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US-Russian drugs operation yields results

10/30/2010

Russian and U.S. drug control services have carried out their first joint anti-narcotics operation in Afghanistan, destroying four major drug laboratories, the head of Russia's Federal Drug Control Service said Friday. Viktor Ivanov, the head of Russia's Federal Anti-Narcotics Committee, said during a joint press conference with Deputy Head of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Russia Eric Rubin that the operation destroyed four drug labs in Afghanistan on the border with Pakistan, RIA Novosti reported. "The operation began on October 28 at 6:30 a.m. and four drug laboratories were destroyed by 10:20 a.m.," Ivanov said, adding the joint operation was carried out by a total of 70 personnel. Ivanov had no information on casualties or the number of detained during the operation. The operation, which took three months of planning, destroyed three heroin labs, including one large drug hub near the village of Achin, and one morphine lab. Ivanov praised joint efforts by Russian and U.S. anti-drug services and said the effective work of a Russian-U.S. presidential commission in the sphere of drug trafficking was a good example of a "reset" in relations between the two countries. He said 932 kilograms (more than 2,000 pounds) of high quality heroin and 156 kilograms (344 pounds) of opium was seized, or 200 million doses with an estimated value of \$250 million. Rubin also praised the results of the operation. "This investigation is a very concrete example of real cooperation," he said. "We cannot succeed alone. This was the first step and we will continue to destroy labs." Rubin said that one of the main goals of U.S.-Russian operations in Afghanistan was to "identify, disrupt, and destroy the drug trade." U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev emphasized last year that the creation of a joint mission on the fight against drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan "should not consist of just commissions and reports, but of concrete results,"

Rubin said. However, Ivanov also admitted that “drug infrastructure in Afghanistan is expanding.”