

Rasmussen seen as next NATO leader

by UPI

BRUSSELS -- Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen appears next in line to become the NATO secretary-general, analysts said in Brussels.

Rasmussen, who reportedly has the backing of Britain, will likely get the job over Washington's preferred candidate, Canadian Defense Minister Peter MacKay, and would succeed Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the helm of the alliance, the EU Observer said Monday.

McKay told a press conference at the Brussels Forum event Sunday that he is more focused on Canada's ongoing armed forces reform and its mission in Afghanistan.

"Just the fact that our country is being considered speaks for the recognition of what we do," he said, adding, "Canada is interested in all aspects of NATO, including its leadership."

Turkey, however, has signaled it would oppose Rasmussen's bid because of how he managed the controversy over a Danish newspaper's cartoon depicting the Prophet Mohammad with a bomb in his turban -- specifically, his refusal to see Muslim ambassadors, the Observer said.

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