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 tactics and 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 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.

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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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technically superior team. Thus a superbly coached Greek team
defeated a Portuguese team of probably superior individual players in
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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
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Especially teams that concentrate on this aspect of the game, like the Brazilians, are the most admired and many built American teams are astonished with their versatility and ability. On the other hand, they sometimes are as infatuated by the artistry. But they forget that the purpose of the game.
is to score goals and they are sometimes overcome by more elementary & tactically oriented teams.

This is because only the recent players can achieve - Pelle for Brazil, Tarabara for Japan, Pelé for France - can score goals by essentially solitary efforts. For almost all other circumstances it is teams and players which win games. The reductionist quality of soccer resides in the intellectual penetration with the ball which seems more the will to score the challenge which seems so mighty that it seems to turn with a smile. How to get a halfpass to seem opponent [with each side moving at high speed] one of whom 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 an uncovered open space, not to a question from which to launch an unexpected shot at the
the ball. The great field generals like Etienne or Bakenhoeve had the uncanny skill of distributing the ball among their teammates in a manner that seemed inevitable in its abstract and irresistibly self-evident in execution. Soccer at its highest level in this a game of unmediated simplicity.

And look how the decades in

became strategic.

Robert designed the game he increasingly complicated.

When I first

strategy to become as far the ten field players

were distributed with five attackers, three mid-field players,

and two defenders. As a result the attackers usually

outnumbered the defenders - especially as the players

more often stayed

were not as well conditioned as to play 24 they kept

on the field

in their assigned positions - since this a radical change;

deployment has taken place. It started with the

midfielder

under the half-mooning in effect a strict defensive

and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield.

By now it has evolved into redeeming the attackers
Forwards to 2 and 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 intended to act as
a "smoother" in defense with remaining
the most threatened positions in the field. Bednarek
gave this role an additional significance by acting
as an offensive defense and 2 as an attacker
in attacking. Wilson
for the quarterback on the attack.
its punishing
the speed of modern senses and the conditioning of
the players leads to a kind of total football which
means that whatever the original 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 for an
much harder to come by that defense tends to dominate
more offense at least compared to the situation when
I first became acquainted with the game because you play fond of all, but to lose and rarely found all and attacks unless of course they find themselves cut behind. Since the number of positions field from which a goal can be a high prospect of leading to a goal infinite a disciplined defense can occasionally throug a technically superior team. Thus a reputedly weak Greek team defeated a Faroe Islands team of the 'notably superior individual players' in the 2004 European cup and a very disciplined German team overcame a comparatively cannon from the Netherlands in the World Cup of 1974. National teams over 24 goals to near down the other. These theoretical aspects can be illustrated by the bowing at the finals of the World Cup over the last 25 years. Here extended never of the last nine and never seem to be encompassed by their different character.

1970 over my first exposure to the command all on Nothing style of Brazilian
football, led by its incomparable Peli, secured an
all-the-credit victory over France, the so-called
‘national team’ of a very good Italian
team. Literally there was a good team with the
ground by a score of 4:1. The Italian team was
just which usually in international football gives
it the opportunity to apply its well-honed skill
in frustrating the opponent with much accuracy
via a give-no-quarter defense. But Brazil did not
play by its book. It abandoned its awkward theoretical
formation and instead entered the game with each and every
player with a wild offense literally running the field.

Penalties were added
to win the ground. The same strategy prevailed
high altitude of Parma city which was/being
in a heatwave. In the semifinal between Italy and Germany,
Penne personnel the Argentinians in overtime and after the same round in a row.

Bucharest venue being determined in 1970. This example offense triumphed in 1970.

Also, a psychological shift France to Table in 1974.

Game between the Netherlands and Germany, The Dutch
was elegant and offensive-minded to chance by one
of the all-time greats — Cruyff. It had defeated
Burjat in the semi-final by the complexity of its movement
in the final, rather than the individual brilliance. About 90 minutes
afterward, in the 90th minute, a penalty kick was awarded and a penalty
kick in the first minute gaining it a 1:0 lead. This was
a pointed salve. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon
their finely tuned game in favor of an Scottish style
offense. The Germans led by Beckenbauer changed
their everything into an all-out attack, supported
by a frustrated home public. This led to a 2:1 lead
which Germany defended tenaciously through its extra
half. By 1978 the Netherlands found itself once
more in a final before a rabid hometown crowd.
In an extraordinary game the Dutch faced an Argentine
Team playing with Brazilian flair and European
ability; both sides in their first minute. But after
years earlier, they could not stay the course and
proceeding
not in accordance to the home team, Argentina
a demonstration of the leading power of soccer.
Humbled, you mention Argentina was mocked lawsuit was unfounded
or that official
shots for fans, guests had to arrive with armed guards
but for forty-eight hours after the Argentina victory
celebrated with noise, drum, and trumpet, it
was to observe for a brief moment and the festivities of
the national stage.

In the amber green, altogether in
the seven games I watched, from Brazil, France,
and Italy three times each, the Netherlands twice, the
only team that
felt their strength to France.
What future meaning for the
What At firm the World Cup elite is
historically entitled. Will this little be discerned
in the World Cup along with the rest, or does it
seen away
the national teams it is lose
the
prediction. I expect England to reclaim a place

in the role through the recent signing of its star
In the remaining games, Italy beat Germany in extra time in 1982.

In Italian teams that had been hit hard in the "strong stability" emerged as dominant early in the 1980s, becoming dominant in the finals.

In 1994, an unimpressed France, a systematically

German team, overcame a lackluster and

unimpressed Argentine-ricch. In 1998 and the

French team, overcame a Brazilian rival

which after a brilliant semi-final victory met

the Netherlands team inexplicably collapsed.

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 life-saving match

that might do for American soccer what it meant

- lots of football fans of 1984 which inspired the

public interest in professional football.

Unfortunately, the game was dimly
in a penalty shootout after 120 minutes of scoreless tactical maneuvering.
player Rooney reduces its prospects. This may be the year for an African team to emerge, their lack of technical brilliance hitherto far has been overrated by the press

The United States places in a very difficult virtual group, it would love to overtake Italy, both established soccer power, and legal, capable to reach the final. Elimination cannot fit them and face the US team.quéntede The German team has been a mystery. It has seen inconsistent form and a passionate public support. If it puts up a fight it could go far. Then and there is always Brazil which will guarantee excitement and fans

arriving for happenings rather then in England by July 9. But we will know the answer for the remaining 30. Twenty games guarantee to make the choice for football of even the most fervent fans - to the extent that their addiction to the game marks it.