



# **LUKE FORWARD**

## **Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer**

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Good morning to all of you, and welcome to all of our invited guests -- and members of the media -- for attending our press conference today.

What we are announcing this morning -- and what you will learn more about in a few minutes -- is a new team effort on behalf of Luke Air Force Base -- securing its long-term future by encouraging the Department of Defense to select Luke as a training site for the F-35 Lightning II -- Joint Strike Fighter.

This mission is personal for me.

Luke Air Force Base is in my backyard. I hear the roar from those jet engines -- the sound of freedom -- on a regular basis -- and I love it.

I was a founding member of Luke's Fighter Country Partnership.

And, this past May, I was privileged to be able to turn the last bolt on the First Honeywell engine -- called the Power and Thermal Management System -- for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

What's more, I actually got to fly the fighter after that ceremony.

All right, it was in a simulator, but it was real enough for me -- real enough for me to issue a proclamation recognizing the F-35 as the premiere fighter aircraft in the world, guaranteeing our nation's defense and continuing the proud heritage of military aviation in the State of Arizona.

As I said, this is personal for me.

Not long ago, I sent a letter to Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley expressing our state's desire to be a training base for the F-35. I told the Secretary that Luke Air Force Base is the perfect location for this advanced

fighter aircraft given the fact that Arizona has state statutes in place to manage growth around our military installations that protect their missions.

I reminded him of Luke's unique assets --including its proximity to the 2.7-million acre Barry M. Goldwater Range, key to air-to-ground combat training, along with 57,000 cubic miles of airspace overhead where pilots practice air-to-air maneuvers and engage targets on the ground. Frankly, no other area in the country can compare in size, scope and tactical training ability.

Protecting, maintaining and expanding these types of missions are critical to Arizona's long-term viability as our military installations generate more than \$9 billion in economic impact annually to our state.

This makes the military one of the largest industries in Arizona.

Given our state's current economic condition, this stable, recession-proof industry needs to be maintained and strengthened.

With that as perspective, I'd now like to ask my own hometown mayor -- Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs -- to please come up to the podium to make our special announcement.

We need to continue working closely with our federal delegation, the Department of Defense and the Pentagon to position Arizona as the ideal location to maintain and expand the military presence in our state.

We need to do this through demonstrating our preparedness and commitment to continue this partnership, and Luke Forward will help us accomplish this.

Finally, I look forward to working with the West Valley Partners, business organizations and local community groups in supporting this Luke Forward initiative.

I am committed to doing whatever I can to help prepare Luke Air Force Base for its next mission . . . training the world's best fighter pilots and maintainers with the new F-35 joint strike fighter.

This concludes today's press conference.

Today's speakers will be available for one-on-one interviews.

Thank you all very much for coming this morning.