FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

Close Out of NASA-Ames Award No. NAG 2-16   End Date: 12/31/96

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH /PUBLICATIONS FOR FINAL GRANT PERIOD

FROM

MOLECULAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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PALOALTO, CA 94304

TO

NASA AMES RESEARCH CENTER

MOFFETT FIELD CA 94035-1000

MAY 15, 1997
INVENTION STATEMENT

THERE HAVE BEEN NO INVENTIONS CONNECTED WITH THIS RESEARCH

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Theoretical descriptions of interaction forces and collision dynamics in the H2O-He system were improved by calculating the interaction at additional orientations and by including diffuse functions in the basis set. The improvements made substantial changes to the potential energy surface, but made only small changes in the predicted microwave pressure broadening coefficients.


Gas-phase chemical models of deuterium fractionation in dense interstellar clouds utilize a small number of exothermic reactions to achieve fractionation. Although HD is a major repository of deuterium, it does not appear to exchange D with many molecular ions. The potential energy surfaces of three representative protonated ions (H3+, CH3+, HCO+) and HD were investigated. Quantum chemical calculations confirmed an earlier semi-quantitative explanation for the fractionation processes and showed that tunnelling at low temperature is unlikely to alter this picture. Fractionation reactions proceed to products when the transition state lies below the energy of the reactants. Reactivity can therefore be predicted by computing the activation energy with \textit{ab initio} calculations.


Rotational constants for the carbon-chain molecules H2C=(C=)nC, n=3-8, were predicted using \textit{ab initio} methods. H2C3 and H2C4 have already been observed by radioastronomy. Our calculated dipole moments indicate that the higher members in the series are good candidates for future astronomical or laboratory searches.


\textit{Ab initio} molecular orbital theory was used to study the effect of ionization on the infrared spectrum of naphthalene. The structures, band frequencies, and intensities of neutral and ionized naphthalene were determined. The calculated frequencies and intensities allowed an assignment of the most important bands in the newly reported experimental spectrum of the cation. Agreement between theory and experiment is sufficient to confirm that ionization significantly affects intensities without dramatically shifting the positions of the ir bands. These results suggest that it is no longer necessary to postulate that PAHs are stripped of most of their hydrogens to explain the observed ratio of carbon skeleton band intensities to CH stretching ones.

Theoretical rate constants among the lowest 45 para and 45 ortho rotational levels of water in collisions with He atoms have been calculated for temperatures between 20 and 2000 K using a new theoretical potential (described above). These values are 30-40% larger than previous ones but relative sizes of state-to-state rates have not changed significantly.


A potential energy surface has been determined for the competing associative and reactive ion-molecule processes involving C₃H⁺ and H₂. Our ab initio results show that the linear C₃H⁺ ion and H₂ can directly access the deep potential well of the propargyl ion H₂CCCH⁺, which lies 390 kJ mol⁻¹ below the reactants. The more stable cyclic c-C₃H₃⁺ ion lies 501 kJ mol⁻¹ below the reactants. Isomerization between the linear and cyclic structures can occur via two pathways, one involving a single transition state and the other possessing two transition states and an intermediate. The dissociation of c-C₃H₃⁺ to C₃H₂⁺ + H proceeds without a barrier, but is endothermic with respect to the reactants by 7.3 kJ mol⁻¹. Rates and branching ratios calculated with the ab initio data are in agreement with some experimental observations and in disagreement with others.


In order to test the hypothesis that polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are carriers of the UIR bands, we studied selected small PAHs in order to ascertain the effect of ionization upon their IR spectra. In this work we determined the IR spectra of naphthalene, anthracene, and pyrene and their cations by means of ab initio calculations. The frequencies of the cations are shifted only slightly with respect to the neutrals, while the band intensities are strongly affected. The calculated CH/CC vibrational intensity ratios of the ions are in much better agreement with those deduced from observation than are those of the neutrals.


The syntheses of interstellar c-C₃H₂, H₂CCC, c-C₃H, and HCCC (where “c” indicates a cyclic isomer) are thought to proceed via dissociative recombination of the precursor ions c-C₃H₃⁺ and H₂CCCH⁺, which are in turn produced mainly via the radiative association reaction between C₃H⁺ and H₂. We have utilized ab initio methods to study the potential energy surface for C₃H⁺ + H₂ to form the isomers c-C₃H₃⁺ and H₂CCCH⁺. The overall rate coefficient for radiative association has been calculated as a function of temperature via the phase space method. Our ab initio calculations show that the H₂CCCH⁺ isomer is formed directly without an activation barrier and that isomerization can occur readily via a low-energy pathway. Calculation of the equilibrium coefficient for H₂CCCH⁺ c-C₃H₃⁺ as a function of temperature shows that equal abundances of these two ions should
be produced as relaxation proceeds, in agreement with experimental measurements at high pressure.


New quantum chemical calculations have been undertaken to understand the rates and mechanisms of the reactive and associative channels for C2H2+ + H2. The reactive channel, which produces C2H3+ + H, was found to be slightly endothermic, confirming earlier calculations and in agreement with recent experimental work. The associative channel leading to C2H4+ proceeds via a transition state that lies below the energy of the reactants, so association is expected to be efficient. This result is in conflict with an earlier theoretical study but in agreement with low temperature experimental measurements.


We have calculated the interaction for H2O-H2 at 722 points on a five-dimensional surface where both molecules are treated as rigid rotors. The ab initio points were fit with a 48-term angular expansion of spherical harmonics and rotation matrices. The potential functions show strong angular dependence and a large contribution from electrostatic contributions. When averaged over H2 orientations, the resulting surface is found to have a zero-crossing point and a minimum at distances similar to the corresponding H2O-He surface but is more repulsive at short range and more attractive at long range. The isotropic potential has zero-crossing radius of 3.05 Å and a well depth of 49.5 cm⁻¹ at Rm = 3.52 Å.


Linear carbon-chain radicals CnH for n=2-7 were studied with correlation consistent valence and core-valence basis sets and the coupled cluster method RCCSD(T). Equilibrium structures, rotational constants, and dipole moments were determined and compared with available experimental data. The ground state of the even-n series changes from 2+ to 2 as the chain is extended. For C4H, the 2+ state was found to lie just 72 cm⁻¹ below the 2 state in the estimated complete basis set limit for valence correlation. Core-valence effects stabilize the 2+ state by at least another 140 cm⁻¹, however, making the assignment more definitive. The C2H− and C3H− anions have also been characterized.


An extensive study of Mg-bearing compounds was performed in order to determine molecular properties critical for planning and executing new astronomical searches and laboratory studies. The primary focus of the work was on MgCCH, MgCCH+, and the isomers of MgC2. Only MgCCH has been identified in laboratory studies. Additional calculations were carried out on MgH, MgNC, MgCN, and their cations in an effort to
evaluate pathways to the formation of MgCCH and MgCCH\(^+\) in the ISM or in circumstellar envelopes. Correlated \textit{ab initio} methods and correlation consistent basis sets were employed. Properties including structures, rotational constants, dipole moments, and harmonic frequencies were determined. The transition state between linear MgCC and cyclic MgC\(_2\) was characterized and found to yield a minimal barrier (~0.5 kcal/mol), indicating easy interconversion of the linear isomer to the more stable cyclic form. Direct reactions in the ISM between ground state Mg or Mg\(^+\) and HCCH are precluded by their large endothermicity, but a number of ion-molecule or neutral-neutral reactions exchange reactions between CCH and various Mg-containing species offer plausible pathways to MgCCH and MgCCH\(^+\). Weakly bound MgH may react with CCH to form MgCCH, but MgH has not been detected. Both MgNC and MgCN have been observed, but their reactions with CCH are slightly endothermic by 1-3 kcal/mol. Although MgH\(^+\), MgNC\(^+\), and MgCN\(^+\) have not been detected, their reactions with CCH to form MgCCH\(^+\) are all exothermic. With only a small barrier separating linear MgCC and cyclic MgC\(_2\), the dissociative recombination of MgCCH\(^+\) with an electron is expected to yield cyclic MgC\(_2\) and regenerate Mg and CCH. New astronomical searches for MgCCH, MgCCH\(^+\), cyclic MgC\(_2\), MgNC\(^+\), and MgCN\(^+\) will provide further insight into organo-magnesium astrochemistry.


The recent confirmation of by Ziurys and Apponi of the detection of HOC\(^+\) toward Sgr B2 (OH) and their identification of the ion in Orion-KL and several other sources show that HOC\(^+\) is far more abundant than predicted by previous ion-molecule models. In these models, the reaction HOC\(^+\) + H\(_2\) \rightarrow HCO\(^+\) + H\(_2\) is assumed to rapidly destroy HOC\(^+\), based on the results of a prior calculation. We have recalculated the rate of this reaction as a function of temperature using a new \textit{ab initio} potential surface and a phase space approach to the dynamics which includes tunneling. The new calculated rate is small (<1 \(10^{-10}\) cm\(^3\) s\(^{-1}\)) at temperatures under 100 K.


The \(X^2A_1\) and \(A^2E\) states of the MgCH\(_3\) radical have been studied with correlation consistent basis sets and the coupled cluster method RCCSD(T) in order to compare with two recent experimental efforts. The best computed values [RCCSD(T)/cc-pCVTZ] for the \(X^2A_1\) state are (experimental results in parentheses): \(A_e = 160.433\) GHz, \(B_e = 10.948\) GHz (\(B_0 = 11.008\) GHz), and \(e = 1.011\) D. Values for the \(A^2E\) state are \(A_e = 154.648\) GHz (\(A_0 = 149.666\) GHz), \(B_e = 10.87\) GHz (\(B_0 = 10.932\) GHz), and \(e = 1.022\) D. The excitation energy (\(T_e\)) for the \(A^2E\) to \(X^2A_1\) transition is \(19,999\) cm\(^{-1}\) (\(T_0 = 20,030\) cm\(^{-1}\)). A brief discussion of bonding trends in Mg-containing radicals is included.


New experimental results on the rates of selected neutral-neutral reactions involving either gas-phase atoms (C) or radicals (OH, CN) show that these reactions are much more
rapid than previously thought. It is currently unclear, however, how general these results are. The results of chemical models of dense interstellar clouds are strongly affected by the inclusion of rapid neutral-neutral gas-phase reactions, most of which have not yet been studied in the laboratory. Unstudied reactions involving atomic oxygen and carbon clusters are known to curtail the synthesis of complex molecules if they occur rapidly at low temperatures. In this work, we show via quantum chemical and dynamical studies that the prototype reaction between O and C$_3$ possesses a small activation barrier and does not occur rapidly at low temperatures even when tunneling is considered.


Although the most stable isomers of C$_2$N and C$_2$P are linear radicals, both have cyclic isomers that lie relatively close in energy. At the RCCSD(T)/cc-pVTZ level, the cyclic isomers lie above the linear forms by only 11.1 and 5.1 kcal/mol for C$_2$N and C$_2$P, respectively. However, the barriers for cyclization are very different, with that of C$_2$N (49.3 kcal/mol) much larger than that of C$_2$P (15.3 kcal/mol). Rate calculations were performed to estimate the yield of each isomer from a process that might generate hot C$_2$N or C$_2$P such as the dissociative recombination of HCCN$^+$ or HCCP$^+$ with an electron. In spite of the differences in the potential energy surfaces, the yields are about 30% cyclic, 70% linear for both species.


The rate coefficient for the important interstellar reaction between CN and C$_2$H$_2$ has been calculated as a function of temperature between 10 K and 300 K. The potential energy surface has been determined via ab initio quantum chemical techniques. It exhibits no barrier in the entrance channel but does show a small exit channel barrier that lies below the energy of the reactants. Phase space calculations, which take the exit channel barrier into account, show the same unusual temperature dependence as determined by experiment, in which the rate coefficient first increases as the temperature is reduced below room temperature and then starts to decrease at temperatures below 100 K. Overall agreement between theory and experiment is excellent and confirms that the reaction is competitive with ion-molecule processes at cold interstellar temperatures.