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DISTRIBUTIONS OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO 10 LIOUID EXTRACTANTS FROM SIMULATED ACID-DISSOLVED SLUDGE AND ACIDIFIED SUPERNATE SOLUTIONS OF HANFORD HIGH-LEVEL WASTE

S. F. Marsh, Mail Stop 0728, Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, NM 87185, and

Z. V. Svitra and S. M. Bowen Mail Stop J514, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, NM 87545.

ABSTRACT

The distributions of 14 elements into ten extractants were measured from simulant solutions that represent acidic dissolved sludge and acidified supernate from Hanford HLW Tank 102-SY. The extractants: LIXTM-26, LIXTM-54, LIXTM-84, LIXTM-1010, CyanexTM 272, CyanexTM 923, AliquatTM 336, DHDECMP, DHDECMP-DIPB, and CMPO-DIPB, were sorbed on porous carbon beads to provide dry-appearing beads that would be suitable for column operations. The selected elements, which represent fission products: Ce, Cs, Sr, Tc, and Y; actinides: U, Pu, and Am; and matrix elements: Cr, Co, Fe, Mn, Zn, and Zr; were traced by radionuclides and measured by gamma spectrometry. Distribution coefficients for each of 280 element/absorber/solution combinations were measured for dynamic contact periods of 30 minutes, 2 hours, and 6 hours to provide sorption kinetics information for the selected elements from these complex media. The resulting 840 measured distribution coefficients are presented.

INTRODUCTION

The Hanford Reservation in Washington State incorporates 177 underground storage tanks that contain over 165 million Curies of radioactivity in more than 65 million gallons of waste. Many different processes were used at Hanford during the half-century these wastes accumulated from nuclear materials processing for national defense requirements. Consequently, many different reagents and waste streams were neutralized and combined in underground tanks, often with insufficient concern about compatibility of the various components being stored. The resulting wastes are a complex and sometimes unstable mixture of sludges, saltcakes, slurries, and supernates. Adding significantly to the stored waste problem is the fact that 67 tanks are known, or are suspected, to have leaked.

The US Department of Energy is committed to the environmental remediation of hazardous wastes stored at the Hanford Site. Los Alamos National Laboratory has been directed by DOE to support the Hanford Tank Waste Remediation System (TWRS) mission, which is to "store, treat, and dispose of all tank waste in a safe, cost-effective, and environmentally sound mannar." An essantial prerequisite for achieving the TWRS mission is the identification of suitable partitioning agents and technologies to accomplish this challenging goal.

As part of a larger study for the Tank Waste Remediation System (TWRS) at the Los Alamos National Laboratory,¹ we measured the distribution coefficients of 14 elements representing fission products (Ce, Cs, Sr, Tc, and Y) ; matrix elements (Cr, Co, Fe, Mn, Zn, and Zr); and actinides (U, Pu, and Am) into ten selected extractants. Each axtractant was sorbed on porous carbon support beads to facilitate eventual use as solid column-packing material. Each element/ extractant combination was tested from two simulant solutions representing acid-dissolved sludge and acidified supernate for Hanford HLW Tank 102-SY. Each element/extractant/solution combination was measured for dynamic contact times of 30 min, 2 h, and 6 h to provide information about sorption kinetics.

EXPERIMENTAL PARAMETERS

Radiotracers

Because gama spectrometry was selected as the technique for measuring the distribution of the selected elemants, suitable radiotracers were obtained and added to the simulant solutions. To minimize the possibility of interference among gamma rays with similar energies, we divided these radiotracers into two easily resolved groups. Each group of tracers was added to a separate portion of each simulant solution, after which each of the four resulting solutions was evaluated with each of the six absorbers.

Solutions

Detailed compositions of the two simulant solutions used in this study are published elsewhere.¹ Both solutions were essentially saturated with the salts typical of these types of waste solutions. The acid-dissolved sludge solution was approximately O.6 M nitric acid and 6 M total nitrate, whereas the acidified supernate solution was approximately 1.9 M total nitrate at a pH of about 4.

Solution/Extractant Contacts

In all cases, a 250-mg portion of each sorbed extractant was contacted with a measured 6- or 8-ml volume of aach solution in a specially modified 20-ml disposable hypodermic syringe. We modifiad these syringes by inserting cylindrical plugs cut from 1/4"-thick porous Kynar (obtained from Porex Technologies, Fairburn, Georgia) into the tapared tips as filters, which permitted liquid, but not solid absorber materials to pass through. A 250-mg portion of each dried absorber was weighed beforehand into an appropriately labaled syringe.

To begin a set of experiments, a measured volume of the selected solution was pipetted into a plastic beaker and was then drawn from the beaker into the syringe through the Kynar filter. After closing off the tip of each syringe with a solid Luer cap, a set of six syringes, prepared as described, was mixed on a 48-rpm tube rotator for dynamic contact periods of 30 minutes, 2 hours, and 6 hours. At the end of each contact period, approximately **25%** of the total solution volume was expelled through the filtered tip of the syringe

into a tared counting vial. The weight of the dispensed solution was determined and recorded for later use in the calculation of Kd values.

Calculation of Kd Values

Each portion of post-contact solution was assayed by gamma spectrometry for the specific gama energies of the added radionuclides. The portion of each element sorbed on an absorber was determined indirectly from the difference in the measured gamma activity of the selected radionuclide before and after contact with the specified absorber.

Distribution coefficients (Kd) were calculated for each element aa:

Kd = <u>(pre-contact conc.) - (post-contact conc.)</u> (ml solution).
post-contact concentration e absorber post-contact concentration

Corrections

Because the weight of the post-contact assay solutions usually differed slightly from that of the pre-contact standard solution, each post-contact solution was first normalized to the same weight basis as the standard. Appropriate corrections also were made in the Kd calculations to account for the fact that the liquid/solid ratio and the total activity of every radionuclide changed after each sequential assay portion was removed.

The activity of each radionuclide in the post-contact solution was then compared with the activity of that same nuclide in the pre-contact standard. Because most absorbers were initially added in air-dried form, however, they sometimes preferentially absorbed the aqueous solvent, which had the effect of increasing the concentration of the solutes in the decreased solution volume. This resulted, at times, in the activity of certain radionuclides being higher in the post-contact solution than in the pre-contact solution. Whenever the post-contact/pre-contact solution activity for any radionuclide exceeded unity, we assigned a value of 1.000 to the solution having the highest value, and all other radionuclides in that same portion of solution were normalized accordingly.

RESULTS

Liquid Extractants

We prepared and evaluated porous carbon beads impregnated with 10 different liquid extractants. The measured distribution coefficients are presented in Tables I through X.

$LIX^{TM} - 1010$

Ten ml of $LINK^{TM}-1010$ (di-2-ethylhexylphosphoric acid) was diluted with 20 ml of cyclohexane, after which 25.76 g of Ambersorb^{IM} 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 34.7 g of the loaded Ambersorb^{IM} beads.

Zirconium is moderately sorbed and technetium is weakly sorbed from aciddissolved sludge solution, both with slow sorption kinetics. From acidified supernate solution, americium sorption is significantly greater than the lanthanides, which demonstrates a potential for an efficient trivalent actinide/lanthanide group separation. Uranium, zinc, and manganese are moderately sorbed from acidified supernate solution.

> TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO LIXTM-1010 FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY

$LIX^{TM} - 54$

Ten ml of LIX[™]-54 (a beta diketone) was diluted with 20 ml of cyclohexane, after which 26.80 g of AmbersorbTM 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 34.6 g of the loaded AmbersorbTM beads.

Zirconium is weakly sorbed from acid-dissolved sludge solution. From acidified supernate solution, the sorption of americium is significantly greater than that of lanthanides, which demonstrates a potential for an efficient trivalent actinide/lanthanide group separation. Uranium, iron, manganese, plutonim, and technetium are weakly-to-moderately sorbed from acidified supernate **solution.**

> TABLE II. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO LIXTM-54 FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY.

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$LIX^{\text{TM}} - 84$

Ten ml of LIXTM-84 (a ketoxime) was diluted with 20 ml of cyclohexane, after which 26.13 g of Ambersorb $^{\text{\tiny{\textsf{IM}}}}$ 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 34.8 g of the loaded AmbersorbTM beads.

None of the 14 elements was significantly sorbed from either solution.

TABLE III. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO LIXTM-84 FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY.

$LIX^{TM} - 26$

Ten ml of LIX^{rm}-26 (8-hydroxyquinoline) was diluted with 20 ml of cyclohexane, after which 26.90 g of Ambersorb™ 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 37.1 g of the loaded AmbersorbTM beads.

Plutonium is moderately sorbed, whereas uranium and technetium are weakly sorbed from acid-dissolved sludge solution. Technetium, cerium, americium, and uranium sorb at useful levels from acidified supernate solution.

> TABLE IV. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO LIXTM-26 FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY.

CYANEX[™] 923

Ten ml of Cyanex[™] 923 (trialkylphosphine oxide) was diluted with 20 ml of cyclohexane, after which 26.83 g of Ambersorb^{IM} 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, waa added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 36.8 g of loaded AmbersorbTM beads.

From acid-dissolved sludge solution, plutonium, zirconium, and technetium sorb moderately with slow sorption kinetics. Technetium, lanthanides, americium, and uranium sorb strongly from acidified supernate solution. This extractant demonstrates an outstanding ability to recover many targeted elements from acidified supernate solution.

> TABLE V. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO LIX[™]-1010 FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY

> > \equiv

* These solutions contained 60 mg Pu/L; all others contained 3 g Pu/L.

CYANEX[™] 272

Ten ml of CyanexTM 272 (trimethylpentylphosphoric acid) was diluted with 20 ml of cyclohexane, after which 26.49 g of Ambersorb^{IM} 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 37.1 g of the loaded AmbersorbTM beads.

Zirconium is strongly and selectively sorbed from acid-dissolved sludge solution, although the sorption kinetics are slow. Uranium is selectively sorbed at a useful level from acidified supernate solution.

> TABLE VI. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO CYANEXTM-272 FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY.

DHDECMP

Ten ml of DHDECMP (dihexyl-N,N-diethylcarbamoylmethylphosphonate), obtained from Occidental Chemical Corporation, Specialty Products Division, Niagara Falls, NY, was diluted with 20 ml of cyclohexane, after which 27.99 g of AmbersorbTM 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 39.5 g of the loaded AmbersorbTM beads.

Plutonium is moderately sorbed, whereas uranium and technetium are weakly sorbed from acid-dissolved sludge solution. From acidified supernate solution, technetiw, cerium, americium, and uranium are well sorbed, whereas yttrium is weakly sorbed.

TABLE VII. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELRMENTS INTO DHDECMP FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY.

DHDECMP-DIP5

Ten ml of DHDECMP was diluted with 10 ml of DIPB (diisopropylbenzene) and 30 ml of cyclohexane, after which 48.45 g of Ambersorb^m 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 65.3 g of the loaded $Ambersorb^{TM}$ beads.

Plutonium is moderately sorbed from acid-dissolved sludge solution. From acidified supernate solution, technetium, cerium, americium, and uranium are sorbed at useful levels, whereas yttrium is weakly sorbed.

> TABLS VII1. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELSMENTS INTO DHDECMP-DIPB FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY.

CMPO-DIPB

Ten ml of CMPO (octylphenyl-N,N-diisobutylcarbamoylmethylphosphine oxide), obtained from M&T Chemicals, Inc., Rahway, NJ, was diluted with 10 ml of DIPB (diisopropylbenzene) and 30 ml of cyclohexane, after which 46.83 g of Ambersorbⁱⁿ 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 64.1 g of the loaded AmbersorbTM beads.

Technetium, zirconium, and uranium are weakly sorbed from acid-dissolved sludge solution. Technetium, cerium, americium, uranium, and yttrium are well sorbed from acidified supernate solution.

> TABLE IX. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO CMPO-DIPB FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SINUIATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY.

Aliauat 336

Five grams of Aliquat^{rm} 336, (tricaprylmethylammonium chloride) obtained from Aldrich Chemical Co., was diluted with 10 ml of hexane, after which 17.32 g of AmbersorbTM 563 porous carbon beads, obtained from Rohm & Haas Co., Philadelphia, PA, was added to absorb the liquid. The cyclohexane evaporated to yield 26.2 g of the loaded AmbersorbTM beads.

Plutonium is moderately sorbed from acid-dissolved sludge solution. From acidified supernate solution, technetium is strongly sorbed with high selectivity end only uranium is cosorbed to a significant extent. This extractant demonstrates an outstanding ability to selectively recover technetium from acidified supernate solution.

> TABLE X. DISTRIBUTION OF 14 ELEMENTS INTO ALIQUAT™ 336 FROM TWO SOLUTIONS SIMULATING HANFORD HLW TANK 102-SY.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

1. Technetium is sorbed well by all five anion exchange resins. From aciddissolved sludge solution the order is Reillex^m HPQ > Purolite^m A-520-E > IonacTM SR-3 > Sybron (Pr)₃N > IonacTM SR-6. From acidified supernate solution the order is Sybron^m SR-3 > Ionac^m SR-6 > Purolite^{rm} A-520-E > Reillex^m HPQ > Ionac^{M} SR-3.

2. Plutonium ia sorbed well by some of these resins from acid-dissolved sludge solution only. The order is ReillexTM HPQ > PuroliteTM A-520-E > IonacTM SR-3 > Sybron $(\Pr)_{3}N$ > IonacTM SR-6.

3. Uranium is sorbed somewhat by most of these resins. From acid-dissolved sludge solution the order is PuroliteTM A-520-E > IonacTM SR-3 > ReillexTM HPQ > Sybron $(Pr)_{3}N$ > IonacTM SR-6. From acidified supernate solution the order is ReillexTM HPQ > Sybron $(Pr)_{3}N$ > PuroliteTM A-520-E > IonacTM SR-3 > IonacTM SR-6.

4. Cerium is aorbed significantly better than yttrium or americium by most of these resins. The order for cerium sorption from acid-dissolved sludge is PuroliteTM A-520-E > IonacTM SR-3 > ReillexTM HPQ > SybronTM (Pr)₃ > IonacTM SR-6. From acidified supernate solution the order is the same.

5. Americium is weakly sorbed, and only from acid-dissolved sludge solutions, by Purolite^m A-520-E, Ionac^m SR-3, and Reillex^m HPQ.

6. The increased hydrophobicity of SybronTM (Pr)₃N and IonacTM SR-6 resins was reflected by the fact that these two resins floated on the surface of the aqueous solutions during the contacts. The measured Kd values obtained during our dynamic batch contacts may be significantly lower than what might be obtained from column experiments, in which improved liquid/solid contact would be expected as slightly pressurized solution is passed through the resin column.

REFERENCE

1. S. F. MARSH, Z. V. SVITEA, and S. M. BOWEN, "The Distribution Of 14 Elements on 60 Selected Absorbers from Simulated Acidic Dissolved Sludge and Alkaline Supernate Solutions for Hanford High-Level Waste Tank 102-SY," Los Alamos National Laboratory report LA-12654 (October 1993).