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Viewing cable 07VATICAN29, HOLY SEE: RELATIONS WITH EAST TIMOR

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/29/2017
TAGS: PREL VT TT
SUBJECT: HOLY SEE: RELATIONS WITH EAST TIMOR

CLASSIFIED BY: Christopher Sandrolini, Charge d'affaires, EXEC, State.
REASON: 1.4 (d)
¶1. (C) During a January 29 conversation with charge d'affaires, the Holy See's desk officer for Southeast Asia and Oceania (protect) discussed the October 2006 visit to Rome of East Timor Prime Minister Ramos-Horta, during which he met Pope Benedict XVI. The official shared his view of the government of East Timor as "incompetent" and "not serious". He felt that Ramos-Horta started with good intentions but had let his Nobel Prize go to his head, and probably had viewed his meeting with the Pope largely in terms of how it could help him politically at home.

¶2. (C) The Holy See has been somewhat frustrated in its experience with the government of Timor, which has failed to keep promises and has generally seemed unrealistic. For example, the government objected to the papal nuncio for Timor being based in Jakarta. When the Holy See proposed Port Moresby, the government took offense and said it preferred Jakarta after all. (With only two bishops, East Timor does not have enough Catholic presence to justify a resident nuncio.) After six months, the nuncio has not yet been able to present his credentials. Dili is apparently considering putting a resident ambassador to the Holy See in Rome, a very expensive proposition for a small poor country, despite the fact the the Holy See is quite satisfied for the Timorese ambassador to operate from Lisbon. (Many ambassadors accredited to the Holy See are based elsewhere in Europe.)

SANDROLINI