

Brazil-U.S.custody battle high on agenda

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- When U.S. President Barack Obama meets with Brazilian leader Luis Inacio Lula da Silva the custody of an 8-year-old boy may take center stage, observers say.

One of the most closely watched issues between the two countries deals with Sean Goldman. The boy's Brazilian mother moved him to Rio de Janeiro from New Jersey four years ago without his American father's consent.

An international custody dispute has grown into a delicate political problem, The Washington Post said Friday. Sean's mother died in August, leaving him in the care of her second husband.

Officials from both countries say Sean should be reunited with his father, the Post said. But, a question over whether the boy's mother violated an international treaty when she took him to Brazil has the matter tied up in Brazilian federal court.

The custody battle was the first topic raised by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton when she met with the Brazilian foreign minister last week, the Post said. The U.S. House of Representatives has passed a resolution calling for Sean's return to his father and a similar measure is pending in the Senate.

"There is nothing which would in any way approximate to a diplomatic incident" in the case, Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said in an interview with the Post.

U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., who sponsored one of the resolutions calling for Sean's return, said Brazil "is not complying with international law and risks undermining relations between our two countries," the Post said.

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