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
interrupt their work schedules. The national morale in winners and losers will be affected particularly by the sudden-death elimination games.

I will be one of those viewers and have arranged my schedule to accommodate its necessities. Most viewers would find it difficult to describe what it is about the game that so enthralls the world. They would probably identify it with their passionate adherence to their favorite team – a passion that, in America, is shared only [by] the fanatical adherence of major college football teams.

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 teams. [The former -- dribbling & passing but not scoring -- are surely all tactics & no strategy.]

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.

Over the decades the game has become increasingly strategic: When I first became a fan, the ten field players were distributed as five attackers, three midfield players, and two defenders. As a result the attackers usually outnumbered the defenders – especially as the players were not as well conditioned as today, so they more or less stayed in their assigned positions on the field. Since then a radical change in deployment has taken place. It started with the center midfielder becoming in effect a third defender and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield. By now it has evolved into reducing the forwards to two and deploying the remaining players in various ways,
of which, for illustrative purposes, 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 that is to act as a “sweeper” in defense, charged with reinforcing the most threatened position on the field. Beckenbauer gave this role an additional significance by acting as a sweeper on defense and like an American football quarterback in directing the attack with his subtle passing. Whatever the formation, the speed of modern soccer and the conditioning of the players lead to a kind of total football, which means that, whatever the assigned position of the player, his task is to reinforce the center of gravity, attack or defense, depending on the situation.

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].

My first exposure to the exuberant all-or-nothing style of Brazilian football [was in 1970.] Led by the incomparable Pelé and an
all-star cast of irrepressible virtuosos, the Brazilians overwhelmed a
very good Italian team by a score of 4:1. The Italian team scored
first, which usually in continental football gives it the opportunity to
apply its Machiavellian skill in frustrating the opponent into rash errors
by a give-no-quarter defense. But Brazil did not play by the book. It
abandoned whatever theoretical formation it entered the game with
and threw every player into a wild offense, literally running the Italian
team into the ground. Panache was aided no little by [the] high
altitude of Mexico City, which wore down the defenders [in] the brutal
semifinal between Italy and Germany. [It] was won by the Aggunis
3:2 in overtime and [was] so rough that Beckenbauer, having
dislocated his shoulder, completed the game with his arm in a sling.

While offense triumphed in 1970, a psychological shift helped
turn the tables in 1974 in the game between the Netherlands and
Germany. The Dutch [team] was elegant and offensive-minded,
inspired by one of the all-time greats, Johan Cruyff. It had defeated Brazil in the semifinal by the complexity of its maneuver[s] rather than individual virtuosity. In the final it was awarded a penalty kick in the first minute, giving it a 1:0 lead. It proved a poisoned chalice. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon [its] finely tuned game in favor of an Italian-style defense. The Germans, led by Beckenbauer, thereupon threw everything into an all-out attack, reinforced by a frenzied home public. This led to a 2:1 lead, which Germany defended tenaciously through the second half.

In 1978, the Netherlands found itself once more in a final before a rabid hometown crowd. In an extraordinary game, the Dutch tied an Argentine team playing with Brazilian flair and European killer instinct in the last minute. But as four years earlier, they could not stay the course and lost in overtime to the home team, providing a demonstration of the healing power of soccer. Argentina was wracked
by near-civil war conditions and brutal repression so that official
guests had to move with armed escorts. But for forty-eight hours
after the Argentine victory, Buenos Aires celebrated with such
tumultuous abandon as to observe for a brief moment the bitterness of
the national style. [I don't quite understand this. Why
bitterness?]

In the remaining final, I saw Italy beat Germany in Madrid in
1982. An Italian team that had been lethargic in the early group
matches emerged as dominant in the finals. In 1990, in an uninspired
game a systematic German team overcame a hard-boiled and
uninspired Argentine side. In 1998, an elegant French team overcame
a Brazilian squad which, after a brilliant semifinal victory over the
Netherlands, turned inexplicably lethargic.

The most disappointing match for me was the final of the 1994
World Cup at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. As honorary chairman of the
organizing committee, I had hoped for a high-scoring match that
might do for American soccer what the Giants-Colts football game of 1957 did [by inspiring] the public interest in professional football.

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

Altogether, in the seven games I watched, I saw Brazil, Germany and Italy three times each, the Netherlands and Argentina twice. The only other start went to France.

Will this elite be broadened in the World Cup about to begin?

Not having seen the national teams, I dare not make a prediction. I expect England to reclaim major role, though the recent injury of its star player Rooney reduces its prospects. This may be the year for an African team to emerge; their technical brilliance has so far been thwarted by lack of experience. The United States plays in a very difficult initial group. It would have to overcome Italy and [the] Czech Republic, both established soccer powers, to reach the elimination
round. It if goes that far, the US team might reach the quarterfinals.

The German team has been a mystery. It has an inventive new coach and passionate public support. If it gets on a roll, it could go far. And there is always Brazil, which will guarantee excitement and fans aiming for happiness rather than endurance. We will know the answer by July 9. In the meantime, thirty-two games guarantee to shake the thirst for football of even the most frenetic fans – to the extent that their addiction to the game permits it.
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On June 9, a game for the 1958 World Cup will open the world's premier soccer competition, which will last four weeks and involve 24 teams. The games will be played in the late afternoon in several different locations around the world.

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I will be one of those voices and have arranged my schedule to accommodate it. Most voices would find it difficult to deal with the new world and its needs, but the world is a complex and beautiful one. It will probably identify itself with the passionate adherence to their favorite team—a passion that in America, instead of to the baseball adherents of major college football teams, I grew up in Freiburg, a little town in southern Germany, where I once lived the statues of football in Green Bay. This was played by the Packers in the 20's and 30's over conferences and across Germany, despite the fact that Freiburg was a championship three times in a decade. Although I have not lived in Germany for many more decades than I care to admit, I still follow the fortunes of that club, which has fallen in the age of high point, volume, and intensity on hard times, leaving then relegated to the second division, but making periodic efforts to emerge from this condition and always managing to fall just short of the critical place in the standings which would enable it to advance.
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like the Brazilians,

and many built American teams

astound one with their versatility and abandon.

On the other hand they sometimes are so infatuated by

the spectacle that they forget that the purpose of the fame
is to score goals and they are sometimes overcome by more elementary and tactically oriented teams.

This is because only the recent players - Pelle for Brazil, Tarotball, for Belgium, Ribéry for France - can score goals by essentially solitary efforts. For almost all other circumstances, it is teams and players which win games. The reduction quality of scores resides in the intellectual penetration with the ball, which means more the ball moves the field to solve the challenge, which appears again and again. Each team's element with a middle. How to get a half-space, when opponent is fast - so moving at high speed - one of whom is free. The practice 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 and uncover open space, adapt to a position from which to launch an unexpected shot on the
the goal. The great field generals like Tocanne in
Buckenhauer had the uncanny skill of distributing
the ball among their teammates in a manner that
seemed inevitable in the abstract and inevitably
self-evident in execution. Soccer at its highest level
is thus a game of simplicity, implicitly.

And look back over the decades in
by becoming strategic.

Robert sharpened the game of increasing complexity
when first
not strategy became a fact. 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
more often played
were not as well conditioned as to stay on the field
in their assigned positions twice than a radical change
in deployment has taken place. It started with the
midfield
under itself working, in effect a strict defender
and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield.
By now it has evolved into redrawing the attack.
Footnotes to 1 and displaying the remaining physe
in various ways. Without for illustration purposes
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 "sniper" on defense with releasing
the most threatened positions on the field. Bedonbue
gave this role an additional significance by acting
as a "quarterback" on defense and like an American
in directing. Whether
football quarterback on the attack. It furnishes
the speed of modern soccer and the conditioning of
the playersaceous to a kind of total football which
means that whatever the assigned position of the player
his task it to reinforce the center of gravity, attack or
defense depending on the situation.

The practical consequence is that for all
much harder to score by +, that defense tends to diminish
once offense at least compared to the situations when
I first became acquainted with the game because the play was so fluid, not too fast, and rarely crowded at all.

Teams that play fluidly all meet to lose and rarely found all attacks unless it was too fast for them to finish behind. Since the number of06-009CL0

player field from which a goal could be made was a short of leading to a goal infinite a disciplined defence

an occasional thrust a technically superior team.

Thus a reputedly weak Greek team defeated a formidable team of the world's superior international players in its 2004

European cup and a very disciplined German team

overcame a controversial team from the Netherlands

in the World Cup of 1974. National teams over the decades to now have a high

level of discipline and never seem to be overwhelmed by their superior character.

After 1970 over many past experiences of the continent all-in nothing style of Brazilian
football, led by its incomparable Pelé towards an

all-out attack. The absence of frequent visitors to the Stade de France,
later comes to a very good French
team literally chase a very good team into the

ground by a score of 4:1. The Italian team was

just what usually in international football gives

it the opportunity to apply its technical skill in

frustrating the opponent into such an accuracy

a give-no-quarter defence. But the Brazilians did not

play by the book. It abandoned its tactical

formation and entered the game with and their every

player with a wild offensive literally running the field.

France was a solid
team with the ground. The German

high altitude of Marseille City and defending the

me little by little semifinal between Italy + Germany.

won by the Argentinians in overtime and

the same with its own

that Netherlands being eliminated in the last minute

Win at its own offense triumphed in 1970

elped in a psychological shock France to below in 1974.

Game between the Netherlands and Germany. The Dutch
was elegant and offensive-minded. This quiet game of his all-time greats stunned the world. In the semifinal, the simplicity of his movement in play, rather than the conventional uncertainty. Two in the second half, including a penalty kick in the 70th, was awarded a penalty kick in the 89th minute, gaining it a 1:0 lead. It was a pronounced victory. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon their finely tuned game in favor of an Italian-style defense. The Germans, led by Beckenbauer, chose an attack that was successfully blocked by a powerful home public. This led to a 2:1 lead which Germany defended tenaciously through its entire half. But 1978 the Netherlands found itself once more in a final before a rabid home crowd, in an extraordinary game the Dutch faced an Argentine team playing with Brazilian flair and European style. Unheard of, in the best moments. But after three years earlier, they could not stay its course.
Proceeding next in accordance to the same team, Argentina, a demonstration of the leading power of soccer. It was anticipated near Argentina was named early which was satisfied and that official staff for future guests had to move with armed guards. But for forty-eight hours after the Argentina victory celebrated with much ceremony, the team was allowed to observe for a brief moment the festivities of the national stage. 

In the Allied powers meeting together in the seven games I watched, there was Brazil, France, Argentina, and Italy three times each, the Netherlands twice. The only team that better their initial form in France was England. What happened for the World Cup against these teams in the national teams it is also historically small. Well this list be viewed in the World Cup album. As far as it related to judge, I don't want to make a prediction. I expect England to reclaim a place in the top through the recent signing of its star.
In the remaining games, Italy beat Germany in group in 1982. An Italian team that had been市场的 in the early portion became dominant in its finals. In 1990, an unimpeachable team, a systematically German team overcame a lackluster and unimpeachable Argentine side. In 1998, an eloquent French team overcame a Brazilian equal, which after a brilliant semi-final victory met to the Netherlands seemed inexplicable. But.

The most disappointing match for me was the final of the 1994 World Cup at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. As honorary chairman of its organizing committee, I had hoped for a life-saving match that might do for American soccer what its brains - let's football fame of 1987 which inspired the public interest in professional football.

Unfortunately, the game was decided.
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 outweighed by their passion. The United States, placed in a very difficult group, will need to overcome Italy, both established soccer power, and South Africa. The German team has been a mystery, but a new invention, a new coach and a passionate public suggest it could go far. Then, and this is always Brazil which will generate excitement and fear, arriving for the last two weeks, with the answers to these questions. By July 9, Brazil will know the answer. In the meantime, 632 total games guarantee to make this World Cup football of some of the most dramatic years of its history, and to its extent, the team's ambition and the game's national An