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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 enraptalls 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.]
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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

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In the remaining final, I saw Italy beat Germany in Madrid in 1982. An Italian team that had been lethargic in the early group

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This is true even of Brazilian fans where national team wins over every other World Cup - which is of a higher magnitude than any other national team's frequently and regularly satisfied.

But close fans understand the frenzy evoked by eleven men on each side maneuvering a ball along a 100-meter long field with an opposing goal also containing ninetysix of the fans around them.

For many manipulating a ball by foot for prolonged distances requires an activity analogous to basketball.

Especially teams that emphasize this aspect of the game - like the Brazilians - dazzling the ball and many skill American teams - astound one with their versatility and abandon.

On the other hand they sometimes are so infatuated by the artistry that they forget that the purpose of the game...
is to score goals and they are sometimes overcome by more elementary and tactically orientated teams.

This is because only the recent players - Pelé for Brazil, Taradonna for Italy, Puskas for France - can score goals by essentially solitary efforts. For almost all other circumstances it is team play which wins games. The reduction quality

development of score resides in the intellectual penetration with

which teams move the ball down the field to score the
dodge which seems so mighty and is proven to true

clean with a middle. How to get a halfway effect opponent

[with each side moving at high speed] one of whom

is permitted to use his hands to

intercept the ball. This teams the game not as an exercise

like a mathematical equation, an ability to find

uncovered open space, to find a position

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

And look ahead for the decade in strategic table it enjoyed the game of increasing complexity. When first not strategy became a game 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 improved and stayed on the field in their assigned positions. Given then a radical change; deployment has taken place. It started with the

midfielder becoming in effect a third defender

and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield. By now it has evolved into redeploying the attackers.
Towards this end, 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 midfielders is
usually assigned the role of libero intended to act as
a "sneaker" or defensive role with remaining
the most threatened position in the field. Beddembe
gave this role an additional significance by acting
as an offensive defender and also an announcer
in directing. Excellent
football quarterback or the attack. It punishes
the speed of modern games and the conditioning of
the players evolves into a kind of total football which
means that whatever the assigned positions of the players
his 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 dominate
over offense at least compared to the situation when...
I first became acquainted with the game between the play of all met to lose and rarelyJaundice all.

...attacks unless of course they find themselves...

...since the number of good and field from which a good ball is a shot of...

leading to a goal infinite a disciplined defense can occasionally throw a technically superior team.

Thus a reputedly weak Greek team defeated a French team of the game superior individual players in the 2003 European cup and a very disciplined German team overcame a supposedly strong team from the Netherlands. In the World Cup of 1974, national teams over 24 teams to wear down the opposing side...These theoretical aspects can be illustrated by the bowing at the finals of the World cup over the last 25 years. These extended moves of the best minds and never cease to be mesmerized by the different characters.

1970 over many years comprise of the continent all on nothing style of Brazilian...
football led by its incomparable Pelé seemed like the\nall-star of the event in the enthusiasm it expressed to a very\npying Italian team literally never being good team with the\nfrustrated by a score of 4:1. The Italian team was a\nform which usually in international football gives it the\nadvantage to apply its trademarked skill in\nfrustrating the opponent into a well-executed\ngive-me-quadri defence. But the Belgians did not\nplay by the book. It abandoned relatively theoretical\nformation it entered the game with and their every\nplayer into a wild offence literally running the ruler\nPenrose was unused to\nwith the ground. The Belgian attack precisely high altitude of Venice City until returning to\nne little by the semifinal between Italy and Germany.\n\n37:37
\n3.2 in overtime and scored the game with pressure in\n
that backhander leaving electrified its opponents completed\nwhile a major offensive triumphed in 1970\n
in the\n
a psychological shift France the table in 1974 for\n
games between the Netherlands and Germany. The Dutch
was elegant & offensive-minded. The quiet game of
the all-time great - Cruyff. It had affected
Brazil in the semifinals by the opportunity of a manneuver
in the final.

In the final, the Netherlands met Brazil in the extra
penalty kick. In the extra minutes, the Netherlands
awarded a penalty kick in the first minute, gaining it a 1:0 lead. It
was a promised delight. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon
their finely tuned game in favor of an attacking style
offense. The Germans, led by Beckenbauer, threw
themselves into an all-out attack, supported
by a frenzied home public. This led to a 2:1 lead
which Germany defended tenaciously through the entire
half. But 1978 the Netherlands found itself once
more in a final before a rabid home crowd.

In an extraordinary game, the Dutch tried an Argentine
Team playing with Brazilian flair and European
kicks, victorious in its last minutes. But after
years earlier, they could not stage its course and
But in wartime to the home team Argentina, a demonstration of the lasting power of soccer. An attempt to give Argentina more respect and more understanding of their official match for future guests lost its more with armed escort.

But for forty-eight hours after the Argentina victory sanctioned, with each Buenos Aires motor connected to Carretera 99, the to observe for a brief moment the festivities of the national stride.

In the other games I watched, I saw Brazil, France, and Italy three times each and the Netherlands twice. The only team that left their mark on France, what's the meaning for the World Cup? I think the official competition is historically small.

Well this will be remembered in the World Cup about to start. It is hard to judge the national teams it is too soon. I make a prediction. Desperately England to reclaim a place in the role through its recent rise. I hope.
In the remaining games, the new Italy beat Germany in Sweden in 1982.

In 1990, an unexceptional team of West Germany overcame a lackluster and unexceptional Argentine side. In 1998, an elder French team overcame a Brazilian equal which after a blockbuster semi-final victory over Italy, Netherlands turned inexplicably flaccid.

The most disappointing match for me was the final of the 1994 World Cup against the host Brazil 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 Brazil 2007 football finals of 1950 had inspired the public interest in professional football.

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

What was
player Rooney reduces its prospects. This may be the year for an African team to emerge; their lack of technical brilliance have for long been accentuated by their inertia. The United States play in a very difficult group. It would have to overcome Italy, both established senior power, and eventual Republic to reach the final. Eliminations cannot. If it goes at pace the US team may go as far as the quarter finals. The German team has been a mystery. It has been mentioned weak 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 favours arising for happiness rather than endurance by July 9. But we will know the answer in the meantime.

Some forty games guarantee to make the crisis for football of even the most fervent fans - it is clear that their addiction to the game remains. 