At the end of the 1980s, the economic situation of Poland was deplorable. Rampant inflation, stagnation, unpaid foreign debt, devastating shortages of consumer goods, increasing emigration. As a result, the society grew tired of such mess and undemocratic political system. Yet, there were people who were ready to defend the previous regime. Just like today in Venezuela (February 5).

The Poles showed great wisdom at that time. Exactly 30 years ago, on February 6 1989, they sat down at the Round Table, where I also had my own seat. The negotiations resulted in agreements that not only successfully directed Poland to the path of the market economy and liberal democracy, but launched a process of post-communist transformation from central Europe to the ends of Asia.

The Polish Round Table should be a role model for Venezuela. The bloodshed still can be avoided by following the path of a wise bargain. Foreign countries should not be a party to the escalating conflict, but must support a reasonable compromise. Venezuela may be the second Poland, but it may also become the second Syria. Time to choose.

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