

Predicted thermochemistry and unimolecular kinetics of nitrous sulfide

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The geometry of N₂S was obtained at the CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pV(T + d)Z level of theory and energies with coupled-cluster single double triple (CCSD(T)) and basis sets up to aug-cc-pV(6 + d)Z. After correction for anharmonic zero-point energy, core-valence correlation, correlation up to CCSDT(Q) and relativistic effects, D₀ for the N–S bond is estimated as 71.9 kJ mol⁻¹, and the corresponding thermochemistry for N₂S is Δ_fH₀^o = 205.4 kJ mol⁻¹ and Δ_fH₂₉₈^o = 202.6 kJ mol⁻¹ with an uncertainty of ±2.5 kJ mol⁻¹. Using CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pV(T + d) theory the minimum energy crossing point between singlet and triplet potential energy curves is found at r(N–N) ≈ 1.105 Å and r(N–S) ≈ 2.232 Å, with an energy 72 kJ mol⁻¹ above N₂ + S(³P). Application of Troe’s unimolecular formalism yields the low-pressure-limiting rate constant for dissociation of N₂S k₀ = 7.6 × 10⁻¹⁰ exp(–126 kJ mol⁻¹/RT) cm³ molecule⁻¹ s⁻¹ over 700–2000 K. The estimated uncertainty is a factor of 4 arising from unknown parameters for energy transfer between N₂S and Ar or N₂ bath gas. The thermochemistry and kinetics were included in a mechanism for CO/H₂/H₂S oxidation and the conclusion is that little NO is produced via subsequent chemistry of NNS. © 2011 American Institute of Physics. [doi:10.1063/1.3628521]

I. INTRODUCTION

The chemistry of nitrogen oxide formation in flames has been studied extensively¹ and the major mechanisms are fairly well established. It is generally recognized that formation of NO_x may arise from fixation of N₂ in the combustion air or oxidation of organically bound nitrogen in the fuel. Homogeneous mechanisms for fixation of N₂ involve the attack of reactive radicals (O, CH, H) on the triple bond in molecular nitrogen. These reactions form either NO or a reactive nitrogen intermediate (N₂O, NCN, and NNH) that may subsequently be oxidized to NO. Significant influences of small amounts of sulfur on the formation of nitrogen oxides have been observed at elevated temperatures, but the detailed mechanism is unknown.² Here we consider possible roles for nitrous sulfide, N₂S, the sulfur analog of N₂O, in order to evaluate the possibility of nitrogen fixation via reaction with atomic sulfur in flames.

The N₂S molecule has been observed via infrared spectroscopy in the gas-phase and in matrix isolation.³ It has been the object of several computational studies,^{4–6} with the main goal of interpreting the spectra, and which confirm linear NNS as the most stable structure. Here we present an *ab initio* analysis of the thermochemistry of the N₂S molecule, and estimates of its unimolecular kinetics at elevated temperatures. Our aim is to check for the potential involvement of this species in the coupling of sulfur and nitrogen chemistry in flames and other high temperature systems. Analogous to the thermal decomposition of N₂O,^{7,8} the dis-

sociation



is spin-forbidden, and we expect the kinetics of reaction (1) to be similarly controlled by crossing between the singlet potential energy curve for the reactant and the triplet potential energy curve for the products.⁹ In the case of N₂O the triplet interaction is repulsive so intersystem crossing occurs at an energy significantly above the dissociation energy of N₂O to ground state products.¹⁰ The 0 K bond dissociation enthalpy of N₂O is 161 kJ mol⁻¹ while the activation energy for its dissociation is some 100 kJ mol⁻¹ higher at the high-pressure limit.⁸ Several theoretical studies have focused on the spin-forbidden dissociation of N₂O (see Refs. 10–12 and references therein).

Here we map out the lowest energy singlet and triplet potential energy surfaces for N₂S and use the results to address the thermochemistry of this molecule, and to make predictions of its unimolecular reaction kinetics and its potential role in combustion. Energy transfer parameters for N₂S are estimated by analogy to the valence isoelectronic species N₂O and carbonyl sulfide OCS, for which dissociation measurements are available.

II. METHODOLOGY

Initial analysis of linear N₂S in the singlet ¹Σ⁺ and triplet ³Π states was carried out using coupled-cluster single double triple (CCSD(T)) theory¹³ and the aug-cc-pV(T + d)Z basis set which includes “tight d” functions on sulfur¹⁴ (and not nitrogen, for which this basis is equal to aug-cc-pVTZ (Refs. 15 and 16)). For the singlet species, spin-restricted Hartree-Fock

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TABLE I. *Ab initio* energies for the N₂S system (all quantities in a.u. unless otherwise noted, 1 a.u. \approx 2625.5 kJ mol⁻¹).

Species	CCSD(T) energies with aug-cc-pV(n + d)Z basis sets				ZPE ^a	Scalar relativistic ^b	Core valence ^c	CCSDT(Q)-CCSD(T) ^d
	AV(T + d)Z	AV(Q + d)Z	AV(5 + d)Z	AV(6 + d)Z				
N ₂	-109.38085	-109.40721	-109.41546	-109.41833	1176	-0.05829	-0.12119	-0.00155
S	-397.65722	-397.66862	-397.67210	-397.67356	0	-1.07746	-0.42866	-0.00088
N ₂ S	-507.06330	-507.10443	-507.11725	-507.12200	1884	-1.13488	-0.55051	-0.00360
ΔE^e	66.26	75.09	77.96	79.07	-8.47	-2.30	1.75	3.10

^aIn cm⁻¹ (see text).

^bSum of mass-velocity and Darwin terms at CISD/cc-pwCVTZ level.

^cCCSD(T)/cc-pwCVTZ and CCSD(T)/cc-pwCVQZ data were extrapolated to the CBS limit via Eq. (2), and the difference taken between including a frozen core or using all the electrons in the correlation calculations.

^dCalculated with the cc-pVTZ basis set.

^eContribution to energy change for reaction (1) in kJ mol⁻¹.

and CCSD(T) was employed, and spin-unrestricted versions were used for the triplet species. Spin contamination was negligible, with $\langle S^2 \rangle$ below 2.03 for the triplet states, which compares well with the ideal value of 2. The geometries of singlet N₂S and N₂ were optimized. Then $r(\text{N-N})$ in the linear N₂S configuration was optimized as a function of various fixed N-S separations, in both singlet and triplet states, to explore the singlet and triplet potential energy curves. These computations were carried out with the GAUSSIAN 03 program suite.¹⁷

The MOLPRO 2006 program¹⁸ was used to derive the N-S bond dissociation enthalpy in N₂S. At the CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pV(T + d)Z geometries, energies of singlet N₂S, singlet N₂, and triplet S were obtained with a sequence of aug-cc-pV(n + d)Z basis sets with $n = 3-6$ and CCSD(T) theory (RCCSD(T) for the closed shell species and UCCSD(T) (Ref. 19) for atomic sulfur, all with spin-restricted Hartree-Fock wave functions). Core-valence correlation was assessed with CCSD(T)/cc-pwCVTZ theory²⁰ as the difference between the energy with all electrons correlated and with the core electrons frozen. Convergence of this contribution was investigated by carrying out CCSD(T)/cc-pwCVQZ calculations as well. Scalar relativistic effects were incorporated at the CISD/cc-pwCVTZ level as the sum of the mass-velocity and Darwin terms,²¹ and vector relativistic effects were included via the experimental spin-orbit splitting of the ³P state of atomic sulfur²² (-2.35 kJ mol⁻¹). The MRCC program by Kállay²³ interfaced to the CFOUR code²⁴ was employed to test the effect of higher level electron correlation by means of CCSD(T) and CCSDT(Q) calculations with the cc-pVTZ basis set.^{15,25}

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Geometry and thermochemistry

Our r_e for N₂ at the CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pVTZ level of theory is 1.104 Å (1 Å = 10⁻¹⁰ m), which is 0.006 Å greater than the experimental value.²⁶ Combined with the force constant this bond extension would lead to an energy \sim 0.3 kJ mol⁻¹ too high relative to the minimum. For N₂S, our CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pV(T + d) computation for $r_e(\text{N-N})$ of 1.132 Å is 0.001 Å above the best estimate of Pak *et al.*,⁶ which would induce a negligible energy error, less than 0.02 kJ mol⁻¹. It has been

noted previously that $r_e(\text{N-S})$ tends to be overestimated,^{5,6} and indeed our $r_e(\text{N-S})$ of 1.593 Å is somewhat too high, and lies 0.015 Å above the best estimate of Pak *et al.*⁶ Coupled with the N-S stretching force constant this will lead to an energy error of +0.3 kJ mol⁻¹, and therefore there is fortuitous cancellation of the contributions of geometry errors to the N₂-S bond dissociation enthalpy.

Table I summarizes the *ab initio* data for N₂S, N₂, and S, and the equilibrium N₂-S dissociation energy D_e (shown as ΔE in the first four columns) which does not include zero-point vibrational energy. It may be seen that application of large basis sets has almost but not quite converged D_e . Several functions have been proposed for extrapolation of individual energies to the infinite or complete basis set (CBS) limit, as a function of an index n which varied from 3 in the aug-cc-pV(T + d)Z basis set through 6 in the aug-cc-pV(6 + d)Z basis. We have employed the two-point relationship of Helgaker *et al.*,²⁷

$$E_n = E_{\text{CBS}} + \frac{B}{n^3} \quad (2)$$

the exponential relation of Feller²⁸ fitted through three points

$$E_n = E_{\text{CBS}} + B \exp(-Cn) \quad (3)$$

and the function of Martin²⁹ fitted through all four points

$$E_n = E_{\text{CBS}} + \frac{B}{(n + 0.5)^4} + \frac{C}{(n + 0.5)^6} \quad (4)$$

to extrapolate the total energies (Hartree-Fock plus correlation). The CBS results are shown in Table II. The possible extrapolations involving the largest basis set ($n = 6$) are Eq. (2) applied to $n = 5$ and 6, Eq. (3) with $n = 4-6$, and Eq. (4) (which we fitted to $n = 3-6$). They lead to $D_e = 80.58$, 79.62, and 80.23 kJ mol⁻¹, respectively. The mean and standard deviation of these three values are 80.1 and 0.4 kJ mol⁻¹, respectively. We note that the result of Eq. (4) lies in the middle. The two-point scheme with successively larger basis sets approaches this value from above while the two exponential scheme approaches this value from below (see Table II). These trends suggest that the true infinite basis set limit has been bracketed. Error limits of twice the standard deviation should conservatively encompass any uncertainty in the extrapolation. We can use this D_e result to comment on extrapolations relying on smaller basis sets which of course are

TABLE II. Extrapolation of *ab initio* energies for the N₂S system to the complete basis set limit (all quantities in a.u. unless otherwise noted, 1 a.u. \approx 2625.5 kJ mol⁻¹).

Species	Extrapolated CBS energies					
	T-Q ^a	Q-5 ^a	5-6 ^a	T-6 ^b	T-5 ^c	Q-6 ^c
N ₂	-109.42645	-109.42411	-109.42227	-109.42186	-109.41921	-109.41986
S	-397.67694	-397.67575	-397.67556	-397.67500	-397.67363	-397.67461
N ₂ S	-507.13445	-507.13070	-507.12852	-507.12758	-507.12305	-507.12479
ΔE^d	81.53	80.98	80.58	80.23	79.34	79.62

^aTwo-point extrapolation via Eq. (2).^bExtrapolation via Eq. (4) fitted to four points.^cThree-point extrapolation via Eq. (3).^dContribution to energy change for reaction (1) in kJ mol⁻¹.

dramatically more economical in terms of computer resources. The two-point 3–4 and 4–5 extrapolations give $D_e = 81.5$ and 81.0 kJ mol⁻¹, and the exponential extrapolation based on $n = 3$ –5 yields $D_e = 79.3$ kJ mol⁻¹. These results indicate that for accuracy to within 2 kJ mol⁻¹, calculations with up to CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pV(Q + d)Z and a two-point extrapolation would be adequate for the present system.

The core-valence correction to reaction (1) was found to be 1.96 kJ mol⁻¹ with the cc-pwCVTZ basis set, and 1.84 kJ mol⁻¹ with the cc-pwCVQZ basis set, so it is almost converged with respect to basis set size. The data in Table I were obtained by extrapolating the frozen-core and all-electron results with each basis set to the CBS limit by means of the two-point relation (2), and yield an estimated core-valence correction of 1.75 kJ mol⁻¹ at the CBS limit. The equilibrium D_e is then corrected (see Table I) for the core-valence and scalar relativistic effects (which almost cancel), the spin-orbit correction of atomic S(³P), the effect of correlation beyond the CCSD(T) level, and the anharmonic zero-point energy of N₂ (Ref. 26) and N₂S,⁶ to obtain $D_o = 71.9$ kJ mol⁻¹. For comparison, this is less than half D_o for N₂-O.³⁰ The tabulated heat of formation of atomic S is 274.9 kJ mol⁻¹ at 0 K,³¹ but Nagy *et al.*³² recently argued for revision to 277.3 kJ mol⁻¹. We use the latter value plus tabulated thermal corrections for S and N₂,³¹ and $H_{298} - H_0 = 10.26$ kJ mol⁻¹ computed here for N₂S from the fundamental frequencies recommended by Pak *et al.*,⁶ to obtain $\Delta_f H_0^\circ = 205.4$ kJ mol⁻¹ for N₂S, and $\Delta_f H_{298}^\circ = 202.6$ kJ mol⁻¹. The $\Delta_f H_0^\circ(S)$ has a quoted uncertainty of 0.3 kJ mol⁻¹ so the estimated uncertainty in the thermochemistry is ± 0.8 kJ mol⁻¹ arising mainly from uncertainty in the CBS extrapolations. This does not include any allowance for correlation effects beyond perturbative quadruples or whether the new $\Delta_f H_0^\circ(S)$ will be accepted generally. We note that in the computational work by Nagy *et al.*,³² which also involves sulfur species and to which our approach is broadly similar, typical uncertainties in enthalpy were around 2–3 kJ mol⁻¹ so we propose ± 2.5 kJ mol⁻¹ as the overall uncertainty in the heat of formation.

A seven-term NASA polynomial³³ fitted to computed thermodynamic functions over 100–3000 K, suitable for use in standard modeling codes, has the following coefficients a_1 – a_7 : 2.99418214×10^0 , $9.00692800 \times 10^{-3}$, $-7.39316000 \times 10^{-6}$, $2.67928000 \times 10^{-9}$, $-3.51975000 \times 10^{-13}$, 2.31452584×10^4 , and 8.59332874×10^0 . With

these coefficients, the heat capacity is given by

$$\frac{C_p}{R} = a_1 + a_2 T + a_3 T^2 + a_4 T^3 + a_5 T^4,$$

the entropy is given by

$$\frac{S}{R} = a_1 \ln T + a_2 T + \frac{a_3 T^2}{2} + \frac{a_4 T^3}{3} + \frac{a_5 T^4}{4} + a_7,$$

and the enthalpy, defined as $H = \Delta_f H_{298.15} + (H_T - H_{298.15})$, is given by

$$\frac{H}{RT} = a_1 + \frac{a_2 T}{2} + \frac{a_3 T^2}{3} + \frac{a_4 T^3}{4} + \frac{a_5 T^4}{5} + \frac{a_6}{T}.$$

B. Kinetics

Figure 1 shows the singlet and triplet potential energy curves for linear N₂S as a function of $r(N-S)$. It may be seen that the triplet system is purely repulsive, as expected by analogy with the well-studied N₂O system.¹⁰ The singlet curve shown dissociates to N₂ + ¹S. The wave function for these products would require a multi-reference description, but the T1 diagnostic for the singlet state near the crossing is below 0.02 and so CCSD(T) based on a single-reference wave function should be adequate in this region.³⁴ The intersection

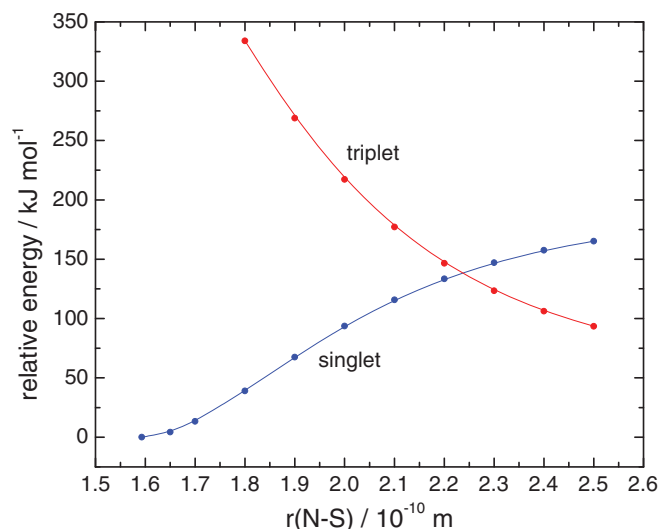


FIG. 1. CCSD(T)/aug-cc-pV(T + d)Z energies of singlet and triplet linear N₂S as a function of N–S distance, relative to the singlet N₂S minimum. The N–N distance has been optimized at each point.

of the curves in Fig. 1 approximately indicates the region of intersystem crossing, although the N–N distances are slightly different. Trial and error indicates that the minimum energy crossing point (MECP) occurs near $r(\text{N–N}) \approx 1.105 \text{ \AA}$ and $r(\text{N–S}) \approx 2.232 \text{ \AA}$, and that both singlet and triplet states at this geometry lie within 0.2 kJ mol^{-1} of each other and about 72 kJ mol^{-1} above $\text{N}_2 + \text{S} (^3\text{P})$. The MECP is therefore 144 kJ mol^{-1} above the $v = 0$ level of N_2S . For comparison, in the case of the $\text{N}_2\text{O} = \text{N}_2 + ^3\text{O}$ system the QCISD(T) study of Hwang and Mebel yielded a MECP geometry with $r(\text{N–N}) = 1.106 \text{ \AA}$ and $r(\text{N–O}) = 1.787 \text{ \AA}$ lying 97 kJ mol^{-1} above separated $\text{N}_2 + \text{O} (^3\text{P})$.¹²

We treat the kinetics of reaction (1) via Rice–Ramsperger–Kassel–Marcus (RRKM) theory. At the low pressure limit the populations of energy levels of N_2S at the MECP will be controlled by the balance between $k_1(E)$ and $k_{-1}(E)$, and in this microcanonical equilibrium the probability of intersystem crossing (which affects both rate processes equally) cancels. The low-pressure limit $k_{1,0}$ is therefore independent of any assumptions about intersystem crossing,^{9,35} but does depend critically on the energy of the MECP, and can be treated as a normal reaction via RRKM theory. We will apply Troe’s unimolecular formalism³⁶ to derive $k_{1,0}$ via

$$k_{1,0} = Z_{\text{LJ}} \beta_c \frac{\rho_{\text{vib}}(E_0) RT}{Q_{\text{vib}}} \exp\left(-\frac{E_0}{RT}\right) F_{\text{E}} F_{\text{anh}} F_{\text{rot}} \quad (5)$$

with energies expressed in J mol^{-1} . The various quantities follow the standard notation. E_0 is the threshold energy for dissociation, i.e., the 0 K bond dissociation enthalpy plus the energy of the MECP relative to the fragments. We first consider application of Troe’s formalism to two isoelectronic analogs of reaction (1), the dissociations of N_2O and OCS, where experimental data are available.

For OCS our scans of the triplet and singlet surfaces, conducted as described for N_2S , lead to a MECP at $r(\text{C–O}) = 1.136 \text{ \AA}$ and $r(\text{C–S}) = 2.405 \text{ \AA}$, with an energy 35 kJ mol^{-1} above $\text{CO} + \text{S} (^3\text{P})$. These data imply a threshold energy of $E_0 = 337 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}$ and the ratio of the moments of inertia of the MECP to the molecule of $I^+/I = 1.77$. Lennard-Jones (LJ) parameters for the OCS molecule were estimated from its critical properties to be $\sigma = 4.55 \text{ \AA}$ and $\epsilon/k_{\text{B}} = 289 \text{ K}$ and parameters for Ar were taken from the literature,³⁷ in order to estimate the Lennard-Jones collision rate Z_{LJ} . Evaluation of Eq. (5) with the collision efficiency β_c set to 1 yields the strong collision dissociation rate constant $k_{\text{diss},0,\text{SC}}$. This will be higher than that observed because typically several collisions with bath gas molecules are required to transfer sufficient energy to reactant molecules to exceed the dissociation threshold. The collision efficiency can be evaluated as $k_{\text{expt}}/k_{\text{diss},0,\text{SC}}$. Comparison with experimental data for OCS dissociation in Ar bath gas³⁸ shows that β_c decreases from 0.058 at 2000 K to 0.024 at 3000 K. The corresponding average energy transferred per collision $-\langle\Delta E\rangle$ is derived via the relation³⁶

$$\frac{\beta_c}{1 - \beta_c^{1/2}} = \frac{-\langle\Delta E\rangle}{F_{\text{E}} k_{\text{B}} T}$$

to obtain $-\langle\Delta E\rangle$ values around 1 kJ mol^{-1} .

For N_2O in an N_2 bath gas, Endo *et al.* derived $\beta_c = 0.043$ and 0.023 at 900 and 2000 K, respectively, and thus $-\langle\Delta E\rangle = 0.44$ and 0.54 kJ mol^{-1} .³⁹ They also suggested that N_2 was a slightly more efficient collider than Ar, by factors of 1.26 and 1.05 at 900 and 2000 K. We therefore expect that the collision efficiency for OCS in N_2 is likely to be similar to that for Ar (in the context of the other uncertainties involved).

For reaction (1) at the low-pressure limit in N_2 bath gas we used $E_0 = 144 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}$ relative to the $v = 0$ level of N_2S , and vibrational frequencies of 463, 463, 741, and 2061 cm^{-1} . The Lennard-Jones parameters for N_2S were assumed to be the same as for the similar OCS molecule, and the parameters for N_2 as a bath gas were taken from Hippler *et al.*³⁷ We assumed $-\langle\Delta E\rangle$ provisionally to be independent of temperature and set it equal to 0.5 kJ mol^{-1} . This implies β_c of 0.04 at 1000 K decreasing to 0.02 at 2000 K. The geometry at the MECP yields a moment of inertia 1.60 times larger than for N_2S , which is used as the ratio I^+/I to calculate the centrifugal correction F_{rot} for this linear system.³⁶ The results from Eq. (5) can be summarized as

$$k_{1,0} = 7.6 \times 10^{-10} \exp\left(\frac{-126 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}}{RT}\right) \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1} \quad (6)$$

over 700 – 2000 K.

An uncertainty of a factor of 4 arises from uncertainty in the energy transfer parameters and the F_{rot} term, but this rough estimate permits an initial evaluation of N_2S behavior at high temperatures.

Equation (6) is the low-pressure-limiting rate constant which for a small molecule like N_2S should be applicable over typical pressures. To explore the range of validity some assessment of the high-pressure-limiting kinetics is needed, which are sensitive to the probability of intersystem crossing. We employ the N_2O analog to set a lower limit to the pressure range where Eq. (6) can reasonably be applied. The experimental high-pressure limit for N_2O dissociation is $k_{\infty} = 1.3 \times 10^{13} \exp(-262 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}/RT) \text{ s}^{-1}$.⁸ The activation energy E_{a} is only 4 kJ mol^{-1} above the E_0 cited above for the MECP, and the pre-exponential factor is 2–3 orders of magnitude smaller than typical for a simple bond fission reaction.⁴⁰ This reflects the small probability for intersystem crossing. By analogy, for N_2S we therefore expect a high-pressure limiting E_{a} of $\sim 145 \text{ kJ mol}^{-1}$. Keeping the same pre-exponential factor for the high-pressure limit as for N_2O decomposition would mean that, at 1000 K and 10 bar of N_2 , the predicted first-order dissociation rate of N_2S is less than 6% of the high-pressure limit.

An alternative estimate of when fall-off effects might become significant for reaction (1) can be made from the first study of N_2O dissociation at the high-pressure limit by Olschewski *et al.*⁴¹ They showed that the kinetics do not reach the fall-off region until pressures of at least 10 bar. They also directly related k_{∞} to the magnitude of the spin-orbit splitting in atomic oxygen. The greater spin-orbit coupling in sulfur as compared to oxygen means that the pre-exponential factor will be greater for N_2S than for N_2O at the high-pressure limit, and so Eq. (6) is applicable at even higher pressures than 10 bar. Consistent with this idea, the study by Olschewski

*et al.*⁴² of CO₂ and CS₂ dissociation provides a pre-exponential factor for k_{∞} which is an order of magnitude larger for the sulfur analog vs. the oxygen species.

C. Combustion implications

The analogy between the S + N₂ and O + N₂ reactions suggests that atomic sulfur may conceivably be active in formation of reactive nitrogen intermediates and subsequently nitric oxide under favorable conditions. The importance of S + N₂ as an initiating step in formation of NO depends on the rate of the association reaction, as well as the lifetime of N₂S and the reactivity of N₂S towards the radical pool. Both the rate of the S + N₂ association and the lifetime τ of N₂S are between the corresponding values for the N₂O and NNH mechanisms, i.e., $k(\text{O} + \text{N}_2) < k_{-1} < k(\text{H} + \text{N}_2)$ and $\tau_{\text{NNH}} < \tau_{\text{N}_2\text{S}} < \tau_{\text{N}_2\text{O}}$. Thus, in principle, nitrogen fixation via the reverse of reaction (1) is feasible.

To investigate this possibility in more detail, we have carried out chemical kinetic modeling for oxidation of a CO/H₂/H₂S mixture at 1800 K and 1 bar in a perfectly stirred reactor under conditions ranging from fuel-lean to fuel-rich. The H₂S inlet concentration was representative of the level encountered for volatile S in coal combustion, i.e., 1000 ppm, and a CO/H₂ mixture was selected as a fuel to avoid the complexities of hydrocarbon/sulfur interactions. The stirred reactor environment was chosen because this type of reactor augments the radical levels during combustion. The reaction mechanism was drawn from Glarborg,⁴³ except for the N₂S subset, which was estimated in the present work. The following reactions were considered:



All of the reactions of N₂S were assumed to be very fast, with $k_7 = k_9 = k_{10} = 1.5 \times 10^{-10} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$, and $k_{11} = 8 \times 10^{-11} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$. Reaction (10) would provide a direct pathway from N₂S to NO, similar to the NNH + O → NH + NO process. The rate of reaction (8) was calculated from an estimate of the reverse step, as described below.

Selected modeling predictions are shown in Fig. 2. The calculations indicate that over the range of fuel-air equivalence ratios $0.7 \leq f \leq 1.6$ and temperatures of 1500–1800 K, the formation of NO from the N₂S mechanism is always well below 0.1 ppm, compared to levels of NO by other mechanisms of 3–12 ppm (1500 K) and 23–39 ppm (1800 K) in the present work. Nitric oxide is formed from N₂S by reaction with atomic oxygen (reaction (10)). The reason for the low impact of the N₂S mechanism is that the S-atom concentration is always much lower than those of the O/H radicals.

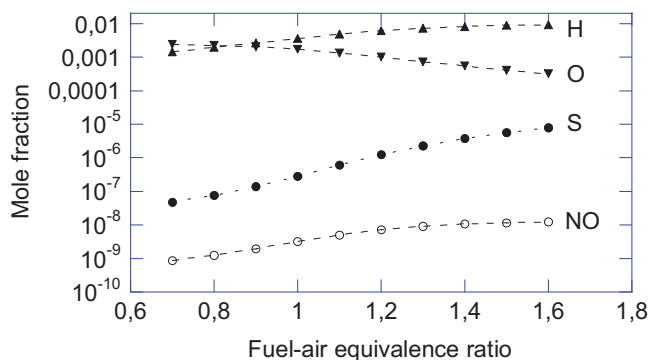
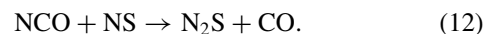
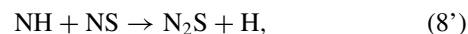


FIG. 2. Modeling predictions with a detailed reaction mechanism for formation of NO, H, O, and S as function of fuel-air equivalence ratio in a perfectly stirred reactor at 1800 K and a nominal residence time of 0.1 s. The fuel is 50% H₂ and 50% CO, burnt in air. Formation of NO through the N₂S intermediate is the only active NO formation mechanism in the model.

Under reducing conditions, where [S] peaks, the [H]/[O] ratio is almost 100, and reaction (10) is insignificant compared to reaction (8). Under stoichiometric and lean conditions, where the rates of 7 and 10 become comparable in magnitude, the concentration of atomic S is small, 3–4 orders of magnitude lower than [H] and [O], and negligible amounts of N₂S are formed. Based on these calculations, the N₂S mechanism appears to be unimportant for forming NO from N₂ in most combustion systems. A possible exception could be high temperature industrial processes with high sulfur concentrations, such as combustion of H₂S or the Claus process.

In addition to the formation through recombination of S with N₂, N₂S may be formed from radical-radical reactions. By analogy to steps forming N₂O, we would expect the reactions between NS and either NH or NCO to be active:



As a first estimate these steps would be expected to behave similarly to the analogous reactions involving N₂O. The NS radical has been detected in sulfur-seeded flames⁴⁴ and reactions (8') and (12) may contribute to the conversion of reaction nitrogen species to N₂. Observations from a very fuel-rich methane flame^{2b} show that addition of SO₂ accelerates the decay of NO in the post-flame zone. However, despite years of research, the direct interaction of nitrogen and sulfur species in flames is still controversial, and further work is desirable to identify the important steps.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The enthalpy of formation of singlet N₂S has been characterized by coupled cluster methods, along with the minimum energy crossing point between singlet and triplet potential energy curves as the N–S distance is increased. The results are used to predict the kinetics of spin-forbidden N₂S decomposition to N₂ + S(³P) at the low-pressure limit. Modeling of high temperature CO/H₂ oxidation indicates that under stoichiometric and lean conditions the concentration of atomic sulfur is likely to be too small for S + N₂ → N₂S followed

by $O + N_2S \rightarrow NO + NS$ to be a significant source of NO, while under fuel-rich conditions the dominant path for N_2S consumption is via reaction with H atoms.

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