm not 100% certain. But there was radio silence on the part of administrations sort of universally as far as Jewish students' complaints are concerned. Let's say Hillel, it's a Jewish campus organization, a national one. They'll have an event or they'll have informational tables. Many of the members of Students for Justice in Palestine will come, will shout, will try to shout them down. As I said before, throw pamphlets on the floor, just try to create mayhem. And try to create physical contact, they want them to fight.

Now there are almost 200 chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine in the United States. That is saturation, you know, on college campuses. Now, I can't say with certainty if this type of disruption is going on in all of these campuses. But it's going on here, it's going on in New York, no question about it. No response, or if there is a response, it's a very lukewarm response. And I really, I felt quite bad for the Jewish students. They had to look over their shoulder all the time. They were shouted at. And, of course, the campus, they'd be shouted, that sort of thing.

So it is a problem. I don't know how you end this. I don't know how you change it to say, alright, administrations, you should be doing much more about it. I don't think they will. I just don't think they are bent in that direction. They're reading the tea leaves and

politically they don't think it's good for them. But it is, it's solid right here in New York City.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: Great. Thank you. Let's start with questions. Ed, do you want to lead us off? And I think if people have questions, if you just put your name tent up, then I'll be sure to get around and call people and just identify yourself when you ask your question. That would be great. Thank you.

QUESTION: Yes, I had a chance to visit the school in Queens with the chancellor when putting together an internship program there. It looked like a very good school there. And I just heard there was an incident there where a Jewish teacher, the students were rampaging against her, and she had to lock herself in a room. How does the police department get involved in that? And what's the separation between the Department of Education and the police department with respect to dealing with situations like that?

RAYMOND KELLY: Well, the police department was called in there. They have school safety agents. They work for the police department. They wear uniforms similar to the police, but they're not armed. About 60% of them are women. Most of the members of this organization are people of color. And they do a great job. Well, one of them was assaulted in that school about midweek, so the police responded there. And when it was a riotous situation, the police ultimately responded as well.

There is a complaint, I read someplace, that the police were not engaging the way they should. I don't know enough about the details. But the school safety agents are critical. A lot of these schools are out of control. You just talk to the teachers and they'll tell you. It can be a very dangerous environment. The chancellor went to that school Monday, I guess, today is Wednesday. He went Monday. There's a *New York Post* editorial today criticizing him for not doing enough, not talking about anti-Semitism. That was clearly the motivation, and you're right, it's because she had been spotted at a pro-Israeli demonstration. That's all. That's all she did. And who knows what they could have done. She locked herself in an office, I think with a couple of other people that helped her.

So the police department should respond. They should be able to clear the aisle or whatever, they should be the instrument that does that. Yes, you can put your hands up, people. That's okay. You can do it. These days people are a little reluctant to do that. But the leadership has to tell them, hey, we're moving these people out. You move them out too. So it's going to be probably an ongoing problem because we see a copycat phenomenon that happens. We'll see perhaps some other school do this, and it's unfortunate.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: Over here...

QUESTION: Hi, Rachel Wagner. I'm at partner at Atairos, an investment firm. Thank

you for your comments, really insightful. I'm curious to hear your thoughts, to your point earlier about protests and how the police deals with those. We all remember sort of the mayhem in the summer of 2020 with all the sort of post-George Floyd protests that became sort of looting and other stuff. How do you, I'm worried that this winter could be the winter of the pro-Hamas protests and looting and whatnot, so how do you, from a police perspective, kind of prevent that from happening? Is there anything they can do to tamp it down ahead of time?

RAYMOND KELLY: Well, I don't think you prevent the sort of disorderly group. But I'll tell you what did not happen under the de Blasio administration, and that was six and a half years ago. There was no disorder control training for our police officers. Under my watch, we had training every day for some segment of our police officers who respond to a disorder. They stopped it. I think they stopped it because they had created, they changed task forces, they changed the name of them, but they were the ones that were getting trained, or they were doing the training themselves. But it was not nearly enough. You realize how complicated this is.

There's signals that you send out on a radio where police will come from every precinct in a borough, a certain number, radio car or whatever. Or in the city, if it's a big deal. That has to be trained for because you have cops showing up from different commands, all over the place, they don't know the supervisors. The supervisors don't need them.

You can't, in other words, they're not coming as a unit. They're coming as individual cops. And you could see that, I could see that problem right there. They were not trained to do that. There was a lot of individual fights, cops wrestling with people. That's not what you want.

In Crown Heights, I was the first Deputy Commissioner in Crown Heights. And I was asked in the middle of it to sort of take charge. And I had been a Precinct Commander in that area so I knew the personnel. And we ended that, the next day we brought in 50 horses, mounted police officers, and did certain things to close off the blocks and arrest people, and that was it. But it takes that type of training.

And as a result of that, we, and the administration put out a handbook on disorder control. And it talks about, you have to think team. You don't run after people. You know, you have to take the ____. You have formations that you use. And that was totally not taught and not done, leading up to whatever it was, May 26th of 2020. That training, I assume, I hope is going on now, but I can't say with certainty. But it was obvious to me that you just can't have individuals showing up acting on their own. That has to be trained.

QUESTION: A question I have for you, Commissioner Kelly, is the growth of homegrown terrorism since 9/11 and how can social media and drones kind of stop it or

kind of alert you as to what's going on? Have you gained in knowledge how to use, how to decipher social media? Have you gained in knowledge as far as who these homegrown terrorists are? And where do we go from here?

RAYMOND KELLY: Well, it's very challenging. We used to be able to, in our industry, we get into chat rooms. And we used to say, well, we know the language of people in the streets of Karachi because we have somebody who was born there. We used that talent. Now, there are a lot more one-on-one chats. They don't let other people in, for instance, that's just one aspect of it.

And people are not necessarily advertising what they're going to do. I mean that's not necessarily the panacea. I think a big threat is the lone wolf, the person who is motivated in some way, maybe by social media. It's very difficult to spot. And I think the, I hope the federal government is putting all reasonable efforts into addressing this issue.

For political reasons, it was put out that somehow white supremacy was the biggest terrorist threat to this country, and that simply is not. I've talked to FBI agents. That's not what's happening. So I don't know. I don't have insight into what's going on in the bureau, what's going on in the CIA. Although the CIA obviously is focused outside of the country, the FBI inside the country. I just hope that they're devoting the resources needed to do this and not a wild goose chase.

If, in fact, radical white supremacists were the threat, where are the arrests? Where are they? How come they're not being arrested? We don't hear about them. It's just not the case, not the number one threat, by certainly a consensus of opinion of people who do this kind of work. That's not where the threat lies.

QUESTION: Commissioner Kelly, Andrew Milgram. Two questions for you. The first is a policy question related to staffing. You've described a difficult operating environment for officers. It appears with the supplement they're getting from the federal government currently, there may be a wave of early retirement in a force that's already understaffed and under-recruiting. How do you see solving that problem? How do you see it evolving? The second question is could you comment or give us your thoughts on the closing of Rikers or sort of where that decision stands today?

RAYMOND KELLY: Well, you're right. It is a big problem, police leaving the NYPD. Other cities too, but not nearly the largest percentage that we have here. And I'm not certain as to why they're leaving. I thought that the PBA contract that was settled now ten months ago, that actually gets some police officers in their last year close to \$200,000 a year – it's serious money for police officers – would quell that, would stop that from happening. Wrong. It continues. And they've gotten more money, have gotten back pay. They're using that and they're going to other places.

Now, what's interesting is about half of the people that are leaving are leaving with retirement benefits of some sort. The other half have no benefits. They're just leaving. There's something called vested interest. If you're a police officer for five years, on your 20th anniversary you can get some money. But half of them are just going. So what's going on in the department? What I would do, I would bring in a very reputable firm, like McKinsey and Company, which I did in the NYPD. Have them do the exit interviews, not a police organization. But have them do it. Make some recommendations, how do we address this issue. Is it more money? What's going on?

You know, the issue of too much overtime, that's a legitimate issue. It's expensive to live in New York City, so we have a lot of cops, they live in Suffolk County and Putnam County. So if you're living at Exit 65 on the LIE and you're working a 12-hour tour, and you've got to come back in for another 12-hour tour, I mean, you know, it's unrealistic. And that's one of the stated reasons why people are leaving. At my time, in my tenure, overtime was always an incentive. They all wanted it. Now they don't want it. So I can't say, in my mind, with any certainty why this exodus is ongoing. But I think a big-time consulting firm might be able to tell us.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: And Rikers? He asked about Rikers also.

RAYMOND KELLY: Oh, Rikers, yes. I see no reason to build these four. But, first of all,

the notion is that you close Rikers and you open four borough-based prisons. And that the total universe of prisoners for all four is like 3,500. Totally unrealistic. Now, one of the reasons why they're threatening a federal takeover and one of the reasons why they want to close Rikers was supposedly abuse on the part of the correctional officers.

To me, you want to keep them, if they're abusing people – and I don't know if they are or they aren't – if they're abusing, you want to keep them in one place. You want to be able to watch them. You put lots of cameras in there and sensors and that sort of thing. They're all together. You don't spread out the problem. It's illogical to do that. So I hope they kill the deal. It's a big money transaction and the money can go to other places, as I say, to renovation of Rikers with a high-tech approach.

QUESTION: Hi. So there's, the Priests of Palestine are calling for a mobilization, occupation of the Rockefeller Center at the tree lighting. And this picture has a man with a very large knife. So, to me, as a New York City taxpaying citizen, that's lived here since 1978, regardless of what religion you represent, this is not what I want to see. And I completely understand the protests, but somebody advocating for murder with a knife, what do you do in this situation? And do you know who is organizing knife-wielding protests?

RAYMOND KELLY: Well, I'm not certain that that rises to the level of a crime or offense.

But what we do is, first of all, you have to hope that the intelligence division of the police department has inside information as to who is coming, who are the problem makers, that sort of thing. You're going to have observers on high who will be looking at activity in the crowd.

And as I said before, okay, we want this person arrested, that person arrested. You have to be able to respond, but respond quickly, and be willing to make arrests, which is not always the case these days. If someone is committing a crime, you've got to be able to go in and get them right away. I'm assuming that's what's going to happen. The intelligence division is, I think, very good. David Cohen, who I mentioned before, he's out now about ten years, but he did a good job in structuring it. You know, you watch this individual if, in fact, there is somebody, the picture in there with the knife. You pick him out. Obviously, they're talking about this. They're going to see this poster that you've showed.

QUESTION: Hi. One, my nephew is a sergeant on Highway 1 so I hear stories every week about what they're going through. Two, I sit, on a police foundation. We just bought six mattresses for one of the precincts because the amount of overtime they're doing, they're sleeping in the precinct two to three days a week. I'm curious, your opinion, you mentioned recruitment. I have to say that without the support of politicians, it won't matter, right? No cop wants to join a force, no individual wants to join a force.

What are your thoughts on, I mean we don't want to pick on politicians or the media, but...

RAYMOND KELLY: No, go ahead.

QUESTION: They're the two offenders of what these cops are going through because they highlight everything that cops do wrong, as well as the politicians. I mean isn't the reality of it, no matter what we say in this room, unless you get the political support in the administration – you have a former cop that's our mayor, and we're not seeing that. How does that, when is that turn of event going to occur, I mean where politicians will start to go on TV and advocate for support of the police?

RAYMOND KELLY: Yes, I don't know, if it's politically beneficial. New York doesn't even do that. So you're right. There's a real problem in recruitment. The desire to become a cop has gone way down on the part of young people. That's why I think we need some outside help in taking a look at it. What I'm concerned about is lowering standards, and it can be done in subtle ways. If you're in charge of recruitment, you're going to maybe try to put your finger on the scale, particularly as far as investigations are concerned. If somebody has something in their background that you're concerned about, ah, we'll let he or she go through, that sort of thing.

We know they've already changed the physical requirements, the run or the walk has already been changed. What else has been changed? It's very difficult to find out. The tests, the written test is a joke. It's made to be a joke. Ninety-five percent of the people pass the test. About 20 years ago, they actually had a test to become a police officer that showed a clock, the time on a clock, and the question was what time will it be in 20 minutes? That kind of shows you the mindset of the person...the police force is not making up this test. It's made up by the Department of Personnel for the city. So that's a sort of a sub-rosa concern brewing around with the requirements. You know, I'd hate to see that. I think we should try to have standards as high as reasonably possible and not change, not equivocate at all. And whatever the costs are, maybe it'll even out down the road.

VICE CHAIR ROBERT K. STEEL: Well, I think we're going to draw the curtain on the official part of the program now, and we'll do some more questions over lunch with Ray here in the room. But those that joined us on video or Zoom, thank you very much for joining.

You know, I have the privilege of concluding, and I want to do a couple of things. One, you hear from Ray, he's had a partner in all of this. And Veronica is with us today, has been Ray's partner in everything. And it's great to see you and have you with us always.
(Applause)

You know, I was talking to a good friend this morning, and we were talking about challenges in the world. And he was talking about leadership and about how to solve them. He said the two elements for solving hard issues are leadership and discipline. So if you want to think about Ray Kelly and why he is successful, is he went through all the different things he did. And for me, those two words had resonance every day. And so I just want to say to Ray, thank you for your public service. A lot of people are alive because of the fall in the murder rate. And a lot of lives are much better because of that. And we all are appreciative because we all love New York. And what you've done here and other places is really, really special. So thank you for your time today. (Applause)