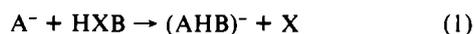


Formation of Gas-Phase Solvated Br⁻ and I⁻ in Ion/Molecule Reactions of Halobenzenes. Revised Heat of Formation of Benzyne

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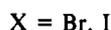
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Received August 30, 1990*

The formation of gas-phase solvated anions through low-pressure bimolecular ion/molecule reactions has been a recurrent and fascinating aspect of the ion chemistry of negative ions.¹ The scheme for these processes involves in general an elimination-type reaction initiated by attack of a strong gas-phase base (A⁻) on an organic substrate containing a mildly acidic site, HXB, as shown in reaction 1. The outcome of reaction 1 has been rec-



ognized to be determined by a delicate balance of thermochemical parameters² and dynamical properties.³ These reactions are particularly attractive because they allow for the quantitative determination of gas-phase ion-solvent binding energies through solvent switching equilibria,⁴ and for probing the effect of solvation on simple organic reactions in the gas phase.^{4d,5}

We report a novel set of gas-phase reactions of halobenzenes that allow for the specific formation of solvated Br⁻ and I⁻ ions. Earlier studies of negative ions with fluorobenzenes established some unusual nucleophilic reactions and helped to bracket the gas-phase acidity of C₆H₅F and C₆H₅Cl somewhere between the acidities of H₂O and CH₃OH.⁶ We now find that hydroxide ions generated in an FT-ICR spectrometer react rapidly with bromobenzene and iodobenzene,⁷ according to reaction 2. Reaction



2a is surprisingly favored over the simple proton abstraction by almost a factor of 10. The C₆H₄X⁻ ion in turn reacts extremely fast with H₂O to yield also the solvated ion (reaction 3). Reactions 2 and 3 are not observed for chlorobenzene or fluorobenzene.



Alkoxide ions also react in a similar way to reaction 2a but in a selective fashion (reaction 4). While iodobenzene reacts rapidly



with MeO⁻ and EtO⁻, bromobenzene only undergoes facile reaction with MeO⁻. With EtO⁻, less than 20% conversion to the solvated ion is observed after 3 s of reaction time with bromobenzene at a pressure of 2.6 × 10⁻⁵ Pa. Thus, it is likely that reaction 4 is endothermic for this case. Finally, the reaction of a weaker base like F⁻ with C₆H₅I yields only traces of FHI⁻. Given that no proton abstraction is observed in reaction 4, the gas-phase acidity of bromobenzene and iodobenzene must also lie between the acidities of water and methanol.

The observation of reaction 2a for C₆H₅I is barely compatible on energetic grounds with the available thermochemical data.⁸ On the other hand, reaction 4 is consistently predicted to be endothermic for all cases, a fact at odds with the ease of these reactions. Thus, we are led to conclude that the proposed heat of formation of *o*-benzyne of 493 ± 21 kJ mol⁻¹, derived from ICR equilibria experiments,⁹ must be too high. A revised heat of formation of *o*-benzyne can be obtained by use of a bracketing technique for the alkoxide reactions with bromobenzene.¹⁰ The bond dissociation energies of the Br⁻(HOR) species can be safely assumed to be in the range *D*(MeOH...Br⁻) = 65 ± 8 kJ mol⁻¹ and *D*(EtOH...Br⁻) = 68 ± 8 kJ mol⁻¹ by comparison with the data available for Br⁻(H₂O)¹¹ and the trend observed in the Cl⁻ and I⁻ adducts with ROH by high-pressure mass spectrometry.¹² This argument leads us to propose a new value for the heat of formation of benzyne of 440 ± 10 kJ mol⁻¹. This value¹³ would then predict reaction 4 to be 5 kJ mol⁻¹ exothermic for the reaction of MeO⁻ and bromobenzene, 5 kJ mol⁻¹ endothermic for the corresponding EtO⁻ reaction, and thermoneutral for F⁻ with C₆H₅I. This revised value would also predict reactions 2 and 4 to be still substantially endothermic for fluorobenzene and chlorobenzene.

The mechanism of reactions 2 and 4 must bear strong resemblance to that depicted for the general reaction 1. In the present case, the binding energy of the nascent ionic moiety provides the driving force required to dehydrohalogenate the halobenzene and yield the solvated species.

The reactions reported here provide a powerful way to explore the gas-phase stability and reactivity of solvated Br⁻ and I⁻ species. These findings and the revised heat of formation of benzyne should also stimulate the recent interest shown in the gas-phase ion chemistry of benzyne.¹⁴

Acknowledgment. We thank the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (SON/NWO) for financial support. J.M.R. also thanks the NWO for providing a Visitors Grant and the Sao Paulo Science Foundation (FAPESP) and the Brazilian Research Council (CNPq) for continuous support.

Registry No. C₆H₅Br, 108-86-1; C₆H₅I, 591-50-4; OH⁻, 14280-30-9; MeO⁻, 3315-60-4; EtO⁻, 16331-64-9; F⁻, 16984-48-8; *o*-benzyne, 462-80-6.

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