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WikiLeaks documents lift veil on Vatican diplomacy

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Secret diplomatic cables revealed today, as part of the WikiLeaks releases, that while the Vatican was appalled by revelations of clerical sexual abuse in Ireland in 2009 and 2010, it was also offended by demands that the papal ambassador participate in a government-sponsored probe, seeing it as an insult to the Vatican's sovereign immunity under international law.

That stance, according to the cable, came off in Ireland as "pettily procedural" while failing to confront the reality of clerical abuse, and thereby made the crisis worse.

The cables also contain critical diplomatic assessments of Pope Benedict XVI's recent decision to create new structures to welcome disgruntled Anglicans, as well as the perceived technological illiteracy and communications ineptitude of some senior Vatican officials.

PR woes in the Vatican, according to one cable, have lowered the volume on the pope's "moral megaphone."

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