'Clinton-Gore allied with Mojahedin'

WASHINGTON -- The Clinton Administration is maneuvering to support the Mojahedin-e-Khalq in attacking the Islamic Republic, if the latest Evans and Novak syndicated column is to be believed.

The two columnists, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, discern an agreement among senior Democrats -- President Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, and House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton -- in favor of backing the Mojahedin despite many years of State Department opposition to supporting the guerrilla group.

Democratic sources in the Congress scoffed at the column, however.

Evans and Novak say Clinton policy advisers are studying a plan "to stem the fundamentalist tide by democratizing the mullahs' home base." The column, published nationally Monday, argues that the Mojahedin could be the instrument for democratizing Iran.

As evidence for Democratic support for the Mojahedin, the columnists say:

- Clinton last month wrote a private letter to Masud Rajavi, leader of the Mojahedin, "setting forth his commitment to financial and other help for establishing democracy as a basic part of his foreign policy."
- Gore conferred last fall with Mohammad Mohaddes-

for Rajavi."

A source close to Gore told the Iran Times the vice president was not supporting the Mojahedin or any other Iranian exile party or movement. He said Gore signed a letter last fall that was circulated by the Mojahedin to express his concern over human rights violations in Iran and not to provide any endorsement for the Mojahedin.

A spokesman for Hamilton said an appointment with the congressman had been requested by a group of "Iranian professionals" in his Indiana district. The spokesman said Mohaddessin showed up at the meeting to the surprise of the Hamilton staff.

Another Capitol Hill Democrat who is critical of the Mojahedin dismissed the premise of the Evans and Novak column. "They are trying to say that a meeting communicates an endorsement. That's ridiculous. Democrats like Hamilton and Gore sit down with Republicans everyday; does that constitute an endorsement of the Republican Party!"

"These are politicians in a democracy, which means they meet perpetually with people holding all sorts of views. That's what democracy is all about. If the Mojahedin don't understand that, maybe they don't understand what democracy is all about."