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 

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,
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].

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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
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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 1966 World Cup will open the 32-nation competition that started three years ago. RCA, appearing a month of football frenzy around the world, will be glued to their television sets when the games are being played - this means early morning in London for the evening games. For the first two weeks, there will be three matches a day as the tournament of a global competition that started three years ago is reduced down to 16 by playing eight in each of four groups of four, with the top two teams in each group advancing to a sudden death round. Each zone had matches culminating 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. No violence will be permitted on any of the matches. The nations in question and those will be affected particularly by the sudden-death semi-final games.
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But these fans must go beyond the frenzy evoked by eleven men on each side maneuvering a ball along a 100-meter long field with an opposing goal additional necessities of the fanes reveal themselves. For manipulating a ball by foot for prolonged distances requires an ability and expertise in hockiowej. Especially teams that emphasize on the technique of especially teams that concentrate on the technique of "like the Brazilians..."

Only the Shats and many other American teams, astound us with their versatility and observation. On the other hand, they sometimes are so infiltrated by artistic flair that they forget that the purpose of the game...
...to score goals and they are sometimes overcome by more elementary and tactically oriented teams. This is because only the recent players can achieve - Pelle for Brazil, Maradona for Argentina, Pelé for France - can score goals by essentially solitary efforts. For almost all circumstances, it is teams and players which win games. The reducing quality of soccer resides in its intellectual penetration with the best which means move the ball down the field to solve the challenge which seems at times that it is prime time with a Noble. How to get a half pace, throw opponents with fast sides moving at high speed. One of them is to 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 solutions within the unoccupied open space, to lead to a position from which to launch an unanticipated shot on goal.
the goal. The great field generals like Zdaniev or Bekenheuer 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. Even at its highest level is this a game of complicated simplicity.

And Zdaniev’s book for the legends in became strategic. What I find not strategy to become a fan the ten field players were distributed with five attackers, three wingfield players and two 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 twice than a radical change in deployment has taken place. It started with the midfield – becoming in effect a specialist defender and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield. By now it has evolved into redeeming the attackers...
forwards to 2 and deploying its remaining players in various areas. 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 in order to act as a "snake" in defense with responsibility to most threatened positions on the field. Bedemian gave this role an additional significance by acting as a "quarterback on defense" and led an American revolution in directing defense. The modern football quarterback is a "quarterback" in leadership, while the speed of modern games and the conditioning of the players accentuates a kind of total football which means that whatever the assigned position of the player's task is to realign the center of gravity, attack or defense depending on the situation.

The practical consequence is that players much harder to come by that defense tends to diminish once offense at least compared to the situation when
I just became acquainted with the game. Because if you
play just as all men to lose and rarely remain all
out attacks unless of course they find themselves
just behind. Since the number of possible field
from which a goal can be 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 Footballer,
team of the reputedly superior international players in the 2004
European cup and a very disciplined German team
overcame a reputedly strong team from the Netherlands
in the World Cup of 1974. National teams over 15 drives
to wear down the effort. These theoretical aspects can be
illustrated by the bowing at the finals of the World
cup over the last 25 years. These extended rounds
of the last nine and never cease to be remembered
by their different characteristics.
1970 over my first exposure to
the comeback all on nothing style of Brazilian
football, led by its incomparable Pelé, sterling in all the rest of unquestionable virtues. The Brazilians literally came to a very good Italian team literally the very good team with the

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

just as it usually in international football, gave

it the opportunity to apply its skilful wits, in

frustrating the opponent who with tact correctly

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

play by the book. It abandoned its tactics to every

formation, and entered the same with every player with a wild offence literally running the Italian

Penalty was evident
team with the ball. The Brazilians utterly prevailed

high altitude of Paraguayan playing, wing defending?

— we little by little semifinal between Italy and Germany.

won by the Argentinians in overtime and against

the same with four

that Paraguayan having discovered its weakness completely

while triumph of the other completed in 1970

elped

a psychological shift France the table in 1974.

Games between the Netherlands and Germany, the Dutch
was elegant and offensive-minded. It was by one of the all-time greats, Cruyff. It had defeated Brazil in the semifinal by the complexity of its movement in the final rather than the individual skill. But it also included a penalty kick in the second half which was awarded a penalty kick in the first minute gaining it a 1:0 lead. It was a prominent picture. 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 their everything into an all-out attack opportunely by a furtive home public. 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 home crowd.

In an extraordinary game the Dutch tied an Argentine team playing with Brazilian flair and European battle instinct in the last moments. But after many years earlier, they could not stage the course and
proceeding
first in overtures to the home team. Argentina's
a demonstration of the leading power of soccer.

Argentina was reputed difficult to understand.
not official
host for nice guests had in more with armed events

But for forty-eight hours after the Argentine victory
celebrated with end.

Buenos Aires mostly went the streets on the day.

wait to observe for a brief moment the celebrations of
the national stade.

In the end, Germany

the seven games I watched. I saw Brazil, France,
Argentina,

and Italy three times each. The Netherlands twice. The
only team that

couldn't stand amongst France

\[ \text{What a disappointment for the} \]

\[ \text{What a test the World Cup} \]

historically match. \[ \text{What a shock} \]

the World Cup about to left it. Indeed to judge

the national teams it is to see

prediction. I suspect England to reclain a place

major in the world through the recent signing of its star
In the remaining pages,

and Italy beat Germany in Spain in 1982. An Italian team that had been hitting on the

Young Whitney emerged as dominant early format became dominant in its finals.

In 1990 an uninvited genome systematically

German team overcome a hard-boiled and

uninvited Argentine-based. In 1998 an early

French team overcome a Brazilian equal

which after a buildup semi-final victory over

The most disappointing match for

one was the final of the 1994 match was at The Rose Bowl

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 friend,

- lets football genome of 1954 which inspired the

public interest in professional football.

Unfortunately this game was decidedly
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 treated lightly. The United States place is in a very difficult group. It would have to overpower both established soccer powers and legal republics to reach the final. Elimination cannot. If it goes out far, the US team is not

quarter round to officials. The German team has been a mystery. It has not invented ball and a passionate public support.

If it gets in a half it could go far. Then and this is always Brazil which will guarantee excitement and fans
amazing for happenings rather than endures. By July 9. But we will know the answer for the meantime.

31 Twenty five games guarantee to shake the lists for football of even the most fanatic fans. It is unclear that their addiction to the same permits it.