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To the Editor, Time Magazine:

With regard to Time Magazine's story of June 12, nuclear power plants are the most heavily defended elements of our civilian infrastructure. Their defenses - at the NRC's direction and at a cost of roughly \$1 billion to the industry - have been upgraded significantly several times since Sept. 11, 2001. Irrespective of other substantive changes, the guard force alone has risen from 5,000 to 8,000, an increase of 60 percent to help deal with the new threat environment.

As I said in the article: "Any terrorist who looks at one of these facilities is going to say, 'This is a hardened target, and I'm not going to have any confidence that I am going to be successful (attacking it).'"

The article unfortunately relies heavily on opinions without an accurate picture of current plant defenses and strategies. The NRC has ordered these plants to take strong defensive measures that make them well prepared to protect the facilities. Moreover, the NRC has worked closely with law enforcement and security agencies at all levels of government in developing protective measures and an integrated response. The story also cites an out-of-date study conducted for other purposes that does not reflect present knowledge of nuclear plant capabilities and accident scenarios. Such scenarios indicate that the potential consequences are orders of magnitude less than described.

The American people should know that these plants are well protected with multiple layers of defenses to ensure safety and security. This agency vigorously monitors plant security to ensure our homeland is well protected.

Nils J. Diaz, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission