The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ivanov Complains About Afghan Drug Labs

October 24, 2010

WASHINGTON — Russia's top anti-drugs official has a completed a U.S. visit where he complained that the United States was not acting on information that he has provided about many narcotics laboratories in Afghanistan.

Viktor Ivanov, head of the Federal Drug Control Service, said he provided U.S. officials in Kabul months ago the coordinates of 175 laboratories where heroin is processed.

He said U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency officials in Kabul have told him that they are awaiting U.S. military approval to take down the labs.

"For some reason they are unable to carry out any operations to destroy these laboratories because there is a delay from the military side," Ivanov said in an interview Thursday.

Ivanov was in Washington for a meeting of a commission on drugs set up by the U.S. and Russian presidents to improve cooperation.

The DEA would not comment, saying it does not confirm or deny information shared by other nations.

Ivanov has long complained that U.S. and NATO refusal to implement poppy eradication programs in Afghanistan is contributing to a flood of Afghan heroin into Russia. U.S. officials have argued that destruction of poppy fields would drive Afghan farmers into the arms of the Taliban.

Ivanov said Thursday that he also has suggested going after the major landlords in Afghanistan's poppy-growing region by submitting their names to the United Nations for sanctions.

"It wouldn't be difficult to trace them," he said.

Ivanov said he discussed the issue with U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke and other officials Thursday, then left frustrated that they provided no evidence that poppy eradication would strengthen the Taliban.

"It sounded not like constructive discussion but a manifestation of stubbornness," he said. "I cannot say they are not listening. They are listening very carefully and attentively. But unfortunately, there are no results."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/10/24/ivanov-complains-about-afghan-drug-labs-a2417