Good afternoon members of the media, and the people of Bermuda
Thank you for your attendance here today and your attention.

During Thursday’s press conference in this very room, I informed the public about a cyber-attack that has impacted Government services.

I know that this news was concerning for many in the community, and I want to reassure all that there has been a non-stop effort by the Government to identify what happened, how it happened and how to resume business and normal operations safely.

It is clear that this was a sophisticated and deliberate attack that has resulted in unprecedented stress on basic government systems. There has been an impact on the delivery of services to the public, and the work is ongoing to establish a safe restoration of those systems which have been impacted.

It is important to note that the nature of this attack and the work that is underway to address its impact is a matter of national security. As such, there will be some information I am unable to divulge at this time.

An infiltration of government systems occurred late on Wednesday evening and was first noticed by officers early on Thursday morning.
The Bermuda Police Service and the government’s Department of Information and Digital Technology immediately began to assess the nature of the attack. They made every effort to isolate the point at which the infiltration occurred and contain it.

Once it became clear that this was not any ordinary interruption to the network, in accordance with best practice, all Government network users were immediately directed to disconnect and shut down all devices connected to the network. The Government network was then shut down to provide the best chances for recovery and mitigate the risk of further incursion.

By early Thursday evening, and having assessed the scope of the attack and its sophistication, in concert with the Cabinet, I directed the engagement of specialist assistance to support the local efforts. There has been no shortage of offers of assistance from the private sector, which has been gratefully received where it can be used. I wish to thank private sector partners who have so willingly offered to come to the assistance of Government of Bermuda.

Concurrent with the restoration effort, work has been accelerated on deploying an enhanced network within the Government with enhanced security. For existing systems that have not been impacted, the aim is to restore them safely with added and enhanced protections. This will assist in standing up government services and providing access to those services for the public.

Since Thursday, there have been four meetings of the full Cabinet, and the Cabinet Committee on Cybersecurity has met as required. All meetings were held to receive updates on this event, fully understand its implications, and provide the necessary approvals for the work that must be done to restore our systems.

Additionally, Her Excellency the Governor this morning chaired a meeting of the Governor’s Council at which myself, the Attorney-General, the Minister of National Security, and the Minister for Tourism and the Cabinet Office attended to discuss the latest issues with the Governor and how we can continue to work collaboratively in the effort to address this attack. The Public Service Executive, led by the Acting Head of the Public Service, has met regularly and is leading efforts to continue delivering critical public services to the people of Bermuda.
The Ministry of Finance team is also working to ensure that just as weekly paid employees received salaries and wages on Friday, monthly paid employees will likewise be paid at the end of this week as scheduled.
Since opening for business today, we continued to assess the delivery of public services and will continue to issue updates for the benefit of the public. I am pleased to note that critical areas like transport, education and the hospital are operating without interruption, providing service to the community as usual.

The restoration effort is fully underway, and we are working on putting out a timeline that persons can follow that will be used to get our systems back online safely. I have been in contact with the Leader of the Opposition and other key stakeholders and will provide briefings to ensure there is a collective understanding of this situation and the effort underway to address it.

The next several days will be critical in managing the recovery and restoration work. No resource is being spared, and at the core of our efforts is the safety and security of the systems on which Bermudians and residents rely.

I am satisfied that we will get to that point based on the expert assistance we have and the dedication already being displayed by all individuals on the frontlines.

In closing, let me address the issue of my travel to Washington, DC, on Thursday. Government leadership is not just about the moment but also consistently having an eye on the future.

The meetings that were confirmed in Washington DC had taken, in some instances, months of engagement to secure. Direct interaction with key US legislators and key members of their staff is difficult to secure at the best of times, and I determined that keeping those meetings, as well as a discussion to advance foreign direct investment in Bermuda, was necessary.

Make no mistake, though may not have been physically present on the island on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, those days were spent fully connected to issues here at home.

It may make for good political sport to paint this trip as something other than what it really was, but that should not overshadow the ongoing efforts by the Government of Bermuda to address this very serious matter.
Let me again commend the dedication of Public Officers, all of whom have worked throughout the weekend the support of our Union partners, the private sector and local banks who are working with us so that we can continue to deliver for the people of Bermuda.

I again thank the public for your continued patience and understanding, and we will ensure you are kept up to date on the government’s restoration efforts.

Before I go to questions, it may be as I said political sport, but make no mistake the Government of Bermuda was attacked. Not the PLP the Government and we are responding as the Government. I hope we can make sure we focus on the issues that matter to the people of Bermuda.