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by Karen Harrison
Language, Region and Culture Program Office

3/22/2012 - **WASHINGTON (AFNS)** -- The Air Force Culture and Language Center, located at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., currently developing a series of Expeditionary Culture Field Guides on key countries to where U.S. forces are deploying.

The ECFGs provide deploying forces of all U.S. military branches with language, region and culture information as it pertains assigned country or region.

AFCLC initially developed guides for Iraq and Afghanistan, which are countries assigned to U.S. Central Command, followed series of 14 guides for U.S. Africa Command. Additionally, 17th Air Force, which is the air component of USAFRICOM, has a second contract to develop an additional eight ECFGs to be developed and delivered in 2013, according to Language, Reg Culture Program Office officials.

The guides are pocket-size and laminated, allowing them to be a handy and durable resource, officials said. The guides contain essential elements pertaining to the cross-cultural environment, from individual verbal and nonverbal interactions to general knowledge about past diplomatic and military engagements.

AFCLC in-house specialists developed a research methodology, in cooperation with experienced active-duty and retired Airmen using this methodology to develop content, AFCLC personnel partner with social scientists and cultural practitioners to ensure accuracy and relevance of the ECFGs.

"We spend an exhaustive amount of time and effort researching and editing the guide's contents," said Col. Jeffrey Smith, the director. "We make sure the information provided is accurate and relevant for our deploying forces."

The Air Force has received high praises from within the Air Force and from other services' leadership regarding the accuracy quality of the ECFGs. According to Mary Newbern, the AFCLC's project manager for ECFGs, Gen. David Petraeus, when he was serving as USCENTCOM commander, requested copies of the Iraq and Afghan ECFGs for his deploying forces.

"Airmen operating in culturally-complex overseas environments need to be armed with the fundamental social skills necessary to engage effectively with their host-nation counterparts," said Barbara Barger, the Air Force Senior Language Authority. "The ECFG program is a testament to AFCLC's vision for providing our warfighters with the tools they will need in hand as they execute their overseas duties."

The ECFGs are accessible from AFCLC's secure, common access card-enabled website at <https://www.mil.maxwell.af.mil/afclc/culture/fieldguides.html>.