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*by UPI*

BRUSSELS - NATO members meeting in Brussels say they've begun considering successors to Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who ends his term as NATO secretary-general July 31.

Herman Schaper, the Netherlands' NATO ambassador, told EU Observer the alliance was waiting until Barack Obama was inaugurated as U.S. president before considering the next secretary-general.

"We waited for the Obama administration and only started two to three weeks ago to invite countries to present their candidate," Schaper said. "At this moment there is no official candidate."

He said two names -- Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski and Bulgaria's former top diplomat Solomon Passy -- have been floated.

Other names mentioned include French Interior Minister Michele Alliot Marie; Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store, the publication said.

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