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
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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.

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].

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
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.

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
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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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But these fans are more beyond the frenzy evoked by eleven men on each side maneuvering a ball along a 100-meter long field with an opposing goal and additional mysteries of the same reveal themselves. For inertia manipulating a ball by foot for prolonged distances requires an activity analogous to handball. This aspect of the game - especially for teams that emphasize on the technique of this sport - like the Brazilians, who have the ball - and many built American teams, astound one with their versatility and abandon.

On the other hand, they sometimes are so fascinated by activity that they forget that the purpose of the game
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This is because only the recent players - Pele for Brazil, Taradella for Argentina, Pelé for France - can score goals by essentially arbitrary efforts. For almost all other circumstances, it is teams and players which win games. The deductive quality of some resides in the intellectual penetration with the best which stems from the ball down the field to solve the challenge which seems so mighty that it preempts time with a sidestep. How to get a ball past a team opponent with each side moving at high speed - one of whom is me - the finish. To preemt his hands to intercept the ball. This turns the game with an exercise like a mathematical equation, an ability to finish an uncovered open space, rocket to a position from which to launch an unexpected shot onto...
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met strategy to become 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 wore out and stayed on the field in their assigned positioning; thus a radical change; deployment has taken place. It started with the midfielders


under the best moving in effect a strict defense and one of the forwards taking his place at midfield. By now it has evolved into redefining the attack.
fowards to 2 and deploying the remaining players
in various assertions which for illustration purposes
the 4:4:2 systems is among the most widely used.
As a practical matter one of the midfielders is
usually assigned the role of liberator ideal to act as
a "winger" in defense more with reinforcing
the most threatened positions on the field. Beddowen
gave the role an additional significance by acting
as quarterback in defense and like an American
in directing, whether
football quarterback on the attack i.e. to punish
the speed of modern soccer and the conditioning of
the players instead 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
defend depending on the situation.
The practical consequence is that for one
much harder to come by that defense tends to diminish
more offense at least compared to the situation when
I first became acquainted with the game, because the play suited all men to lose and rarely caused all
tackles unless of course they found themselves
totally behind. Since the number of footballers field
from which a goal is scored has a high impact of
leading to a goal in infinite discipline. A disciplined
team can occasionally throw a technically superior team.
Thus a supposedly 'weak' Greek team defeated a supposedly
notably superior industrial player in the 2004
European cup and a very disciplined German team
overcame a supposedly 'newcomer' from the Netherlands
in the World cup of 1974. National teams vary in style
to wear down the opposition; theoretical aspects can be
illustrated by the bowing of the finals of the World
cup over the last 25 years. I have conducted many
of the last nine and never cease to be mesmerized
by their different character.

1970 over my first exposure to
the continent all on nothing style of Brazilian,
football, led by its incomparable Pelé and an aide to Britain.
and all the rest of frequent visitors, the Brazilians
literally turned a very good Italian
team literally into a very good team with the
passing by a score of 4:1. The Italian team won
just within usually in international football games,
it is opportunity to apply its Machiavellian skill in
frustrating the opponent and in and nearly
a give-no-quarter defence. But Brazil did not
play by the book. It abandoned its tactics, theoretical
formation, it entered the game with and there every
player with a wild offensive literally running the拉升
Penrose was artist
team to into the ground. The Brazilian attack prevailed
at altitude of 3500 feet with very little air,
and not by the semifinal between Italy and Germany,

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earned by the Argentinians in overtime and
subsequent
the game with its own

that Bockenhauer having dislocated his shoulder completed
White triumphed. France triumphed in 1970

ally in the

a psychological shift France to tables in 1974.

Games between the Netherlands and Germany, the Dutch
was elegant and offensive-minded. The quiet game of the all-time great Cruyff. It had defeated Brazil in the semifinals by the simplicity of its movement. In the final, rather than the individual virtuosity, Brazil had to answer a penalty kick on the 20th minute. The referee awarded a penalty kick in the first minute gaining it a 1:0 lead. It was a personalized battle. For it tempted the Dutch to abandon their finely tuned game in favor of an attack style defense. The Germans led by Beckenbauer turned their everything into an all-out attack successfully by a fanged home public. This led to a 2:1 lead which Germany defended tenaciously 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 tried an Argentine team playing with Brazilian flair and European killer instinct in the best minutes. But after years earlier they could not stop the course and
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proceeding

not in accordance to the same team, Argentina's
administered of the leading power of soccer.

Argentina was ranked highest in world rankings.

But after the match, the team ended up in the
United States, and the United States, despite
this, to observe for a brief moment the kindness of
the national team.

In the wider arena, Argentina is

the team played in France, Brazil, and the

stubbornly match and the Netherlands twice. The

to

last three times and the Netherlands twice. The

The French also went to France

What to write for the

What to focus on should be

historically with it. Well this will be remembered

in the World Cup, above all. I thought to judge

the national team in the

prediction. I expect England to reclaim a place

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

An Italian team that had been ill-fated in the early rounds became dominant in its final.

In 1990, an unexpected force, a systematically prepared team, overcame a last-bought and purchased Argentine side. In 1998, an elderly French team overcame a Brazilian team which, after a brilliant semi-final victory over the Netherlands, seemed inexplicably ill-directed.

The most disappointing match for me was the final of the 1994 World Cup, between Argentina and the USA, which in Pasadena. As honorary chairman of the organizing committee, I had hoped for a lift-saving match that would do for American soccer what its triumphant football prime had done for professional football.

Unfortunately, the game was decided
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 frustrated by futility.

The United States plays in a very difficult virtual group. It would have to overawe Italy, both established soccer powers, and the Republic to reach the final. Weapons count. If it goes well for the US team, many read to re-elect officials. The German team has been a mystery. It has not invented a new and a passionate public support.

If it gets in a role, it could go far. Then, and this is always Brazil, which will guarantee excitement and fear, arriving for happiness rather than endurance.

But we will know the answer in the meantime. Of the 24 games guarantee to make the table for football of even the most fanatic fans. It is unlikely that their addiction to the game permits it.