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Fear silences Chinese opponents

Jan Wong wrongly implies that little opposition to the Three Gorges Dam exists within China (Taming People China's First Step In Taming River — Dec. 28).

Until the Tiananmen Square massacre, opposition to the project — which would flood 1.2 million people off their land — was widespread and vocal. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a group of more than 400,000 citizens, including eminent bureaucrats, academics and intellectuals, condemned the project because of its astronomical costs and environmental risks — floods, landslides, and earthquakes among them. The project was also denounced by the Ministry of Communications, Sichuan prov-

ince, and prominent citizens, scientists, intellectuals, and artists who published their opposition in books edited by acclaimed journalists Dai Qing, and senior state planning commission officials, Tian Fang and Lin Fang.

Since the massacre, fear of government retaliation has silenced project opponents within China. Chinese citizens outside the country, however, continue the fight. Refused re-entry to his own country because of his political beliefs, Guo Yufang of the Federation for a Democratic China has announced his organization's opposition to the Three Gorges project and is co-plaintiff with Probe International in a case to be heard by the jury of the Second Inter-

national Water Tribunal in Amsterdam in February, 1992.

The defendants extend beyond the government of China. They also include Hydro-Quebec International and British Columbia Hydro International which, together with other Canadian engineering firms, completed a feasibility study for the dam that has been discredited as biased, full of inconsistencies, and lacking in careful, thorough engineering analysis. The Canadian government, which provided \$14-million to produce this green light study, is also charged.

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