The Turkish government and media have stirred up nationalist passions against Mr. Ocalan. If the Turkish government and media fail in their effort to convince Mr. Ocalan and the threat to hang him is carried out, the result would be disastrous for all the people of the region. Yet interestingly enough, the trial of Mr. Ocalan has created a potentially positive and long overdue opening towards reconciliation between the Turkish and Kurdish peoples.

Standing in the dock at his show trial, Mr. Ocalan made a brave plea for a negotiated, democratic solution to the Kurdish question. Mr. Ocalan's organization, the Kurdish workers' party known as the PKK, has announced its support for Mr. Ocalan's peace offer. While the media attention that the trial is attracting, putting the Kurdish issue in the spotlight to an almost unprecedented degree, Turkey could vastly improve its international standing by simply agreeing to begin negotiating with the Kurds, both in terms of the conditions precedent to its admission to the European Union, so far a failed enterprise. At the same time, Turkey has put itself into. Turkey is a member of NATO and has sought membership in the European Union, so far without success. In the words of the New York Times editorial, "Turkey's Kurdish Opening," which begins with these words: "Turkey may have a once in a generation opening to treat its national cancer, the problem of its aggrieved Turkish minority."

The editorial in the Post, a paper that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement, suggests an unprecedented degree that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement. The editorial in the Post, a paper that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement, suggests an unprecedented degree that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement. The editorial in the Post, a paper that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement, suggests an unprecedented degree that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement. The editorial in the Post, a paper that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement, suggests an unprecedented degree that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement. The editorial in the Post, a paper that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement, suggests an unprecedented degree that has previously shown sympathy to the Kurdish movement.

An article in the Sunday edition of the New York Times suggests that if the Turkish government were to offer Mr. Ocalan and the Kurds a path to peace insisting that it will not negotiate with him, the trial might be the first step in our efforts to press Turkey to enter into negotiations to achieve a political solution to this tragic struggle.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ocalan made several previous cease-fire offers prior to his arrest—all of which were summarily rejected by the Turkish government and military officials. An article in the New York Times further describes the hardline regime refuses to give in.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to encourage the US Government to constructively move off the crisis in Turkey, my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and I, are circulating a letter this week asking our colleagues to sign a letter to President Clinton urging his intervention to implore that the authorities show some basic fairness in treating Mr. Ocalan and to spare his life. Seeking a fair trial for Mr. Ocalan should be the first step in our efforts to press Turkey to enter into negotiations to achieve a political solution to this tragic struggle.

Mr. Ocalan and his Kurdish organization have offered an olive branch to the Turkish government. It would be both the decent and the smart thing to do for Turkey to accept this good faith offer and to embark on the path of peace.

In many instances, the Turkish political and military establishment is a long way from making this major leap. Last Friday's release of the Turkish's best known human rights advocate, Akin Birdal, entered prison to serve a 9½ month sentence for giving speeches judged subversive.

What was his subversive activity? Mr. Birdal, chairman of the Human Rights Association, has repeatedly urged the Turkish state to reach a peaceful settlement with Kurdish rebels. Now, as the article reports, such statements constitute support for terrorism under Turkish law. This same law has recently been used to convict two journalists, a university professor and an aide to Mr. Birdal. While some brave Turks, including the country's top judge, have called for repeal of the law, the hardline regime refuses to give in.

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