URGENT

To: DR. HENRY KISSINGER  860-927-1198
From: FARREED 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 [The former = dribbling & passing but not scoring are surely all
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
focus resides in the almost intellectual penetration with which the best
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past eleven opponents, with each side moving at high speed, one of
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Over the decades the game has become increasingly strategic:

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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 characters.

My first exposure to the exuberant all-or-nothing style of Brazilian football [was in 1970.] Led by the incomparable Pelé and an
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The most disappointing match for me was the final of the 1994
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Billions will be glued to their television sets when the games are being played—it means early morning in London in Asia for the evening games. For the first two weeks, there will be three matches a day as the 32 survivors of a global competition that started three years ago are reduced down to 8 by playing in pools in four groups of 4. Each of the top two teams in each group advancing to a sudden death round, culminating in the final on July 9 in Berlin. Thus, to 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 will watch in awe to interpret their match schedules. The natural

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- thereby furnishing the mechanics of service and hope that maintains the actual football fans. This is true even if players' fans who realize team wins every third World Cup - about or a higher number than any other nation had, frequently "ill-founded" and satisfying in the short term fans.

But these fans extend beyond the frenzy evoked by eleven men on each with maneuver a ball along a 100-meter long field with an opposing goal additional necessities of the fans reveal themselves. For instance manipulating a ball by foot for prolonged distances requires an activity analogous to hardball throwing. Especially teams that concentrate on the technique of "like the Hungarians introducing the ball" and many built American teams astonish one with their versatility and abandon. On the other hand, they sometimes are so infatuated by activity Their state that they forget that the purpose of the fans
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clearer with a noble. How to get a halfback ahead of opponents

will send rolling at high speed, one of whom

in the final is permitted to use his hands to

intercept the ball. This turns the game into an

equation, like a mathematical equation, an ability to

be found in unposed open space, darting to a position

from which to channel an unimpeded shot to the
the field. The great field generals like Tschirnitz von Beckenhausen had the uncanny skill of distributing the ball among their teammates in a manner that seemed inevitable in the abstract and irrevocably self-evident in execution. Even at its highest level in this a game of complicated simplicity.

And Flackbrock, too, he declared, in his lecture strategic, had discovered the game of increasing complexity. When he first

not strategy became a game, the ten field players

were distributed with five attackers, three midfield players, and five defenders. As a result, the attackers usually

outnumbered the defenders — especially as the players

were not as well conditioned as to stay on the field

in their assigned positions. With a tactical change,
deployment has taken place. It started with the

midfielder becoming in effect a chief defender

and one of the forwards taking his place as midfielder.

By now it has evolved into redeploying the attackers.
Towards this end, deploying the remaining players in various ways 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—better to act as a "smoke" in defense mode while remaining to most threatened positions on the field. Beckenbauer gave this role an additional significance by acting as a "quarterback" on defense and like an American football quarterback on the attack. It's a former change in the speed of modern soccer and the conditioning of the players which is a kind of total football which means that whatever the assigned position of the player (it's task it to refine the center of gravity) attack or defense depending on the situation. The practical consequence is that goals are much harder to come by. 4-4-2 defense tends to diminish some offense at least compared to the situation when
I first became acquainted with the game because the play was of all new to me and rarely landed all and attacks unless of course they found themselves tactically. Since the number of positions field from which a good ball has a high prospect of leading to a goal in finite a disciplined defence can occasionally thrust a technically superior team. Thus a reportedly weak Greek team defeated a French, team of the notably superior individual players in the 2004 European cup and a very disciplined German team overcame a comparatively young, from the Netherlands, squad. The world cup of 1974, national team over its decade to wear down the players. These theoretical aspects can be illustrated by the best play at the finals of the World cup over the last 25 years. They extended never of the best mine and never cease to be mesmerized by their different character.

1970 over my first exposure to the combative all in Nothing style of Brazilian
football, led by its incomparable idol, Pele, toward an all-time record of incomparable victories, the Brazilian team was a very good team in its own right, yet it was outscored by 0-1. The Dutch team was a fine unit, which usually in international football gives the opportunity to apply its outstanding skills in frustrating the opponent with its neat accuracy, a give-and-go, quick defense. But it-Brazil did not play by its book. It abandoned its theoretical formation and entered the game with one of its every players with a wild offense literally running the show. Maracana was a solid team to wilt the Brazil. The Suzanne stadium, prevails high altitude of Brasilia City provided an unexpectedly low battle for semifinal between Italy and Germany. That West Germany having designated its nineteen completed when triumphed offense triumphed in 1970 and a psychological shift France table in 1974. Game between the Netherlands and Germany, the Dutch
was elegant, a defensive-minded 27-game
of the all-time greats – Cruyff. He had defeated
Brazil in the semifinal by the complexity of his movement
to the final
rather than the individual brilliance. 

A penalty kick in the 90th minute was
awarded, a penalty
kick in the first minute gaining it a 1:0 lead. It was
a pointed decision. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon
their finely tuned game in favor of an attacking style
of defense. The Germans led by Beckenbauer
threw everything into an attack, and surprisingly
by a penetrated home goal. This led to a 2:1 lead
which Germany defended tenaciously through its entire
half. 

In 1978, the Netherlands found itself once
more in a final before a rabid hometown crowd.
In an extraordinary game, the Dutch took on Argentina
from playing with Brazilian flair and European
kicks rivaled in its best moments. But after
years earlier, they could not stay the course and
proceeding
left in uncertain to the same term. Argentina
a demonstration of the lacking power of force.

Argentina was reached without any conditions
on that official
day for future guests led to more with armed events
but for forty-eight hours after the Argentine mutiny
celebrated much such

Buenos Aires, over confidant violence, sober

this to observe for a brief moment the bitterness of
the national strife.

In the little groups, across together in

the seven games I watched, I saw Brazil twice

Argentina

and Italy three times each, the Netherlands twice, the

only team mạch

but their discomfort to France

What to expect, the French World Cup elite is

historically strong. Well this will be determined

in the World Cup when the last instant to judge

the national teams it is too late

prediction, expect England to reclaim a place

major in the role through the recent signing of its star
In the remaining games,

and Italy beat Germany in Spain in 1982.

An Italian team that had been hit hard in the

group stage emerged as dominant,

early forced themselves to the finals.

In 1990, an uninvited team, a systematic

german team, overcame a hard-boiled and

uninvited Argentine side. In 1998 an old

French team overcame a Brazilian equal

which after a brilliant semi-final victory met

in the Netherlands proved inexplicablyittellectual.

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 lift-saving match

that might do for American soccer what its friends

- looks football fame of 1984 - 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 overshadowed by those of the United States placed in a very difficult

virtue group. It would have to overcome Italy, both established tennis powers and leading players to reach the quarter-finals. The German team has been a mystery. It has been inconsistent

and 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 endured.

But we will know the answer in the meantime.

& Thirty-two games guarantee to make the Chase for football of even the most frenetic fans - to its extent that their addiction to the game permits it.