This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.
independence and that there was "no common view of the Fretilin party." Montemayor told us some of the "best educated and trained church staff used to support Fretilin." He said that even now there was no consensus of opinion within the Church in favor of or against the current government.

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Allegations of Corruption

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4. (C) According to Montemayor, Bishops Basilio Nascimento and Alberto Ricardo da Silva are convinced that PM Mari Alkatieri leads a faction of "Mozambicans," East Timorese leaders that have returned from political exile in Mozambique, who are trying to limit the influence of the bishops and the Church. "The bishops think Alkatieri's faction is trying to push them into a corner," he explained. Montemayor added that the bishops were convinced that the government was corrupt and rife with nepotism and bribery. "The bishops think Akatieri's family is lining its own pockets," he concluded. Montemayor allows that these allegations might be exaggerated, but were perhaps not entirely off the mark. Still, as he has tried to explain to the bishops, "a bad government is better than no government at all." Montemayor also pointed out that while government bureaucrats in East Timor might be lacking in experience and education, the East Timorese Church was in a similar situation. Both institutions needed to mature, he suggested.

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A New Same Diocese and a New Dili University?

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5. (C) Montemayor mentioned the Holy See's planned creation of the new diocese of Same. He confirmed that the creation of this third East Timorese diocese had been in the works for some time, as according to canon law a local episcopal conference requires three dioceses. However, he emphasized that serious resource and staffing constraints remained before the diocese would become fully functional. The Same diocese must be economically self sufficient, and not a drain on the other two, he noted. In addition, he said it was hard to attract staff for the bishops, both locally because they don't have enough qualified local priests, and internationally as there is no longer a close link between the Portuguese and the East Timorese churches. Montemayor said he explained these obstacles to the creation of a new diocese in his last meeting with FM Jose Ramos-Horta. Montemayor felt it could be "two months or two years" before administrative issues are addressed and the Vatican finds a bishop for Same.

6. (SBU) Montemayor mentioned the bishops' plan to create a university in Dili, and felt it was overly ambitious. "Maybe they could start a small university, but their plans are too grand," he said. According to Montemayor, "at the most they should start simply with departments of education, language and medicine." Commenting more broadly on education in East Timor, he praised the work of the Jesuits in the field, pointing out the order's great impact in East Timor.

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Comment

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7. (C) Montemayor expressed his thanks for Embassy Dili's role in calming tensions during the May protests, and encouraged contact between Embassy Dili and Church leaders. He said the bishops would welcome increased opportunity to present the diplomatic corps with its version of events, as opposed to the government version that is commonly heard. Montemayor has the impression that the bishops do not trust personnel from the UN mission in East Timor. End Comment.

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