

## ARTICLE

Experimental Study of  $C_2Cl_3+NO_2$  Reaction<sup>†</sup>

Tian-cheng Xiang, Kun-hui Liu, Hong-mei Su\*

*State Key Laboratory of Molecular Reaction Dynamics, Beijing National Laboratory for Molecular Sciences, Institute of Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100080, China*

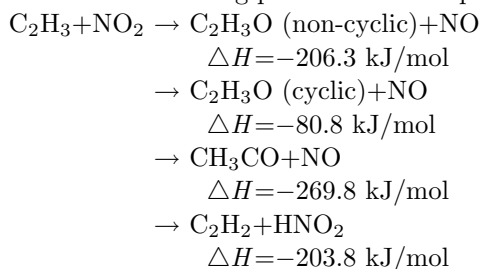
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The free radical reaction of  $C_2Cl_3$  with  $NO_2$  was investigated by step-scan time-resolved FTIR (TR-FTIR) emission spectroscopy. Due to the vibrationally excited products of  $Cl_2CO$ ,  $NO$ , and  $CO$ , strong IR emission bands were observed with high resolution TR-FTIR spectra. Four reaction channels forming  $C_2Cl_3O+NO$ ,  $CCl_3CO+NO$ ,  $CO+NO+CCl_3$ , and  $ClCNO+Cl_2CO$  were elucidated, respectively. Spectral fitting showed that the product  $CO$  was highly vibrationally excited with the nascent average vibrational energy of 60.2 kJ/mol. Possible reaction mechanism via intermediates  $C_2Cl_3NO_2$  and  $C_2Cl_3ONO$  was proposed.

**Key words:** TR-FTIR,  $C_2Cl_3$ , Vibrational population, Reaction mechanism

## I. INTRODUCTION

As the simplest alkenyl radical, the vinyl radical is regarded as the important intermediate in the combustion process of hydrocarbon [1-10].  $NO_2$  is the important pollutant produced from the hydrocarbon combustion process. The reaction of unsaturated hydrocarbon radicals with  $NO_2$  molecule may play an important role in the hydrocarbon combustion process, such as retarding the formation of PAH compounds or soot and reducing the release of pollutants into atmosphere [11-13]. A limited number of studies have been done on the reaction of vinyl with  $NO_2$  in experiment or theory [14-16]. By means of LIF spectroscopy, Huang *et al.* measured the rate constant to be  $(1.8\pm 0.05)\times 10^{-11}$  cm<sup>3</sup>/(molecule s) at room temperature [14]. Using a tubular flow reactor coupled to a photoionization mass spectrometer, Geppert *et al.* measured the rate constant for this reaction to be  $(4.19\pm 0.05)\times 10^{-11}(T/300)^{-0.60\pm 0.07}$  cm<sup>3</sup>/(molecule s) [15]. In their experiment, the only reaction product observed in the vinyl radical reaction with  $NO_2$  is  $NO$ . They also performed *ab initio* calculations and predicted the following possible reaction pathways.



These are in consistent with the unimolecular de-

composition channels of the compound nitroethylene ( $CH_2CHNO_2$ ) calculated by Gindulyte *et al.* using a variety of methods including MP2, MP4, G2, and DFT [16].

Similarly, the chlorinated vinyl radical,  $C_2Cl_3$ , should also be taken into consideration as a critical intermediate in the combustion of chlorinated hydrocarbons which generally releases bad atmospheric pollutants [17]. However, the reactions of  $C_2Cl_3$  radicals has been rarely studied. As a serial work prior to this study, we have studied the reaction of  $C_2Cl_3$  radical with  $O_2$  both theoretically [18] and experimentally [19]. In this paper, we report our preliminary experimental investigation on the products and channels of reaction  $C_2Cl_3$  radical with  $NO_2$  by means of step-scan time-resolved Fourier transform infrared emission spectroscopy (TR-FTIR). TR-FTIR is an effective technique probing multiple IR-active reaction products in real time due to its multiplex advantage and nanosecond time resolution. By observing the vibrationally excited products from the time-resolved IR emission spectra, several reaction channels are identified and the product vibrational energy disposal is derived from the spectral fitting. The experimental characterization of the products, channels and product energy disposal is of great help to understand the reaction mechanism and therefore to gain insights into related realistic processes, i.e., the pollution forming mechanism involved in the combustion of chlorinated hydrocarbons which is the usual treatments of chemical wastes and plastic wastes.

## II. EXPERIMENTS

The reaction products are monitored by step-scan, time-resolved Fourier transform emission spectroscopy [20]. This newly upgraded machine comprises a Nicolet Nexus 870 step-scan FTIR spectrometer, Lambda Physik (LPX305i) Excimer laser, a pulse generator

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\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed. E-mail: hongmei@iccas.ac.cn,

(Stanford Research DG535) to initiate the laser pulse and achieve synchronization of the laser with data collection, two digitizers (internal 100KHz 16-bit digitizer and external 100 MHz 14-bit GAGE 8012A digitizer) which offer fast time resolution and a wide dynamic range as needed, and a personal computer to control the whole experiment. The detector used in this experiment is a liquid nitrogen cooled InSb detector.

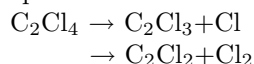
The reaction is initiated in a stainless steel flow reaction chamber. A pair of parallel multi-layer coated mirrors (reflectivity  $R > 0.95$  at 248 nm) reflect the UV laser beam multiple times to increase the photolysis zone.  $C_2Cl_3$  radicals are generated by 248 nm photodissociation (100 mJ/(cm<sup>2</sup> pulse), 10 Hz repetition rate) of  $C_2Cl_4$ . Samples of 12.00 Pa  $C_2Cl_4$  ( $\geq 99\%$ ) and 69.32 Pa  $NO_2$  ( $\geq 99.5\%$ ) enter the flow chamber 1 cm above the photolysis beam via needle valves. The chamber is pumped by an 8 L/s mechanical pump and the stagnation pressure of the chamber is measured by a MKS capacitance manometer. The constant pressure of the sample is maintained by adjusting the pumping speed and the needle valves. Transient infrared emission is collected by a pair of gold-coated White-Cell spherical mirrors and collimated by a  $CaF_2$  lens to the step-scan Fourier spectrometer (Nicolet Nexus 870). The spectrometer and the collimating tube are both flushed with  $N_2$  to eliminate the environmental  $CO_2$  absorption. The spectral resolution is set at 0.5 cm<sup>-1</sup>, the best resolution attainable with this instrument.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Photolytic source of $C_2Cl_3$ radicals

In this experiment,  $C_2Cl_3$  radicals were generated by 248 nm KrF laser photolysis of  $C_2Cl_4$ . Laser fluence dependence of the product yields have been measured in the intensity range of 4.2 and 9.6 MW/cm<sup>2</sup>. As shown in Fig.1, the slope of the fluence dependence is  $1.2 \pm 0.2$ , which means that only one photon dissociation process exists.

The one photon photodissociation process of  $C_2Cl_4$  molecules are expected to follow two pathways:



Russell *et al.* observed the formation of both the photoproducts  $C_2Cl_3$  and  $C_2Cl_2$  [17], indicating that the two pathways are of equal importance.

Besides the radical  $C_2Cl_3$ , there exist some possible interfering photofragments, i.e. Cl atoms,  $Cl_2$ , and  $C_2Cl_2$  molecules. The Cl atoms do not react with precursor or  $NO_2$  within the time scale of measurements, i.e., about hundreds of  $\mu s$  [21-24]. The other photofragments, the chlorinated acetylene  $C_2Cl_2$  and  $Cl_2$  are stable molecules and simply do not react with  $NO_2$  molecules. Therefore, all the co-existed photofragments Cl atoms,  $Cl_2$  molecules and chlorinated acetylenes

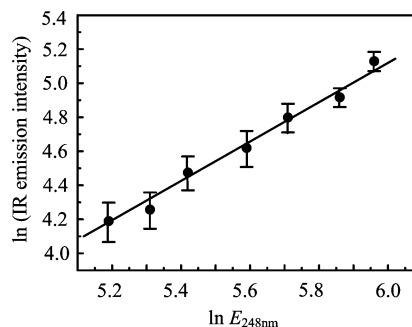


FIG. 1 Laser fluence dependence of the product IR emission signal with the slope of  $1.2 \pm 0.2$ .

$C_2Cl_2$  are not likely to compete with the highly reactive  $C_2Cl_3$  radicals in their reaction with  $NO_2$  molecules. The photodissociation of  $C_2Cl_4$  molecules provides a good source of  $C_2Cl_3$  radicals.

#### B. Identification of reaction products and channels

In the first reference experiments of the pure photodissociation of  $C_2Cl_4$ , no transient IR emission signal was detected with the detector InSb because both of the IR-active photofragments  $C_2Cl_3$  and  $C_2Cl_2$  have vibrational frequencies below 1850 cm<sup>-1</sup>, which is beyond the detection scope of InSb. When pure  $NO_2$  was photolyzed by 248 nm laser, no IR emission signal was observed. Due to the small absorption cross section of  $NO_2$  molecules at 248 nm ( $3.8 \times 10^{-20}$  cm<sup>2</sup>) [25], it is estimated that only a negligible amount (approximately 0.5%) of  $NO_2$  molecules were dissociated at a laser power of 100 mJ/cm<sup>2</sup>. As a result, no IR emissions due to the photofragments NO was observed in the TR-FTIR spectra.

Strong IR emission bands were observed upon the laser irradiation of the gas mixture of the  $C_2Cl_4$  and  $NO_2$  as shown in Fig.2, a series of TR-FTIR spectra at typical delay times from 5  $\mu s$  to 120  $\mu s$  after the initiation of the reaction by photolysis laser with a 0.5 cm<sup>-1</sup> spectral resolution. These IR emissions arise from the vibrationally excited products of the reaction of  $C_2Cl_3 + NO_2$ . Three emission bands were observed as shown in the 8  $\mu s$  spectrum. Two rotationally resolved emission bands, the 2000-2250 cm<sup>-1</sup> band and the 1850-1950 cm<sup>-1</sup> band, are results of sets of ( $v \rightarrow v-1$ ) rovibrational transitions of CO ( $v=1-9$ ) and NO ( $v=1-3$ ), respectively. The NO rovibrational lines are superimposed on top of an irresolvable emission band peak at 1850 cm<sup>-1</sup>. According to its spectral position, this band is assigned to the polyatomic molecule  $Cl_2CO$  [19,26]. Because the detector InSb cuts off at 1850 cm<sup>-1</sup>, only part of the emission bands of NO and  $Cl_2CO$  is detected in the spectra. All of these product IR emission signals appear in a few microseconds and grow to their maximum intensity roughly at 20  $\mu s$ . The

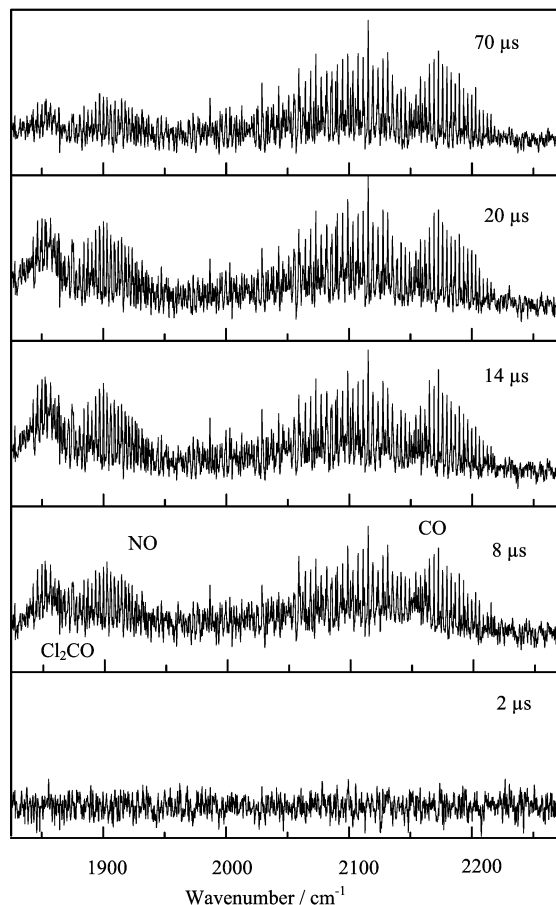
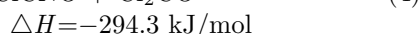
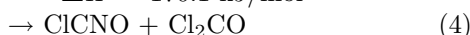
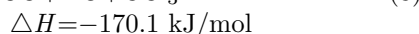
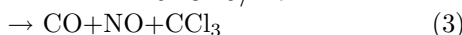
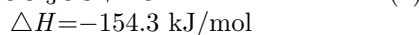
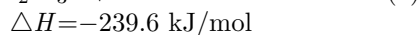


FIG. 2 TR-FTIR emission spectra of product from the reaction of  $C_2Cl_3+NO$  taken at representative reaction times from 2  $\mu s$  to 70  $\mu s$  with the spectral resolution of  $0.5\text{ cm}^{-1}$ .

intensity of the  $Cl_2CO$  band decays rapidly due to fast vibrational energy transfer of polyatomic species and by the time 70  $\mu s$ , it almost decreases to zero. In contrast, the other two diatomic species, CO and NO especially for CO, undergo slow vibrational energy transfer and thus their intensity sustains at longer delay times such as 70  $\mu s$ .

By the above spectral assignments, the following reaction channels can be elucidated for the reaction of  $C_2Cl_3+NO_2$ :



These channels are highly exothermic and thus lead to vibrationally excited products as observed in the IR emission spectra. The exothermicity of these channels is calculated using the heat of formation data in Ref.[27]. All of the reaction channels (1), (2), and (3) can con-

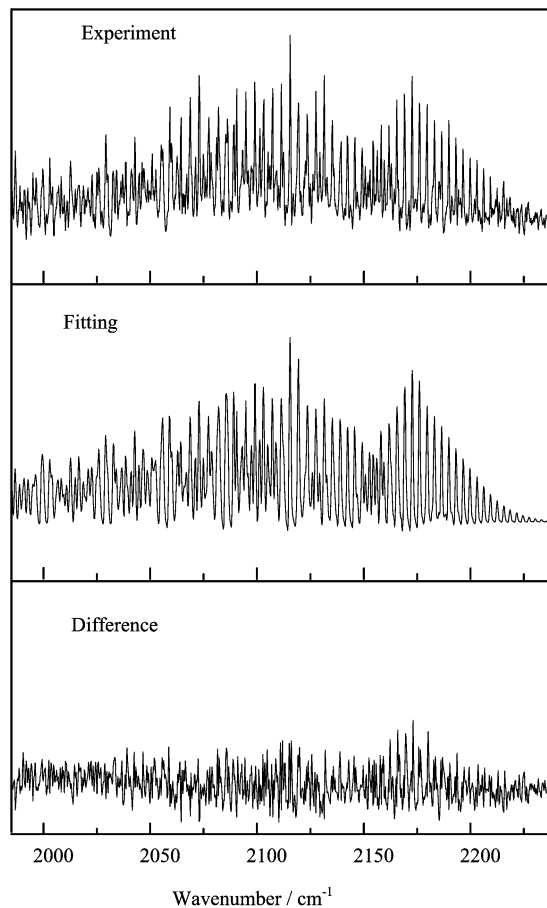


FIG. 3 Representative spectral fitting results for the IR emission band of the product CO collected at the reaction times of 16  $\mu s$ . The difference between the experimental spectrum and the corresponding fitted spectrum is also shown at the bottom.

tribute to the formation of the product NO, whereas the product CO or  $Cl_2CO$  corresponds to either channel (3) or channel (4), respectively.

### C. Vibrational energy disposal of product CO

The vibrational energy disposal of the diatomic product CO are analyzed by fitting the IR spectra using a non-linear fitting program which has been described in details in Ref.[28]. For another diatomic product NO, spectral fitting is not performed simply because only part of its spectrum is observed with the detector InSb. Figure 3 shows the representative fitting results for the CO spectra collected at the time of 16  $\mu s$ . Both of the rotational line positions and intensities fit well with the experimental spectra.

By spectral fitting, the vibrational populations of CO are derived to be 1, 0.32, 0.16, 0.11, 0.07, 0.06, 0.04, 0.03, 0.02 for the vibrational levels of  $v=1-9$ , respectively. As shown in Fig.4, the vibrational population

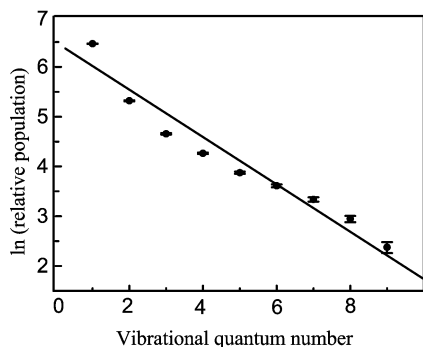


FIG. 4 Representative Boltzmann plot of the vibrational distribution of CO from the  $C_2Cl_3+NO_2$  reaction at the reaction time of 16  $\mu s$ . The straight line is the best fit of the data to a Boltzmann distribution with a temperature of  $7700 \pm 900$  K.

can be described nicely by a Boltzmann distribution with a vibrational temperature of  $T_{vib} = 7700 \pm 900$  K. The corresponding average vibrational energy is thus calculated to be 56.8 kJ/mol.

Similarly, we fit the CO emission bands and derive the CO vibrational state distribution at different delay times. It is found that at all times, the product CO shows Boltzmann vibrational distribution. The corresponding average vibrational energy of CO at different reaction time of 8, 16, 20, 40, and 70  $\mu s$  is 60.2, 56.8, 55.6, 54.3, and 53.5 kJ/mol, respectively. Apparently, the average vibrational energy of CO does not alter much with time, indicating that CO undergoes slow vibrational relaxation. This is due to the inefficient vibrational energy dissipation of CO molecules [29]. The colliding bath molecules  $NO_2$  and  $C_2Cl_4$  in the system do not have any vibrational modes in resonance with the CO stretching ( $2140\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ). Although roughly 60 collisions (under total pressure of 81.3 Pa) occurs within 8  $\mu s$ , the earliest time to observe descent signal, the average vibrational energy obtained at this time, 60.2 kJ/mol, should be very close to the nascent vibrational energy of CO. Divided by the available energy of the reaction channel (3) which generates CO, it is found that approximately 35% of energy is released as the CO vibrational energy. If assuming the internal energy of the other two accompanied products NO and  $CCl_3$ , substantial energy partition into the product internal degrees of freedom is expected.

The rotational temperature of 300 K always generates the best fitting results indicating that the rotational excitation has been thermalized. This is reasonable because these spectra are acquired as early as 8  $\mu s$ , corresponding to roughly 60 collisions, which is sufficient to quench rotational excitation but not to alter the nascent vibrational excitation yet.

#### D. Possible reaction mechanism

Calculated at the MP2/6-311+G(d,p) level of theory [15], the  $C_2H_3+NO_2$  reaction is revealed to proceed through three major intermediates nitroethylene ( $C_2H_3NO_2$ ) and two vinyl nitrite isomers ( $C_2H_3ONO$ ). The N-site attack of  $NO_2$  is favored and thus the nitroethylene is initially formed with association energy of 313.6 kJ/mol. The energized nitroethylene can surmount the barrier rearranging to vinyl nitrite and subsequently decompose into the final products of  $C_2H_3O+NO$ . The nitro-nitrite rearrangements are found to be crucial in the mechanism.

In the present study for the reaction of  $C_2Cl_3+NO_2$ , similar mechanism can be proposed as shown in Fig.5. The reaction starts with the association of the  $C_2Cl_3$  radical with  $NO_2$  by the N-attack style forming  $C_2Cl_3NO_2$  and its subsequent isomerization to  $C_2Cl_3ONO$ . The further dissociation of  $C_2Cl_3ONO$  leads to the final products of  $C_2Cl_3O+NO$ . On the other hand,  $C_2Cl_3ONO$  can rearrange to  $CCl_3CONO$  through a Cl atom migration and the further decomposition of  $CCl_3CONO$  forms eventually  $CCl_3CO+NO$ . The chlorinated acetyl radical  $CCl_3CO$  is highly unstable and expected to decompose further into  $CCl_3+CO$ .

The above proposed mechanism can explain well the reaction channels (1)-(3). For the reaction channel (4) generating the observed products  $Cl_2CO$ , more complicated mechanism is anticipated. To validate the feasibility of these channels and mechanism, detailed *ab initio* calculations are being performed. Interesting questions would arise such that if the nitro-nitrite rearrangements are also playing crucial roles in the reaction of  $C_2Cl_3+NO_2$  and why substantial amount of energy is released as the internal excitation of the products. Combining the experimental findings with *ab initio* calculations, these questions are to be answered by further studies.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, for this free radical reaction of  $C_2Cl_3$  with  $NO_2$  which is of fundamental importance to atmospheric pollution process, we present the preliminary experimental results of the products, channels and vibrational energy disposal studied by step-scan TR-FITR emission spectroscopy. Vibrationally excited reaction products of  $Cl_2CO$ , CO and NO are observed and four reaction channels forming  $C_2Cl_3O+NO$ ,  $CCl_3CO+NO$ ,  $CO+NO+CCl_3$ , and  $ClCNO+Cl_2CO$ , respectively, are therefore elucidated. Spectral fitting shows that the product CO is highly vibrationally excited with the nascent average vibrational energy of 60.2 kJ/mol. Possible reaction mechanism via intermediates  $C_2Cl_3NO_2$  and  $C_2Cl_3ONO$  is proposed. These results can contribute to the understanding the pollution forming mechanism involved in the combustion of

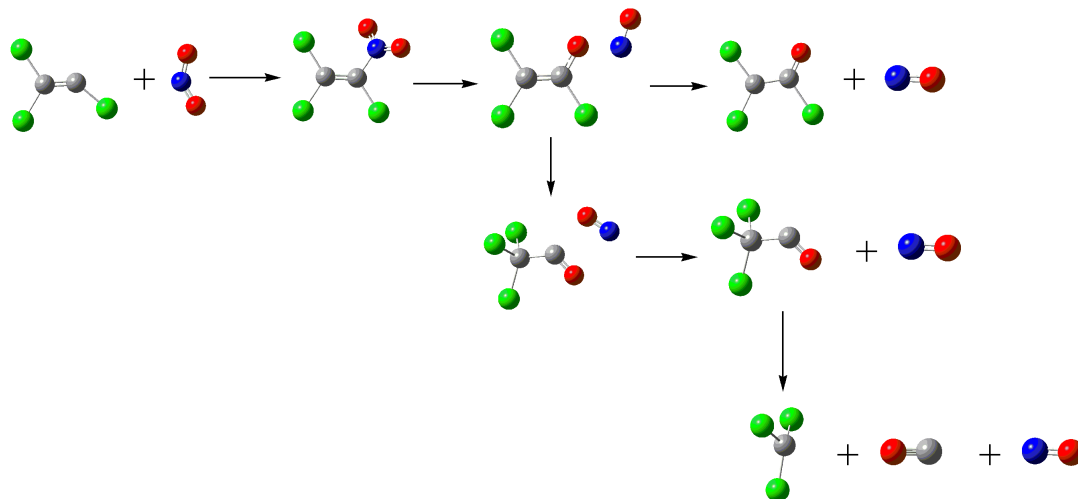


FIG. 5 Schematic diagram of the proposed reaction mechanism. The grey balls, green balls, red balls, and blue balls denote C atoms, Cl atoms, O atoms, and N atoms, respectively. For interpretation of the color in this figure legend, the reader can refer to the web version of this article.

chemical wastes and plastic wastes containing chlorinated hydrocarbons.

## V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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