

MONDAY CHENEY GAMES

Vice President Cheney and his lovely wife have snuck off to Dallas for a secret visit (h/t TP).

Vice President Dick Cheney was visiting Dallas on Monday for undisclosed reasons.

I was going to engage in some utterly irresponsible guessing about why the Vice President (and his lovely wife) would need to steal off to Dallas without any warning: heart surgery, quail hunting, and Halliburton meetings all came to mind.

But then I read Ken Silverstein's account of mounting fighting between Turkey and the Kurds.

The Turkish offensive, which has been green-lighted by the Bush Administration, was criticized by the Iraqi government. "We know the threats that Turkey is facing, but military operations will not solve the PKK problem," a government spokesman, Ali al-Dabbagh, told The Guardian. Meanwhile, Kurdish anger towards the United States is growing. "We are their friends and we thought we were their allies," the newspaper quoted Muhammad Qadir, a shopkeeper in Irbil, as saying. "We don't support the PKK, but we are angry that the Americans are allowing the Turks to wage war against our fellow Kurds."

A former U.S. official who works in northern Iraq emailed me to say:

The United States is being skillfully handled by the Turks, who are dragging the U.S. into a policy disaster in Kurdistan. The Kurds have moved a lot of

fighters and equipment quietly into the area, and are prepared to strike the Turks. Massoud [Barzani, the Iraqi Kurdish leader] has issued all the press comments he can to publicly warn that Kurdish patience is gone. The United States is either ignoring the signals or missing them...The Kurds can and will bloody the Turks badly in a fight.

And I couldn't help but recall that Ray Hunt, the spooked up oil billionaire who made his own private deals with the Kurds, lives in Dallas. Mind you, that recollection and the suggestion that perhaps Cheney (and his lovely wife) was off to do some off-the-books foreign policy is just as irresponsible as speculating about quail hunting. But these Bushies do like to blend business and diplomacy, and Hunt is precisely the kind of guy they like to work through.

They had to have had a reason for allowing Hunt to so blatantly undermine our stated goal of helping the Iraqis craft an oil law, after all. It would be just like them to encourage him to develop ties with the Kurds so they'd have some leverage for a time like this.

Update: Apparently, the story is they were house shopping. I guess that Wyoming residency was always just a convenient way around the Constitutional prohibition on two-Texan Administrations.