

Canadian PM's chief of staff leaving

by UPI

OTTAWA -- Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's chief of staff is stepping down after allegedly influencing the U.S. Democratic Party primary race. Unidentified sources told the Globe and mail and Toronto Star that Ian Brodie will resign as of July 1 and his replacement has already been decided. Brodie figured prominently in a federal inquiry into leaks about the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade agreement with the United States in late February. The inquiry's report is finished but hasn't been released. The leaks led to reports that Democratic hopeful Sen. Barack Obama's campaign had discretely told Canadian diplomats calls by Obama, D-Ill., for renegotiating NAFTA were political rhetoric and not serious plans. Allegations then arose Brodie told reporters the same thing about Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y. -- that her anti-NAFTA stance was simply posturing, the reports said. Brodie will be replaced by lawyer Guy Giorno, who served as chief of staff to former Conservative Ontario Premier Mike Harris, the Star said.

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