

University students question the regime

In a meeting organized by Ricardo Alarcón, current Chairman of Cuban parliament (*Asemblea Nacional*) at a university in the province of Santiago de Cuba, university students questioned the legitimacy and the actions of their government.

Video obtained by BBC showed a very unusual display of public discontentment with the regime – two students had tough questions for Alarcón.

They criticized economic development and general poverty, questioned the recent elections and openly denounced the procedures barring Cuban citizens from foreign travel and access to local hotels.

One of the main targets of criticism was the lack of access to internet and censorship associated with that – e.g. inability to access websites like yahoo.

Alarcón responded to these remarks with a rather unconvincing and defensive position, praising present day Cuba and comparing it to the country before the revolution in 1959.

The meeting was organized as a part of the initiative of Raúl Castro to discuss the shortcomings of the regime publicly throughout the Island.

There are suspicions that Alejandro Hernández and Eliécer Avila, two most outspoken students, may be at risk of reprisals and imprisonment.

Source:

CUBA: Students challenge regime in rare video, The Miami Herald, February 7, 2008, page: A13