URGENT

To: DR. HENRY KISSINGER  860-927-1198
From: FAREED ZAKARIA

Dear Henry,

This is superb, not just more than I had hoped for but a fascinating meditation that abstracts out the essential elements of soccer. I would not dare to say this is your real expertise but clearly a real passion.

My tweaks are all suggestions. It is brilliant as is. Just have your office email me a final before you leave for Europe. All best,

[Signature]
On June 9, host country Germany will open the competition for the 2006 soccer World Cup by playing Costa Rica, inaugurating a month of football frenzy. For the first two weeks, there will be three matches a day as the thirty-two survivors of a global competition that started three years ago are whittled down to sixteen by playing in eight groups of four. The top two teams [of] each group advance to a sudden-death round, culminating, after some 62 matches, in the final on July 9 in Berlin. Thus each team is guaranteed a minimum of three games, and the ultimate winner must prevail in seven games over the course of a month. Billions around the world will be glued to their television sets when the games are being played; this means early morning hours in Asia for the evening games. Millions will find ways to
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I grew up in Fuerth, a little town in southern Germany, where soccer had the status of football in Green Bay. Soccer in the 1920s and 1930s was played by amateurs, and it happened that Fuerth won the German championship there [for the first] time in a decade. I have not lived in Germany for many more decades than I care to admit, [but] I still follow the fortunes of that club, which has fallen on
hard times in the age of high salaries and has been relegated to the second division. It makes periodic efforts to emerge from this condition but always manages to fall just short of the third place in the standings, which would enable it to advance — thereby guaranteeing the continuation of misery and hope that sustains the typical football fan. (This is true even of Brazilian fans, whose national team wins every third World Cup – a higher number than any other nation – but not satisfactory to its irrepressible and buoyant fans.)

But those fans who go beyond the frenzy evoked by eleven men on each side maneuvering a ball along a 100-meter long field into an opposing goal [see] additional mysteries of the game reveal themselves. For one thing, manipulating a ball by foot for prolonged distances requires an activity analogous to ballet. Especially teams that concentrate on this aspect of the game – like the Brazilians and many South American teams – astonish one with their versatility and
abandon. On the other hand, they sometimes are so infatuated by their artistry that they forget that the purpose of the game is to score goals, and they are sometimes overcome by more elementary and single-minded tactically-oriented teams. This is because only the rarest players — Pelé for Brazil, Maradona for Argentina, Platini for France — can score goals by essentially solitary efforts. For almost all other circumstances, it is teams, not players, which win games. The reductive quality of soccer resides in the almost intellectual penetration with which the best teams move the ball down the field to solve the challenge, which seems so simple but is prone to turn into a riddle: how to get a ball past eleven opponents, with each side moving at high speed, one of whom — the goalie — is permitted to use his hands to intercept the ball. This turns the game into an exercise like a mathematical equation, an ability to find uncovered open space, leading to a position from which
to launch an unimpeded shot on the goal. The great field generals like Zidane or Beckenbauer had the uncanny skill of distributing the ball among their teammates in a manner that seemed inconceivable in the abstract and self-evident in execution. Soccer at its highest level is thus a game of complicated simplicity.

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The practical consequence is that goals are much harder to come by and that defense tends to dominate over offense, at least compared to the situation when I first became acquainted with the game. Teams therefore play first of all not to lose and rarely launch all-out attacks.

[you might note this is an interesting contrast to most other sports than have become more high-scoring over time.]
unless, of course, they find themselves behind. Since the number of points on the field from which a shot on goal has a prospect of leading to a goal is finite, a disciplined defense can occasionally thwart a technically superior team. Thus a superbly coached Greek team defeated a Portuguese team of probably superior individual players in the 2004 European Cup, and a very disciplined German team overcame a marvelous team from the Netherlands in the World Cup of 1974. Similarly, almost every Italian national team over the decades has relied on its tenacious defense to wear down the opponent. These theoretical aspects can be illustrated by looking at the finals of the World Cup over the last twenty-five years. I have attended seven of the last nine and never cease to be mesmerized by their different character[s].

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And it is felt that they forget that the purpose of the game
It is to score goals and they are sometimes overcome by more elementary and tactically oriented teams.

This is because only the recent players can achieve goals - for example, for defeating "Belgium for France" can score goals by essentially solitary efforts. For almost all circumstances, it is less the players which win games. The subjective quality of men resides in the intellectual penetration with the best, which seems more the hall down the field to score the challenge which seems so mighty but is prone to turn even with a noble. How to get a half pass and opponent with each side moving at high speed, one of whom is free - the finale is permitted since his hands to intercept the ball. This turns the focus with an exercise like a mathematical equation, an ability to find "the mathematics" in unexpected open space, instead it a person, from which to launch an unimagined shot into
the goal. The great field generals like Tschirnitz or Beckenbauer had the uncanny skill of distributing the ball among their teammates in a manner that seemed inevitable in its abstract and irresistibly self-evident in execution. Soccer at its highest level is thus a game of implicit and inexplicitly strategic, but it engaged the game of increasing complexity. When I first watched to become a fan, the ten field players were distributed with five attackers, three midfield players, and two defenders. As a result, the attackers usually outnumbered the defenders, especially as the players moved about. They were not as well conditioned as the players on the field in their assigned positions. Thus, there was a radical change in deployment as the place. It started with the midfielders becoming more involved in the field, and the halfbacks remaining in effect as a defensive line. By now, it has evolved into redrawing the attack...
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The 4:4:2 system is among the most widely used. As a practical matter, one of the midfielders is usually assigned the role of libero intended to act as a "sweeper" in defense with repositioning to most threatened positions on the field. Bedonbres gave the role an additional significance by acting as a quarterback in defense and like an attorney in directing. Instead of a football quarterback in the attack, it functions with its utmost ability the speed of modern soccer and the conditioning of the players crucial to a kind of total football which means that whatever the assigned position of the player its task is to reinforce the center of gravity, attack or defense depending on the situation.

The practical consequence is that for all much harder to come by that defense tends to diminish once offense at least compared to the situation when...
I first became acquainted with the game, because the play of all was to lose and rarely turned all and attacks unless of course they found themselves left behind. Since the number of successful field from which a goal card has a high prospect of leading to a goal infinite a disciplined defence can occasionally throw a technically superior team. Thus a reputedly weak Greek team defeated a Spanish team of the 2004 European Cup and a very disciplined German team of the World Cup of 1974, national teams over 25 years to wear down the opponent. These theoretical aspects can be illustrated by the leading at the finals of the World Cup over the last 25 years. I have attended many of the last nine and never cease to be mesmerized by their different characters.
football. Led by its incomparable Pelé, it faced an all-star cast of guest stars from the world's best teams. Literally every now and then, a very good Italy team literally knew how good teams were. The Italian team, playing joint matches usually in international football, gave the opportunity to apply its technical skill in frustrating the opponents with their well-crafted, give-no-quarter defense. But Brazil did not play by its book. It abandoned and tried the tactical formation that entered the game with almost every player in a wild offense literally running to the heater. Brazil was a solid team that wanted the ground. The groundwork had already been laid with the altitude of Serra do Mar and the defending team led by Brazil's semifinal between Italy and Germany. The game was won by the Argentinians in overtime and a penalty. The same with its away team scored. That Brazilian team being depleted by the manager, Brazil triumphed in 1970 and 1974, a psychological shift促进了 the table in 1974.
was elegant and offensive-minded. The finest game of the all-time greats - Cruyff. It had shifted Brazils in the semifinal by the complexity of a man, in the final, with the individualistic, almost. Brazil had to intervene a penalty kick in the second half. The first minutes awarded a penalty kick in the first minute gaining it 1-0 lead. Brazil was a prominent dislike. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon their finely tuned game in favor of an attacking style of defense. The Germans led by Beckenbauer, they changed their everything into an all-out attack successfully by a frustrated home public. This led to a 2:1 lead which Germany defended tenaciously through the next half. But in 1978 the Netherlands found itself once more in a final before a rabid hometown crowd. In an extraordinary game the Dutch tried an Argentine team, playing with Brazilian flair and European skill. But in the last minutes they could not stay the course and
Proceeding out in accordance to the same team, Argentina
a demonstration of the scanty power of forces.

Argentina was reached by the official
staff that official
staff for the guests had arranged with armed exerts.
But for forty-eight hours after the Argentine victory
celebrated with each

Buenos Aires, most personalized,

was to observe for a brief moment the bitterness of
the national field.

In the other games, I always watched France
against
the seven games I watched I saw Brazil, Portugal
and Italy three times each the Netherlands twice.
The only team that better than them meant to France

What happened in the

What a thing the World Cup is

historically match? Well this will be remembered
again? Not surely

in the World Cup above all to England to judge

the national teams it is the

prediction. Expect England to reclaim a place

magin in the role through the recent signing of its star
In the remaining games, the Italian team, which had been hailed as the favorite, emerged as dominant, easily defeating Germany in the final.

In 1990, an unexpected team, a systematic German team, overcame a hotly tipped and uninvited Argentine side. In 1998, an inexperienced French team overcame a Brazil team, which after a brilliant semi-final victory met the Netherlands, to win inexplicably, 2-1.

The most disappointing match for me was the final of the 1994 World Cup, which lost in Pasadena. As honorary chairman of the organizing committee, I had hoped for a life-saving match that might do for American soccer what its teams did for football, lifting football's profile in professional football.

Unfortunately, the game was delayed.
in a penalty shootout after 120 minutes of scoreless tactical maneuvering.

What next?
player Rooney reduces its prospects. This may be the year for an African team to emerge, their lack of technical brilliance has so far been overrated by the media. The United States plays in a very difficult group. It would have to overcome Italy, both established soccer powerhouses, and Egypt. The United States would need to find cohesion and unity. If it goes well, the US team might reach the quarterfinals. The German team has been a mystery. It has a very strong core, with a passionate public support. If it gets on a roll it could go far.

Then there is always Brazil which will guarantee excitement and fans arriving for happiness rather than vengeance by July 9.

But we will know the answer for the summer in 30 games guarantee to make the match for football of even the most fanatic fans - to its extent that their addiction to the game permits it.