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]
ARTICLE

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 — 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...
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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].

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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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
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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
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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.

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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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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
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But these fans go beyond the frenzy evoked by eleven men in each side maneuvering a ball along a 100-meter long field with an opposing goal additional necessities of the game reveal themselves. For mastery manipulating a ball by foot for prolonged distances requires an activity analogous to ballet. This aspect of the game especially teams that concentrate on the technique of — like the Brazilians, broadening the ball and many build American teams — astonish us with their versatility and abandon. On the other hand, they sometimes are so infatuated by artistry they forget that the purpose of the game
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the field. The great field generals like C袒eau or
Barckhauaer had the uncanny skill of distributing
the ball among their teammates in a manne that
allowed inescapable in its abstract and incontro-
sistent self-evident in execution. Success at its highest level
is than a game of complicated simplicity.

And look: today, ten players, the attackers,
strategically
about disengage the game at increasing complicity.

What a shift,
not to strategy became a fan 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
more often played
more not as well conditioned as to stay on the field
in their assigned positions forever than a radical change;
deployment has taken place. It started with the
midfield
under the half-moving in effect a chief defender
and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield.
By now it has evolved into redeploying the attacker.
fornwards to 2 and deploying the remaining players
in various ways. While 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 "sweeper" on defense with reinforcing
the most threatened position on the field. Bedenko
puts the role an additional significance by acting
as a quarterback on defense and like an American
football quarterback on the attack. It combines
the speed of modern soccer and the conditioning of
the players because it is 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 one
much harder to come by as that defense tends to diminish
more offense at least compared to the situation when

I first became acquainted with the game. Because of the play of all not to lose and rarely ventures all-out attacks, unless of course they find themselves left behind. Since the number of players in the field from which a good and best prospect of leading to a goal infinite a disciplined defense can occasionally thrust a technically superior team. Thus a surprisingly weak Dutch team defeated a Portuguese team of the virtually superior international players in the 2004 European cup and a very disciplined German team overcame a very strong team from the Netherlands in the World cup of 1974. Not only on its hi-tech defense to wear down the offense. These theoretical aspects can be illustrated by the bowing of all the finals of the World cup over the last 25 years. Have extended never of the last nine and never cease to be mesmerized by their different characters.

1970 over my first exposure to the compact all on nothing style of Brazil.
football. Led by its incomparable referee, the Dutch team dominated the match. The Dutch team was a very good team with the锋 9 by a score of 4:1. The Italian team was the joint victor in the international football game. It the opportunity to apply its specialized skill in frustrating the opponent into a quick, no-quarter defense. And the Dutch did not play by the book. It abandoned its tactical formation, entered the game with each of their every player in a wild offense, literally running the field. The Dutch team was a solid team with a ground game. The assumptions about their high altitude of tactics only when they went into the 3:2 coming in overtime and running. The same with its victory in a story.

That the Dutch team swung directed its tournaments completed. While the Dutch offense triumphed in 1970. It helped a psychological shift, finishing third in 1974. The game between the Netherlands and Germany, the Dutch
was elegant and offensive-minded. It was one of the all-time greats - Cruyff. It was tactically
Brasil in the semifinal by the complexity of a master
actor on the individual personality. But it was
incredible that in the extra time a penalty kick was awarded. A penalty
touch was given in the first minute, gaining a 1-0 lead. 27 years
later, the greats were back. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon
their finely tuned game in favor of an attacking style.

The Germans, led by Beckenbauer, chased them everywhere with an all-out attack, repulsed
by a ferocious home public. This led to a 2:1 lead
which Germany defended meritoriously through its entire
half. But 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
tact, winning in the last minutes. But after
years earlier, they could not stop its course and
proceeding
but in accordance to the same team. Argentina
a demonstration of the league's power of force.
Chile taking in a
Argentina was lackluster. Lack in commitment
is that official
shot for goal. Guests had not more with armed events.
But for forty-eight hours after the Argentine victory
celebrated with credit
Buenos Aires were unmissable. Dancers, vendors,
first to observe for a brief moment and the betterment of
the national stage.

In the adherence, there altogether in
the seven games I watched. I saw Brazil, France,
Argentina and Italy three times each the Netherlands twice. The
only team that
better than France went to France
What a difference for the
What to there the World Cup elite is
historically worth. Well this will be remembered
again? Not many
in the World Cup abounds. Left it hard to judge
the national teams. It is here
the prediction. Despite England to reclaim a place
major in the role through the recent signing of its star
In the remaining games, Italy beat Germany in Group 1 in 1992.

An Italian team that had been hit hard in the first round emerged as dominant, easily defeating Switzerland in the finals.

In 1993, an unexpected team, a systematic German team, overcame a lackluster and unimpressive Argentine side. In 1998, an old French team overcame a European rival, which, after a brilliant semi-final victory over the Netherlands, seemed inexplicably all-heart.

The most disappointing match for me was the final of the 1994 World Cup, a 0-0 draw with Brazil in Pasadena. As honorary chairman of the organizing committee, I had hoped for a lift-savvy match that might do for American soccer what it brought to the football frenzy of 1984, which inspired the public interest in professional football.

Unfortunately, this game was distinctly
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 has so far been unnoticed by the media.

The United States plays in a very difficult group. It would have to overcome Italy, both established soccer powers, and host Republic. But the United States cannot lose if it plays well. The US team has been a mystery. It has a new manager and a passionate public supporter.

If it plays on a roll, it could go far.

Then there is always Brazil which will guarantee excitement and fans.

Hoping for bigger news rather than endurance of July 9.

But now it's answer for the meantime.

435 two games guarantee to make the dance for football of some the most greeted fans. It's to be seen that their addiction to the game remains at