



Corps of Engineers admits design failure

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WASHINGTON, April 6 (UPI) -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has taken responsibility for the breach of the 17th Street levee that flooded New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

In the closest thing yet to a "mea culpa," Corps Commander Lt. Gen. Carl Strock told a Senate Appropriations subcommittee a "design failure" led to the disaster, the New Orleans Times-Picayune said.

Strock said the corps neglected to consider the possibility that floodwalls atop the 17th Street Canal levee would lurch away from their footings under significant water pressure and eat away at the earthen barriers below.

"We did not account for that occurring," Strock said. "It could be called a design failure."

Independent forensic engineers probing the levee failures have long suspected that a botched design was at fault. A panel of engineering experts confirmed that suspicion last month in a report which said the "I-wall" design could not withstand the force of the rising water in the canal, triggering the breach.

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