



**THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON**

February 24, 2004

MESSAGE FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF STATE EMPLOYEES

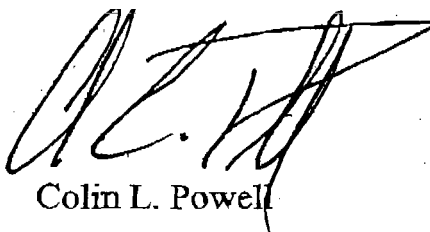
SUBJECT: Contracting with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

The Department of State has a successful record in meeting most of its goals for awarding contracts to small businesses of diverse ownership. However, we have not yet achieved the 3% minimum goal established by the Veteran's Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999.

Recent enactment of the Veterans' Benefit Act of 2003 (PL 108-183) creates a procurement set-aside program for small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans. Once the provisions of PL 108-183 are added to the Federal Acquisition' Regulation, the Department and other federal agencies will have the tools we need to meet the 3 % goal.

In the meantime, I urge all Department of State employees who have a role in the acquisition process, whether as program managers or as acquisition officials, to be proactive in ensuring that service-disabled veteran-owned firms are included in the competitive process. There are over 600 firms located in the MD-DC-VA area that are registered as being owned by service-disabled veterans in the Small Business Administration's database. A/SDBU will soon be contacting bureau Executive Directors to share this database, which includes firms in a wide array of industries.

Let us work together to improve our record for awarding contracts to these very important people, the brave men and women who sacrificed their health in the service to their country. We can meet, and even exceed, -the 3% statutory minimum goal for awarding contacts to firms owned by our service-disabled veterans.



Colin L. Powell