

According to Popular Science, the discovery of lithium in Afghanistan is good news. According to the article, one site alone may have more lithium than the Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia, which until now has been considered as having half the world's reserves. Seth Fletcher, the author of the article, asserts that this is another counter-argument to the idea that the world is running out of lithium.

He writes that this is big news because, "even if Afghanistan's lithium never leaves the ground, the sudden, black-swan appearance of a new and potentially massive resource helps further debunk the myth that the world is running out of lithium and that, as a result, an electric-car revival that relies on lithium-based batteries is doomed before it begins."

What is especially interesting is that the presence of lithium is not really mentioned by the USGS or the Department of Defense in their news briefings, according to Fletcher. In fact, when asked about the New York Times article mentioning lithium,

Neither the Pentagon nor the USGS will elaborate on the mention in the Times story of a salt-lake lithium source. In an otherwise candid conversation, Jack Medlin of the USGS declined to provide any more details on the subject. Major Shawn Turner, a Pentagon spokesperson, said he had nothing to add.

IAGS Executive Director and TREM Center Advisor, Dr. Gal Luft mentions why Afghan minerals may take a while to be exploited.

Companies don't like risk and lack of security, and Afghanistan, well—"it will be probably the worst place to go to," says Gal Luft, the executive director of the energy-focused D.C. think tank the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security." Security concerns aside, Luft points out that it took years for Chile to build the rail and road infrastructure that gets its huge copper mines running, and before Afghanistan can become a serious mining country, it will need the same infrastructure.

Luft continued that Afghan's mineral wealth is a story for the 22nd century, not the 21st.

The full article can be read here:

<http://www.popsci.com/science/article/2010-06/why-finding-lithium-afghanistan-big-deal-even-if-it-never-leaves-ground>

