

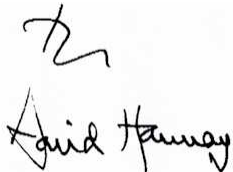
**Lord Hannay of Chiswick  
House of Lords  
London SW1A 0PW**

Sir,

Robert Kagan's somewhat half-hearted apologia for the concept of a league of democracies which is currently doing the rounds of think-tanks and foreign policy staff of US presidential hopefuls ("The case for a league of democracies", 14 May) misses two rather crucial points.

It is not simply that setting up a new caucus or institution would systematise a division in the world between Russia, China, Vietnam and many of the countries of the Middle East, on the one hand, and the league of democracies on the other – although that is surely a pretty serious drawback for a world which has only relatively recently emerged from 45 years of Cold War. It is also the fact that the league of democracies would have no claim to international legitimacy, let alone to international legality, if it were to become a basis for action and not just a talking shop. But surely the real conversation-stopper, which none of the proponents of the league seem to have addressed, is the improbability that the great democracies of the developing world (India, Brazil, South Africa, etc.) would be prepared to sign up for the journey.

A brief survey of the UN voting records of the three developing countries I have mentioned would reveal that they are among the most anti-interventionist of all UN members and the most hesitant about authorising the use of force. Have any of the champions of a league of democracies thought to ask the Indians or Brazilians what they think about the idea? And, if I am correct in my belief that their response would be somewhere between cautious and negative, could not a great deal of time be saved next year when a new US president arrives in the White House and looks around for the best way to turn the page on eight years of unilateralism?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hannay". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Hannay