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Economic Forum Pushes Mideast Aid and Free-trade Agreements

Afghan President Hamid Karzai appealed at Sharm el-Sheikh for \$50 billion in aid for his country. President Bush praised Karzai and announced his support for the Afghan aid appeal. "This is a great opportunity for the world to help Afghanistan grow and prosper," Bush told the WEF attendees. The agenda of the WEF Sharm el-Sheikh gathering of political, business, and financial elites was aimed at advancing the Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI) announced by the Bush administration in June 2004 before the G-8 Summit. The GMEI, which envisions a carrot-and-stick approach utilizing free-trade agreements, foreign aid, and U.S.-NATO military power to redraw and restructure the Middle East, was first put forward at the 2004 meeting of the secretive Bilderberg Group.





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