

It's a small world after all

There is a ride in the Disneyworld theme park in Orlando, Florida called: It's a Small World. Enter a small boat and float past little toy children of a **host** of nationalities singing the catchy tune It's a Small World After All over and over, and in many languages.

Erected in the 1960s, this ride sings the hope that people from all parts of the globe come together. We are one big happy family is the main **gist**. And from the look of things, this is happening.

Globalization, while **abhorred** by some, is bringing us closer together. Raw materials **foraged** in one part of the world are routinely put together in another and consumed in a third. While this equation has gone on for some time, nowadays the country where the consumption is taking place could easily be China.

A new catch-phrase has blossomed: "The shifting power of economies," and with it the understanding that world powers are moving. Who is today's global economic king? The answer depends on what factors are taken into account.

Moreover, given the amount of **intertwining** alliances, you have to wonder the **relevance**. Indian companies are many times subsidiaries of foreign firms – or, increasingly, vice versa. Considering the size of U.S. treasuries held by the Chinese, you can easily ponder who owns America. International unity, once just an ideal, is now a reality.

For China, this is a reason to smile. The country largely avoided the global slowdown and continued to **prosper** even during the depths of the **recessionary** malaise. The **staggering** sums currently invested in public infrastructure – some EUR 62 billion just for urban rail transportation – is enough to make any country blush with envy. Investments into China also continue to top record amounts. Companies everywhere are **tapping into** Chinese flexible production, smart business **acumen** and the growing wealth of its consumers.

For our children, these are exciting times. They will be able to travel abroad faster and easier than we can possibly imagine. Thanks to electronic communications, they will also **reach out** in ways we are only now pioneering. **Unburdened** by antiquated thinking about who is a superpower, they will see the world as dynamic and **approachable**. Now, isn't it a small world after all?

Glossary

abhor	hate, detest
acumen	ability think quickly and make good decisions
approachable	accessible; friendly
forage	search for supplies
gist	the main idea
host	a large number of people or things
intertwining	closely connected
prosper	develop and be successful
reach out	communicate with and show interest in others
recessionary	related to or the cause of a low economic situation
relevance	importance
staggering	extremely great
tap into	to use or take what is needed from something
unburdened	free of worries or problems