

Spitzer: Throw MTA boss from the train

By DAVID SEIFMAN
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In a stinging attack on MTA management, gubernatorial front-runner Eliot Spitzer said he's baffled that subways here lack surveillance cameras five years after 9/11 and a year after terrorists bombed London's trains.

"How can it be we don't yet have cameras in subway stations?" Spitzer asked in a meeting with Post editors and reporters. "It's simple. It's legal. It's smart. I just don't understand how we can fail to do things like that."

Spitzer cited the effectiveness of the cameras in identifying the London train bombers.

Spitzer made it clear that MTA chairman Peter Kalikow — who has vowed to stay on until his term ends in 2012 — will be shown the door one way or another.

"I don't have anything against Peter," said Spitzer. "He's a nice guy. I don't think he has managed the MTA the way I would have."

For the first time, Spitzer also named an MTA chief he admires — Richard Ravitch, who ran the agency from 1979 to 1983.



Eliot's agenda

- Get rid of MTA head Peter Kalikow (left)
- Put closed-circuit cameras in subway stations
- No tax hikes
- Major reform of state government within 60 days
- Lock in lease commitments before building Freedom Tower
- Examine consolidation of OTB and the New York Racing Association

Eliot Spitzer speaks to The Post's editorial board yesterday.

"Richard Ravitch is the sort of guy I look to as someone who is a genuine expert, a manager who understood transportation. He is the sort of model," said Spitzer.

With a wide lead in all the polls, Spitzer set out an ambitious vision for reforming Albany if he gets to trade in his state attorney general's job for that of governor.

The MTA had no immediate comment.

Spitzer also said he hopes to win by a sizable margin in order to come in with a sweeping mandate to overhaul Albany.

"I think you will see fundamental change within 30 or 60 days," Spitzer pledged. "A new governor has the capacity to say the public has spoken. If I can win by a margin that is meaningful, then I will be able to do that."

The Democratic hopeful also said the 2.6 million-square-foot Freedom Tower at Ground Zero has "unique problems" and the state should lock in lease commitments for 1 million square feet before proceeding.

"If they have the million square feet, they're going to move it forward and I'll make sure it gets

built on schedule. If they don't have the million square feet, then you go back and revisit the premise."

Gov. Pataki said he is confident that goal is achievable before a mid-September deadline.

Spitzer advocated building Towers 2, 3 and 4 at Ground Zero as quickly as possible, with or without commitments from potential tenants.

Spitzer said he has little faith in those deciding the fate of the New York Racing Association, which has a franchise coming up for renewal next August.

"These are the very folks who for years sat there when a lot of people suspected NYRA was mishandling the whole structure," said Spitzer.

"So this is one where I would like to be involved in making the decision next year."

While reserving all his options, Spitzer said a possible merger of NYRA and OTB "has superficial appeal to me."

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