

athletes in the NBA. That is because he was threatening not only the powers that be in China but the cash cow that China represents for American business, including professional basketball. China's government may be red, but its money is green, and plenty of people are willing to cash its checks, no matter the cost.

The league's biggest star, LeBron James, said that Morey's support for Hong Kong was "misinformed" and "not educated." He reportedly called for Morey to be punished. Perhaps it is no coincidence that LeBron James stands to make billions of dollars from the Chinese market—not only from a higher NBA salary cap, shoe sales, and Nike ads, but also from his own movie company. Often known as King James, perhaps "Chairman LeBron" would be a better honorific today.

Joe Tsai, owner of the Brooklyn Nets, called the protest in Hong Kong a separatist movement that was trying to carve up Chinese territories like colonial powers or Imperial Japan. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Mr. Tsai is an executive at Alibaba, a Chinese company that developed a Communist propaganda app that hijacked cell phones of anyone who downloaded it.

At a Wizards game last week, security confiscated a protest sign that said simply "Google Uighurs," referring to the native people of western China whose culture and religion are being exterminated by the Chinese Communist Party. That sign was not confiscated in China by the secret police but right here in America's national capital.

Steve Kerr, the head coach of the Golden State Warriors, drew a moral equivalence between Communist China and the United States. "None of us are perfect," he said, "and we all have different issues we need to get to."

Nobody is perfect. That is what he says of an authoritarian regime that starved, shot, or beat to death 50 million of its own people on a forced march to modernity and a regime that runs a network of concentration camps in its western provinces and harvests the organs of political prisoners for its own pampered elite. Nobody is perfect, indeed.

This is craven and greedy behavior, and it stands in stark contrast to how America has historically used sports to promote our interests and our aspirations, from the triumph of Black Olympians in Hitler's Germany to the Miracle on Ice against the Soviet Union. Even our diplomatic opening to China happened in part through sports with ping-pong diplomacy.

Today, the tables have turned. China has used sports to export its authoritarian model to our soil. So far, it has found too many willing enforcers in the NBA. But it doesn't have to be this way. Commissioner Adam Silver, after a slow start, defended Daryl Morey's right to speak his mind about Hong Kong. He said: Free expression is "what you guys stand for."

Too many American companies kowtow to China not because they love its government but because of the tremendous pressure that government can exert on their operations. But the NBA is in a unique position. Beijing can ban an airline, or it can ban a hotel that lists Taiwan as a country in its online drop-down menu, and the Chinese people can use a different airline, or they can use a different hotel, but there is only one NBA. Beijing can't create another one.

And here is the rub: There are more than 500 million basketball fans in China. More people in China follow the NBA than there are people in the United States. No doubt Beijing has some leverage over the NBA, as it does over all businesses, but the NBA has a lot of leverage over Beijing. Is Beijing really going to ban the entire league, as they have done with the Houston Rockets, at the risk of alienating more than 500 million people who follow the league and the resultant public backlash that could create? So instead of acting as a bullhorn for Communist propaganda in America, the NBA could be a beacon of freedom in China. They could dare China to shut them out.

Let me urge all of these NBA executives and players who say they care about social justice, don't just speak out when the stakes are low for you personally or when the cause is popular among your friends; speak out now when the stakes are deadly high for millions of Hongkongers and more than a billion Chinese, including so many of your fans.

LeBron James tweeted not long ago: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Live out that principle consistently. There are a million Uighurs in concentration camps yearning to hear a champion who speaks out on their behalf, particularly since the NBA runs an elite training academy in proximity to those camps.

Steve Kerr never held back on expressing his opinion about our President. That is fine. That is his right as an American. But how about some outrage for the authoritarian regime in Beijing?

Joe Tsai was born in Taiwan. His fellow Taiwanese live in constant fear of meddling, attack, and subjugation by the Chinese Communist party. Are they separatists for wanting to maintain their way of life? Speak out proudly on behalf of your homeland about the true nature of the government in Beijing.

I realize it is a hard thing to ask any person. No doubt this is a harder path than the path many in the NBA are traveling at present. It would require sacrifice, and it would certainly invite the wrath of the Chinese Communist Party. But if the league used its unique leverage for freedom, millions of ordinary Chinese would surely notice, despite an army of Chinese Communist censors arrayed against them.

The NBA didn't pick this fight. It probably prefers to avoid this fight.

The Chinese Communist Party wants this fight. So the choice isn't to fight or not; it is to win or lose. And perhaps alone among American businesses, the NBA has a shot to win against Beijing. And in any fight against Communists, there can only be one strategy and one policy: victory.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I rise in support of the Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval of the Trump administration's so-called affordable clean energy rule, which really should be called President Trump's dirty power plan or unclean energy rule.

To be clear, I believe that the Environmental Protection Agency has an urgent moral responsibility and economic imperative to reduce the global warming pollution from powerplants, which are by far the largest stationary source of carbon pollution on our planet. I also believe that those of us in Congress must act now to protect the American people from the dangers posed by poor environmental quality and the worsening impact of climate change. That is why we are holding this vote tomorrow—to send a clear message to this administration and to take a strong stand for the American people.

Truth be told, I am not typically a staunch supporter of the Congressional Review Act. It is a blunt procedural tool, and I prefer to embrace a better way to express our disapproval of the administration's failure to address one of our Nation's major sources of carbon pollution.

For Senate Democrats, this vote is about holding supporters of this shortsighted, irresponsible policy accountable for surrendering America's global leadership and for jeopardizing the health of our planet and the promise of our children's future.

Nearly 4 years ago, the Clean Power Plan set the first Federal targets to reduce carbon emissions from our Nation's powerplants. The Clean Power Plan set meaningful but achievable carbon limits for fossil fuel powerplants and gave flexibility and time for States to meet those standards. It was not a one-size-fits-all deal. It provided quite a bit of time and flexibility for States to try to figure out how they would go about meeting those standards in their own way. This administration's alternative to the Clean Power Plan—President Trump's unclean power plan—allows States to decide whether to regulate harmful emissions. At the same time, this rule will, at best, have essentially no impact on powerplant carbon emissions—no impact.

Let me say that again. At best, this rule will have essentially no impact on powerplant carbon emissions. At worst, it will increase emissions by extending these plants' lifespans and allow them to burn more coal each year.

Today our Nation's utilities are already on track to meet and surpass the emission reduction goals set by the Clean Power Plan way ahead of schedule. All the while, the vast majority of Americans are now enjoying lower utility bills, not higher utility bills, and more than 3 million Americans went to work today in the clean energy sector, which includes jobs in renewable energy generation and energy efficiency. Yes, you heard that right. There are more than 3 million jobs in the clean energy sector today.

The President's dirty power plan does not build on this progress. It does not promote affordable or clean energy. What it actually does is attempt to scam or fool the American people into believing that the EPA is doing something to stem the tide of climate change while taking us backward—backward, not forward.

By repealing and replacing the Clean Power Plan, the Trump administration is ensuring that our country forgoes a vast number of economic opportunities of the clean energy future. Instead of building on the Obama-Biden administration's forward-looking environmental standards, the Trump administration, with its dirty power plan, is refusing to see or accept that the global economy's transition to clean energy sources is already underway. Instead of mustering the political courage to lead on the issue of climate change, yet again, the Trump administration is walking away from the bold action we need to address this climate crisis.

This failure of leadership will make it all the more likely that the worsening storms and flooding, record-setting rainfall, and volatile temperatures we are already seeing all over the world will continue to be our reality.

So where do our Republican colleagues stand? Tomorrow we will find out.

Sadly, for too many of them, President Trump's dirty power plan is a sufficient plan to address carbon pollution. In truth, it is not. It is a failure of vision and a retreat from global leadership, and it is time for Congress—Democrats, Republicans, and maybe an Independent or two—to hold this administration accountable.

That is why Senate Democrats are calling for a vote on this issue. Our government needs to provide the right market signals today if we are going to create a clean energy tomorrow, and we need to take a stand for a stronger economy. We need to lead the world to act on climate change, and we need to take a stand for clean air and environmental quality.

We can do that tomorrow by standing together against President Trump's dirty power plan, and I hope a number

of colleagues will join us by doing just that.

It is a false statement to say we can't have cleaner air, less threat to our planet, and create jobs. We can do both, and we need to.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks prior to the vote for Ambassador Barrett.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF BARBARA MCCONNELL BARRETT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, a few weeks ago, I had an opportunity to come to the floor and talk about the outstanding public service of some senior U.S. marines: Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, Secretary of Homeland Security General Kelly, and the outgoing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. Joseph Dunford. The service these gentlemen have given to their Nation includes almost 140 years of combined Active-Duty military service in the Marine Corps but also at the highest levels of government at a critical time in our Nation's history.

Men and women who are committed to the service of our Nation are continuing to follow in the footsteps of these three very impressive U.S. Marine generals who brought the Marine Corps ethos of honor, courage, and commitment to our Nation's military and to their work in government. We should all be thankful for that.

At the end of September, I had the privilege of attending the swearing-in of a member of the new team that President Trump is putting together in terms of national security, GEN Mark Milley, as the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, now in the position succeeding General Dunford. At the Department of Defense, we have Secretary Esper, Secretary McCarthy, the Secretary of the Army, and General Milley who have all served their country with honor and will continue to do so.

Now we are considering the nomination of Ambassador Barbara Barrett to be the next Secretary of the Air Force. In fact, we are going to be voting on her nomination in a few moments.

I want to talk about her experience and her qualifications, which are diverse and very impressive. I think she is extremely well qualified to be the next Secretary of the U.S. Air Force.

Let me provide just a bit about her background and exceptional experience. She is a private pilot, astronaut, Deputy Federal Aviation Administrator, past CEO of the Aerospace Corporation, past member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services and Defense Business Board. Importantly, she is a former U.S. Ambassador to Finland. That is a very impressive resume, a very impressive background.

I first met Ambassador Barrett in 2015 when I had the opportunity to

share dinner with her and the late Senator John McCain. Prior to that dinner, I was talking to Senator John McCain, and he told me how highly he thought of Ambassador Barrett. I can state—and I think many of my Senate colleagues will agree—that there can be no better an endorsement than that from Senator McCain.

Ambassador Barrett will be taking over from Dr. Heather Wilson, who did an outstanding job as Secretary of the Air Force. Secretary Wilson's leadership was critical in rebuilding the U.S. Air Force, which had shrunk to its smallest level ever just a few years ago since the Air Force was created in the late 1940s. We had to start bringing it back. She did a great job on that, and I know Ambassador Barrett is committed to continuing that rebuilding of this critically important branch of our military.

Another important element of Ambassador Barrett's experience is that as a former U.S. Ambassador to Finland, she understands the strategic importance of the Arctic and what is happening in terms of great power competition in the Arctic.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about that critically important part of the world and the role of my State, the great State of Alaska. Dating back to Gen. Billy Mitchell, who is the father of the U.S. Air Force, Alaska has been recognized as what General Mitchell said in an Armed Services Committee hearing; that it is "the most strategic place in the world." Former Secretary Wilson and our current Chief of the Staff of the Air Force, General Goldfein, have been leaders at the Department of Defense, raising awareness of the critical importance of the Arctic in defending America's national security interests. Additionally, Congress has been playing a role in highlighting this in our national security priorities in the National Defense Authorization Act over the last 3 years and so, too, has the Trump administration.

Secretary Pompeo, our Secretary of State, was recently in Finland for the Arctic Council, all the nations of the Arctic, and he had this to say:

We are entering a new age of strategic engagement in the Arctic, complete with new threats to the Arctic and its real estate. . . . This is America's moment to stand up as an Arctic nation and for the Arctic's future.

That was our Secretary of State a few months ago in Finland.

America is an Arctic nation because of Alaska. I like to say that my State constitutes three pillars of America's military might. We are the cornerstone of missile defense for the entire Nation—the missile fields and the radar sites that protect Washington, DC, New York, Miami, Rhode Island, L.A. They are all based in the great State of Alaska. We are the hub of air combat power for the Arctic in the Asia-Pacific.

In the next 2 years, we are going to have over 100 fifth-generation fighters, F-35s and F-22s, stationed in Alaska.