

Chairman of BMC Executive Board Ethem SANCAK:

“The Two Wings of the Asian Eagle, Turkey and China”*



Mr. Sancak graduated from Istanbul University, the Faculty of Business in 1976. He worked as a journalist between 1976 and 1978. He served as the representative for the southeastern and eastern regions of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Turkey and also the Diyarbakır Province Head of the Party. He later ventured into the business world and founded Es Pharmaceutical Warehouse in 1978 and Esko Perfumery in 1989, Hedef Pharmaceutical Warehouse in 1993 and later bought BMC, a manufacturer of truck, bus and military vehicle. He was selected “Business Manager of the Year” in 2001 and “Entrepreneur of the Year” in 2005. He was granted an award of “National Sovereignty Outstanding Service and Honor Award” by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. He served the Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Wholesalers Association of Turkey between 2004 and 2010. He is currently the Vice Chairman of Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, member of the Board of Directors of Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Art, member of the Advisory Board of Okan University.

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**Ethem Sancak (Chairman of BMC Executive Board),
answers the questions of Adnan Akfırat, Chairman of the Board of BRIQ.**

Adnan Akfırat: Mr. Ethem Sancak, you are one of the most important businesspersons of Turkey and you possess an intellectual background and depth. We thought that it is important to talk with you as a member of our journal's Advisory Board about the “post-Coronavirus world”. Therefore, we would like to know more about your views. Today, many observers anticipate an economic crisis that may be more destructive than the Great Depression of 1929. How do you see the situation in June 2020? What future awaits Turkey and the world?

Ethem Sancak: First of all, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I congratulate your journal. BRIQ has become a publication that I welcome with excitement and joy. As the world of the future is taking shape, there is a growing need to look for new sideways to instill the thought that will lead this formation.

First, there was the word. Humanity began with a word. If there is no word, development does not occur rationally; otherwise, development does not result in an efficient manner. So, saying the word is the beginning of everything. The new world needs words, too. The word is the greatest characteristic of people. It is a result. What distinguishes humans from other creatures is their ability to think, their ability to reason. Indeed, in our holy book, The Qur'an, Allah makes us understand: “Use your intellect and speak your words.”

Therefore, the BRIQ journal embarked on its publishing journey by dealing with a very important problem. And I am very happy to be a part of it. Besides, this journal will play a really important role in terms of not merely being a local initiative, but also being a medium where actors of the new world (China, Russia, Brazil, Indonesia, Venezuela, etc.) can have a voice, and in terms of preparing the ground for the new world powers to develop themselves through mutual discussion.

A Lot to Say for the New World

The virus revealed that lots of words are to be said for the new world. This is needed now. In our faith, the source of knowledge and the gate of custody is Hz. Ali. Our prophet says, "If I am the city of knowledge, Ali is my door." Therefore, all faiths and sects in our belief system see Ali and Ali's children as the source of knowledge. "The reward (sevap) of one hour of contemplation is equal to the reward of 70 years of prayer," Ali said once. Tefekkür (Contemplation) is an Arabic word, as you may know. It means generating thoughts. They ask, what is this contemplation? He says, it is looking for answers to who I am, where I came from, where I am going. This is exactly where we are now. You need to turn to yourself and ask these questions. This natural disaster was instrumental in seeking answers to these questions.

The East Is the Source of the Word and the Human Thought

Humanity's rise and intellectual journey began in the east. Ancient Indian civilization centered in the Hindu Valley and the system of thought that rose above it and came up to Buddha; ancient Chinese civilization, the great civilization that started with Zen and continued with Confucius; the great civilization of the Middle East and monotheistic religions; they all appeared in this medium. The thought begins therein and spreads throughout the world.

These geographies share several characteristics. They carry the human civilization. If we start the history of civilization with writing, even before, and if we leave out the last 500 years from almost 25 thousand years of human history, civilization has always developed in these geographies. The reason they can carry vibrant civilizations

there is that people in these geographies adopted systems of thought that glorify the human; they are based on the human. Look, in Confucius, the most sacred being is the human. It is the same with Buddha and Prophet Ali. So is with Prophet Muhammad. They are based on humans.

"He is the animal that produces and consumes more than he produces. Man is a wolf to man." They brought a system that monopolizes over worldly pleasures and produces selfishness from it. That's capitalism.

What does this mean? To be at peace with the earth, to be sincere and to love all living things... you know how they say, "we love the created, because of the creator." It exists in all the basic ideas and Eastern philosophy. These are the hallmarks of all great powers and great people who advance humanity. To devote himself to nature and the person next to him, to work for his happiness and to enjoy it, to love the person.

Capitalism: Anti-Civilization

As humanity advances like this, an "anti" rises from the West: capitalism. This is the opposite of the system of thought we are talking about. The ideologues of capitalism are based on the idea that man adores himself and further humiliates man. These ideologues describe the man as: he is the animal that produces and consumes more than he produces. Man is a wolf to man, they say. They brought a system that monopolizes over worldly pleasures and produces selfishness from it. That's capitalism. Since its advent, humanity has never seen both ends meet. The Western system, centered on Western-centrism, created a welfare society only for the West; it built slaugh-



terhouses, and accumulated enormous wealth. But 80 percent of humanity was sentenced to hunger and misery, plundered. During the birth of capitalism, 100 million African people were enslaved and sold to the New Earth as commodities: forced to work on agricultural plantations, becoming a means of production for exploitation...

This system captured almost two third of the world, with the powers it obtained by plundering the world. In response, Chinese, Indian, and Islamic civilizations resisted. The native Americans, the Aztecs, the Incas resisted. But they were enslaved by the wheel of history, the great powers the system generated and the brutality devices these powers eventually produced.

That's how this wheel has been spinning for 500 years. Of course, these 500 years are full of glorious victories of the resistance against this wheel. A lot of heroes came out like Mustafa Kemal, Mao, Sun Yat-sen, Gandhi, Nehru, Patrick Lumumba, Che Guevara.

The Grave Diggers of Capitalism: All Humanity

Over these 500 years, the system, the enemy of humanity born in the West, began to crack. When Marx said, "capitalism produces its grave diggers," he didn't mean just the proletariat working in the factory. We perceived that way for a time. He actually meant all humanity. With

the digital revolution that we have seen recently, there are possibilities that may benefit humanity: communication, being able to communicate, being able to see everything immediately, that is what drives these “gravediggers.” Now people realize that they are deceived by the grave digger created by this capitalism much more quickly.

Of course, it was not with this virus that imperialism began to collapse and new centers of civilization emerged in Asia. These were already in progress. In a sense, the virus was a blessing from Allah, which hastened its emergence. In other words, the USA's massive capitalist system based on looting would collapse anyway. We saw the clues in the 2008 crisis. This crisis was as devastating as the 1929 crisis. But because the forces against the USA were not organized, because there was a lack of communication between them, because of the Western-induced contradictions that divided them and antagonized one another they could not form a union of forces, and capitalism was perceived to be restoring itself. But within capitalism, these fires were already going on. The wheel was broken once. Now, this virus has accelerated it.

Now look, our Eastern Thought System, which scholars call dialectics and attribute it to Marx and Engels: this dialectical thought system actually goes long way back. Division of 1 into 2, carrying the opposite of everything in it... that's in Chinese philosophy. Good and evil are side by side. Yin Yang... even in Chinese language, crisis and opportunity are expressed in the same way. Looking at Indian civilization again, there are rival Gods, Lord Shiva and Brahma, forces of good and evil. In Islam, it is said, “there is a good in every evil and a bad in every good.” This virus may be a disaster, but it carries such good in it. This will be revealed now, the collapse of capitalism will accelerate.

Humanity Has Seen Many Pandemics

Adnan Akfırat: *Is it the collapse of capitalism or imperialism?*

Ethem Sancak: Capitalism has already lost its progressive character since the crisis of 1929. Capitalism had relatively progressive sides against feudalism and slavery, and it also advanced societies in the direction of the development of productive forces. But especially after 1929, it lost its progressive character and went into its special phase, imperialism as Lenin called it, leaving no progressive side. It generated a predatory, imperialist ideology. It became reactionary with its ideology, art, and all its aspects. Because, after all, its fiction is based on the plundering of the majority of humanity. So, when we say capitalism here, we don't imply the period in history when it is progressive. We imply the imperialism phase, and this system was rotten; it has always been destined to collapse. This virus will speed it up.

Now, I am very opposed to the concepts that scare humanity with this virus. Disaster is coming; we're all dead, we're done for good: there is no such thing. Humanity has seen many pandemics. The black plague came and destroyed one



third of humanity. There are many pandemics, and humanity has overcome and outlived all of them. Why hasn't humanity been effective against these outbreaks in the past 100 years?

Because capitalism has antagonized humanity with nature and hindered the development of the immune system. It prevented the development of the immune system with the foods it produced, with fake foods, GMOs, etc., with the poisoned soil and nature destroyed. Now it is going back to its essence. Look, as a result of the pandemic, the black hole in the atmosphere has gone. The poles are being cleaned; the climate is getting better; the seas, nature, and air are being cleaned. Very nice things will come out of this trouble. Humanity will learn very good lessons. You see: prostitution is gone, gambling is gone, alcoholism is gone.

The collapsing Western powers will try to conceal the problem by blaming the emerging powers China, Turkey, Iran, Russia, allegedly covering up the problem. I'm very hopeful, though. This coronavirus crisis will lead to a faster birth of a whole new world. Maybe that's why we'll love Corona in the future.

Adnan Akfirat: *(The virus) does its duty in the unity of the opposites...*

Ethem Sancak: Of course, a lot of people died. These were painful from an emotional point of view. Over a hundred thousand people died. Humans are brothers and sisters in our philosophy. We do not discriminate. When we say the capitalist system, we do not mean the 600 million people already living under capitalism. Almost 550 million of them are our brothers and allies. We cannot become enemies with our American brothers who have experienced the civil war and removed slavery. How do we

become enemies against Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson? These were the heroes of humanity. How can we get angry at George Washington, who beat British imperialism? They were our allies in history.

"Today, 80 percent of the West's wealth is in the hands of 10 percent of its population," the statisticians say. The 100 richest, on the other hand, hold 70% of humanity's wealth. They are our enemies. I mean, the forces that steal and plunder the labor of humanity, and use it against humanity.

Xi Jinping Turns to Mao's Policies

Adnan Akfirat: *How do you evaluate China's position here?*

Ethem Sancak: China stood up. China left Deng's policy of subserviency to capitalism. They returned to Mao's politics under Xi Jinping's leadership. "I will turn China into a country with a social system dominated by moderate prosperity," he says. Beneath all China's current efforts resides this nationalist thought. It is not a nihilistic nationalist view. China says it can form fraternal alliances with other nations similar to itself. This is very important. China was born as a rival to the United States in the world's production and revenue. And now Xi Jinping says, I am ready to share it with humanity. Some say China defends globalism, America has turned to nationalism. This is an illusion. America is trying to save itself, to recover its economy. China says your globalism is about plundering others, mine is about developing together by establishing an equal and fraternal relationship. What is China doing? It is trying to develop African countries. The Americans were going to Africa to plunder their mines, their wealth, to buy their people and sell them as slaves. How is China going to

Africa? China is going to support national development. It does not strangle those countries with financial games. China says, let's produce together, let's win together. This philosophy defines the globalization of China.

Only China and Turkey Have Succeeded

Adnan Akfırat: *Observing the beginning of the pandemic in China, TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD [Turkey's business associations] claimed that Asian economies will be weakened and collapse, that these economies cannot resist the economic crisis, and that the West has recovered itself, and that Turkey should grow by improving relations with the West economically. How do you assess these predictions? You are the former director of TÜSİAD; you know those circles...*

Ethem Sancak: The fact that this pandemic began in China is an illusion. We don't know it. Several scientific circles are conducting investigations and are finding that the first case began in France in December. There is also another report that traces the origin of the virus to Canada. Where did the rumours that the virus started in China first come from? Chinese society is so organized thanks to its system that it quickly noticed the virus. Maybe at the time, this virus was already traveling throughout America, Italy, and France. Even if it started in China, what's it

doing in Brazil's Amazons? How did it get there so fast? In the process, this will come out. In the end, humanity, with the technology it produces, will reveal where this virus originated, and if it is man-made, by whom it was produced.

Why is it called China-virus or Wuhan-virus? Since China is an organized society, they were the first to notice it. They also raised the first alarm in the world. They said: "There is a virus; it kills people and we took measures; you should take your own measures, too." Therefore, they neutralized the virus in a short time, because they took precautionary measures quickly. Even South Korea and Singapore were affected and took precautions because it was close to China in terms of natural geography. So, Asia has taken measures earlier, as it possesses a more organized force. Asiatic Turkey, which gradually assumed its own identity and spirit, also has seen this earlier and taken measures earlier than all the Western societies. So, today the two countries are victorious in the battle against the virus are China and Turkey.

The two powers of the new world, organized and fit, displayed exemplary attitudes and examples of humanity in this regard. They protected their people and others. Famous director Francis Ford Coppola says, "the strategy of the war against the virus exists in the most important Surah of the Qur'an for Muslims." He means Fatiha. He says: the compassionate and the merciful. He says that if we know the Rahman (the compassionate) and Rahim (the merciful), we will overcome it. It expresses love and compassion. Where did this come from? It appeared in China and Turkey. Has it ever happened in America, in the country of that fascist-headed President of Brazil, or Germany? Germany defended itself, but didn't help anyone else.

"Asia has taken appropriate measures earlier, as it possesses a more organized force. Asiatic Turkey, which gradually assumed its own identity and spirit, has also seen this earlier and taken measures earlier than all the Western societies."

Adnan Akfırat: *Do you say that the “strategy of closing the doors” stems from capitalist morality?*

Ethem Sancak: Yes. They just shut their doors. The European Union, the European Brotherhood, the European way of life and culture, they threw it all away. Germany took the lead. Suddenly, seeing the danger, Germany said, I should protect my own Germans, I don't care about the Italians, the Spaniards. With a very selfish approach, of course. Because there is selfishness in their basic thinking systems and their nature. They're so alienated. The selfishness, egocentrism, and capitalist looting have reached their climax. The capitalist Western system, representing a total of 1 billion people, was standing by, plundering 6-7 billion people. Now those people stand up. South America, Asia, China, Iran, Turkey are no longer accepting this situation.

TÜSIAD's Opinion Is Nonsense

Adnan Akfırat: *What does TÜSIAD say about COVID-19? Is a national attitude developing in the economy?*

Ethem Sancak: TÜSIAD's view, “the West will develop, not Asia”, is complete nonsense. Because the way to triumph in this business is (the same as in the economy, war, social relations): The more prepared you are and the better your morale, the faster you will overcome the crisis. Westerners are down in morale, they're actually not prepared; they're bewildered by what they're going to do; they have fallen out with each other. On the other hand, countries such as Turkey, Iran, Russia, and China detected the real problem and have taken appropriate measures. These countries were more prepared to take advantage of this situation in economic construction and development.

In our faith, a saying goes: A Muslim doesn't go through the hole he went through once. There is no longer a Turkish leadership that has sold its soul to the West. The national forces have seen this: we will not look back on these Western looters who have deceived us, no matter what carrots they give us. No more looting like that: Turkey will return, take the carrot that the United States, France, whatever else extends, and be enslaved again. Because we've tried these before.

Even in the pandemic, when people are fearing for their lives, the American government is sending huge amounts of aid to the PYD, which it has created to divide Turkey. Again, the USA does not stand idle about building the terrorist state that will protect and save Israel. They are making moves in the Eastern Mediterranean. They are not giving up on their nature. There is no government in Turkey that will eat these carrots stupidly anymore.

We Return to National Production

Adnan Akfırat: *Is a national attitude developing in the economy?*

Ethem Sancak: Of course! Look, July 15 was a critical battle. On July 15, the Republic of Turkey cleared its bowels. Turkey took huge steps toward becoming a national state. Turkey captured this national spirit with its army, its state, its police, its political parties, and its people. This was what we have long been dreaming of.

The Republic of Turkey now says, “Look, brother, I cannot reset my customs barriers in front of the World Trade Organization and European Union”. Turkey puts 30% customs again. And Turkey also says, if you produce something that substitutes for imported products, all the resources of the state are at your disposal. Three public banks have announced the largest loan

agreement in history. This is based on the idea of supporting national production. This is a terrific event. This is a serious development. What we haven't been able to do for 80 years, what Mustafa Kemal tried to do, what national leaders tried to do from time to time, and what Demirel tried to do, is to return to national production, which was always interrupted by coups, and today the Republic of Turkey, which cleanses from within those who have sold their souls, is doing so.

We Must Unite With the New World

Adnan Akfırat: *What do you think Turkey needs to do first in the face of changing world balances?*

Ethem Sancak: What Turkey is going to do now is to build alliances with the actors of the new world very quickly. The Republic of Turkey should form alliances with China, Russia, Iran, Indonesia, India, Korea, North Korea, Maduro, Argentina, alliances with the oppressed, like Mustafa Kemal envisioned at the beginning of the 20th Century, as the representative of the oppressed nations. Forming such alliances, Turkey has a great future ahead of it. As such, Turkey can become one of the top 5-6 countries that will shape the world.

“If Turkey and China can clap their wings in harmony, other powers will join in. The Asian Eagle takes off and will defeat America’s vultures”.

To defeat America’s imperialist vultures, the Asian eagle must take off. China, the eastern wing of the Asian Eagle, is very prepared. It is ready with its new system, which comes from its traditional system of thinking. Now it is time for Anatolia

and Turkey, the western wing of Asia, the land of Mustafa Kemal, to act. Turkey will be prepared quickly, and if these two complementary forces can clap their wings in harmony, other forces will join in. The Asian Eagle takes off and will defeat America’s vultures. That’s the gist of it. This is going to happen. That’s the way history goes. Because humanity has always moved forward.



So I’m very optimistic. First of all, I am optimistic about the development of humanity. Secondly, capitalism is in the throes of death. I look optimistic to the end of imperialism, which is nearby. This will pave the way for the new world to make an alliance that will bring this end. The least damaged by this virus is Asia. China has recovered. Even Iran has recovered. Even though it looks like the most unrecoverable due to America’s pressure and embargo. This was challenging for Iran, because America has flown at it. The USA was trying to overthrow the resisting Persian bravery. Thanks to God, the Iranians

have also surpassed the threat. Turkey has, too. And Russia is in the recovery process and it will succeed. China is already helping; we will help too. China will also help us by sending tourists.

Our Tourism Will Develop

Adnan Akfırat: *We have many reasons to look at the developments with optimism and hope.*

Ethem Sancak: Yes. For example, I think we will be the heart of world tourism in the next 3-4 months because of the reputation and climate that we have created during the pandemic. Think of yourself as a German, French, Swedish, British, Russian citizen. You want to go on vacation. Which is the safest country in the region? Of course, Turkey. Its nature is most appropriate; Turkey has the longest tourism season. In other words, we will double the 50 million tourists we received last year only in 4 months. Because they have nowhere else to go. Perhaps some would ban their own citizens from going to Turkey because of their hostility toward Turkey. But how long will they be able to ban it? Germany has said to its citizens that you can go here and there but do not go to Turkey. Will the German citizen go to Spain, Italy, Greece, to the heart of the danger? Or are they going to Turkey? They will come to Turkey. In other words, German citizens cannot give up Alanya, Russian citizens cannot give up Antalya, British citizens cannot give up Bodrum and Fethiye. Tourism is an important sector of our economy. I think our tourism will revive tremendously.

Taking advantage of this pandemic, Turkey provides great agricultural support in food production, too. We will become an agricultural powerhouse. Our machinery and equipment industry will be supported. There is a national movement and therefore I am very optimistic. The future is ours.

What Measures Has BMC Taken?

Adnan Akfırat: *How has this pandemic affected BMC?*

Ethem Sancak: Since we are a defense industry company, we said we will not put any of our employees on the street at the beginning of the process. We promised that we're not going to put any of them in danger on job or health matters. We also have to continue producing. Because we're a defense industry company. We serve the purpose of the Turkish Armed Forces. Maybe there is a pandemic, but our enemies other than the pandemic do not sleep. We have to continue our production. We have taken the necessary measures and continued working. We didn't put even one employee at the door. We had some workers who got virus treatment and we have helped them (even their relatives who were infected) by paying for the health expenses. Thank God, we didn't suffer any casualties. Over 4 thousand employees have never had even a nosebleed. We have no casualties. We did not underpay anyone's salary. We've cut the board's salaries by 20%, but we haven't cut anyone's salary below our board. We have completed the remaining amount of what the government gave us, and we have not left our employees without a job. We kept them healthy.

Our Lives Are No More Precious Than the Lives of Our Soldiers

Adnan Akfırat: *How do you manage the administrative affairs of your offices?*

Ethem Sancak: Fewer people came to the offices. But we continued working from home. Our hot production employees, the people at the workbench, took the necessary precautions and worked. Our union is the Turkish Metal Union. A national union, we cooperated with them very well.



Our chief of General Staff called me and said, “Ethem, look, the water sleeps, but the enemy doesn't sleep. Do not interrupt production.” I said: “Commander, our lives are no more precious than the soldiers in operation Peace Spring”

The President of the Turkish Metal Union has been a worker of BMC for 25 years. We joined hands with the Union, and together in these three months we carried out serious production. In the second week since the pandemic began, our chief of General staff called me and said, “Ethem, look, the water sleeps, but the enemy doesn't sleep. Do not interrupt produc-

tion.” I said: “Commander, our lives are no more precious than the soldiers in operation Peace Spring”. Our soldiers are on duty there, and we will produce here. This is our role. This is a national cause; there is also to die for this cause. While our young people, who are 22-23 years old, are resisting in Euphrates Shield, in Mavi Vatan (The Blue Homeland) and Libya, can we say that we have a pandemic and let's not get anything produced?

We keep up with this understanding. Everyone is satisfied with BMC. We are happy, too. Our production continues. Our national engine works, tank works, gun works continue. We did not take any break. It goes as we planned. We said to the employees that we do not want the expected 20%

profit as patronage for 3 months. Let our cash flow run smoothly, let our employees receive their salaries, make production, take our raw materials, and protect our suppliers. We do not want profit. We removed 20% profit in the budget we put at the beginning of this year. We already have a contract with the employees as follows: We will now account for all of what BMC produces as value. I gather our employees together and account every six months. And I say to them that one-third of the produced profit is your right before your sweat dries, it will be given to you; one-third is the right of our state, we will pay as tax; we said one third is the right of the business owner. We are also working with our union, trying a new system. No matter what profit you make, there is no such thing as you keep all profit for yourself. Whatever profit is made, premiums etc. come accordingly. Our employees are also very satisfied.

“We will now account for all of what BMC produces as value. I gather our employees together and account every six months. And I say to them that one-third of the produced profit is your right before your sweat dries”

Last week, I told our staff by teleconference: I want your family to attend the conference from your location. Almost everyone virtually attended. Every employee of BMC sees BMC as his or her own, not only Ethem Sancak's. This is a national company, and I'm a partner here. It's the truth. It's going so well, and it's going to get even better. Because we have stepped into international marketing, too.

Our products are also needed for friendly countries that fight against the looting of imperialism. I'm going to Libya next week. I will identify the needs of the Libyan government, from there I will move to Algeria, Tunisia, from there to Somalia, from there to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. I'm waiting for flights to resume. Our relations with Azerbaijan and Pakistan are already working. Then we'll go with you to China. You know, last time we had more of a diplomatic trip. Now we go for BMC. We'll talk to them about what we can do together.

Adnan Akfirat: On behalf of BRIQ, thank you very much. It was a very fascinating, enlightening, beautiful interview. 🍷