



Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr.:

Well, good afternoon. I've had the opportunity to provide keynote remarks at AFA several times over the past few years, and in those remarks I told you that we can't predict the future, but we can shape it. That I don't believe in impossible, that we've done this before, we could do it again, and that air power is the answer.

Now throughout my tenure as your chief of staff, I've been focused on accelerating change. In 2018, Simon Sinek released a book "The Infinite Game," about building an infinite mindset in an infinite game. The players are known and unknown. The rules are not agreed upon and are changeable, and the objective is to sustain the game as long as possible. We are in an infinite game. We have a complex strategic environment with five known challenges outlined in our security strategies and there are other players and factors that will come and go not all playing by the same rules.

Our objective is to continue to change, to remain relevant. In this dynamic environment, change is a journey and the journey must continue to ensure we remain the most respected air force in the world. First, I want to thank Orville for the kind introduction, and I notice he said, praise the Lord. I'm asking for a few prayers too.

I also want to congratulate the Mitchell Institute on its 10th anniversary. I want to thank them for all they do to advocate for our Air Force, for Airmen, for our Space Force, our Guardians, and for our combat capability. I want to thank our department of the Air Force leaders, Secretary Kendall, Under Secretary Jones, our CSO, Salty Saltzman, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Jo Bass and Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force, Toby Towberman. Thanks for your leadership. I especially want to say thanks to Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force Towberman. This is his last AFA, as a Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force

Toby, you've done an incredible job setting the foundation for all of our Guardians today, and for generations that come. I've been proud to work with you, the Air & Space Forces Association, thanks for providing this venue of professional development for Air Force and Space Force and to all our Airmen, Guardians, families, industry community partners, attending today, welcome. I want to reflect on the journey of the last three years, on our accomplishments and how we're accelerating change.

You know, I wrote "Accelerate Change Or Lose" because I saw the evolving strategic environment and I knew we needed to change because if we don't change, if we fail to adapt, we risk losing. We risk losing the certainty with which we have defended our national interest. For decades, we risk losing our credibility with our joint teammates and our allies and partners.

We risk losing quality Airmen and most importantly, we are just losing our ability to secure our future. In our profession, the words of General Omar Bradley will always ring true. In war, there is no second prize for the runner up and I agree because personally and professionally I do not play for second place.

Change is a journey and that journey started with placing greater focus on future conflict. What is required of us by our nation, by changing our mission statement: to fly, fight and win air power any time anywhere. One of our biggest changes came from the release of new doctrine. We took the old doctrine, slashed it down to 16 pages. We included mission command as a key tenant, but a culture of mission command doesn't just happen because it's in our doctrine. Airmen and leaders must practice mission command daily using simple scenarios, to invoke confidence ahead of complex challenges we will find in combat.

When I wrote "Accelerate, Change or Lose," one of the key words was collaboration. We must collaborate more than just within the Air Force when it's collaborated across the joint force. Inter-agency with the industry, with our allies and partners. We must be integrated by design starting at the beginning with the end in mind from the initial concept, from the initial plan to delivery of capability to



execution of combined operations integrated by design. The action orders focus us on what must change. I'd already drafted the action orders when I came in to chair as the chief and it was one of our Maj. Com. Commanders who laid it out A-B-C-D, so it'd be easy for all of us to remember Airmen, bureaucracy, competition and design implementation. Action Order Airmen is how we recruit, train, and retain our Airmen. It's how we develop Airmen with the attributes needed to compete, deter and win in a high end fight.

We have the best Airmen in the world and we must continually focus on creating an environment where all Airmen can reach their full potential. We've been working on helping Airmen in their career progression. We've established Airman leadership qualities to set expectations. We continue maturing developmental categories. We published the enlisted force development action plan. We change the list of promotions to better value experience. We continue to evolve our command and leadership selection processes and we've executed a series of reviews of Airmen's quality of service and quality of life, addressing factors that contribute to their wellbeing and those that detract from their success. We've moved forward on performance report improvements and static close out dates across the force. You know, before we had bullets that many could not understand, we had 60,000 made-up acronyms by removing all the vowels.

It was like Wheel of Fortune. If a family member or future employer read your performance reports, they would have no clue what you've done with your career. Now with NATO performance statements written in plain English, everyone can appreciate the great value each of our Airmen provide to our nation. Finally, we provided greater cross-training opportunities even for first turn Airmen. I was at Al Dahfra back in January with the CMSAF and I was finishing dinner with some CGOs and after a group photo, the photographer asked to speak with me and I mentally prepared for this Airman to present me an issue that he was challenged with. Instead, staff Sergeant Sabatino DeMasio shared his story. He was a maintainer but he was highly skilled for photography and video and he wanted a cross-training in the PA and he had been told it couldn't happen. He had quoted something I had said about Cross-training to make his case.

He just wanted me to know that because of my statement, he was cross-training into combat camera after his deployment. Matter of fact, Staff Sergeant DeMasio checked into his new squadron as a combat camera Airman just last week.

Change is a journey and the journey must continue. Action or bureaucracy is focused on changing our decision processes to make analytically informed and timely decisions so we can outpace our key competitors decision cycles. Our decision processes must enhance, not impede our effectiveness. It's how we must break down silos across the Air Force. For example, our Vice Chief General Dave Allvin who had a confirmation hearing today to be CSAF 23. I heard it went fairly well.

The Vice Chief led a Tiger team designed to move fast and take action and the team did just that. We brought back the enlisted college loan repayment program. The team found a way to recruit roughly 1,300 more Airmen a year just by changing our tattoo policy. With no change in our qualification standards, we're introducing the staff to the staff using Microsoft Teams to fly communication. Secretary Kendall is working hard toward an acquisition quickstart initiative, a multi-year procurement to seize opportunities when we see them and give a clearer demand signal to industry. We've been innovating and responding to Airman's operational needs, empowering Airmen to innovate and find solutions to our Air Force problems. From the MAJCOM all the way down to the squadron level, we found that good ideas have no rank. We even have Airmen innovating out of thin air, one making water, another making fuel. Project Arcwater, the 2022 Spark Tank winner Senior Master Sergeant Brent Kenney, uses solar fabric and batteries with a generator back up to pull water out the air.



Project Fierce. In 2022 Blue Horizons Project by Lieutenant Colonels Nikki Pearl and Corey Stottinger produces fuel from carbon molecules in the air, fuel that can be made anywhere at the point of need. Innovative solutions to bureaucratic problems, all thanks to Airmen.

You know, I found in the bureaucratic processes it's hard to say "yes," it's easy to say "no." If there's something you believe in, then you need to get past what I call the five stages of no. Hell no; no; we'll think about it; not a bad idea; we should be doing it already. Change is a journey and the journey must continue.

Action order competition isn't just about orders of battle operations, activities and investments, it's how we accelerate our understanding of our adversaries, how they make decisions, do an emphasis on competitive thinking and comparative analysis so we can better deter and be prepared for conflict. Now based on my experience at the [inaudible 00:12:34] in 2019 where I had a bilateral engagement with the PLA Air Force Northern Theater Commander, I learned it's not only what is said, but it's the underlying meaning of what is said. Because of that experience, we've worked hard to increase visibility of the Chinese Aerospace Studies Institute at Maxwell. We pushed for more intel briefs and open source information to our Airmen, all so we could better understand our pacing challenge the People's Republic of China.

We've become more agile to counter their threat, practicing ACE across the globe, doing so with our allies and partners. Refining, improving, creating a more agile and lethal force. We are executing more challenging exercises and mobility command just recently concluded Mobility Guardian 23, the most realistic yet. 3,500 Airmen with 70 aircraft showcasing agile combat employment that we can respond anytime, anywhere. Change is a journey and the journey must continue.

Action order of design implementation is how we adapt, how we need to make difficult force structure decisions, how we need to develop an affordable and analytically defensible force structure. How we accelerate the transition from the force we have to the force required. We continue to implement AFFORGEN with the next major step -air task forces. We publish and continue to update our future force narratives and we conducted deep dives to inform decisions on our future force.

We codified our core functions and published the Air Force future operating concepts in the six fights. Secretary Kendall that guided the department through the operation imperatives and our budget submissions. And as he articulated yesterday, he's leading a broad review to re-optimize for great power competition. Part of the operation imperatives is the B-21 family of systems. A perfect example of successful design implementation, of operators and acquisition professionals working together to deliver capability to the war fighter.

Just as importantly, developing the maintenance processes to ensure aircraft availability. Air Force Global Strike Command has an Airman working to do that right now, Airmen like Staff Sergeant Ashley Ross, ensuring the capability we need is supportable and maintainable, day one. Change is a journey and the journey must continue.

For that journey to continue, we need you and those who support you. It's your serving today and those who will serve tomorrow. It's your loved ones and your families. We can't thank our families enough. Let me express my personal thanks to all of our family members across our entire air force, your sacrifices, your support, are how we do what we do. I want to thank my family, my wife of 34 years Sharene, our sons Sean and Ross. They never raised their right hand to take an oath, but like many family members, they have sacrificed more than we probably realize. I want to thank my inspiration to join the Air Force, my parents. My dad, who told me as a high school student, 'four years in the military won't hurt you,' and my mom who supported the idea. Mom and dad, you were right.



We are all inspired by someone to serve our nation, to join our Air Force or join our Space Force. We need to think about the Airmen of tomorrow and the Guardians of Tomorrow. We all have a responsibility to inspire the next generation. I believe that people only aspire to be what they see. Be seen, share your stories, be that inspiration.

In closing, within the infinite game, Simon Sinek uses a term "existential flexibility" to create an extreme disruption in strategy to advance. Said another way, over a hundred years ago by General Giulio Douhet, an Italian air power theorist, "victory smiles upon those who anticipate the change in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur." Today with the convergence of security challenges impacting current and future geo-strategic environments, change must continue. We changed before and we can do it again. We know air power is the answer and that we are the most capable, most respected air force in the world.

In my first AFA address as the chief, I said, "We can't predict the future, but we can shape it."

Change is a journey and the journey must continue to shape our future, to give the joint force, our allies and partners in America, the capabilities required to protect our security interests, to deter a future conflict, to be ready to win when the nation's calls, and to execute our mission: fly, fight, and win. Airpower anytime, anywhere. Thank you.