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03 October 2000

SUBJECT: Authorization for Release of Technical Information, Control Number: **AFRL-PR-ED-TP-2000-189**  
Vij, V.; Vij, A.; Wilson, W.W.; Christe, K.O. (ERC); Sheehy, J.; Boatz, J., Tham, F.S., "Chemistry of N-F  
Containing HEDM Materials and on Lewis Acidity of LiF"

**HEDM Contractors Conference (Park City, UT, 24 Oct 2000)**  
**(Deadline: 27 Sep 2000 – PAST DUE)**

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# Chemistry of N-F Containing HEDM Materials and on Lewis Acidity of LiF

Vandana Vij, Ashwani Vij, William W. Wilson, Karl O. Christe, Jeffery A. Sheehy, Jerry A. Boatz and Fook S. Tham

Air Force Research Laboratory, Edwards AFB, Edwards CA 93524

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089

University of California, Riverside, CA 92521

## Abstract

The recent isolation of the  $N_5^+$  cation is one of the most amazing discoveries of modern chemistry.<sup>1</sup> This statement is justified by the fact that this is the first all nitrogen homoleptic species to be isolated in more than a century, and only the third known species of this kind besides atmospheric nitrogen ( $N_2$ ) and the azide ion ( $N_3^-$ ). The  $N_5^+AsF_6^-$  salt is only marginally stable at room temperature. In order to prepare other more stable  $N_5^+$  salts for application as high energy density material, it was necessary to prepare the corresponding precursors in an efficient manner and in large quantities. The choice of common natural graphite flake as opposed to HOPG for the graphite.  $AsF_5$  intercalate formation reduces not only the cost drastically, but also the intercalation time from several weeks to two days. This intercalate is then used to reduce  $N_2F_4$  to  $N_2F_2$ . Using the graphite flake intercalate, this reduction reaction was accomplished in several hours instead of weeks with minimal formation of by-products. Another major discovery made during this study is the catalytic conversion of *trans*- $N_2F_2$  to its *cis*-isomer when  $SbF_5$  is used as the Lewis acid. This reduces the number of steps required for the preparation of the precursor,  $N_2F^+SbF_6^-$ , and avoids the need for an extra step involving the corresponding expensive  $AsF_6^-$  salt. Also, discovered during the isomerization studies is a novel synthetic route to prepare  $NF_4^+$  salts at relatively low temperature and pressure that does not require elemental fluorine and  $NF_3$ . A structural

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analysis of the  $\text{N}_2\text{F}^+$  cation was also carried out by the crystal structure determination of  $\text{N}_2\text{F}^+\text{SbF}_6^-$  and  $\text{N}_2\text{F}^+\text{Sb}_2\text{F}_{11}^-$ . Isolated  $\text{N}\equiv\text{N}$  and  $\text{N-F}$  bond distances were measured for the first time in the solid state. These distances are in excellent agreement with those predicted by theoretical calculations. The  $\text{N}\equiv\text{N}$  bond in  $\text{N}_2\text{F}^+\text{Sb}_2\text{F}_{11}^-$  is shorter than the triple bond in  $\text{N}_2$  and is the shortest known nitrogen-nitrogen bond.

In addition to the structure and chemistry of  $\text{N-F}$  compounds, an attempt was also made to synthesize and characterize  $\text{CsLiF}_2$  in order to study the isolated  $\text{LiF}_2^-$  anions. According to theoretical calculations and the recently developed  $\text{pF}^-$  scale, free gaseous  $\text{LiF}$  ( $\text{pF}^- = 7.23$ ) is a much stronger Lewis acid than  $\text{CsF}$  ( $\text{pF}^- = 3.8$ ) and, therefore, should easily abstract the fluoride ion from  $\text{CsF}$  with the formation of the  $\text{LiF}_2^-$  anion. However, the linear  $\text{LiF}_2^-$  anion, which is theoretically predicted to be vibrationally stable in the free gaseous state, could not be isolated. The single crystals obtained from a fused 1:1 eutectic mixture show that  $\text{CsLiF}_2$  exhibits an interesting three-dimensional network of alternating tetra-coordinated lithium and octa-coordinated cesium cations bridged by fluorine atoms in a  $C$ -centered monoclinic lattice.

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1. C&E News, Jan 25, 1999; C&E News August 14, 2000, *and references therein.*