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I have today, October 7, 1997, tendered my resignation to the Taoiseach from the Government and from my position as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

At this time with our Government about to enter into historic talks on behalf of our people on the future of our island, and with the major challenges we face in Europe, I believe that the holder of my office must be allowed the opportunity of giving total focus to these most pressing issues and should not be subject to distractions from any other quarter.

The ongoing public controversy which confronts me does not afford me this opportunity.

I have also decided to resign my seat as a member of Dail Eireann. In all, my father and I have been honoured to represent the people of North County Dublin in the Dail for fifty-three years, twenty-four by myself. I would like to thank the people of North County Dublin for their loyalty and support throughout those years and to thank them particularly for their warm support in these more recent times.

During my career in public service, I have tried to serve my constituents and country to the best of my ability in the many offices I have been honoured to hold. I want to thank all the officials in the public service with whom I have worked for their cooperation and loyalty.

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I want to clearly restate that I have done nothing wrong and that I look forward to fully cooperating with any investigation. Despite my inclination to face down these ongoing personal attacks, I feel that I can no longer justify this as being helpful to the Government on a political level. On a personal level, I have a duty to protect my wife and family.

I want to wish the Taoiseach and the Government every success in their future endeavours for the people and the country.

Ends