# Synthesis and Characterization by Raman Spectroscopy of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>; its Thermodynamic and Kinetic Stability and that of Related Salts<sup>†</sup>

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The thermodynamically and kinetically unstable salt  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  was prepared by the reaction of stoicheiometric quantities of  $AsBr_3$ ,  $Br_2$ , and  $AsF_5$ , and characterized by Raman spectroscopy at -196 °C. It was shown by Raman spectroscopy that  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  decomposes to  $AsF_3$  and  $Br_2$  via  $AsBr_3$ . The energetics of the formation and decomposition have been estimated, and reaction pathways suggested. Simple estimates of the energetics of the formation of  $AsBr_4AlBr_4$  showed it should have greater stability than that of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ ; it was subsequently prepared but shown to be in equilibrium at room temperature with  $AsBr_3$ ,  $Br_2$ , and  $AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$ . The differences in thermodynamic stability of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  have been accounted for, and reasons for the kinetic instability of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  proposed.

We have been able to estimate<sup>‡</sup> the enthalpy of formation and relative stabilities of the hexafluoroarsenate salts of the simpler homopolyatomic cations of Groups 16 and 17,<sup>1</sup> MBr<sub>3</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>  $(M = S \text{ or } Se)^{2a} \text{ Sel}_3\text{AsF}_{6}^{2a} \text{ Se}_2\text{Br}_5\text{AsF}_{6}^{2b}$  and to account for the non-existence of  $\text{Se}_2\text{I}_5\text{AsF}_{6}^{2b,c}$  using a simple model.<sup>1,2c</sup> More recently we employed this approach as an aid to the synthesis of simple  $AsF_6^-$  salts, and estimated that  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ might be preparable from stoicheiometric quantities of AsBr<sub>3</sub>,  $Br_2$ , and  $AsF_5$ . The salt  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  was subsequently prepared, and characterized by Raman spectroscopy at -196 °C. It is unstable at room temperature; its decomposition was followed by Raman spectroscopy, and the intermediate AsBr<sub>3</sub>, and the final products AsF<sub>3</sub> and Br<sub>2</sub>, were identified. The model showed the decomposition to be thermodynamically favourable, and pathways to both the formation and the decomposition of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  have been suggested. We estimated the energetics of the formation of other  $AsBr_4^+$  salts by various routes, and subsequently prepared AsBr<sub>4</sub>AlBr<sub>4</sub>, which is stable at room temperature but is in equilibrium with AsBr<sub>3</sub>, Br<sub>2</sub>, and  $AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$ .

The cation AsBr4<sup>+</sup> is formally a derivative of the as yet unprepared AsBr<sub>5</sub>. In contrast to PCl<sub>5</sub> and SbCl<sub>5</sub>, which are stable at ambient temperature,  $AsCl_5$  was prepared at  $-105 \,^{\circ}C$ and is stable for some days at  $-50 \,^{\circ}C.^{2d}$  Thus, the present absence of AsBr<sub>5</sub>, and the low stability of AsCl<sub>5</sub>, are examples of the tendency of the non-metals of the fourth row, As, Se, and Br, to be unstable in their maximum oxidation state,<sup>3</sup> and AsBr<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> salts are of interest in this context. Although AsCl<sub>5</sub> is unstable,  $AsCl_4^+$  and  $AsCl_6^-$  salts including  $AsCl_4AsF_6$  have substantial stabilities at room temperature. In fact AsCl<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> is prepared by the reaction of AsF<sub>3</sub> and Cl<sub>2</sub> at room temperature; in contrast AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> decomposes to AsF<sub>3</sub> and Br<sub>2</sub>. We account for these differences by application of our simple energetics model. The salt PBr<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub> is kinetically stable but thermodynamically unstable, in contrast to AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>, which is both kinetically and thermodynamically unstable. We suggest reasons for the kinetic stability of PBr<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub>, and other related kinetically stable salts. Using a similar conceptual and experimental approach, one of us has recently prepared AsI4<sup>+</sup> (in AsI<sub>4</sub>AlCl<sub>4</sub>),<sup>4</sup> and PI<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> (in PI<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>).<sup>5</sup> Thus, salts containing  $MX_4^+$  (M = P or As; X = F, Cl, Br, or I, but excluding the species  $AsF_4^+$ )<sup>6,7</sup> have been characterized. These salts are of interest as simple species and as members of the tetrahedral MX<sub>4</sub> class of compounds and ions. A preliminary communication of this work has been published,<sup>8</sup> a full account of which is given below.

## Experimental

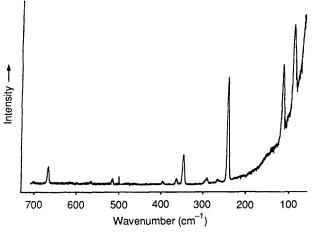
General Procedures.—Techniques, except those listed below, have been described in ref. 9. The compounds  $AsBr_3$  (Alfa), AlBr<sub>3</sub> (Merck), and  $AsF_5$  (Ozak Mahoning) were used without further purification. Reactions were carried out in a 10-mm glass tube incorporating a Rotoflo valve and an attached 5-cm thin-walled (5 mm) n.m.r. tube (for Raman spectroscopy). Raman spectra were recorded in the solid state using a Spex Ramalab spectrometer with a Spectra Physics 2 W argon-ion laser exciting line 5145 Å), slit width 4 cm<sup>-1</sup>, or an Ybin Yvon U 1000 spectrometer with a Spectra Physics krypton laser (exciting line 6471 Å), slit width 10 cm<sup>-1</sup>; Stokes radiation was analysed at a 90° angle to the exciting radiation at – 196 or – 100 °C, respectively.

Preparation of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>.—In a typical reaction AsF<sub>5</sub> (1.198 g, 7.05 mmol) was condensed at -196 °C on to a mixture of Br<sub>2</sub> (0.376 g, 2.35 mmol) and AsBr<sub>3</sub> (1.479 g, 4.70 mmol) which had been held previously at room temperature (r.t.). The reaction mixture was warmed to -5 °C until a clear solution was formed (1 min) and then recooled to -196 °C. This process was repeated in excess of 10 times and a white solid formed (no Br<sub>2</sub> was present). The volatiles (AsF<sub>3</sub>) were removed by pumping under a dynamic vacuum for 10 min at -5 °C and after that, the vessel was cooled to -196 °C. The Raman spectrum (5 145-Å excitation, -196 °C) (Figure and Table 1) was indicative of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> (1.65 g, yield 60%).

Thermal Stability of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ .—The solid salt decomposed within a few minutes at room temperature. At -78 °C there was slow decomposition, and after 15 min at -50 °C a significant fraction of the salt had decomposed (see Table 1). However, the compound appeared to be stable for several days at -196 °C (Raman).

 $<sup>\</sup>dagger$  Non-S.I. unit employed: cal = 4.184 J.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>‡</sup> We recognize that our approach employs an approximation for energy values that are not available, and therefore we use the term 'estimate'. In the text we compare our estimated values with those that have been more rigorously determined.



**Figure.** Raman spectrum of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  at -196 °C. <sup>*a*</sup> Peak at 515 cm<sup>-1</sup> attributable to the glass container

Table 1.	Identification	of	AsBr <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	by	Raman	spectroscopy
(excitation	i line 5 145 Å, -	-19	6°C and of t	he d	ecomposi	ition products
(time sequ	ence)					

Time	Identified	Identification		
Time, conditions	species <sup>a</sup>	method	value <sup>b</sup>	assignment
Immediately after	AsBr <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	Raman	88 (94)	$AsBr_4^+ v_2$
preparation, vessel	4 0		115 (74)	$\frac{\text{AsBr}_4 + v_2}{\text{AsBr}_4 + v_1}$
held at - 196 °C			244 (100)	$AsBr_4^+ v_1$
			349 (28)	$AsBr_4^+ v_3$
				$AsF_6^{-1}v_5^{-1}$
				$AsF_6^- v_2$
				$AsF_6^- v_1^2$
			702 (1)	
	AsBr <sub>3</sub> (traces)	Raman	· · ·	$AsBr_3v_1$
	Br <sub>2</sub> (traces)	Raman	292 (9)	
		Raman		Not assigned
After 15 min at	AsBr <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	Raman	113 (100)	AsBr. + v.e
$-50 ^{\circ}\mathrm{C}^{d}$			244 (96)	AsBr <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> $v_1$
			349 (38)	$AsBr_4^+ v_1$ $AsBr_4^+ v_3$ $AsF_6^- v_5$ $AsF_6^- v_5$
			370 (25)	AsF <sup>2</sup> v <sub>s</sub>
			671 (32)	$AsF_6^-v_1$
	AsBr <sub>3</sub>	Raman		$AsBr_3v_2$
	5		258 (24)	$AsBr_{3}v_{3}$
			268 (38)	$AsBr_3v_1$
	Br <sub>2</sub>	Raman	292 (70)	
	- 2	characte	ristic colo	ur
After 15 min at	AsBr <sub>3</sub>	Raman	95 (23)	AsBr <sub>3</sub> v <sub>4</sub>
- 50 °C and 5 min at			105 (39)	$AsBr_{3}v_{4}$
+25 °C <sup>d</sup>			130 (37)	$AsBr_{1}v_{2}$
			258 (19)	$AsBr_3v_3$
				$AsBr_3v_1$
			282 (4)	$AsBr_3v_1$
	Br <sub>2</sub>	Raman	292 (15)	Br <sub>2</sub>
	-	characte	ristic colo	ur
After 15 min at	AsF <sub>3</sub>	i.r. (gas)	695s	$AsF_3v_2$
- 50 °C and 15 min	-		750m	$AsF_3v_1$
at +25 °C	Br <sub>2</sub>	characte	ristic colo	ur

<sup>a</sup> All species are in the solid state unless otherwise specified. <sup>b</sup> Raman and i.r. values (cm<sup>-1</sup>). Intensities: i.r., s = strong, m = medium; Raman, intensities in parantheses (measured area under the peak) are relative to the strongest line given a value of 100. <sup>c</sup> Solid bromine (deep red) is a very weak Raman scatterer; the observed values for v<sub>1</sub> are in agreement with those of a pure sample of Br<sub>2</sub> (s) the Raman spectrum of which we obtained in a separate experiment. <sup>d</sup> The sample was recooled to -196 °C and the spectrum recorded. <sup>e</sup> Intensity may be too high, attributable to overlap with v<sub>4</sub> AsBr<sub>3</sub>.

The final products of the decompostion reaction are  $Br_2$  (Raman) and  $AsF_3$  (i.r. spectroscopy);  $AsBr_3$  was detected as an intermediate (see Table 1).

The preparation of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> in AsF<sub>3</sub> solution was carried out as described above, except that AsF<sub>3</sub> (*ca.* 2 cm<sup>3</sup>) was condensed on to the mixture of Br<sub>2</sub> and AsBr<sub>3</sub> before addition of AsF<sub>5</sub>. The reaction mixture was warmed to 0 °C and thermally cycled 10 times ( $-196 \le T \le -5$  °C). An insoluble solid was formed (AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>, Raman spectroscopy) which liberated bromine on standing in liquid AsF<sub>3</sub> at 0 °C.

Reaction of AsF<sub>5</sub> with AsBr<sub>3</sub>.—Arsenic pentafluoride (0.2561 g, 1.509 mmol) was condensed, at -196 °C, on to AsBr<sub>3</sub> (0.9438 g, 2.999 mmol) in a Raman tube (5 mm). The reaction mixture was warmed to r.t. for 1 min and then recooled to -196 °C. The Raman spectrum (5145-Å excitation, -196 °C) showed peaks attributable to AsBr<sub>3</sub>, AsF<sub>5</sub>, and AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> (v<sub>1</sub> and v<sub>3</sub> of AsBr<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>).

Attempted Synthesis of  $AsBr_4PF_6$ .—(1) Stoicheiometric amounts of  $AsBr_3$ ,  $Br_2$ , and  $PF_5$  were allowed to react in a manner similar to that described for  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ . Bromine was still present after thermal cycling, and  $AsBr_3$  was the only solid identified (-196 °C, Raman spectroscopy) after removal of the volatiles (PF<sub>5</sub>, traces of OPF<sub>3</sub>, i.r. spectroscopy) at 0 °C.

(2) Arsenic tribromide (0.2004 g, 0.6369 mmol) was condensed on to  $PF_5$  (0.0803 g, 0.6378 mmol) and BrF (*ca*. 0.64 mmol) in an attempt to prepare  $AsBr_4PF_6$  according to equation (1). The BrF (not directly identified) was first prepared <sup>6</sup> by condensing  $F_2$  onto  $Br_2$  which was frozen as a thin film on the surface of the Raman tube. After thermally

$$AsBr_3 + BrF + PF_5 \longrightarrow AsBr_4PF_6$$
(1)

cycling ten times between -196 and -5 °C the reaction mixture had the colour of elemental bromine and the gas-phase i.r. spectrum at r.t. showed only bands attributable to AsF<sub>3</sub> and PF<sub>5</sub> (and some POF<sub>3</sub>). All the products were volatile and were readily removed under a dynamic vacuum.

(3) Arsenic trifluoride (5.66 g) and PF<sub>3</sub> (1.69 g) were added to Br<sub>2</sub> (0.54 g) in a Parr bomb (Monel 400, 40 cm<sup>3</sup>) [*i.e.* AsF<sub>3</sub> and PF<sub>3</sub> were in excess relative to that needed for the reverse of equation (9) with X = Br, E = P, and M = As] and left at r.t. for 6 d. The volatile products were shown to contain PF<sub>5</sub>, traces of OPF<sub>3</sub>, PF<sub>3</sub>, AsF<sub>3</sub> (i.r. spectroscopy), and Br<sub>2</sub> (appearance). The solid residue was identified as AsBr<sub>3</sub> (Raman spectroscopy m.p. 32—34 °C).

Reaction of AsF<sub>3</sub> with AsBr<sub>3</sub>.—Arsenic trifluoride (ca. 3 cm<sup>3</sup>) was condensed on to AsBr<sub>3</sub> (0.4256 g, 1.3527 mmol) in a Raman tube at -196 °C. At r.t. the mixture consisted of a liquid over a solid. The Raman spectrum (6471-Å excitation) of the frozen liquid only showed two peaks (600 and 700 cm<sup>-1</sup>), attributable to solid AsF<sub>3</sub>; the solid showed much stronger peaks, attributable only to solid AsBr<sub>3</sub>.

Attempted Synthesis of  $AsBr_4Sb_2F_{11}$ .—The salt  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ was prepared as described above. At -78 °C SbF<sub>5</sub> (2.2501 g, 10.3815 mmol) was condensed onto solid  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  (*ca.* 2.92 g, 5 mmol) [see equation (2)], followed by thermal cycling between -5 and -196 °C ten times. The i.r. spectrum of the

$$AsBr_4AsF_6 + 2 SbF_5 \longrightarrow AsBr_4Sb_2F_{11} + AsF_5 \quad (2)$$

solid, and its weight (2.3268 g), was consistent with  $\text{SbF}_3$ .  $\text{SbF}_5^{10}$  (5.88 mmol) and some other material (perhaps occluded  $\text{SbF}_5$ ).

Preparation of  $AsBr_4AlBr_4$  (*i*) and  $AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$  (*ii*).—(*i*) Bromine (0.707 g, 4.42 mmol) was condensed on to a mixture Table 2. Raman bands (excitation line 6 471 Å, -100 °C) of 'AsBr<sub>4</sub>AlBr<sub>4</sub>' and 'AsBr<sub>4</sub>Al<sub>2</sub>Br<sub>7</sub>'

Sample <sup>a</sup>	Raman <sup>b</sup>	Assignment
$AsBr_4AlBr_4$ prepared	96 (78)	$AlBr_4 v_2$
according to equation (4),	115 (80)	$AlBr_4^{-}v_4^{-}$ $AsBr_4^{+}v_4^{-}$
(i), equilibria at 45 °C,		$AsBr_4^+ v_4$
quenched to -100 °C	201 (64)	$AlBr_4 v_1$
		$Al_2Br_7 d$
	233 (100)	$AsBr_4^+ v_1$
	258—289 (vb)	AsBr <sub>3</sub> $v_1$ and $v_3$
	300 (69)	Br <sub>2</sub> e
	344 (70)	$AsBr_4^+ v_3$
AsBr <sub>4</sub> AlBr <sub>4</sub> prepared	116 (73)	$AsBr_4^+ v_4/AlBr_4^- v_4$
according to equation (4),	202 (57)	$AlBr_4 v_1$
(i), equilibrium frozen from		$Al_2Br_7 d$
5 to -100 °C	233 (100)	$AsBr_4^+ v_1$
	260—285 (vb)	AsBr <sub>3</sub> $v_1$ and $v_3$
	298 (71)	$\operatorname{Br}_2 e$
	344 (62)	$AsBr_4^+ v_3$
$AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$ prepared	116 (78)	$AsBr_4^+ v_4 / AlBr_4^- v_4$
according to equation (5),	201 <sup>f</sup> (77)	$AlBr_4 v_1$
(ii), equilibrium frozen from		$Al_2Br_7 d$
20 to -100 °C	$233^{f}(100)$	$AsBr_4^+ v_1$
	$302^{f}$ (86)	$\operatorname{Br}_2 e$
	344 <sup>f</sup> (90)	$AsBr_4^+ v_3$
$AsBr_4AlBr_4$ prepared	76 (9)	
according to equation (4),	88 (10)	$AsBr_4^+ v_2$
( <i>iii</i> ), equilibrium frozen from	114 (4)	$AsBr_4^+/AlBr_4^-v_4$
20 to -100 °C	200 (1)	$AlBr_4 v_1$
	231 (6)	$AsBr_4^+ v_1$
	266 (1)	$AsBr_3v_1$
	298 (100)	$\operatorname{Br}_2 e$
	342 (3)	$AsBr_4^+ v_3$
	596 (1)	$AlBr_3 v_3$

<sup>a</sup> All species in the solid phase unless otherwise specified. <sup>b</sup> In cm<sup>-1</sup>. Raman intensities in parentheses (measured area under the peak) are relative to the strongest line (100); the baseline was off-scale at 90 cm<sup>-1</sup>. <sup>c</sup> cf. D. H. Brown and D. T. Stewart, *Spectrochim. Acta, Part A*, 1970, **26**, 1344. <sup>d</sup> A sample of pure KAl<sub>2</sub>Br<sub>7</sub> made from KBr and AlBr<sub>3</sub> showed only one peak at 205 cm<sup>-1</sup> (excitation 5 145 Å). <sup>e</sup> See footnote c in Table 1. <sup>f</sup> Broad lines.

**Table 3.** Raman bands (cm<sup>-1</sup>) with intensities in parentheses of  $AsBr_4^+$  (in  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ ),  $AsCl_4^+$  (in  $AsCl_4AsF_6$ ), and  $GeBr_4$ 

AsBr <sub>4</sub> <sup>+ a</sup>	AsCl <sub>4</sub> + b	GeBr4 <sup>c</sup>	Assignment		
88 (94)	156 (78)	75	V2		
115 (74)	187 (92)	111	$v_4$		
244 (100)	422 (100)	236	$v_1$		
349 (28)	500 (35)	332	v <sub>3</sub>		
<sup>a</sup> This work. <sup>b</sup> See refs. 11 and 12. <sup>c</sup> See refs. 13 and 14.					

of AsBr<sub>3</sub> (1.380 g, 4.39 mmol) and AlBr<sub>3</sub> (1.175 g, 4.40 mmol) at -78 °C. On warming to r.t. an intense red viscous solution was obtained. In one case the reaction mixture was warmed to 45 °C, in the other case it was recooled to 5 °C. Both solutions were then quickly frozen to -196 °C and Raman spectra (6 471-Å excitation) were obtained at -100 °C. Both Raman spectra were very similar and consisted of peaks attributable to AsBr<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>, AlBr<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>/Al<sub>2</sub>Br<sub>7</sub><sup>-</sup>, AsBr<sub>3</sub>, and Br<sub>2</sub> (see Table 2).

(*ii*) In another similar reaction, designed to give  $AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$ , a very viscous liquid was formed and very similar species were identified in the Raman spectrum (see Table 2), with the exception of the absence of a peak due to  $AsBr_3$ .

(*iii*) In another similar reaction, designed to give  $AsBr_4AlBr_4$ , a large excess of bromine (5.1885 g, 32.437 mmol) was condensed onto a mixture of  $AsBr_3$  (0.6872 g, 2.1861 mmol) and AlBr<sub>3</sub> (0.5870 g, 2.1981 mmol) at -78 °C. On warming to r.t. an intense red liquid was obtained. The solution was quickly frozen to -196 °C and the Raman spectrum (6471-Å excitation) obtained at -100 °C. The spectrum consists of peaks attributable to AsBr<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>, AlBr<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>, AsBr<sub>3</sub>, AlBr<sub>3</sub>, and a very intense line attributable to Br<sub>2</sub> (s) (see Table 2).

#### **Results and Discussion**

Preparation of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ .—A white solid,  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ , was prepared by the oxidation of  $AsBr_3$  and  $Br_2$ , by  $AsF_5$ , between -5 and -196 °C according to equation (3). The salt  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ 

$$2 \operatorname{AsBr}_3 + \operatorname{Br}_2 + 3 \operatorname{AsF}_5 \longrightarrow 2 \operatorname{AsBr}_4 \operatorname{AsF}_6 + \operatorname{AsF}_3 \quad (3)$$

was unambiguously identified by its Raman spectrum (see Figure, Table 1).

There was no evidence (Raman spectrum) for  $AsBr_3$  in freshly prepared  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ , and thus the reaction appeared to be quantitative. The isolated yield was only 60%, because decomposition products ( $AsF_3$ ,  $Br_2$ ) had been removed under dynamic evacuation.

Preparation of  $AsBr_4AlBr_4$  and  $AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$ .—The preparation of these compounds was attempted by reaction of stoicheiometric amounts of  $AsBr_3$ ,  $Br_2$ , and  $AlBr_3$  according to equations (4) and (5). In both cases viscous liquids were formed.

 $AsBr_{3} + AlBr_{3} + Br_{2} \longrightarrow AsBr_{4}AlBr_{4}$ (4)

$$AsBr_3 + 2 AlBr_3 + Br_2 \longrightarrow AsBr_4 Al_2 Br_7$$
 (5)

The Raman spectrum of the product of equation (4) showed unambiguously that  $AsBr_4AlBr_4$  and  $Br_2$  were present; it was also consistent with the presence of  $AsBr_3$  and  $Al_2Br_7^-$ . It is therefore likely that reaction (4) did not go to completion (*i.e.* both reactants and products were in equilibrium with one another) and a second equilibrium occurred also [equation (6)]. Adding an excess of  $Br_2$  did not remove  $AsBr_3$  and  $AlBr_3$  by displacing the equilibrium to the right.

$$AsBr_4AlBr_4 + AlBr_3 \longrightarrow AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$$
(6)

The attempted preparation of  $AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$  also resulted in an equilibrium mixture (see Table 2), as  $Br_2$  was unambiguously identified. It is possible that the corresponding  $AsBr_3$  was also present but that it was not detected (broad lines, low resolution).

Raman Spectrum of  $AsBr_4^+$ .—The best Raman spectrum of  $AsBr_4^+$  was obtained from solid  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  at -196 °C (Figure). The  $AsBr_4^+$  portion of the spectrum consists of four bands with similar relative intensities to those of  $AsCl_4^+$  in  $AsCl_4AsF_6$ ,<sup>11,12</sup> but with similar frequencies to those of (the isoelectronic)  $GeBr_4^{13,14}$  (see Table 3). The value of the symmetric stretch,  $v_1$ , increases in the series  $GaBr_4^-$ ,  $GeBr_4$ ,  $AsBr_4^+$  (210, 236, 244 cm<sup>-1</sup>), as do related values of  $v_1$  for other related isoelectronic partners in Table 4.

The value of  $v_1(AsBr_4^+)$  (244 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is slightly less than  $v_1(PBr_4^+)$  (254 cm<sup>-1</sup>), as are all  $v_1(MX_4)$  values of row 4, relative to their row 3 counterparts. Thus all the data are consistent with the new species being tetrahedral AsBr\_4<sup>+</sup>.

Thermal Decomposition of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ .—The salt is stable at -196 °C, decomposes slowly at -78 °C, and rapidly at room temperature according to equation (7). Both final

$$AsBr_4AsF_6 \longrightarrow 2 AsF_3 + 2 Br_2$$
(7)

<b>Table 4.</b> Vibrational spectroscopic data $(v_1 \text{ cm}^{-1})$ for tetrahedral species	temperature, and is consistent
	mixture of products and

A

AlCl <sub>4</sub> <sup>-</sup>	348
SiCl₄	423
PCl <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup>	458
AlBr <sub>4</sub> <sup>-</sup>	212
SiBr <sub>4</sub>	247
PBr <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup>	254
GaCl <sub>4</sub> <sup>-</sup>	343
GeCl <sub>4</sub>	397
AsCl <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup>	422
GaBr <sub>4</sub> <sup>-</sup>	210
GeBr <sub>4</sub>	236
AsBr <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup>	244

<sup>a</sup> E. Rytter and H. A. Oye, J. Inorg. Nucl. Chem., 1973, **35**, 4311.<sup>b</sup> Refs. 13 and 14.<sup>c</sup> P. Van Huong and B. Desbat, Bull Soc. Chim. Fr., 1972, 2631. <sup>d</sup> D. H. Brown and D. T. Stewart, Spectrochim. Acta, Part A, 1970, **26**, 1344.<sup>e</sup> M. Delahaye, P. Dhamelincourt, and J. C. Merlin, C.R. Accad. Sci., Ser B, 1971, **272**, 370.<sup>f</sup> H. A. Oye and W. Bues, Inorg. Nucl. Chem. Lett., 1977, **8**, 31.<sup>e</sup> Refs. 11 and 12.<sup>h</sup> L. A. Woodward and A. A. Nord, J. Chem. Soc., 1955, 2655.<sup>i</sup> This work.

**Table 5.** Heats of formation and reaction enthalpies for the formation of  $MX_4EF_6$  (M = P or As; X = Cl, Br, or I; E = P or As) according to equation 8 and their decomposition by equation (9). All values correspond to 1 mol of  $MX_4EF_6$ 

Compound	$\Delta H_{\mathrm{f}}{}^{a,b}$	$\Delta H(8)^{a,c}$	$\Delta H(9)^{a,c}$
AsBr <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	-433	-113	-25
AsI <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	-360	-33	-98
AsCl <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	-483	-161	+25
AsBr <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	- 509	+2	+60
PBr <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	-423	-91	-26
PBr <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	- 499	+ 24	+ 59

<sup>*a*</sup> All values in kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>. <sup>*b*</sup> Estimated by Scheme 1. <sup>*c*</sup>  $\Delta H(8)$  and  $\Delta H(9)$  calculated, using the following heats of formations (kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>); <sup>23</sup> PBr<sub>3</sub> (l), -48; AsBr<sub>3</sub> (s), -47; AsCl<sub>3</sub> (l), -73; AsI<sub>3</sub> (s), -14; AsF<sub>5</sub> (g), -296; PF<sub>5</sub> (g), -382; AsF<sub>3</sub> (l), -229; and PF<sub>3</sub> (g) = -220.

**Table 6.** Heats and enthalpies of formation of  $AsX_4AlX_4$  (X = Br or I) calculated from equation (10)

Compound	$\Delta H_{\mathrm{f}}{}^{a,b}$	$\Delta H(10)^a$
AsBr <sub>4</sub> AlBr <sub>4</sub>	-191	-23 °
AsI <sub>4</sub> AlI <sub>4</sub>	-67	$+21^{d}$

<sup>*a*</sup> Values in kcal mol<sup>-1. *b*</sup> Estimated by Scheme 2. <sup>*c*</sup>  $\Delta H_{f}^{*}[AsBr_{3}(s)] = -47.1 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1.6} \Delta H_{f}^{*}[AsI_{3}(s)] = -13.9 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1.6}$ 

decomposition products were identified by Raman spectroscopy, as was the reaction intermediate AsBr<sub>3</sub>.

Thermodynamics and Kinetics of Formation of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> and AsBr<sub>4</sub>AlBr<sub>4</sub>.—Our estimate of a favourable reaction enthalpy for the formation of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> by equation (3) [ $\Delta H$ (3) = -113 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>; see Table 5, equation (8) with M = As, X = Br, E = As] motivated us to carry out this reaction. The subsequent successful preparation of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>, by this route, shows that  $\Delta H$ (3) must, at least, be substantially negative to offset the unfavourable entropy term, and illustrates the usefulness of the simple thermodynamic model in guiding chemical syntheses of hitherto unknown salts. The estimate for the formation of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AlBr<sub>4</sub> by equation (4) (see Table 6) of  $\Delta H$ (4) -23 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> is of the same order of magnitude as the entropy at room temperature, and is consistent with the observed equilibrium mixture of products and reactants, and the presence of  $AsBr_4Al_2Br_7$  as given by equation (6).

$$2 \operatorname{MX}_3 + \operatorname{X}_2 + 3 \operatorname{EF}_5 \longrightarrow 2 \operatorname{MX}_4 \operatorname{EF}_6 + \operatorname{EF}_3 \qquad (8)$$

$$MX_4EF_6 \longrightarrow MF_3 + EF_3 + 2X_2 \quad (9)$$

$$AsX_3 + X_2 + AlX_3 \longrightarrow AsX_4AlX_4$$
(10)

The formation of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  may proceed by equations (11) and (12), and/or (13) and (14), followed by (15) and (16).

$$AsBr_3 + AsF_5 \longrightarrow AsBr_2^+ AsF_5 Br^{-*}$$
(11)

$$Br_{2} + AsBr_{2}^{+}AsF_{5}Br^{-} \longrightarrow AsBr_{4}^{+}AsF_{5}Br^{-} \qquad (12)$$

$$Br_2 + AsF_5 \longrightarrow Br - Br - AsF_5$$
 (13)

$$AsBr_3 + Br - Br - AsF_5 \longrightarrow AsBr_4^+ AsF_5 Br^-$$
(14)

$$AsF_{5}Br^{-} + AsF_{5} \longrightarrow AsF_{6}^{-} + AsF_{4}Br \qquad (15)$$

 $2 \operatorname{AsF}_{4} \operatorname{Br} \longrightarrow \operatorname{AsF}_{3} + \operatorname{AsF}_{5} + \operatorname{Br}_{2}$ (16)

Reaction sequences related to those given in equations (11)—(14), but with  $AlBr_3$  replacing  $AsF_5$ , likely represent the reaction steps leading to  $AsBr_4AlBr_4$  formation.

Thermodynamics and Kinetics of Thermal Decomposition of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ .—The enthalpy of decomposition of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  [equation (7) or equation (9) (M = E = As, X = Br)] is estimated as -25 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> (Table 5) and is also favoured by entropy. Possible steps in the decomposition are shown in equations (17)—(20).

$$AsBr_4AsF_6 \longrightarrow AsBr_4^+F^- + AsF_5$$
 (17)

$$AsBr_4^+F^- \longrightarrow AsBr_2F + Br_2 \qquad (18)$$

$$3 \operatorname{AsBr}_2 F \longrightarrow 2 \operatorname{AsBr}_3 + \operatorname{AsF}_3 \qquad (19)$$

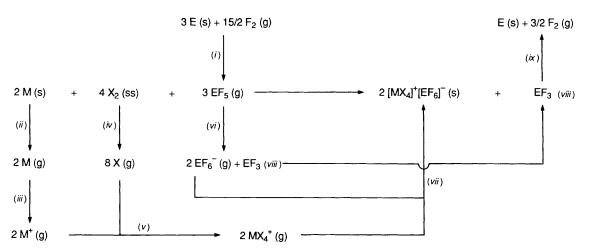
$$AsBr_2F + AsF_5 \longrightarrow 2 AsF_3 + Br_2$$
(20)

In one experiment SO<sub>2</sub> was added to  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  and the mixture held at -20 °C for 1 h. The reaction products included  $Br_2$ and  $AsF_3$ , but not SO<sub>2</sub>BrF (i.r., Raman, spectroscopy), showing BrF was unlikely as an intermediate in the decomposition.<sup>15</sup>

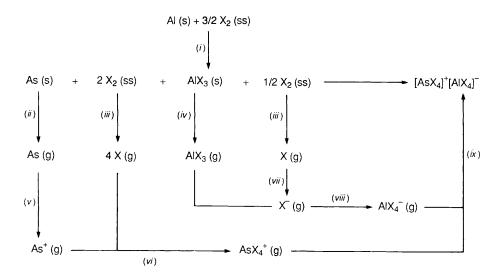
Rather surprisingly,  $AsBr_3$ , but not  $AsBr_2F$  or  $AsBrF_2$ , was detected as a reaction intermediate (Raman).<sup>†</sup> Consistently we only detected  $AsBr_3$  and  $AsF_3$  in the Raman spectrum of  $AsF_3$ (l) and  $AsBr_3$  (s). Arsenic pentafluoride was not detected, either because it is a weaker Raman scatterer than  $AsBr_3$ and  $Br_2$ , or much more likely because it immediately reacts with  $AsBr_3$  and/or  $AsBr_2F$ . In a separate reaction,  $AsF_5$  was treated with  $AsBr_3$  and proceeded according to equation (21). It could

<sup>\*</sup> An ionic formulation is written here and elsewhere for simplicity. However, there will be significant cation-anion interactions, especially in  $AsBr_2^+AsF_5Br^-$ .

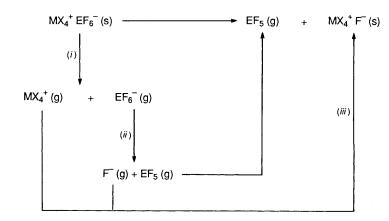
<sup>†</sup> Halogen-exchange reactions which are observed in phosphorus trihalide systems<sup>16-19</sup> are not favoured in the arsenic system.<sup>18-20</sup> Only a few examples of mixed arsenic trihalides have been completely characterized. For example, mixed species were found in a study of a mixture of AsCl<sub>3</sub> and AsF<sub>3</sub>.<sup>20</sup> However, the equilibrium constants for the exchange reactions ( $2 \text{ AsF}_3 + \text{AsCl}_3 \longrightarrow 3 \text{ AsF}_2\text{Cl}$ ,  $K_1 = 5 \times 10^{-3}$ ;  $2 \text{ AsCl}_3 + \text{AsF}_3 \longrightarrow 3 \text{ AsFCl}_2$ ,  $K_2 = 5 \times 10^{-3}$ ) are very low. This probably explains why these species were not detected in the Raman study.<sup>18</sup> There is strong intermolecular association in both liquid and solid AsF<sub>3</sub>.<sup>7,21</sup> This may be one reason for the entropy-disfavoured 'dissociation' of mixed arsenic(III) fluorohalides into AsF<sub>3</sub> and AsX<sub>3</sub>. (X = halide).



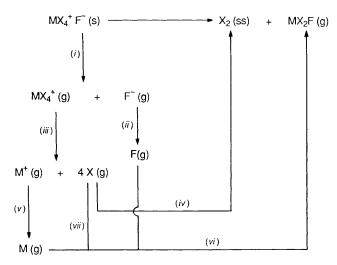
Scheme 1. Energy cycle for the formation of  $[MX_4]^+[EF_6]^-(M = P \text{ or } As; X = Cl, Br \text{ or } I; E = P \text{ or } As). (i) <math>\Delta H_t^*(PF_5, g) = -381.8,^a \Delta H_t^*(AsF_5, g) = -295.6 \text{ kcal } mol^{-1}.^b (ii) atomization energy: +75.3 (P)^a \text{ or } +72.4 \text{ kcal } mol^{-1} (As).^a (iii) First ionization potential of gaseous P: (+241.8) and As: (+226.2 \text{ kcal } mol^{-1})^e (iv) Atomization energy of X_2 in its standard state, X = Cl (+29.1), Br (+26.8), or I (+25.6 \text{ kcal } g-atom^{-1})^a (v) M^+-X \text{ bond energy in } MX_4^+ (ie. MX_4^+ \longrightarrow M^+ + 4X), estimated as M-X bond energy in MX_3^a + 5% (calibrated on: 2 AsF_3 + 2 Cl_2 \longrightarrow [AsCl_4]^+[AsF_6]^-$  with  $\Delta H = -25$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>). This gives: PBr, -66.2; AsCl, -77.6; AsBr, -64.1; and AsI, -45.8 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>. N.B. The +5% estimate for stronger bonds in the cationic species is in good agreement with the estimate of Jenkins *et al.*,  $^d e.g. \Delta H_t^e(PCl_4^+, g) + 110.6 \text{ kcal } mol^{-1}, cf \text{ our estimate} + 110.3 kcal mol^{-1} from <math>\frac{1}{4}$  P<sub>4</sub> (s)  $\longrightarrow$  P (g), +75.3, 2 Cl<sub>2</sub> (g)  $\longrightarrow$  4 Cl (g), +116.4, P (g)  $\longrightarrow$  P<sup>+</sup> (g), +242.1, and P<sup>+</sup> (g) + 4 Cl (g)  $\longrightarrow$  PCl<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> (g),  $4 \times (77.0 + 3.85)$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>.<sup>a</sup> (vi) Calculated as shown in ref. 2, Fluoride affinity of AsF<sub>5</sub>, -111, PF<sub>5</sub>, -101 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>.<sup>e</sup>  $\Delta H[3 AsF_5(g) + 2e^- \longrightarrow 2 PF_6^-$  (g) + PF<sub>3</sub> (g)] = -169.5 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>. (vii) Crystal-lattice energy (U/kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>), calculated from the molecular volume ( $V_M/A^3$ ), using linear relationship: U = 556.3 ( $V_M$ )<sup>-0.33</sup> + 26.3.<sup>cf</sup>  $V_M(AsF_6^-) = 105.^{e}$  (PF<sub>6</sub> - ) = 103.<sup>g</sup></sup> (AsCl<sub>4</sub> +) = 133, h (AsBr<sub>4</sub> +) = 178, and (AsI<sub>4</sub> +) = 223. (The volumes of AsBr<sub>4</sub> + and AsI<sub>4</sub> + were taken to be equal to the volumes of GeBr<sub>4</sub> and GeI<sub>4</sub>.<sup>b</sup> (viii) AsF<sub>3</sub> (l), PF<sub>3</sub> (g). (ix)  $\Delta H_t^e(PF_3, g) = -219.8$ ,  $\Delta H_t^e(AsF_3, I) = -228.8$  kcal mol<sup>-1, e</sup> (x) The salt is written as  $MX_4E_6$  for brevity. A similar protocol is used for related salts.<sup>a</sup> D. A. Johnson, in 'Some Thermodynamic Properties of Inorganic Substances, Springer, New York, 1977, supplement



Scheme 2. Energy cycle for the formation of  $[AsX_4]^+[AlX_4]^-$  salts (X = Br or I). (*i*)  $\Delta H_f^{\circ}(AlBr_3, s) = -121,^a \Delta H_f^{\circ}(AlI_3, s) = -74.2$  kcal mol<sup>-1.6</sup> (*ii*) Atomization energies: Br, 26.8; I, 25.6 kcal g-atom<sup>-1.6</sup> (*iv*) Sublimation energies: AlBr\_3, 20; <sup>c</sup> AlI\_3, 19 kcal mol<sup>-1.4</sup> (*v*) First ionization potential of As: +226.2 kcal mol<sup>-1.6</sup> (*vi*) As +-X bond energies [see Scheme 1, (*v*)]: X = Br, -64.1; I, -45.8 kcal mol<sup>-1.6</sup> (*vi*) Electron affinities: Br (g), -82.7; I (g), -72.6 kcal mol<sup>-1.6</sup> (*vii*) Al<sup>-</sup>-X bond energies in AlX\_4<sup>-</sup>, estimated as Al-X bond energy in AlX\_3<sup>a</sup> - 5%; X = Br, -81.7; <sup>a</sup> I, -83 kcal mol<sup>-1.6</sup> (*ix*) Crystal lattice energy (*U*/kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>), calculated from the molecular volume ( $V_M/Å^3$ ), see Scheme 1, (*vii*). (*V*<sub>M</sub>(AsBr\_4<sup>+</sup>) = 178, (AsI\_4<sup>+</sup>) = 223 [see Scheme 1, (*viii*); (AlBr\_4<sup>-</sup>) = 218, (AlI\_4<sup>-</sup>) = 223 [estimated by using the volumes of Al\_2Br<sub>6</sub> (335 Å^3) and Al\_2I<sub>6</sub> (341 Å^3)].<sup>f</sup> <sup>a</sup> W. Klemm and E. Tanke, *Z. Anorg. Allg. Chem.*, 1931, 200, 364. <sup>b</sup> D. A. Johnson, in 'Some Thermodynamic Aspects of Inorganic Chemistry, '2nd edn., Cambridge University Press, 1982, appendix.<sup>c</sup> W. Fischer and O. Ralfs, *Z. Anorg. Allg. Chem.*, 1932, 205, 37. <sup>e</sup> E. Fluck and K. Heumann, 'Periodic Table of the Elements,' VCH, Weinheim, 1985. <sup>f</sup> R. C. Weast, 'Handbook of Chemistry and Physics,' 54th edn., CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida, 1973–1974, B-63.



Scheme 3. (i) Crystal lattice energy  $U/kcal mol^{-1}$ : PBr<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub>, -112, PBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>, -112; AsBr<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub>, -111; AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>, -111; AsCl<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub>, -116. For calculation see Scheme 1, (v). (*ii*) Fluoride affinity (kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>): AsF<sub>5</sub>, -111; PF<sub>5</sub>, -101.<sup>*a*</sup> (*iii*) Crystal lattice energy  $U/kcal mol^{-1}$  [for calculation see Scheme 1, (v)].  $V_{\rm M}({\rm F}^-) = 10$  Å<sup>3</sup>;  $V_{\rm M}$  (cations), see Scheme 1. U: PBr<sub>4</sub>F<sub>7</sub>, -125; AsBr<sub>4</sub>F<sub>7</sub>, -123; AsCl<sub>4</sub>F<sub>7</sub>, -133. <sup>*a*</sup> T. E. Mallouk, G. L. Rosenthal, G. Müller, R. Brusasco, and N. Bartlett. *Inorg. Chem.* 1984, **23**, 3167.



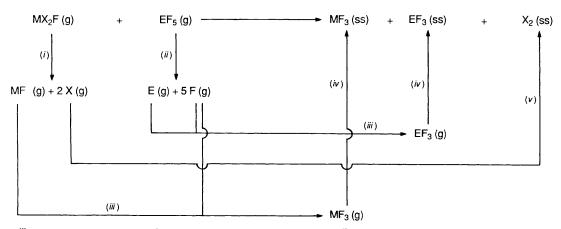
Scheme 4. (*i*) Crystal lattice energy, see Scheme 3. (*ii*) Electron affinity of F (g): -83.6 kcal mol<sup>-1.2</sup> (*iii*) M<sup>V+</sup>-X bond energy: see Scheme 1. (*iv*) Atomization energies of Cl<sub>2</sub> (g), Br<sub>2</sub> (1), and I<sub>2</sub> (s): see Scheme 1. (*v*) Ionization potentials of P and As: see Scheme 1. (*vi*) M<sup>III</sup>-F bond energies: M = P, 117; As, 117 kcal mol<sup>-1.a</sup> (*vii*) M<sup>III</sup>-X bond energies: P-Br, 63; As-Cl, 74; As-Br, 61 kcal mol<sup>-1.a</sup> D. A. Johnson in 'Some Thermodynamic Aspects of Inorganic Chemistry,' 2nd edn., Cambridge University Press, 1982, appendix.



be that without this  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  regeneration step the salt would be very much more difficult to identify.

The first step in the decomposition of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  is, reasonably, fluoride-ion transfer with formation of  $AsBr_4^+F^-$ [equation (17)]. The analogues  $PBr_4^+F^-$  and  $AsCl_4^+F^-$  have both been observed as products of the thermal decomposition of  $PBr_4AsF_6$  and  $AsCl_4AsF_6$ , respectively<sup>22</sup>]. This step is endothermic,  $\Delta H(17) \equiv \Delta H(22) = +99$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> (see Table 7 with M = As, X = Br, E = As). However, the decomposition reaction (18) is exothermic (-78 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>) and may take place almost simultaneously, substantially reducing the activation barrier [equation (17)]. Inclusion of the enthalpy of the subsequent reaction (20) [ $\Delta H(20) \equiv \Delta H(24) = -73$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>; M = As, X = Br, E = As] renders the decomposition sequence substantially exothermic (-29 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>) in agreement with observations and the estimated overall enthalpy of -24 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup> (see Tables 5 and 7).

Differences in Thermodynamic Stability of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  and  $AsCl_4AsF_6$ : a Criterion for the Kinetic Stability of Thermodynamically Unstable Salts of Complex anions; the Search for New Stable  $AsBr_4^+$  and  $AsI_4^+$  Salts.—The low stability of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  contrasts with that of  $AsCl_4AsF_{6,}^{12}$  which can be prepared by the reaction of  $AsF_3$  (1) and  $Cl_2$  (g) at room



Scheme 5. (*i*)  $M^{III}$ -X bond energies (kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>): P-Br, 63; As-Cl, 74; As-Br, 61.<sup>*a*</sup> (*ii*)  $M^{V}$ -F bond energies (kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>): P-F, 110;<sup>7</sup> As-F, 92.6, ref.<sup>*b*</sup>, Scheme 1.<sup>3</sup> (*iii*)  $M^{III}$ -F bond energies (kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>): P-F, 117; As-F; 117.<sup>*a*</sup> (*iv*) Heat of vaporization of AsF<sub>3</sub> (l): 9 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>.<sup>2</sup> (*v*) Atomization energies: see Scheme 1.<sup>*a*</sup> D. A. Johnson, in 'Some Thermodynamic Aspects of Inorganic Chemistry,' 2nd edn., Cambridge University Press, 1982, appendix.

**Table 7.** Enthalpies of steps in the decomposition of  $MX_4EF_6$  (M = P or As, X = Cl or Br, E = P or As) calculated from equations (22)–(24)

Compound	$\Delta H(22)^{a,b}$	$\Delta H(23)^{a,c}$	$\Delta H(24)^{a,d}$	$\Delta H_1^a$
AsBr <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	+ 99	- 55	-73	-29
AsCl <sub>4</sub> AsF <sub>6</sub>	+ 94	-22	- 50	+ 22
$AsBr_4PF_6$	+89	- 55	+ 24	+ 58
$PBr_4AsF_6$	+ 98	-65	- 59	-26
PBr <sub>4</sub> PF <sub>6</sub>	+88	-65	+ 37	+60

<sup>*a*</sup> Values in kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>,  $\Delta H_1 = \Delta H(22) + \Delta H(23) + \Delta H(24)$ . <sup>*b*</sup> Estimated by Scheme 3. <sup>*c*</sup> Estimated by Scheme 4. <sup>*d*</sup> Estimated by Scheme 5.

$$MX_4EF_6 \longrightarrow MX_4^+F^- + EF_5$$
 (22)

$$MX_4 + F - \longrightarrow MX_2F + X_2$$
(23)

$$MX_2F + EF_5 \longrightarrow MF_3 + EF_3 + X_2$$
(24)

temperature. The positive enthalpies of the first steps [equation (22)] in the decomposition of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> [ $\Delta H(22) \equiv \Delta H(17) = +99$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>; M = As, X = Br, E = As] and AsCl<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> [ $\Delta H(22) = +94$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>; M = As, X = Cl, E = As] are both very similar. However, the enthalpies of reactions (23) and (24) are significantly less favourable for AsCl<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> [ $\Delta H(23) = -22 \ \Delta H(24) = -50 \ \text{kcal mol}^{-1}$ ] than for AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> [ $\Delta H(23) = -25 \ \Delta H(24) = -73 \ \text{kcal mol}^{-1}$ ]. Thus the overall decomposition of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> is favourable ( $-29 \ \text{kcal mol}^{-1}$ ), whereas that of AsCl<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> is not ( $+22 \ \text{kcal mol}^{-1}$ ). These differences arise because the As<sup>+</sup>-Cl bond ( $-77.6 \ \text{kcal mol}^{-1}$ ).

The enthalpy for fluoride loss is greater in the order  $AsF_6^- < SbF_6^- < Sb_2F_{11}^-$ ; therefore on this basis  $AsBr_4Sb_2F_{11}$  is expected to be significantly more stable to decomposition than  $AsBr_4AsF_6$ . Our attempts to prepare this salt by the reaction of  $AsBr_4AsF_6$  and  $SbF_5$  were unsuccessful. If  $AsBr_4Sb_2F_{11}$  were formed, it may have decomposed according to equation (25).

$$AsBr_4Sb_2F_{11} \longrightarrow SbF_3 \cdot SbF_5 + AsF_3 + 2 Br_2 \quad (25)$$

The enthalpy of formation of AsI<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> by equation (8) is estimated (see Table 5) as favourable  $[\Delta H(8) = -33$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>; M = E = As, X = I] and is approximately the same as the enthalpy of formation of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> by the same reaction  $[\Delta H(8) = -113$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>; M = E = As, X = Br]. However the estimate of the decomposition enthalpy of AsI<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> ( $\Delta H$ = -98 kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>; M = E = As, X = I) is substantially greater than that of AsBr<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> [ $\Delta H(9) = -25$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>]. Our attempts to prepare AsI<sub>4</sub>AsF<sub>6</sub> were unsuccessful and are consistent with this. However, using a similar experimental and conceptual approach, one of us has succeeded in preparing the thermodynamically more stable AlCl<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup> salt of the AsI<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> cation.<sup>5</sup>

The enthalpy of formation of  $AsBr_4PF_6$  by equation (8)  $[M = As, X = Br, E = P; \Delta H(8) = +2 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}]$  is about zero, and not surprisingly attempts to prepare the salt by this method were unsuccessful. The estimated enthalpy of decomposition of  $AsBr_4PF_6$  to  $PF_3$ ,  $AsF_3$ , and  $Br_2$  was significantly positive  $[\Delta H(9) = +60 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}; M = As, X =$  Br, E = P], showing that the salt is substantially more thermodynamically stable than those decomposition products. However, our attempts to prepare  $AsBr_4PF_6$  by this route [see Table 5, equation (8)], proceeded instead by equation (26), which is even more exothermic  $[\Delta H(26) = -122 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}];$   $\Delta H_f (AsF_3, 1) = -229$ ,  $(PF_3, g) = -220$ ,  $(AsBr_3, s) = -47$ , and  $(PF_5, g) = -382 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1.23}$ 

$$2 \operatorname{AsF}_{3}(l) + 3 \operatorname{Br}_{2}(l) + 3 \operatorname{PF}_{3}(g) \longrightarrow$$
  
2 AsBr<sub>3</sub>(s) + 3 PF<sub>5</sub>(g) (26)

The salt  $PBr_4PF_6$  is stable up to 125 °C.<sup>24–26</sup> However, we estimated that it is only marginally stable ( $\Delta H = +11$  kcal mol<sup>-1</sup>) with respect to the products given in equation (27).

$$5 \operatorname{PBr}_4\operatorname{PF}_6 \longrightarrow 6 \operatorname{PF}_5 + 4 \operatorname{PBr}_3 + 4 \operatorname{Br}_2 \qquad (27)$$

Thus  $PBr_4PF_6$  is likely to be kinetically stable, but  $AsBr_4-AsF_6$  is both kinetically and thermodynamically unstable. We therefore suggest that the criterion for salts of this kind to have kinetic stability is simply that the products after halide transfer must retain kinetic stability in their new environment. In the  $PBr_4PF_6$  system [see equations (26) and (27)]  $PF_5$  is both kinetically and thermodynamically stable and  $PBr_4^+F^-$  is kinetically stable up to  $85 \,^{\circ}C.^{24-26}$  This contrasts with the AsBr\_4AsF\_6 system; AsF\_5 is likely to react rapidly with any AsBr containing species, and  $AsBr_4^+F^-$  is very probably kinetically labile, even if it did not react with  $AsF_5$ . A number of related salts [*e.g.*  $S_4(AsF_6)_2$ , <sup>1</sup> SeBr\_3AsF\_6, <sup>2c</sup> and SBr\_3AsF\_6^{-2c}) may also be only kinetically stable.

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