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ARIZONA’S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION UNITES IN SUPPORT OF THE F-35 MISSION COMING TO LUKE AFB

OCTOBER 20, 2009 – Arizona’s congressional delegation supports the new F-35 mission landing at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale.

In a unified showing, the state’s eight members of the House of Representatives and two members of the Senate said in a recent letter that Luke AFB, with its robust and modern infrastructure, provides the Air Force with a site that is extremely well-suited to support the fighter tactics and training required by the F-35 Lightning II.

Arizona’s congressional delegation sent the letter to Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and General Norton Schwartz, chief of staff for the Air Force, on October 15. Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl, along with Representatives Ann Kirkpatrick (District 1), Trent Franks (District 2), John Shadegg (District 3), Ed Pastor (District 4), Harry Mitchell (District 5), Jeff Flake (District 6), Raul Grijalva (District 7) and Gabrielle Giffords (District 8), all signed the letter.

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In the letter, Arizona’s representatives in Washington, D.C., say: “We have worked together to enable Luke AFB and the Barry M. Goldwater Range to remain vital national assets in the Air Force’s support of the global contingency operations.”

The congressional letter is being well received by local Luke supporters.

“To have Arizona’s entire congressional delegation unify and show their unwavering support of Luke Air Force Base is a very significant step forward in helping secure Luke’s future mission,” said Charley Freericks, co-chair of the Luke Forward campaign that was recently launched to bring the F-35 to Luke AFB.

Luke is currently the largest active-duty F-16 training base in the world, and the Air Force is planning to begin replacing its fleet of F-16s with the new F-35 within the next few years.

The Luke Forward campaign is a statewide initiative developed to send a strong message to the Department of Defense that Arizona supports Luke AFB continuing to be the country’s premier fighter pilot training facility. The campaign will also raise awareness of the critical role Luke serves in the nation’s defense and in the state’s economy.

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