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near major airports and was not a comprehensive look at the health effects. "It might not be true," he said.

He said the government has updated information on the threat to public safety but said he would wait until the Jan. 17 forum to elaborate, in part because he was leaving for Miami on Monday afternoon.

Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the NRC has urged the nation's 103 nuclear reactors to be on high security alert.

Florida Power has added additional security guards at its Crystal River energy complex and installed concrete barriers. The Coast Guard recently established no-trespassing zones in the coastal waters near the plant.

The company drew some criticism when it rejected help from the National Guard, but officials said the measures already in place were adequate.

Next month's meeting is not the first time Diaz has publicly addressed nuclear terrorism. During a talk at the University of Florida on Nov. 17, he said nuclear plants are better secured than any industrial facility. Fears about radiation and cancer, he told the audience, have been hyped.

Some nuclear watchdog groups have been critical of the NRC's actions in recent weeks, suggesting it is too close to the industry.

"They are going into full battle mode," said Tyson Slocum, research director for Public Citizen, a group that is critical of the nuclear industry.

"The NRC all along has been a pretty open advocate of nuclear power, which is kind of an unusual position for a regulatory body to have."

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