CHEMISTRY LETTERS, pp. 561-562, 1977. Published by the Chemical Society of Japan

NEW HIGHLY STRAINED UNSATURATED PROPELLANES, [4.2.2]PROPELLA-2,4,7-TRIENES

Fumio TODA and Takayuki YOSHIOKA

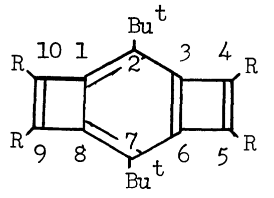
Department of Industrial Chemistry, Faculty of Engineering, Ehime University,
Matsuyama 790

Cycloaddition of tetracyanoethylene to the benzene nucleus of 2,7-di-tert-butyl-4,5,9,10-tetra(p-halophenyl)tricyclo[6.2.0.0^{3,6}]deca-1,3(6),4,7,9-pentaene (**1**) afforded the title propellane, 2,7-di-tert-butyl-11,11,12,12-tetracyano-4,5,9,10-tetra(p-halophenyl)tetracyclo[6.2.2.0.0^{3,6}]dodeca-2,4,6,9-tetraene (**2**).

The most highly strained unsaturated propellane which has been isolated so far is [4.2.2]propella-3,7-diene.1) We now report the isolation of two derivatives (**2a** and **2b**) of more strained unsaturated propellane (**3**), and some thermal reactions of them.

Stirring of a 1:1 mixture of 4,5,9,10-tetra(p-bromophenyl)-2,7-di-tert-butyltricyclo-[6.2.0.0^{3,6}]deca-1,3(6),4,7,9-pentaene (**1a**)2) and tetracyanoethylene (TCNE) in p-xylene under N_2 at room temperature for 0.5 h afforded 4,5,9,10-tetra(p-bromophenyl)-2,7-di-tert-butyl-11,11,12,12-tetracyano[6.2.2.0.0^{3,6}]dodeca-2,4,6,9-tetraene (**2a**)3) in a 66% yield; λ_{max} 251 (ε 44700), 317 sh (7800), and 340 sh nm (3500); m/e (rel intensity) 986 (M^+, 100) and 858 (M^+- TCNE, 60); ^{1}H-NMR δ 1.02 (s, Bu^t, 18H) and 7.0-7.7 ppm (m, Ar, 16H); ^{13}C-NMR δ 31.6 (CH_3), 33.8 ($\overset{*}{C}(CH_3)_3$), 45.4 ($C_{1,8}$), 66.7 ($C_{11,12}$), and 111.4 and 112.1 ppm (CN). The same treatment of the Cl-analog of **1a** (**1b**) with TCNE gave **2b** in an 84% yield. By heating, **2a** and **2b** decomposed gradually without melting. This cycloaddition of TCNE to the 3,6-positions of **1a** and **1b** is in contrast to the previously reported cycloaddition of TCNE to the 4,5-positions of **1c** which affords **5c**.4) This contrast would be due to an inductive effect of halogen, which would reduce electron density of the 4,5-positions of **1** and then prevent the cycloaddition to these positions.

Heating of **2a** under reflux in p-xylene under N_2 for 0.5 h afforded 2,3,7,8-tetra(p-bromophenyl)-5,10-di-tert-butyl-11,11,12,12-tetracyanotetracyclo[4.4.2.0^{1,4}.0^{6,9}]dodeca-2,4,7,9-tetraene (**4a**) in a 44% yield; λ_{max} 244 (ε 21500) and 318 nm (39600); m/e (rel intensity) 986 (M^+, 1) and 858 (M^+-TCNE, 100); ^{1}H-NMR δ 0.92 (s, Bu^t, 18H) and 7.1-7.7 ppm (m, Ar, 16H); ^{13}C-NMR δ 31.1 (CH_3), 35.3 ($\overset{*}{C}(CH_3)_3$), 56.9 ($C_{1,6}$), 61.9 ($C_{11,12}$), and 111.6 and 114.3 ppm (CN), and **5a** in a 40% yield, mp 286-288 °C. Similarly, **2b** gave **4b** (56%) and **5b** (25%). Both **4a** and **4b** did not show clear melting point due



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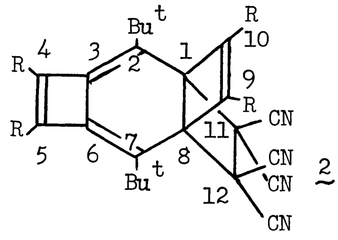

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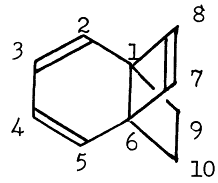

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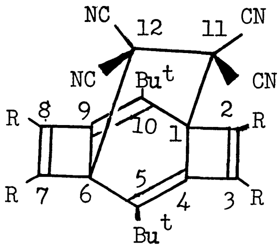

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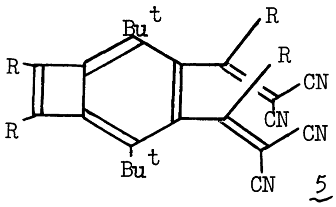

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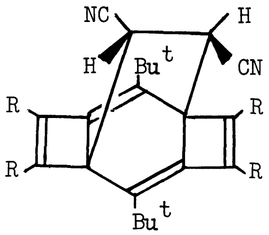

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a: R = p-Br-C_6H_4- ; b: R = p-Cl-C_6H_4- ; c: R = C_6H_5-

to their thermal isomerizations. The spectral data of 4 were comparable to those of analogous compounds.5) The thermal rearrangement of 2 to 4 and 5 would proceed successively through the cycloreversion of 2 into 1 and TCNE, and through the cycloaddition of TCNE to the 3,8- and 4,5-positions which finally affords 4 and 5, respectively. These pathways are supported by the following experiment. Heating of 2a in the presence of an equimolar amount of 1c afforded 1a in a 63% yield in addition to small amounts of 4c and 5c.

Although 4 was not converted into 5 under the above thermolysis conditions, heating of 4a and 4b under reflux in o-dichlorobenzene under N_2 for 0.5 h afforded 5a and 5b, respectively, both in 88% yields. This relative instability of 4 would be due to steric repulsion between Bu^t and CN groups, because 6a which had been prepared in a 72% yield (mp 308 °C) by the thermal cycloaddition of trans-1,2-dicyanoethylene to 1a was stable up to 180 °C.

Acknowledgement We are grateful to Drs. T. Oshima and M. Hatakenaka of Ube Industries Ltd. for the measurement of ^{13}C-NMR spectra.

References and Notes

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3) UV and NMR spectra were measured in $CHCl_3$ and $CDCl_3$, respectively. All new compounds gave satisfactory elemental analyses.

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(Received March 19, 1977)