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,

Farrell
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 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 tactically-oriented 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,
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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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challenge which seems impossible but is quite a trifle if

clever. How it get a half raging players off guard

with each side moving at high speed. one of whom

is free - the favourite is permitted to use his hands to

intercept the ball. This turns the game into an exercise

like a mathematical equation, an ability to finish

on an unowned open space, shoot to a position

from which to launch an unexpected shot and its
the goal. The great field generals like Eustace or
Beckenbauer had the uncanny skill of distributing
the ball among their teammates in a manner that
seemed inevitable in its abstract and inexorably
self-evident in execution. Soccer at its highest level
is thus a game of implicated simplicity.

And look how it developed. As the decade in
became strategic,
and the game of increasing complexity
when it first
war strategy became a fact. The ten field players
were distributed with five attackers, three midfield players,
and two defenders. As a result, the attackers normally
outnumbered the defenders — especially as the players
increased as they stayed
on the field
in their assigned positions during the constant changes;
deployment has taken place. It started with the
midfielder
as a halfback, working in effect a strict defensive
and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield.
By now it has evolved into redrawing the attacking
fornwards to and deploying the remaining players in various ways which for illustration purposes the 4-4-2 system is among the most widely used. As a practical matter one of the middlefielders is usually assigned the role of libero meant to act as a "sweeper" in defense but with responsibility to most threatened positions on the field. Bednarski gave this role an additional significance by acting as a quarterback in defense and like an ammun. It's interesting football quarterback on the attack. Its function with its nature pushing the speed of modern soccer and the conditioning of the players causes to a kind of total football which means that whatever the original position of the players his task is to reinforce the center of gravity, attack or defense depending on the situation.

The practical consequence is that fore all much harder to come by that offense tends to diminish once offense at least compared to the situation when
I just became acquainted with the game. Because of the play, just about all met to lose and rarely found all-out attacks unless of course they found themselves at fault. Since the number of forward field from which a goal can be taken is a high prospect of leading to a goal infinite a disciplined defense can occasionally throw a technically superior team.

Thus a supposedly much Greek team defeated a Portuguese team of the notably superior individual players in the European cup and a very disciplined German team overcome a much smaller team from the Netherlands in the World cup of 1974. National team over 24 teams to meet down to 16. These theoretical aspects can be illustrated by the scoring at the finals of the World cup over the last 25 years. There has been never of the last nine and never even to be overshadowed by their different character.

1970 over my foot campaigners, the common all-on nothing style of Brazilian.
football, led by its incomparable Pelé towards an
all-time record of unprecedented victories. The Brazilians
literally came onto a very good Italian
team literally as a very good team into the
final match by a score of 4:1. The Italian team was
just which usually in international football gives
it the opportunity to apply its teamwork skill in
frustrating the opponent who with great accuracy
a give-no-grace defense. But Brazil did not
play by its book. It abandoned its effective tactical
formation, it entered the game with and then every
player with a wild offensive literally running to the
perimeter, an odd
team that was to the ground. Its scenario added to
its higher altitude of Italian city and defending
in the dirty by the semifinal between Italy and Germany.

Beaten by the Argentinian 3:2 in overtime and
that Baez and Ronaldo scored with two goals in
the same match in Rome in a
day that Maradona scoring绝 at the 1986 World Cup
offence triumphed in 1970
helped
a psychological shift between the tables in 1974.

Game between the Netherlands and Germany, the Dutch
was elegant and offensive-minded to be quiet by one of the all-time greats - Cruyff. It had defeated Brazil in the semifinal by the complexity of its movement. To defend in the
rather than the individualistic. But it lacked intensity at the start with a penalty kick in the 9th minute and then another awarded a penalty kick in the first minute gaining a 1:0 lead. It wasn't a promised paradise. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon their finely tuned game in favor of an attacking style of defense. The Germans led by Beckenbauer, who gave them everything into an all-out attack, opportunely by a fengued home public. This led to a 2:1 lead which Germany defended tenaciously through its entire
half. But in 1978 the Netherlands found itself once
more in a final before a rabid hometown crowd.
In an extraordinary game the Dutch tied an Argentinian team playing with Brazilian flair and European
tales riveting in its last minutes. But at the
years earlier, they could not steal its course and
Not in accordance to the same terms, Argentina is demonstrated as the leading power of soccer. At the European Cup, Argentina was reached without uncertainty. That official was that some guests had to move with armed escort. But for forty-eight hours after the Argentine victory, the town was celebrated with music. They were great celebrations, abundant to observe for a short while and the bitterness of the national stage.

In the soccer games, with 11 goals to 1, the men games I watched were Brazil, France, and Italy. Three times each the Netherlands twice. The only team that did not lose was France.

What happened in the World Cup is that it continued to judge the national teams. It has to make a prediction. I expect England to reclaim a place in the top through the recent injury of its star.
In the remaining games, Italy beat Germany in 1982.

An Italian team that had been victorious in the 1980s, was dinner was drawn in the early games, became dominant in the finals.

In 1990, an unorganized team and systematically
German team overcame a lack lashed and
unorganized Argentine team. In 1990, an older
French team overcame a Brazilian equal,
which after a brilliant semi-final victory met

The most disappointing match for

one was the final of the 1994 World Cup, a 3 to 2 loss to
in Pasadena. As honorary chairman of the organizing
committee, I had hoped for a life-saving match
that might do for American soccer what it did for

- US 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 manoeuvring.

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 place in a very difficult

virtually gone. It would have to overcome Italy, both established soccer powers, and host Republic to reach the final. Elimination cannot. If it goes and face the US team tomorrow can lead to a struggle. The German team has been a mystery. It shows incredible

well and a passionate public support. If it pays off a deal it could go far. Then and this is always Brazil which will guarantee excitement and fans

arriving for legitimacy rather than attendance by July 9. But we will know the answer. In the meantime.

$30. Two games guarantee to make the final for football of even the most fantastic fans - to be able to their addiction to the game guests to

