

Helium: Are There Commercial Resources in Myanmar and Other S. E. Asia?

Michael C. Clarke¹, Duncan Seddon¹, and Greg Ambrose¹

¹Onshore Petroleum Australasia (OPA) Pty Ltd (michael.clarke@metts.com.au)

Abstract

Helium is an important industrial rare earth. Demand for helium has been increasing as indicated by rising prices over the last two decades. Helium has been 'democratised' over the last thirty years with US monopoly being broken by new producers. Helium as a co-product of major LNG production is a lucrative side-play to LNG production, and helium derived from small but more concentrated helium in natural gas resources, can be a profitable business, as demonstrated by US producers. Helium separation plant is available as modular and relocatable units. They can be put on a site with minimal preparation and training of operators can be provided. Helium transport (logistics) as LHe poses some challenges in terms of retaining its liquid state and minimising losses through boil-off during transport, however these challenges can be managed. The first action that many gas explorers are now taking is to re-examine old gas analyses for the presence of nitrogen, and ask the question, 'did the analysis also look for helium?'. If the answer is NO then there is a chance that helium was overlooked, and that future exploration should analysing gas samples for helium.