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
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all-star cast of irrepressible virtuosos, the Brazilians overwhelmed a very good Italian team by a score of 4:1. The Italian team scored first, which usually in continental football gives it the opportunity to apply its Machiavellian skill in frustrating the opponent into rash errors by a give-no-quarter defense. But Brazil did not play by the book. It abandoned whatever theoretical formation it entered the game with and threw every player into a wild offense, literally running the Italian team into the ground. Panache was aided no little by [the] high altitude of Mexico City, which wore down the defenders [in] the brutal semifinal between Italy and Germany. [It] was won by the Agguris 3:2 in overtime and [was] so rough that Beckenbauer, having dislocated his shoulder, completed the game with his arm in a sling.

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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

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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.

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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On June 9, a game for the 1990 World Cup will open the world-class tournament in the movie-going capital of La Paz, the center of a month of football frenzy around the world. Billions will be glued to their television sets when the games are being played. This means early morning in Buenos Aires, Asia for the evening games. For the first time in the history of the World Cup, there will be three matches a day as the 32 nations of the world compete in the 16th edition of this global competition that started three years ago. The matches will be played in eight groups of four, with the top two teams from each group advancing to a sudden-death round to determine the final on July 10 in Berlin. This will guarantee a minimum of six games per team and the ultimate winner must prevail in seven games over the course of a month.

In many ways, this World Cup will be affected by the sudden-death requirements. The nations in the various teams and their roles will be affected particularly by the sudden-death requirements for.
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which teams move the ball down the field to solve the challenge which seems so simple that it proves to turn
clean with a middie. How to get a halfway decent 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 unmarked open space, which is a paucity,

from which to launch an unexpected shot onto
the goal. The great field generals like Utz and von Beckenbauer had the uncanny skill of distributing the ball among their teammates in a manner that seemed inevitable in its abstract and inevitably self-evident in execution. Success at its highest level is thus a game of complicated simplicity.

And tactics made the decade in political, strategic, and sporting terms. The game that was increasing in complexity.

When I first went to America and 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 became more skilled. The attackers were not as well conditioned as to stay on the field in their assigned positions. Thus there was no radical change.

Deployment had taken place. It started with the midfield becoming a half-forward. In effect a second defender and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield. By now it had evolved into redeeming the attackers...
jorments to x 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 meant to act as a "sweeper" on defense while remaining in the most threatened positions on the field. Bednarz gave this role an additional significance by acting as a quarterback on defense and like an American football quarterback on the attack. It enhances the speed of modern games and the conditioning of the players access to a kind of total football which means that whatsoever the assigned positions of the players his task it to reinforce 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 first became acquainted with the game. Because the players if all met to lose and rarely heard all attacks unless of course they found themselves left behind. Since the number of football field from which a goal can be a high prospect of leading to a goal infinite a disciplined defence can occasionally thrust a technically superior team. Thus a supposedly weak Greek team defeated a top-level team of the most capable football players in the 2004 European cup and a very disciplined German team overcome a supposedly strong team from the Netherlands in the World Cup of 1974. National teams over 25 years to near down this offer. These theoretical aspects can be illustrated by the stunning of the finals of the World cup over the last 25 years. There existed never of the last nine and never cease to be remembered by their different characters.

1970 over my foot compare to the continent all in nothing style of Brazilian
football led by its incomparable star, Pelé, and ran all the rest of frequent visitors, the BelgiansJARRIS AVERY, who knew a very good Italian team, literally threw everything into the 

foreground by a score of 9:1. The Italian team was

firm which usually in international football gives

it the opportunity to apply its technical skill in

frustrating the opponent. It was not exactly

a give-no-quarter offensive. But the Belgians did not

play by the book. It abandoned relative theoretical

formation. It entered the game with each and every

player with a wild offense literally running to help

Pelé was a solid team. It was the correct strategy because

high altitude of Venice City which seemed to

give a little by the semifinal between Italy and Germany.

Dortmund won by the decisive 3:2 in overtime and

the same with the same

that Germany having eliminated its smallest competitor

Whistle triumphed offense triumphed in 1970

at a psychological lift France to the top in 1974.

Game between the Netherlands and Germany. The Dutch
was elegant and offensive-minded. It was no surprise to anywhere of the all-time greats - Cruyff or Beckenbauer. At half time, Brazil led by the simplicity of its approach in the final. Rather than the individual brilliance, Brazil turned the game into a penalty kick in the 11th minute and it became awarded a penalty kick in the 11th minute gaining a 1-0 lead. This was a poised defense. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon their finely tuned game in favor of an attacking style. Defending, the Germans led by Beckenbauer, changed their defending into an all-out attack, unexpectedly by a frustrated home public. This led to a 2-1 lead which Germany defended tenaciously throughout the second half. For 1978, the Netherlands found itself once more in a final before a rabid hometown crowd.

In an extraordinary game, the Dutch took on Argentina, a team playing with Brazilian flair and European vitality, in a battle that had its best moments. But after years earlier, they could not stay the course and
Proceeding next in attendance to the same teams, Argentina, a demonstration of the healing power of soccer, 
was neither a panic nor a panic of panic. Argentina was not invited to the match, nor was attendance 
expected for fans. Guests had a more mellow event.

But for forty-eight hours after the Argentina victory, 
celebrations were not as the tumultuous, 
abound to observe for a brief moment and the bitterness of 
the national stage.

In the soccer games, Argentina, Germany, 
France, Brazil, and England

and Italy three times each.

The only team to have defeated France 

have a strong chance to win

What do you mean for the World Cup?

What if France are the World Cup elite?
In the remaining games, Italy beat Germany in Spain in 1982, an Italian team that had been halted in the 1970s by their inability to dominate early in the tournament. In its finals, an unimpressed France, a systematic German team overcome a lack of height and an unimpressed Argentine and in 1998 an ill-prepared French team overcome a Brazilian record which after a battle to reach a final victory to the Netherlands known inexplicably reach.

The most disappointing match for one 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 - lift 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 manoeuvring.

What was
player Rooney reduces its prospects. This may be the year for an African team to emerge, their lack of technical brilliance being far from constants denying it the ordinary.

The United States is in a very difficult situation. It would have to overcome Italy, both established soccer powers, and face the USA's elementary weakness. It's not just the USA's soccer team but a passionate public support. If it gets a goal, it would go far.

Then and there is always Brazil which will guarantee excitement and fans arriving for happiness rather than for sadness by July 9. But as we will know the answer for the meantime, for football of the most important fans - to its extent that their addiction to the game makes it