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Nigeria rebels attack Shell oil pipelines

Mon Apr 21, 2008 5:14pm BST

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"Mr President, your warships do not intimidate us. Instead they only embolden our resolve in fighting the Goliaths of the world that support injustice," the MEND statement said.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEND complained that Bush had not responded to past requests from it to mediate talks with the Nigerian government.

"The ripple effect of this attack will touch your economy and people one way or the other and (we) hope we now have your attention," the group said.

The U.S. government criticised the disputed Nigerian elections that brought Yar'Adua to power last year, but has since engaged with him. MEND said the U.S. government knew the election had been fraudulent but had "looked the other way".

It said it was still ready to hold peace talks, but would now prefer former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to act as mediator, instead of Bush.

Niger Delta militants often make appeals to the international community but Nigeria has treated the unrest in the delta as an internal matter and so far there have been no international mediators involved in negotiations.

MEND is one of several armed groups who say they are fighting to redress injustice in the impoverished region, where five decades of oil extraction have polluted the land and water, and enriched corrupt politicians.

But crime and militancy are intertwined in the Delta and such groups make big profits from kidnappings for ransom, from a lucrative trade in stolen oil or from providing thugs-for-hire to politicians who use them to steal elections. **Continued...**

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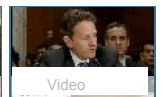
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