

# I spy with my little iPad

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**L**AST week we sang the unwritten patriotic song: a torch of freedom became a searchlight of truth. The week invoked our democratic culture to demand the highest level of accountability when the powerful were too weak to protect our constitution.

The highest office in the land was protected by the lowest in society. Ordinary people spotted the Gupta plane while those in charge of the proverbial air tower feigned ignorance.

What poetic irony.

Ministers invoked the severest of security laws – the National Key Point Act – to refuse to account for the use of the taxpayers' money at President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla homestead last year.

Do you remember the animated Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi's overzealous performance during that press conference last year?

But when the country's national key point was threatened by the president's friends, it was journalists, opposition and ordinary South Africans who stood up while ministers invoked PR techniques and obfuscation to spin.

What a frightening irony.

Journalists assumed the role of securocrats at the press conference, demanding the highest action against what they perceived as a treasonous act, while ministers were largely unperturbed by the gravity of what happened at the military base. Some of them even attended the wedding of the same people who threatened our sovereign security.

Funnily, acting director-general of state security Dennis Dlomo, who was supposed to alert the country of the imminent security threat, was "spying" on journalists at the press conference through his iPad.

Imagine Dlomo briefing the president about the present and imminent threat facing the country, swiping his iPad: "You see Mr President, our high-tech intelligence through Operation BBM can reveal this one is Sibusiso Ngalwa, this is Xoli Mngambi, and this is Candice Bailey. We got their details."



Moshoeshe Monare

Our security boss and other powerful jesters must know there are many among the plain folk who are singing a patriotic song and it's getting louder

I wish I were a cartoonist.

The journalists introduced themselves and gave the police their personal details at the entrance to the press conference. The Government Communication and Information System records all press conferences.

But the spy chief decided not to send his case officer, let alone foot soldiers. He personally came armed with his iPad.

Doesn't our chief spy understand there was a reason why anyone heading Britain's MI6 signed his name as C in honour of the first spy chief Mansfield Cummings? I always thought the universal dictum of intelligence was: "They served and remained silent."

I guess Zambian deputy president Guy Scott was wrong about South Africans, but right about some of the clowns running this country?

Are we a nation run by jesters with iPads while our premier air force base resembled Snoop Dog's music video?

On the other hand, the air force – with fighter jets and powerful high-tech radars – allowed the "enemy plane" to land "without detection", and only reacted when it was spotted through the lens of the media.

Absurdly, the powerful want to close



The Jet Airways Airbus A330-200 that flew the Gupta guests to the Waterkloof Air Force Base takes off. Ordinary taxpayers are asking why. PICTURE: PHILL MAGAKOE

the aperture of this lens through the National Key Points Act, the secrecy bill and other legislative mechanisms.

At least the jesters with their iPads and fighter jets, the spin doctors' terminological inexactitude and the liars occupying our public offices heard our unwritten patriotic song loud and clear: a country mightier than the mighty.

They may celebrate now that the tar-mac guys and clerks have taken the fall for the scumbags.

They may breathe a sigh of relief now that they'll remain in office despite their lowest ethical standards.

They may pat each other on the back now that their sophistry has succeeded in protecting those whose primary role has been to shame this country's dignity.

But their conscience will be prodded by the lyrics of the unwritten patriotic song whose melody mirrors Enoch Sontonga's dream 116 years ago – a vision immortalised by brave men and women who refused to sacrifice the soul of their people to protect immoral mortals.

The unwritten patriotic song should be dedicated to those officials who, at the expense of their careers, refused to

defend the indefensible.

As opposed to those who marched to the Goodman Gallery and remained silent last week, these officials are true patriots whose moral conscience will be invaluable to the next generation.

They brandished the torch of freedom and the searchlight of truth in the face of enormous pressure to protect the mysterious UFO (Unidentified Fibber Of note).

For those who violated their oath of office to protect this UFO, is it worth sacrificing this country? Is he worth the low intensity racial backlash against our fellow Indian compatriots? Racists who fought against change must be reminding whoever dares to listen about why their cause was worth a limb.

Is this UFO worth betraying men and women who fell in Sharpeville or children who fell in Soweto?

Remember, the child is not dead, but is "shouting the scent of righteousness".

Our founding mothers will shout from the grave demanding to know why we passed the sacred torch to these souls who conflate liberty with their personal freedom to disgrace our nation.