

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

PARVANEH LIMBERT

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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Born in Maku, Iran, and raised in Sanandaj, Kurdistan	
Attended University in Tehran	1959-1962
Gymnastics Teacher, Tehran	1962-1965
Met John Limbert (Peace Corps volunteer) in Sanandaj	1965
Instructor, Peace Corps, School for International Training Brattleboro, Vermont	1967
Persian Instructor, Harvard University	1967-1968
Physical Education High School Teacher Shiraz, Iran	1968-1972
Husband John finished Ph.D. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA	1972
Husband John Limbert entered U.S. Foreign Service	1973
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates Husband John takes Commerce position	1973
Dubai, United Arab Emirates Husband John Limbert opened Commerce Office	1975
Arabic Student at Foreign Service Institute in Tunis, Tunisia	1976-1977
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	1978-1981
Eligible Family Member (EFM) position, U.S. Consulate, Tehran, Iran	August 1979

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia while husband John held hostage	1979-1981
Reunited with husband John after release as hostage, West Point, NY	January 1981
Three months leave for hostages, family travel to Texas, Florida, California, and Hawaii	1981
U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland (While husband John Professor, works @JCPenny, then takes ConGen and French at Foreign Service Institute)	1983-1984
Admin/Personnel/Community Liaison Officer (CLO) Djibouti, East Africa	1984-1986
Defense Intelligence Agency Section Algiers, Algeria	1986-1988
Consular Officer Dubai, United Arab Emirates	1988-1991
Accompanies husband John to Center for International Affairs (now Weatherhead Center) Harvard University, Cambridge, MA	1991
Language Tester, Foreign Service Institute, Arlington, VA	1992-1994
Consular Officer Conakry, New Guinea	1994-1997
Instructor, School of Language Studies, Foreign Service Institute Arlington, Virginia	1997-2000
Ambassador's Wife, Mauritania (Also Consular Officer TDYs to: Benin, Addis Ababa, Niger, and Cape Verde)	2000-2003
U.S. Passport Agency	2003
Baghdad, Iraq (2-month assignment)	2004
U.S. Passport Agency (1 year)	2004
Retirement	2005
Post retirement activities: Art work and travel	

INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 23rd of August 2016 and an interview with Parvaneh, P-A-R-V-A-N-E-H Limbert, L-I-M-B-E-R-T. This is done on behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Is there a nickname or do you go by Parvaneh.

LIMBERT: Parvaneh.

Q: Mrs. Limbert is the wife of John Limbert whom I have done an interview some years ago. Parvaneh, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

LIMBERT: I was born in Iran in the city of Maku in West Azerbaijan on the border of Iran and Turkey.

Q: I see. First let's get a feel for your family. Let's start with your father's side. Are they from there and what is their background?

LIMBERT: My father and mother are originally from Iranian Kurdistan. They lived many years in the provincial capital of Sanandaj. My father was a medical doctor and worked many years for the Iranian Ministry of Health. He was the head of health offices in many cities in Iran and transferred from city to city. Each of my brothers and my sister was born each in a different city where he lived and worked. I was born about 18 months before the Russian invasion of September 1941 in Azerbaijan, Iran. At the time I was born my father was head of the health unit in Maku and also he was appointed as a governor by Reza Shah, the father of the Muhammad Reza Shah, who would eventually be deposed by the Islamic Revolution. I was born in Maku and then my father transferred to the nearby district of Shahpour/Salmas shortly before the Russians' invasion.

Q: Could you explain the invasion of the Russians? This was when?

LIMBERT: September 1941.

Q: This is during the second world war.

LIMBERT: At that time the Russians invaded Iran from the north and the British from the south. My father at that time was a governor of Shahpour/Salmas district in West Azerbaijan and he had to leave and go to the city of Tabriz, the main town in Iranian Azerbaijan. He was in Shahpour also at the same time he was head of the health department for the whole of West Azerbaijan. After the Russians invaded West Azerbaijan my father had to leave. The Russians were arresting Iranian government officials and sending them to the Gulag. He left with six children, maids and other officials who had to leave Shahpour and go to Tabriz, the provincial capital. In Tabriz he had a very interesting encounter. He told us that when he was there he wanted to go to

Tehran and he went to a garage to look for a big car or a truck to take his family to Tehran. He went there and he saw a Russian captain taking care of the garage in that area. He recognized my father and said, "You are Dr. Tabibzadeh?" My father said, "How do you know me?" He said, "I know you very well. You saved my life when I had pneumonia. You treated me and put me in a hospital and took care of me. Then I had long hair and a long white beard." At the end my father found out that he was a KGB spy and he was working in Iran a couple of years before the Russian invasion. Because my father had helped him he helped my father. He found a truck, prepared the truck with fuel and oil and said to my father, "Because you saved me Dr. Tabibzadeh, I am providing you this car and having my driver take you to Tehran." So my father and mother, with six children, a maid and a cook, all went to Tehran.

Q: Before we pick up the story there what is the background of your mother and her story?

LIMBERT: My mother is a distant cousin of my father and they both studied in the Alliance Française school in Sanandaj. My father's medical training was with his father and with the Alliance Française. He spoke French very well. He also spoke Persian, Azeri Turkish, Kurdish, and Aramaic. With these languages, Reza Shah appointed him governor in Azerbaijan, where he would be close to the Turkish frontier where foreign officials would enter Iran.

Q: Ah yes.

LIMBERT: Yes, he was very well-educated.

Q: When the Soviet troops came in to Azerbaijan was this considered a temporary war time thing?

LIMBERT: It did not happen that way. They wanted to take the whole of Azerbaijan in in the Northwest. The Americans were very helpful in getting them out (in 1946). I was one-year old when the Russians invaded.

Q: Basically your early years that you recall were in Tabriz, was that it?

LIMBERT: Tabriz was after Maku and Shahpour (also called Salmas). They went to Tabriz because my father thought Tabriz was a larger city and he could settle there with his family and take care of his family and children, food, lodging and everything. Then he had to leave and he wanted to go back to Tehran and go to the Ministry of Health and do health work instead of being a governor or in a sensitive position.

Q: As a young child where did you grow up?

LLIMBERT: I grew up in Sanandaj. When we went to Tehran I was still one-year old and we stayed in Tehran for a year or two. I was two years old and my sister one and we were six brothers and sisters; the oldest was about thirteen or twelve. After that because

my father was originally from Sanandaj in Kurdistan, he wanted to go back to live there because the extended family was there also. Our families were there and he was happy to go on work duty to go different cities because he was transferred from city to city to check the health department and stay there for a year or six months. He felt the safest place for us was to be in Kurdistan.

Q: On your mother's side what's the sort of background of her family?

LIMBERT: My mother is also a second cousin of my father and her father was also a medical doctor. Our family nine generations back were medical doctors and they were called Hakim, Hakim is doctor in Persian. Another word is Tabib, and that is why my father and my family's side are called "Tabibzadeh. Tabib means doctor; zadeh means descendent. So nine generations back were Tabibs or Hakims.

Q: Were there women in the family that ever became doctors?

LIMBERT: Not as many. My father wanted me to be a doctor. I have uncle doctors from both father and mother's side. I have cousins who are doctors, my niece is doctor, my nephew is doctor because medicine was the best practice, best work, for the person. It used to be and still is and that's why my father wanted me to become a doctor but I didn't want to.

Q: Well let's talk about growing up as a young girl. At home were you much of a reader?

LIMBERT: We read lots of Persian histories and poetry. Our system of education was French, which I didn't like at all, sorry to say.

Q: It is very exacting isn't it?

LIMBERT: Yes, and with many subjects to study.

Q: Did this make you feel estranged from Iranian culture?

LIMBERT: Not really. We were used to it. It was a French system until after the revolution. After the White Revolution under the Shah, it changed a little bit to be more American; before everything was French. My parents both studied in Alliance Française. Alliance Française was very strong in that province of Kurdistan especially among the Jewish community which wanted the Alliance to be there to educate them.

Q: Alliance Française is semi-equivalent to our America Houses and things like that I mean it is a cultural training.

LIMBERT: It is culture training and complete education like medical education, medicine. My father also studied with the American Presbyterian missionaries in Hamedan, where there was a missionary hospital. His father sent him there when he was very young.

Q: What were your classes like at a very early age?

LIMBERT: Classes were very simple and actually we had a girl's school and a boy's school; we were not coed. At the elementary level we mixed, it was coed, but into high school it was not coed and again it was girls' school and boys' school separated. Our education was always in Persian.

Q: At an early age was your family I don't know how to put this but how Islamic was your upbringing?

LIMBERT: Actually, I don't come from the Muslim family; my background comes from a Jewish family, whose ancestors we believe came from Spain. They left and...

Q: In 1492.

LIMBERT: Yes, in 1492 or very early...

Q: And Isabella.

LIMBERT: Yes.

Q: Expelled the...

LIMBERT: And then they left, they went to Salonica in the Ottoman Empire and then at some uncertain date they moved to Golpayegan, Iran (in the region of Isfahan). Since then those two doctors who left went there and their children became doctors and their grandchildren and their great grandchildren all became doctors. We can trace our family nine generations back to doctors in Golpayegan.

Q: Did you speak Ladino?

LIMBERT: No, I don't speak Ladino but in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan the Jewish community speaks Aramaic. In Sanandaj and the rest of Kurdistan the Jews (and the Assyrian Christians) spoke Aramaic. I didn't speak much Aramaic because in school we spoke Persian and at home we spoke Persian with my parents. My parents spoke French or Turkish to each other when they didn't want us to understand what they were talking about.

Q: Very interesting. Well you are a language expert you say Farsi and Persian are the same or...

LIMBERT: All the same. Persia is old name for Iran and actually now many Iranians prefer to call themselves Persian because it is old name for the country and the current name for the language.

Q: These name changes are always confusing.

LIMBERT: Yes and then they changed to Aryan and later to Iran which now many Iranians don't like because of the revolution.

Q: Okay, what did you do for recreation as a very young girl in elementary school?

LIMBERT: Sports.

Q: What sort of sports?

LIMBERT: All kinds of sports.

Q: They weren't frowned upon?

LIMBERT: From football, soccer, not American football.

Q: Soccer.

LIMBERT: Soccer, basketball, volleyball, ping pong, I was a school teacher and when I finished high school and I wanted to go to university my father wanted me to go to medical school and I said, "Sorry, we already have too many doctors in our family; let me do something else. I preferred to be a teacher and I liked to be a physical education teacher. He finally agreed and I studied at the University of Tehran.

Q: Well this is interesting. We've only in the last few decades have changed our outlook toward women and sports but what about was sports considered a problem for people in Iran?

LIMBERT: No.

Q: Girls?

LIMBERT: Girls, boys, actually I always played with the boys. I always did my sports with boys and no problem in my family. Actually, my father was very, very open-minded and our education was very free and we learned anything and he wanted us to learn a lot. When we were in school and high school he said, "Yes, I like you to learn about Muslim religion. When you study at school you should learn about the Muslim religion. I want you to learn and see what is going on and you learn about history, and that's what we did.

Q: While you were a school girl did you know anything about the United States or see Americans or not?

LIMBERT: We always read the news, and we were current with the news and newspapers on what's happening. My father not only was a medical doctor, he was very

much into news and books. He and my mother wanted to know what was going on, what was happening in the world. He really wanted us to be the same as he was.

What an interesting life he had. He was a very famous medical doctor in Kurdistan even from Iraqi Kurdistan Iraq and Sheikh Osman's family all the Naqshbandis from Iraq when they got sick they came to Sanandaj to see my father. When I got married Sheikh Osman's wives made me a Kurdish outfit as a wedding gift. And by her hand this lady sat down and made it; I still have it. It was good. We learned a lot from our father and our mother and he was very well known. Even once Lawrence of Arabia when he left Saudi Arabia got sick as he was passing through Iraqi Kurdistan. They called my father and they came and they drove him there and he sat by his tents and by Lawrence's head and held him because he diagnosed his sickness because he had malaria. He stayed three nights and when he got better my father left.

Q: T.E. Lawrence?

LIMBERT: Yes and it was interesting but he didn't know that. When they made the movie of Lawrence of Arabia I was in high school. I was about 12 years old, in eighth grade, when the day father said, "I want to see this movie because I was Lawrence's doctor and I want to see his story." He didn't want to go to the movies very much because were junky and strange stories. When he saw it he said, "Peter O'Toole is exactly like him because of the blue eyes, long face. That was one of the stories we learned from our family.

Q: Well was the girl's school simply Alliance Française?

LIMBERT: For my mother and father's generation, not our generation. Our generation Alliance Française was still there but I went to the regular public schools. My parents wanted us to study French and after school we used to go to the *Alliance* school and study French.

Q: What was your high school like?

LIMBERT: The high school went from the seventh grade to twelfth grade and we were just girls separated from the boy's school. We weren't coed just girls and boy's separate. We did study very hard the problem was I thought the problem was the system was the French system. I was twelve years old and I had twenty-one subjects to study.

Q: Good God.

LIMBERT: From everything.

Q: Normally it is four to five.

LIMBERT: Twenty-one also with the school, painting, history, geography, physics, chemistry, algebra, everything all kinds and it was so difficult. It was hard for the kids to

swallow, to learn, all those subjects that was very difficult. But later on I think they changed a little bit and when you went to the ninth and tenth grades and they changed and separated the branches to the history branch or like engineering or economic or something different they made it in four branches; the literature branch and all was separated.

Q: As a young girl what was your feeling about the Shah and the Royal Family?

LIMBERT: We liked them, we liked them very much. Actually, we liked them and we saw them ruling and we had respect. They were ruling the country and they were good we liked them very much. Actually myself and when I was in high school I remember when it was his birthday we had a ceremony and we had fun to celebrate his birthday. We liked them very much and they were not any problem.

Q: Were the Mullah's, religious leaders...

LIMBERT: They came later.

Q: But at that time were you were in high school were they much of a presence that you were aware of?

LIMBERT: They were not much of a presence. In Kurdistan province, which we grew up, it was not as strong as in other cities like Mashhad or Tabriz or in other provinces. In Kurdistan Province it was very normal and was not too much mostly because most of the people were Sunnis. The Sunni population is different from Shia population.

Q: As a young girl were you aware of the American influence at all?

LIMBERT: When I was younger, no, like elementary or junior high but when I was in high school we felt that the American influence more.

Q: By the way where did you rank in order with six children in the family?

LIMBERT: I was one before last.

Q: So you were fifth or sixth?

LIMBERT: I am the fifth.

Q: Fifth ah huh.

LIMBERT: There were six.

Q: Was your family a strong unit would you say?

LIMBERT: Very, very strong unit. Everybody respected the parents, we obeyed anything they said and we had very respect for our families.

Q: Getting together for meals was important?

LIMBERT: Oh yes, that was very important, we always sat with parents, we ate together. I remember the first time I was eighth grade we were sitting and having geeren and my brother said, "Dad, my I have some wine?" My father sometimes drank wine and he said, "Yes, I'll give you a glass of wine and I want you to drink with me, not in other places. Anytime, you want you can have it at home with me." And that gave us a lesson.

Q: That's an excellent way to deal with it.

LIMBERT: Yes.

Q: By the time you were in high school were you really looking toward being a teacher and not a doctor?

LIMBERT: Yes. Actually every day I came home from high school my father called me and said, "Come to my clinic." I went there and sat and he said, "You sit here and when my patient comes and when I check and I ask him questions I want you to diagnose." I was in high school. I sat there and I watched and he checked and he said, "Okay, tell me what he or she has." I would make a diagnose. My father said, "You should go to medical school still I want you to go to medical school." I came to your office but I learned that I don't want to be a doctor. I grew up in hospitals, I grew up in Provinces when we went to check his clinics and I watched him and I didn't want that job because it was tough and I wanted to be a sports teacher.

Q: From high school you graduated when?

LIMBERT: I graduated in 1959.

Q: Now how was the Soviet Union regarded from your perspective although you were pretty young but in your family at that time?

LIMBERT: Excuse me I didn't like the Soviet Union. Iranians were afraid because they had a bad memory of the invasion in 1941.

Q: Because somebody reading this transcript they should look I should say the first act of the Cold War was Harry Truman essentially making a case for the Soviet Union to pull out of Iran and they did.

LIMBERT: They did the Americans...

Q: If we, United States, hadn't made that they'd probably still be there.

LIMBERT: As long as they know those events. They know the Americans made the Russians get out. They helped the Iranians, and most of us know it.

Q: Well then did you travel much?

LIMBERT: Very much.

Q: Where did you go?

LIMBERT: At what age?

Q: We are talking about elementary and high school years.

LIMBERT: Elementary school we traveled a lot inside the country to different provinces. I remember when I was in fourth grade and ten years old, my father was stationed in Ilam, near the border of Iraq and Iran. While we were there, in 1950, the Iraqis expelled the Jews. We were living in a large hospital compound in Ilam. This large compound had a garden, the hospital, and our residence. When the Iraqis expelled they took their jewelry and other property. When the Jews left, most went to Iran. My father was the head of the hospital then, and he received orders from Shah to help these refugees. I remember this all clearly. I was ten years old one year older than my sister and one year younger than my brother. We asked our mother, "Who are these people?" My mother said, "These are poor people who left Iraq and we have to help them." They didn't tell us they were Jews because they didn't want to frighten us. They took them to the hospital, where they took care of them and fed them. I remember my mother had some nursing training, and day and night she was in the hospital. I would say, "Why are you doing this?" My mother and my father said, "We have to help these people. We have a government order." I recall there were many refugees. From Ilam, we transferred to another province and finally we ended up in Sanandaj, my parents' home city.

Q: Was your family identified as being Jewish?

LIMBERT: In province of Kurdistan, yes. Everyone knew my father and mother were Jewish, but they looked at them as both good Jews and Muslims. For the people there, religion was not a problem. Personality and humanity were much more important.

Q: Did you observe Jewish customs at all?

LIMBERT: We did some not all the time. My parents, especially my father, was not a very religious person.

Q: Did you get any feeling about the greater community in and out of Iran? How they felt about Jews?

LIMBERT: No, the most were very good. In Iran most people respected Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity. They didn't have any problems except later on after the

Islamic revolution in 1979, with the Bahais. They had serious problems, but things were mostly normal for Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians.

Q: Bahia's were considered to be?

LIMBERT: A later religion and something to replace Islam.

Q: Yeah, as opposed to the other ones had their own religion and basically all were children of the Book, as they said. But the Bahia's were an off-shoot of Islam and that can cause a lot of trouble.

LIMBERT: Yes, that's right.

Q: Alright then you got out of high school when?

LIMBERT: I got out of high school in 1959 and I went to University in Tehran. I went to teachers college and studied physical education.

Q: What was Tehran University like when you were there?

LIMBERT: It was very good. It was coed. Men and women students mixed freely. In the class we had men and women. We played sports together, we traveled together. The atmosphere was very free.

Q: Where were you when the Shah was forced out of the country for a while and what was the date?

LIMBERT: It was 1950. We were in Iran that's where my father was...

Q: How did that play in your family?

LIMBERT: It was scary but lots of students in Tehran were pro-Mosaddegh.

Q: At Tehran University when you were there an active student movement against the Shah?

LIMBERT: There were a couple of incidents, yes. I remember a group demonstrated in front of the university did a demonstration. The police stopped them like in a police state. they stopped them.

Q: Did you take part in any student activity?

LIMBERT: Political? No. We were into sports and playing games.

Q: What course did you particularly like?

LIMBERT: Actually in high school I was a ping pong champion and at the university I did many the sports: basketball, volley ball, and gymnastics. Gymnastics was my favorite and later on I was a gymnastics teacher in Tehran. I traveled with my students to different cities for competitions.

Q: Did you have much contact with foreigners before or in college?

LIMBERT: Actually in college we had two American teachers and it was interesting. One of them was an English teacher and one of them was a physical education teacher.

Q: When was it when you got out of college?

LIMBERT: I finished in 1962 and I stayed in Tehran for three years and taught there. and; I didn't go to my hometown Sanandaj. I taught in two public high schools (with the ministry of education) Then in 1965 when I decided to go to Sanandaj to be with my parents. All the children had left home. I was lonely, and I thought why not go there to be with my family and teach at the same school where I had studied.

Q: Let's talk about your early teaching experience how did you find it?

LIMBERT: Very interesting, very interesting actually. When I as teaching I had a basketball team in high school and a gymnastics team. We had competitions with other schools and every year we had a big sports competition. We also had a boy's competition and a girl's competition in different provinces. The girls wore short pants, or they could play basketball wearing long pants, but they were not forced to cover. Those days things were very relaxed.

Q: Was there any movement to put on a hijab?

LIMBERT: There was not, because in 1935 our Shah eliminated veil and ladies didn't have to wear hijab. I remember I saw the pictures of my mother and even when they were in Azerbaijan or other places they wore hats with European dresses. They did not wear chadors. But in some provinces and in some cities the people had some choice if they wanted to wear a chador. They did not cover their faces. The only place in Iran they covered faces was in the South close to the Persian Gulf.

Q: Did you have any contact with young people from Arabia or Iraq?

LIMBERT: During the high school no, not during university either. We didn't have that much contact with foreigners. When I was teaching in Tehran and I took a trip with forty teachers to Israel, for a tour.

Q: Any problems?

LIMBERT: No, no problem. The Iranians used to go there a lot.

Q: Did you have the feeling that you were living as a big city girl and that the people who lived out in the countryside were much more conservative and different?

LIMBERT: Yes big city girls were different. The people in the countryside were more closed.

Q: Did that play out at college and university?

LIMBERT: No. College and university were more free. We were free to travel.

Q: Did the Cold War intrude at all or that you can think of any?

LIMBERT: Except when I was a child and there was a Russian invasion during WWII. Other than that, I don't remember any. Iran didn't have any fights with other countries.

Q: My feeling about it is that this is a fairly quiet period.

LIMBERT: Yes.

Q: Did you run into the Peace Corps at all?

LIMBERT: I taught Peace Corps later on. I taught seven projects Persian, I taught language. I had about 700-800 students.

Q: How did you find them?

LIMBERT: Beautiful, good. Some learned fast, some did not. That was later on after we married and I lived in the States and then I got into a teaching program.

Q: We are talking about when you were in Iran.

LIMBERT: We didn't have Peace Corps when I was in high school. Later on I think in '62 was the first Peace Corps in Iran. We didn't have anyone before that.

Q: Looking at sort of the American influence were American movies...

LIMBERT: Oh yes there were lots of American movies, movie theaters and we saw lots of American movies in movie theaters.

Q: Did you get a feel for America through the movies?

LIMBERT: Oh yes, everybody does, even now. Everyone who sees the American movies says, "Oh my God that's a beautiful country. Let's go there." I remember after we got married we came and John took me to New York to some neighborhoods where I said, "Oh my God." We lived in Cambridge in a place where it was scary to go out, and I said, "This is not the America I saw in the movies."

Q: How did you meet John?

LIMBERT: After graduation for three years I worked in Tehran as a teacher. Then I arranged a transfer to Sanandaj to be with my parents. John was a Peace Corps volunteer there. That was the summer of 1965, when I went to Sanandaj and in September the school started. I was teaching at the same high school where I had studied and working for the same principal. She was my principal when I was in high school and now I was working with her at the same time. I went to school and then after a few months one day I saw John there. I was teaching physical education and John was teaching English. Our timing was a little different. When he was coming to the school to teach I was leaving. One day the last hour in the school my students they were playing sports and ping pong and then my students asked me, "Why you don't play with this American, we want you to play and beat him in ping pong." I said, "Okay." They asked John, "Come and play with our teacher." John came and he thought he was going to be good and he was a good ping pong player and we played and finished him off. He thought, "Oh my God, this is really a teacher you know." Then he got to know me and after six months I was there one day and one of the lady teachers came to me and said, "John really likes you and wants to talk to you." Because our cultures are different, we couldn't date. I met him in school...

Q: Why couldn't you date?

LIMBERT: Because people don't go on dates.

Q: This is dating in principal. I mean this is not because he was American but because...

LIMBERT: No, even Iranian before they are engaged they don't date. They have to officially become engaged and then date. The culture is different, it isn't American culture.

Q: I know I started dating when I was twelve years old.

LIMBERT: I know that's different, no we could not date and even especially in small towns everybody knows you, everybody's eyes are on you and everybody knows your family. Even other people they never date. When the girl wants to marry, of course, the people they know or they go after and they check with the parents, they ask the parents first and then the boys and girls they talk to each other, then they meet each other. Then they get engaged and then they go out together.

Q: Were they arranged marriages or not?

LIMBERT: They are lots of arranged marriages and also because the family knows each other and mostly they know the family and they go after that family they get married, you know.

Q: What were you girls doing talking about the boys all the time?

LIMBERT: We saw them on the street and we'd say we don't like that boy or we like that boy but we never talked to the boys. Except we had our family we had a very close relationship family with other families; our parents got together every Thursday night and our children would play together and it was a social activity as a big group. That's how we got together and got to know each other. But most families they socialize with those families they know.

Q: Here there is this guy from the United States how did that sit with your family?

LIMBERT: John was very interesting because he was in town a year before I went there and everybody in the small town of 50 thousand population knew him. He got out, went home and to school; everybody knew who he was. My father used to see him from his clinic. He said when John wanted to marry me he asked me to marry, propose. My father said, "I saw him for one year everyday he walked down the street, he went to school, went home and everybody talked nicely about him and I know he is a nice guy." Then one night the lady who was teaching him Persian she came to me and said, "John really wants to talk to you and he wants to..." I said, "I can't marry him because I don't know him and I don't want to go to the States. I want to be close to my parents." Then finally the lady came back again the next week and then the next week. I think John really asked her to come and ask me to talk to him. Finally she had a big dinner party and invited everybody and included John in that party. Then I knew he wanted to talk to me and my father knew. He then played backgammon with my father, and my father was very knowledgeable person and he saw him very closely when he played backgammon with him. Then we came home and he says, "Parvaneh I know this guy is a nice person and you are a very independent girl. I know you and you will live with him better than if you marry an Iranian. I know you won't get along with any Iranian man."

Q: You had already chosen a non-medical field which shown that you had an independence which probably was not a great trait to be an Iranian wife was it?

LIMBERT: Yeah, I didn't want to be an Iranian wife. My father said, "I know you and you will live very well and I know you can take care of yourself."

Q: When did you finally get to talk?

LIMBERT: Then he came and he said, "Okay, can we talk?" We said, "Fine." He came to the house one afternoon and we sat in a room together because we used to see each other in the school lounge between classes but he talked about school, about children. He came home and we went to our living room and we sat and talked and he proposed. He said, "I want to marry you and I like you and I have this and I don't have this. I don't have money and I want to go back to the States to graduate school and I want to marry you. Can you answer me?" Then because my father told me that I know you are an independent girl and you live with him better than any Iranian man I said, "Okay." That was very interesting in that city because we didn't want everybody to know what's going on and a week later another friend had forty people couples and children who got

together every week to play music and play cards at a party in her house. We invited her that afternoon. She and she came with her husband. We talked and then we said, "Okay." So we were engaged. That night we went again to their house and they invited John also. It was about 8:30-9:00 o'clock at night and the lady announced John and Parvaneh were engaged. Believe me that night 9:00 o'clock we went home at twelve o'clock at night. The next day at 8:00-8:30 I went to school. All the teachers there knew we were engaged; so this is how a small town is.

Q: Oh yes.

LIMBERT: It was interesting, everybody was hooraying, clapping, congratulations. We like you, and we like John, so everything is good. That was interesting and I taught that morning... I was teaching at two schools and at 11:30 that morning the other school they called me and they said, "We have a meeting at twelve thirty, we want you to be present because we are talking about the programs at school. Would you please be here at 12:30?" I said, "Yes." At 12:30 it is usually the lunch time, I usually go home, and then eat lunch and go back. At 12:30 I went to the other school. I went to the principal's office. They had a big table full of sweets and food. All the teachers were sitting around and I opened the door and went in and everybody got up, clapped, hooray, congratulations, we are happy and that was so interesting for me. I know how much people like me and John. That really gave me support -- that was important support from the population.

Q: You didn't run across any why is she leaving us or anything like this?

LIMBERT: No, no, no. That was really interesting. Then we were engaged and then after about three or four months it was the end of John's Peace Corps program. We arranged a marriage in Tehran because my family all lived there, except my parents. My brother had a big house and we had a big wedding.

Q: What kind of wedding was this?

LIMBERT: It was a very normal western wedding reception.

Q: I mean it wasn't a Jewish wedding?

LIMBERT: Jewish wedding with the registrar.

Q: It was a Jewish wedding?

LIMBERT: Yes. We went and we signed the papers at the Jewish registrar's office. then Before we could do that we had to get official permission from the ministry of the interior for me to marry a foreigner. They had to check to see who he is. Usually the government wanted to support Iranian girls when they get married to foreigners to be sure he was not married before, doesn't have any other wife, he is not cheating or something like that.

Q: I know in Korea back in the 1970s my consular office used to have to get people in Americans who were going to marry Korean women to swear that they had never been married and all. We had to send it over to the mayor's office and they would permit the marriage.

LIMBERT: Yes, we had to have that piece of paper from the government.

Q: Because otherwise Americans can sort of wander around I mean foreigners...

LIMBERT: That gave support to me and I felt myself because I was so independent that I didn't want...I knew I could handle myself on my own.

Q: Did you find yourself studying more about America?

LIMBERT: Yeah.

Q: What the hell is this like?

LIMBERT: You know I wasn't afraid to come to America. When we came we went to Cambridge and we found an apartment, got some furniture and John started going to school to get his PhD, graduate school at Harvard. I said, "Either I work or I want to study also." My English was not very good but I spoke English and everywhere I went to get work they said, "Do you know typing?" I said, "No, I don't know English typing." They said, "Okay, we want you to type." Then I went to Boston. I took a subway to Boston every morning, I went to class and I learned typing. After a month or a month and a half I did very well. I went to Harvard again and I said, "I am looking for a job." Then they said, "There are some jobs but we don't know if you can do it." I said, "Let me try it." I worked at Harvard library I searched and found a job for a professor who was doing Chinese society projects. I said, "Wow, this is interesting for me I would like to learn more." I was hired by him and I worked for him for almost a year and mostly worked at two or three libraries at Harvard and Cambridge. I did research and I went to office and he used to come to office and say, "You are doing much better job than my graduate student is doing." I said, "Okay." Then in 1967 Peace Corps wanted to hire John to work as a cultural studies for a training project in Vermont. So I teach school, School for International Training, and he went there and we both worked. I started teaching Persian and then John taught the cultural studies and back again to Cambridge and I started working again. Then I had three students at Harvard who were going into Peace Corps and I was teaching them Persian at Harvard. Then in the afternoons some weeks with another professor, which he was TA, actually he was Iranian and he studied and was working Radio Harvard. I worked with him and we worked in Persian Radio at Harvard University. It was interesting and I got into different things which I didn't know. I liked to learn I wanted to learn. Anyhow, the second year we also went to Vermont again, worked with more training projects. In '68 we went back to Iran because John wanted to do research for his Ph.D. thesis.

Q: While you were doing this university period when you first got to the United States were there anything that you remember as being my God I didn't know that they did that or customs that...

LIMBERT: Customs regarding John?

Q: Customs you didn't know about or surprised you?

LIMBERT: Actually, no for me it was very, very usual. I don't know but what was interesting for me only John's mother lived in New York and we went to visit her. John, when we got to the States in 1966 after we got married we went to New York. John's sisters both with their husbands came to New York to meet us and then to be together for a few days and travel in New York; they took me all places in New York. My English was not very good but I could understand but I was not good at speaking. One day we were walking on a street and one black guy came to us and I was scared. I hid myself behind John and John said, "Don't be scared." You will see here what you haven't seen in Iran. and the stranger said to my sister-in-law, "Oh, you look like my sister." Then he turned to me and said, "You look more like my sister," because I was darker. Then they took me to a theater they were playing "Marat/Sade". It was so odd. I kept asking John, "What are they saying, what are they saying?" John said, "Even I don't know understand. Don't worry about it."

Q: Well I think this might be a good place to stop here and we will pick this up when you go back to Iran. John was going with...

LIMBERT: To Iran? No, we went to Shiraz in 1968.

Q: And what were you going to be doing there?

LIMBERT: I went back to teach at the high school.

Q: Okay so 1968 we will pick it up then, great.

LIMBERT: Sure.

Q: Okay, today is the 29th of August 2016 with Parvaneh Limbert and we are in 1968.

LIMBERT: Yes.

Q: And what happened then?

LIMBERT: 1968 we were in the States that summer while we were working at SIT, School for International Training, in Brattleboro Vermont. John and I worked with Peace Corps. Then we were going to Iran after that and the Peace Corps volunteers went to Iran after two months in the U.S. to have in-country training. John and I both traveled with the Peace Corps volunteers. We flew to Hamadan and we stayed there for a month and we

did the rest of the training. After that because we went to Shiraz for John to work on research for his PhD dissertation and. In September we went to Shiraz and we found a nice house with a small garden. Before we went to Shiraz I went to ministry of education in Tehran again. I told them that I'm back and I would like to go back to work. They said, "Fine, where do you want to go?" I said, "I am going to Shiraz." They said, "That's nice we need a teacher there." I was lucky they didn't oppose that and they agreed and they gave me the transfer. We went to Shiraz, we found a house, moved in, and I started teaching in September.

Q: What were you teaching?

LIMBERT: Physical education. The same thing because that was my specialty....

Q: Oh yeah, that was your major really.

LIMBERT My university major, yes. Then I went to the Shiraz education office and they said, "Yes, there is a school that needs a good teacher. We know your experience and we'd love to have you there." I went to the school; they were very friendly and very nice. The principal, a lady, was very nice and said, "We are happy you are here. Know what? Next month we have the Shah's birthday, and we have to celebrate. We have to have a big ceremony and I want you to plan something." I said, "Fine." I knew about that plan and what I should do. Anyhow, I made a plan and then started working with the students for almost a month. In October, which was the Shah's birthday, we had a big ceremony and my students did a great job.

Q: This would be a time to demonstrate to the parents and everybody else what you are doing?

LIMBERT: Yes, yes.

Q: What did you do, what sort of show was it?

LIMBERT: The show was mostly with music with gymnastics. That were about 300 students moving together.

Q: Were they all girls for the...

LIMBERT: All girls, all girls with their different uniforms, with color and it was turned out beautifully. That was my part of the program because the other schools had the same thing, but different. But my program was very good and everybody liked it. Then I continued working in that school. We originally planned to stay in Shiraz for one year but stayed four years. When I started teaching and working my parents said, "Now you are back and you can have children here because here is easier. You can have good help, you can have nannies and at the same time you can work with no problem." Actually, that year I got pregnant and then we had our first child in '69. But during my pregnancy I was teaching, played basketball, volleyball with the students and I did everything, including

gymnastics. I remember one day I was playing basketball with my students and I was six months pregnant. I was running and I saw the principal of the school behind the window was looking and came down and rushed to the playground and said, "What are you doing?" I said, "I am playing basketball with my students." She said, "No, no, no, no you are not be running like that. You are pregnant you are not allowed to run like that. You shouldn't do that it's dangerous for you." I said, "No, I know sport is good for me, it's good for a pregnant lady." Anyhow, in July '69 our daughter was born in Tehran because my family was there. Then in September we went back to Shiraz and again we went back to work.

During the first year John did his dissertation he checked with the city and went around for his work and university invited him and proposed for him to teach at the university. We said, "Okay," and he started teaching at university. I was sitting at my school and we had a baby, we had help and we had a nice house. We had a ground-floor apartment with a small, pleasant courtyard. We stayed in that apartment for three years until our son was born in Shiraz. Actually, Shiraz had one of the best hospitals in Iran and the best doctors.

Anyhow, our son was born there. A year after that, in 1972, I said, "John, if we stay here you will never do your thesis and you will never get your doctorate. We have to go back to the States. John said, "No, I can write..." I said, "No, you never can write it here. We have to go back." At my insistence we came back. We went back to Cambridge and we found a place to live. When we left Iran in 1972 I had to leave my job again because of his work and with two kids three and one we came back to the States. We came back to the States and John wanted to start writing thesis. Our house was very small; one bedroom and one living room and a kitchen. We had cribs for the kids. We had a small basement, and I went and found a small desk and put for John. I said to John, "You go to the basement and sit and write your thesis until you come up." For nine months, eight or seven months you have to do that every day after breakfast." John started writing his thesis even if he wanted to come up for a cup of coffee I said "No, no, you stay down there and I bring you coffee. If you come up and then you don't go back and then I took him his lunch and he finished in nine months. He sat and completely finished his thesis in 1972. It was '73 when he got to the State Department and he already got his PhD.

Q: Before you left Shiraz at this time had you seen any change in the political climate at all?

LIMBERT: I'm sure something was going on but that was not very clear. In 1972 it still was hidden. Almost nothing showed.

Q: Was there a feeling that there was a major difference between how people thought in a city like Shiraz or Tehran and all and the countries villages?

LIMBERT: We visited villages actually but it was just the same, and it was not just because they had land reform. The villagers had money, they had their own land, they were having agriculture and they were mostly happy what they were doing. There were few obvious problems. In the city around the university I felt a little bit change among the

students but it was not clear because they didn't tell us what was going on. We felt something is a little bit different and among the people because was after the oil price rose in 1971 people got a little bit richer. After that each year we went back for visit we saw the difference between the dollar and ten dollars and everything got more expensive. People they were not talking about hundred thousand they were talking about million; one hundred thousand was something older, something like that. That was a little bit of a change after that.

Q: While you were in Iran did you feel the heavy hand in any manner of the Savak?

LIMBERT: There were Savakis everywhere and everybody knew who they were.

Q: Were they a problem or...?

LIMBERT: No, with us we didn't have any problem. But I'm sure other people they did. They had Savak everywhere.

Q: Well how about at the school you were teaching were the students mentioning this, were they aware or were they talking about their parents being bothered?

LIMBERT: No, they never, they never told us. They never talked to us about it. In those days, especially at a girls school the girls were not into politics at all and they didn't know what was going on because like government is in control and they are going to school. They were studying and their parents were working., I'm sure their parents if there was something they never told the children what was going on.

Q: Well alright so you said you are going back to visit...

LIMBERT: In 1972 John finished his thesis at Harvard and then at the same time he did the oral exam with the Foreign Service. He passed the exam and in September '73, and in June we came to Washington and for his A100 course.

Q: How did you feel about initially John going into the Foreign Service?

LIMBERT: Actually I liked that because I'm a person who loves to travel. I don't care where, but I like to see the world. John first came home one day and said, "Oh I went to Harvard and I was talking to my advisor Professor Frye about teaching jobs." I said, "John you took the Foreign Service exam. You passed both the written one and the oral, and if you get to the Foreign Service we can travel." Then he said, "Do you like to do that -- to travel every two years one country." I said, "Oh, I love that. Why not that's the best way to see the world and that's the best way to raise the kids. The kids will know the world too."

Q: What were you doing in Washington while he was in class?

LILMBERT: I took care of the kids. I had a three year old and a one year old. We put the three-year old a preschool and I took her to school. The one year old was at home with me. We were in Washington until John did his A100. Then in 1973 one day he came home and said, "Do you like to go to Abu Dhabi?" I said, "Oh yes, why not I love that." He said, "It is just a small country, nothing there." I said, "I love it because it is close to Tehran and I can go take my children to visit my parents and my family, why not?" "I was so happy when he got it. When I said that he went to the department and he said, "Yes, I would like to go to Abu Dhabi," and they were so happy getting someone like him. While preparing to leave, he worked in the Department of Commerce. Every day he came home and he was not happy. He said it was so quiet, and nothing is moving there But the flies. I said, "Okay, you will do something else."

In November of 1973 we left Washington. First we flew to Tehran and I stayed with my parents for two months. John went on to Abu Dhabi because they didn't have housing yet.

Q: Abu Dhabi or...

LIMBERT: Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. He went to Abu Dhabi because we didn't have housing yet and I stayed in Tehran for two months. Then the housing got ready and I flew there with the kids and was with John in Abu Dhabi. Before I went to Abu Dhabi I went to the ministry of education again and I said, "I was a teacher here and I was on leave. I know I had problem I didn't get leave without pay and my file is so confused, but I am going to Abu Dhabi and I'd like to work in the Iranian school there." They said, "Yes, we have an Iranian elementary school there what do you want to do?" I said, "I want to teach elementary school." They said, "Okay." They gave me an order to work in the Iranian school in Abu Dhabi while John was working in American embassy. This was because in those days the relations were good there was no problem if I working for the Iranian ministry of education. One thing that helped was because in 1973 it was the beginning of the time that the officer's efficiency report did not include the wives.

Q: Oh yes, I remember that because we used to write efficiency reports on wives; very tricky.

LIMBERT: Yes, yes, yeah that was very tricky. Everyone watched what the wife was doing, where the wife was going, and did she serve the ambassador's wife. I was lucky because that year we had that order that the wives were not included in the efficiency report. I was working in an Iranian elementary school that was very good and I was so happy. My salary was double of John's salary. After about a month I got my salary and John got his salary and my salary was double.

Q: Let's talk about Abu Dhabi a bit. I know Abu Dhabi a bit because back in the '50s I was the vice council in Dhahran and we included all the Arab States and Bahrain in our consular district. So I would go to Abu Dhabi a couple times to do visa work and passports. What was Abu Dhabi like when you were there?

LIMBERT: Abu Dhabi when I got there, my God, was a sand box. There was nothing really. Just some old houses...

Q: Dhows pulled up on the beach

LIMBERT: Dhows floating onto the beach from India, Oman and all over and there was really nothing there. Because they had oil the ruler Sheikh Zayed started putting money in the city of Abu Dhabi to build housing, parks, streets, and palaces for himself. He hired one Iranian who did horticulture in the city and we got to know him very well. He did the city planning with lots of greenery. By then, 1973, that man started and that was really interesting to see the changes in Abu Dhabi. Even between 1973 and 1974 it changed a lot.

Q: The children you were teaching were the children of Iranian...

LIMBERT: Iranian population in Abu Dhabi and some local Abu Dhabians. They send their children, they were originally Iranian from southern part of Iran, and they studied in that school because Abu Dhabi itself didn't have proper schools.

Q: Was there any trouble between the Iranian people in Abu Dhabi and the...

LIMBERT: In those days not at all. The Iranians, Americans, UAE personnel and all they were all very good. Usually they were very nice people they are nice people and like Sheik Zayed himself he was very, very into people and wanted to develop the country. I remember the first year we were there we didn't have an ambassador we had kind of a principal officer. Phil Griffin was there.

Q: Chargé.

LIMBERT: Chargé yeah, he was the chargé and we didn't have an ambassador. The ambassador was in Kuwait and from there he covered the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. He used to come and visit. I remember one day when Ambassador Stoltzfus came and we went to Al Ain to visit Sheik Zayed. His summer palace was there and he used to go there and we all went and had lunch with Sheik Zayed. He sat with the embassy families, and it was all very casual and very friendly. In 1974 we had a visit from the Iranian minister of education, Mrs. Parsa. Mrs. Parsa was a very, very nice lady. As minister of education she came to the UAE to visit the Iranian schools. The American embassy even gave a lunch for her. John and I went to and she recognized me. She said, "Oh, I know you were teaching in Tehran I saw you there many times." I said, "Yes." She said, "You are teaching here?" I said, "Yes, I am working in the Iranian school." She was so happy to hear that. She was a very nice lady and unfortunately after the revolution they put her in a bag and took her on a roof and shot her.

Q: Oh.

LIMBERT: Yes, I cried many, many times.

Q: You were in Abu Dhabi for how long?

LIMBERT: We were in Abu Dhabi two years and then in 1975 the State Department wanted to send John to Dubai to open the commercial office, because Dubai was the center of business and commerce. We went to Dubai and they found a house for us on Jumeirah Road that was a one-story villa. The owner was Sheik Hamdan, son of the ruler of Dubai. They rented that place for us, we went there and John said, "Let's go I want to look for the place for the office." We both went to look at many places and then finally we found a very nice building, very new in the Deira side by the creek close to the spice market. Then we went up, we looked at that apartment building and said, "This is the best place for the consulate. It's best for the commercial center of the commerce in a bazaar." We rented it and put an American flag up on the balcony, and from outside anybody who walked by could see the American flag, and asked himself, "What is going on in here?" It was a pleasant two-person commercial office.

Q: Well both the time you were in Abu Dhabi and Dubai was there a change in Iran you could feel I mean the people coming back?

LIMBERT: No, the Iranians coming and going had lots of business in the UAE. Many of the businesses there were run by Iranians. They opened the first hospital. The best hospital was the Iranian hospital. Dubai also had the Sheik Rashid Hospital, but didn't run very well. The Iranian hospital was better. The Iranian government sent doctors, pharmacists, and nurses. It was run very well in Dubai many of the local citizens preferred the Iranian hospital.

Q: In both places that you lived how did you find living there?

LIMBERT: Actually when we went to Abu Dhabi things were so open. First week I saw a Lebanese lady wearing shorts and no sleeves at all walking on the street. At first I thought my God this is a country you should be careful not to dress like that, but I saw in the markets they were wearing shorts. This was a kind of summer place and lots of foreigners, especially British people were there and that changed the city a lot. Why? Because of the British people they were wearing just very light clothes and the beach was full of people.

In Abu Dhabi in front of our embassy there was a beach. The embassy building was five stories and we rented the fifth floor for our offices. The American flag was up and then underneath were some apartments and we could see all the laundries hanging and the American flag flying from the top floor. It was right by the beach and we used to go to the beach every afternoon because it was so hot and sometimes our air-conditioners didn't work in the house. Our friends were the admin officer and his wife and we both took the kids to the beach right in front of the embassy. Then we went swimming and John and the admin officer came down after work at 5:30 and they swam a little bit and then we went home. It was very open, very easy to get around. There was no crime and it was very safe.

Q: How did you find relations with the commercial people including the British and foreign and Emirates people?

LIMBERT: Abu Dhabian?

Q: Yes, Abu Dhabi.

LIMBERT: They were very good because the British were there; the British helped them after the oil and still are there. Yeah, they were good together they were working together a lot. Then when we went to Dubai I also transferred myself from Abu Dhabi to Dubai. They also had an Iranian school there. I went there and I worked at the elementary school there, and I was vice principal at the school. Then I taught fourth grade also. The principal of the school happened to be from my home town of Sanandaj and he was my father's patient. He knew me very well and he knew my family. He said, "Oh my God you are here you can help me as your father helped me." I worked for him for one year when we were in Dubai. In '76 we went to Tunis to study Arabic.

Q: Okay, were you able to get along in the Emirates with the Iranians?

LIMBERT: Very much so. Lots of Iranians not only the officials with the embassies we got along very well. They invited us to their houses to their parties. We also had Iranians who had lived there from 1950s-60s and even earlier. They were originally from the southern part of Iran, they were businessmen and they had moved from Bandar Lengeh in the southern part of Iran. They went to Dubai and they were working there as businessmen. We became very close friends with them and still we know them; those people they remember us. It was interesting and they spoke Farsi and their Farsi was a little bit different they called it Khodamuni. "Khodamuni", means ourselves, that means our own language. We could communicate with them. We became very, very friendly with them and most of them got to know us and after that when we went back again to Dubai in 1988 everybody was so happy to see us again. It was very nice memory from Dubai in those days.

Q: Well during this how did you feel about studying the Arabic and this meant that you were going to be spending a good part of John's career in the Arab world?

LIMBERT: I liked the idea and I wanted to learn Arabic. In high school we studied some Arabic but not very much. I studied Koran and I studied Muslim religion because my father wanted us to learn. He insisted we learn about Islam and know what is going on in the world. I always liked to study languages. Persian is about 35 percent Arabic words. In many cases, the roots are the same but the meaning is different. I was very happy to study Arabic."

Q: How about the writing?

LIMBERT: The writing was easy for me because writing is the same way from right to left and the alphabet is the same. In Persian there are four extra letters. Arabic has 28 letters and Persian has 32 (for sounds “p”, “g” “ch” and “zh”).

Q: Again while you were in the Emirates was Israel a focus of interest or not?

LIMBERT: I didn't feel very much about that. The Emiratis were not very anti-Israeli. Later on maybe around 1978 or after '77 there were more Palestinians and during the long Lebanese civil war lots of Palestinians (and Lebanese) moved to Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Q: You were in Tunis for how long?

LIMBERT: Fifteen months.

Q: What year was that?

LIMBERT: The years were '76-'77. In '76 they moved the school from Lebanon, from Beirut. FSI had the school in Beirut and they moved the school to Tunis because of the Lebanese civil war.

Q: And the kidnappings.

LIMBERT: Yes the kidnappings and shootings and something and actually we were the first students to move to come directly to Tunis from outside. Most of the students had come from Beirut during their second year of study.

Q: How did you find taking Arabic courses?

LIMBERT: Yes, I sat with John in a class with others like Ambassadors Hambley, Crocker and Larocco.... We were about five or six and became very good friends through being in class together.

Q: What are the variations of Arabic?

LIMBERT: Basically Levantine Arabic. FSI brought the teachers from Beirut. They also hired Tunisians who taught modern standard Arabic (MSA) and introduced us to the Tunisian dialect.

Q: You were a teacher so I imagine how did you view the teaching there?

LIMBERT: The teachers?

Q: I mean the technique of teaching and whatever?

LIMBERT: The teaching was a little bit different in Arabic. We taught Peace Corps in a different way, an oral way. Then I had five or six students -- never more than eight students -- and we talked all the time in class. It was so easy for them to learn that way but the system of teaching at FSI was a little bit different. We read books, we had conversations and discussions but it was not the way we had taught. But we studied and sometimes it was difficult because for me especially in Persian the words have the same roots and the meaning is different in Arabic. It was a little bit hard for me until I got used to it.

Q: What was Tunis like at the time?

LIMBERT: Tunis was not rich actually. It was a regular simple country. We went to supermarkets and we couldn't find much in the market. It was tough to shop in many ways but it was not expensive. We traveled around Tunisia a lot, we used our language, and we saw a very interesting country. As a group actually we went with the students who knew Arabic and that was the best way to learn language.

Q: Was there any problem coming from Algeria because Algeria was having this fundamentalist movement?

LIMBERT: Maybe there was a little bit on the border but we didn't feel it in the city of Tunis. The city was safe where we lived, it was so easy and Carthage was so easy and all the places were so nice to visit. They had a lot of tourists who were so happy to see like Sousse and Monastir were the best and full of Germans and French; they used to vacation there. Jerba was one of the islands in the south. We went a couple times and it was full of Germans. It was so easy for them to go there for vacation also and it was a similar type like European country but Arab country; you see? But if you go to the market you could see the Tunisian lady with the cover but you go to Sousse you see the French lady with shorts, you go to Sousse or Monastir or hotel you see bathing suits.

Q: Also you have the Mediterranean too.

LIMBERT: Yes and Tunis was very good for us too because by then we still had kids in school there.

LIMBERT: In Tunis our daughter was second grade and our son was in kindergarten, five and seven actually. They were in Tunis' school with us.

Q: How did they like it there?

LIMBERT: They liked it very much especially going to the beach and going anywhere traveling.

Q: Were you getting any talk because the school moved because of the trouble in Lebanon and Israel and all. Was Israel a topic of conversation?

LIMBERT: There was some but not as much as now. There was some and people they didn't talk politics openly. That was the reality in Tunisia.

Q: Were you getting any reflections of changes in Iran?

LIMBERT: I remember before we went to Tunis in '76 we went to Tehran and we saw changes in talk because of the new oil money. People had more money and they were not talking about like before about a hundred thousand. Instead they spoke about million and two million. The housing was higher, rents were higher and that was a little bit changed. There was inflation.

Q: Did you get any feeling for the Shah had brought so many American technicians to the country and were they causing people to be kind of annoyed with them?

LIMBERT: Of course they didn't tell us they didn't tell us why the Shah brings this or brings that I'm sure they had some problems and that's why they ended up with a revolution. But the problem was because of the inflation and the religious movement was underground, it was not clear it was not open. The Shah I think was the time that maybe he got sick, he was sick around '76 or '77. That's why he was not very much paying attention but I don't know if that was because of that.

Q: Where did you go in '77 was it?

LIMBERT: To Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in the winter of '77 We finished our course and then we went to Jeddah. That was December '77, I think.

Q: Is that still the capital at that time?

LIMBERT: Jeddah was the center of the diplomatic community because they were not in Riyadh; Riyadh was capital but all the embassies were in Jeddah. That was much nicer nobody wanted to go to Riyadh. All the diplomats wanted to stay in Jeddah because it was much easier, much easier to be there. In '78 the first year when we were there I started working in a small Jeddah local school after the classes we worked with the sports with Saudi kids. Then in '78 I started to work regularly in a Saudi school which was an all girl's high school. I got the job there and I was working as a physical education teacher and that was very interesting for me.

Q: Let's talk about this in the Saudi school. Women seem to be put to one side, not allowed to partake in much of the political life. How was it when you were there?

LIMBERT: They were not political at all, they loved to be free, and they wanted to be by themselves. Actually, when I started in that school it was very interesting for me. I had worked with another school where the principal got to know me and said, "Do you want to teach physical education in another school which was called Dar al-Hanan. It was a private girls' high school originally opened by Queen Iffat, King Faisal's Turkish wife. She created and opened this school. She wanted the school to run very well almost like in

Turkey. She was very nice and educated and wanted the school run by good teachers. When I got a job there I started working there as a physical education teacher. I used to go to school with just a scarf and long dress. I went to school and schools usually in Jeddah are surrounded by a wall and inside is ladies, no men inside. All of the girls would take off their veil, revealing beautiful outfits. I asked these students I want you to wear pants while you are playing sports and they said, "Okay." The principal of this school was Egyptian and very, very open minded and said, "Okay." The girls they went into the dressing room and put on their pants and tee shirts and then to the playground to play basketball volleyball, and other sports. Also at the end of that school year I arranged with another lady who was also Egyptian and a Phys Ed teacher to arrange a ceremony with dance, gymnastics and movement. Queen Iffat herself came to the school and she sat there and we, the teachers, invited the mothers and that was so nice. At the end she was so happy and came to me and thanked me for teaching the girls the sports.

Q: Were they able to get intramural teams?

LIMBERT: Inside yes. We played classes against classes and they were two groups playing together basketball, volleyball and groups between classes and in stages like lower level and higher level; it was very interesting to work with them. The girls they were not unhappy about wearing covers. It was interesting most of them they were sitting and talking to each other about girlfriends and boyfriends.

Q: Did the Orthodox Imams and all did they interfere there at all? Did you feel any...?

LIMBERT: No, not inside the school.

Q: You kept it inside?

LIMBERT: Kept it inside, yes, kept inside.

Q: What about living in Jeddah?

LIMBERT: Living in Jeddah we had a very nice house when we were together in the house. We had a nice house outside with a local guard out there by the door. John used to drive to the embassy but women couldn't drive so I and one other teacher, who was Syrian actually, very nice teacher, we hired a taxi and he came and took both of us. He took me and the other teacher to school and the taxi driver took us home.

Q: And you wore just the head covering?

LIMBERT: I wore just a scarf, nothing to cover my face.

Q: But just covered.

LIMBERT: Outside yes just put something on my head not cover to cover. I actually went to school and went inside and changed clothes and did the sports. The ladies were

so free inside they were so happy what they were doing; especially the teachers and the salary was excellent; it was a good place to work.

Q: I would think that the girls would be a great relief to be away from the family where they could all get together and talk.

LIMBERT: To talk yes.

Q: Did they bring up the subject of what's the world like out beyond Saudi Arabia and all? Did they ask about America and all?

LIMBERT: Oh yes they were talking how is the United States and actually most of them they were very high class Saudis. I should say how many of my students were princesses. They only traveled to England in the summer, to Switzerland, they spoke English very well and some of them spoke better than I did. They were very, very open because they traveled a lot and they had been in the U.S. for vacation. They knew very well America, they knew England very well; no problem with them. They were very easy to sit and talk to them, they were very open.

Q: How did you find shopping and that?

LIMBERT: Shopping was very easy and actually for us we had a commissary at the embassy, no problem but I loved to go shopping in the city; it was very good. I had just the same scarf and long sleeves and no problem. Shopping and market and actually we talk about market when I was working in the school and I saw these older Saudi ladies, the teachers, at the end of the month they get their salary. I said, "What are you doing with your salary? You are spending for house or spending for groceries?" They said, "No, we go buy gold for ourselves." I said, "Oh my God I take my money and I go buy groceries." They said, "No, no, no don't do that. Next month when you get your salary give it to us and we will spend it for you." So I gave them my salary and they bought gold for me. They said, "If you buy gold now next week the price is higher you can make more money." I said, "No, no I don't want to do that. Just buy me something small." At the end of each month they were asking me to give them some more money, part of my salary and they would buy gold for me. I kept saying, "No, I don't need it." They said, "No, you can have gold, gold is always money for you. Don't spend your salary on groceries. Let your husband pay for that." That's what they did. Their husbands paid the expenses for the house, for the groceries, and they went to buy gold. At the end actually they opened a bank for themselves, Ladies Bank run by and for ladies. So the ladies put their money there and when they opened the bank they invited me to the opening. It was interesting and I loved it.

Q: Well investing in gold is their way of saving.

LIMBERT: Yes, saving money. They said don't spend your money just save money and instead of putting it in the bank go buy gold and put it in your closet. I remember the first month I didn't spend on that. I took it and went to the grocery, but the second month they

took some of my salary and bought gold for me at 19 Saudi Riyals per gram. When I left the country it was 42, so it had more than doubled. I didn't want to go to gold market and I didn't want to bargain because I was afraid I would attract attention of those police in the market who were watching the ladies and what they were doing. Anyhow, it was interesting to work with these ladies and know how they lived, where they lived and how they enjoyed themselves

Q: Did you find with the ladies at the school were there ever within a house or something mixed parties or that sort of thing?

LIMBERT: Oh yes, they invited us to their parties. Actually later on we socialized with Saudi officials from the foreign ministry, particularly from their protocol office. They invited us to their houses and we went there, yes.

Q: Did you get any feel about how America is viewed by this group that you were teaching and their parents?

LIMBERT: Oh they loved it. They liked Americans, they liked us very much. Of course, they don't come to me and say we don't like Americans. But I felt they were very open about wanting to see how America is and what they liked and disliked.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LIMBERT: I was there from '78 to '81, three years.

Q: Of course this is the time of the Great Revolution in Iran.

LIMBERT: Yes, in late 1978 or early 1979 the State Department asked John to go to Tehran. Actually John volunteered to go and he went to Tehran in August '79. I thought it better that I not go back to school to teach. I called the principal of the school and said, "I'm sorry, because we are transferring to Tehran I can't teach anymore next year." August 18 John went to Tehran. Before he left we moved from our house to the embassy compound. They found a small cottage on the compound for me and the children and we planned to stay there a few months until we could go to Tehran. We wanted to make the house available for John's replacement. We moved to the embassy compound and John left August 18 and then the embassy personnel asked me if I could work in the consulate. I said, "Yes, why not." They said, "You speak Arabic, you speak Persian, you speak English, we need you to come and help in the consulate and take care of the register machine to get the money and also for interviews. We need you to help." I was hired as an EFM, a family member, and I started working in the consulate in August '79. John went to Tehran and he came twice because it was an easy three-hour direct flight between Tehran and Jeddah. He came in September for a weekend, then again in October, and was supposed to come in November. November 4th they took over the embassy and John got stuck there. I was working in the consulate and I stayed there and after that when they took our embassy the Department asked me to come back to the States and I said, "No, I want to stay here. I have a job at the embassy, my kids have good schools and I want to

stay here until John comes back.” Of course, I didn’t know it would take so long. In any case I continued working there. The ambassador was so welcoming and very helpful. We had a great, great ambassador.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

LIMBERT: John West, former governor of South Carolina. He was an excellent ambassador. He was like a father and brother and helped us a lot. He helped the children when I stayed there and John was in Tehran and we didn’t know what to do. At first the State Department wanted me to go back to the States and I didn’t want to go because I felt the hostage crisis is happening and it was so difficult and I can’t go back to the States with the kids. I didn’t want them to feel what was happening in the U.S. because the atmosphere there would be so bad for someone half Iranian and half American. So I kept the kids in school in Jeddah. I talked to the teachers and I said, “Would you please be sure at school the kids don’t talk about hostages as our children will get upset.” Every day when they came home from school they came to my office they said, “Did you hear from dad?” I said, “Yes, they are still in the embassy they don’t want them to go anywhere.” I didn’t want to tell them what is happening. I had my radio in my office listening to the news constantly about what was going on. I saw some reporting cables and talked to Iranians. I was the one interviewing Iranians mostly. The Iranians they were coming from Tehran going to Mecca and they would stop for visas. When they came to embassy and I was the one talking to them. I said very politely, “Go back to Tehran and yell and open the embassy and get your visa there. Sorry we can’t do that.” I had a tough job working in the consulate.

Q: I would imagine you would.

LIMBERT: It hit us very hard.

Q: What were you hearing from your family?

LIMBERT: From my family it was very difficult to get news. My middle brother with his wife came to Jeddah to visit; he told them he’s going to Mecca. He came and visited me and stayed with me for a couple of days to make sure we were okay and then went back to Tehran. That was hard for him. He was a civil engineer but the authorities didn’t bother him. But my younger brother after the revolution had a hard time because he was working as an engineer with Farmanfarmaian Company, owned a very, very high-class family. He had shares in that company and he was building the new Tehran airport. He had a plan for the airport and everything and had just before the Shah left the Farmanfarmaian chairman got himself out. So then my brother was left with the company. His driver saved him. He went at five o’clock in the afternoon said, “Mr. Tabibzadeh, I was working with this group they called it komiteh. and I heard they are going to your office tomorrow at ten o’clock to arrest you. Please get out.” My brother got home, went and told his wife and our mother, “Let’s pack.” He got tickets and at five o’clock in the morning left the country with my mother, my niece, his wife and two kids. They went to Switzerland to stay with my bother in Geneva. At ten o’clock they went to

arrest him in his office and he was not there. He was lucky. Otherwise, he would have been executed. Those were tough times.

Q: Your father was dead?

LIMBERT: Yes, my father died in 1978 when we were in Jeddah. I was still working in the school and one day John came home and said, "Your dad is very sick. You have to go to Tehran they want you to see him." Right away they found an airline which had brought about 300 people on a charter for Mecca for pilgrimage. It was returning to Tehran empty and John got a ticket for me. I got on that 747 plane with about 30 hostesses and me as the only passenger. They found me a Chador and I flew to Tehran that night. I got to Tehran and it was 2 o'clock in the morning and I went out and saw my younger brother's driver and he said, "Mrs. Limbert I am here to take you home." I said, "Where is Feridoun (my brother)?" He said, "Oh they are at home." He took me in a car and every hundred yards we were stopped because the city was under martial law. We stopped and I was so scared. Then he talked to the soldiers and said, "This lady's father is sick, and she has just come to visit from Saudi Arabia." And then he took me home. I got home and I saw my family all sitting. I opened the door and I found out that my father had passed away. That's why they wanted me to be there. The funeral was then and it was October 12, 1978. He passed away and then I stayed for a week with my mother and my family. I wanted to go back but because of the unrest in Tehran most flights were cancelled, and there were no airlines except Swiss Air. My sister was working in the Queen's office, where she was head of the social workers in the Queen's office. She found a ticket for me on Swiss Air from Tehran to Geneva and then I went from Geneva to Jeddah. Anyhow, I flew to Geneva, where my brother picked me up from the airport and we went home. From there a day or two later I flew to Jeddah; a three-hour flight took me 24 hours. I got back to Jeddah to my family.

In any case, after they took the embassy in Tehran I stayed in Jeddah. I was working in the consulate. I was busy there interviewing many Iranians and found out what was going on in Tehran.

Q: Oh boy. The Iranians you talked to were they joyful, sad or what?

LIMBERT: They were sad. Actually that is why they were coming to the embassy to get a visa to leave Iran and go to the States. They didn't want to stay in Iran. But unfortunately we couldn't give them a visa. We had orders to not give visas to Iranians.

Q: What happened to your family?

LIMBERT: In the summer of 1979, as I mentioned, my brother, my mother and his wife and children and my sister's oldest daughter left Iran. They first went to Switzerland and then to the States.

Q: How about your sister?

LIMBERT: My sister stayed in Tehran because she was not allowed to leave the country. They went to her office and they threatened her. She said, "Look at these files that prove I helped the poor people. If Khomeini doesn't like my helping poor people yes you can shoot me." They didn't say anything because she had done honest and charitable work in the Queen's office

Q: How long did she stay there?

LIMBERT: She was not allowed to leave the country but in the summer of 1980 she left the country under her husband's name. He was a medical doctor in private practice and they had nothing against him. So she was able to leave with him and her name in his passport. Until she arrived in Geneva and my brother, I was dying. I was worried for my sister, my brother, my family and John. Oh God that was a nasty year for me and my life.

Q: It was good you had a job.

LIMBERT: I had a job, I was busy and I had my kids safe there at a very good school with good teachers I also had contact with the State Department's Iran desk and I came three times with the children to the States. Actually the atmosphere there was not good and I didn't want the kids to hear the news and hear scary things from the radio. I visited the Iran desk and I visited with Secretary Muskie who was then Secretary of State. I talked to him as John's family did; they visited President Carter It was hard for me to come and go, but I wanted to come. I also went to California and visited my mother and the rest of my family. I also flew to San Francisco, where we had a gathering of all the hostage families.

Q: Did you feel what they were doing was the right thing or did you feel they are out of line? How did you feel?

LIMBERT: Who did?

Q: The family group of the hostages.

LIMBERT: You know because I was Iranian it was tough, but some of them were very nice. When they met me they were sorry the same as they were for themselves. But I felt some blamed me because I was Iranian.

Q: Yeah.

LIMBERT: You see that?

Q: Absolutely.

LIMBERT: That was tough.

Q: I mean here you were a victim and they were blaming you.

LIMBERT: Yes, but you know I felt so bad; some were very nice they understood but some they felt...

Q: This happens you have to focus on who is at fault.

LIMBERT: For me to be in Saudi Arabia then was much better.

Q: Oh absolutely.

LIMBERT: It was much nicer because for the kids things were easier. My life there was so simple and we had a great group of people at the embassy, very friendly, very nice. The ambassador, DCM, and their wives and all the people at the embassy, both local and Americans all very friendly and very helpful. I remember the ambassador any time he had a dinner visitor he called and invited me. I remember almost every other day he came after work, took the kids and played golf with them in the sand. The time he took the kids I saw the fear in his eyes.

Q: How did this eventually when the time came I mean were you lead to believe that they were continuing to talk about releasing them and nothing was happening?

LIMBERT: You know I listened to Tehran radio every day. I could get receivers in my office and I and I played them softly. I would sit and work, and at the same time I would listen to the radio stations. I could listen to what Tehran radio said about the hostages. There were ups and downs. They were playing games/

You know I love President Carter. I know he cared enormously for the safety of the hostages. If it were someone else I'm sure he would have bombed the embassy and killed all of them. You know when the rescue mission happened I was so sorry that they did that because they never could get inside the embassy. With the location of the embassy with the population of the city, God could never have found these people and that was a really bad idea. But I think they insisted President Carter do the rescue mission; I know he didn't want it. He was such a nice person I think he did through politics. The election was coming, so it is tough to say why he did it.

It was interesting when Ambassador West had a guest, any guest from outside like visiting Senators or Congressmen, I was always invited and he loved to go shopping and he was interested to go shopping. Every Thursday he went in the morning and saw Prince Fahd and came to the office and at noon his secretary called me and said, "The ambassador wants to go shopping after lunch, do you want to go with him? He wants to take Senator so and so who is coming and he wants to take them." I did help the guests a lot when they came and once one of the guests was John Connally.

Connally came to Jeddah with his friend and the ambassador had a big dinner for him and invited some diplomats and also invited the embassy people as he always did. He also invited me there too. That night and the next morning the ambassador said, "John

Connally wants to go shopping. Do you want to take him?" "Yes." I took him and his friend. He bought a carpet and the next day he invited me for lunch at his hotel. I didn't want to go but the ambassador said, "No, you go. I want you to take this bottle of whiskey for him and give it to him." Here I was so scared to carry in Jeddah a bottle of whiskey in a bag. An embassy driver took me to the hotel. I went there and I went to the room and they said, "This is his room." And then his friend said, "This is his room, sit down and Mr. Connally will come." While I was sitting I saw the door was opening and the hotel worker was bringing a lunch table. I had the bottle behind me. I was so that the worker might see it. When he left I put the bottle in the closet in a drawer because I didn't want him to see the bottle of whiskey. I was sitting there and then when John Connally came for lunch we sat and I forgot to mention the whiskey. After that I said to the ambassador, "I'm sorry I forgot to give him the whiskey. I left it in a closet, I was scared."

Anyhow, Connally kept asking me are you Democrat or Republican and I didn't want to answer.

Q: You might want to explain to people who John Connally was.

LIMBERT: John Connally was the former governor of Texas, do you remember? He was in Kennedy's limousine and got shot in his arm. He showed me his arm and he said, "You see this arm? This scratch is from that bullet when President Kennedy was killed; he was sitting next to me in front. I think he was also the one who went to Iran during Nixon's time and asked the Shah for money to help Nixon's reelection campaign.

Q: He was a big, big operator.

LIMBERT: Very big operator.

Q: I think he kind of ran for president a little bit.

LIMBERT: Yes, he wanted to.

Q: He wanted to.

LIMBERT: Yes, yes.

Q: He didn't get nominated.

LIMBERT: No, he did not. Then a couple times at lunch time he asked me do you like President Carter? I said, "Yes, I love President Carter. He's a good president. Why should I not? He's trying to get the hostages safely, diplomatically." Then he asked me, "Did you vote for President Carter?" Every time he asked me I brought up another subject. I said, "Oh, did you like that carpet you bought, did you like that coffee pot you bought?" You know I don't know why he was there during the election. I think he became Republican and then he was working with Reagan.

Q: This, of course, he was a complete politician he couldn't sit down with someone without finding out where they stood.

LIMBERT: Yes, anyhow I couldn't wait to finish the lunch and get back to my office to work. I got back and the driver was not there and finally I found a taxi and I got back to embassy. Later on I told Ambassador West I'm sorry I forgot to give him the whiskey. I was so nervous about the whiskey I put it in the closet." He never got that whiskey bottle. I was in Jeddah until January '81 when John and his friends were released...

Q: Were you back in the States to greet John?

LIMBERT: Yes, actually the night they left Tehran we were at home. The ambassador and DCM and most of the employees came to our home, that small cottage, and we had champagne ready for them when the plane left. As soon as it did we opened the champagne. It was fantastic.

They were so good to me the whole embassy. The ambassador, DCM, their wives and all the families they were so good. The next day they got a ticket for me and children with Saudi Airlines and we celebrated at the embassy yard with the flags up and with the yellow ribbon opened and it was so nice. Then in the evening they took us to the airport and got on the plane and came to the States. I came to the States, I went to my sister-in-law's house in Bethesda with children, and we stayed there. My father-in-law, John's father, and his wife and my sisters-in-law were all there and stayed there and then came to the State Department and they said, "We all go to West Point." We go to West Point and then they come there because they have to take the hostages to Wiesbaden to do the medical checkup. They stayed there for four days and then flew to West Point. We went to West Point then with the other families. By then Reagan was president and they gave us Air Force One to take all the families to West Point. We went there and we were there four days with our husbands and families and together and then came back to Washington and a big parade.

Q: I'm thinking this is a good place to stop for this session and we will pick this up, I'll put at the end here so we'll know about going to West Point and meeting John and being there and we will pick it up then.

Q: Today is September 6, 2016 and I'll mispronounce it again but Parvaneh. The hostages have been released and they...

LIMBERT: They've gone to Wiesbaden...

Q: For medical checkups?

LIMBERT: ...For four days. I and the children flew to Washington.

Q: From Jeddah.

LIMBERT: Straight to Washington and we stayed at with my sister-in-law until they took all families to West Point, with Air Force One and Air force Two. When we got on the plane, I sat in President Reagan's seat. We went to West Point and John and his colleagues arrived that afternoon. We stayed for four days and it was wonderful to have our families with the hostages. Those who were married their wives and children were there. Those who were not married their parents came. We stayed four days and then we came to Washington.

Q: Before we move to how you saw John and all when you were in Jeddah were you able through pilgrims coming from Iran hearing any word about conditions in...

LIMBERT: Oh yes, I mentioned in my previous conversation. I was working in the consulate and interviewing Iranians...

Q: Oh that's right.

LIMBERT: ...There I was interviewing Iranians because I spoke Persian but they didn't know who I was I made it easy for them to talk to me about what was happening in Tehran. If I had mentioned I was the wife of one of the hostages, they wouldn't have talked. One day an Iranian woman visa applicant, who claimed to be a journalist, said, "May I come in and talk to you about the situation." I said, "Yes, come on in." We sat and my boss was in the other room and we sat together and I said, "How is this situation there?" Then she said, "Oh they had a right to storm the embassy." I said, "What?" Because she thought I was Iranian and she wanted to tell me what I would be happy to hear. I said, "Well I'm sure people are not happy to..." She interrupted, "No, no, they are all spies." When she said that I got angry. I screamed at her, "Get out of my office!" My boss from the other room heard me and said, "What's going on?" I said, "This lady is coming for a visa to the United States and she says all those diplomats in Tehran are spies. If they are all spies then she is a spy herself." I said, "Get out of our office," and then called our security and they took her out. After they took her out we sent her name to our consulates and said not to give her a visa. Sometimes if an applicant did not get a visa, they would go around visa shopping and hope to get a visa somewhere else. We sent in her name to all the embassies and the consulates that this person by this name should not get a visa. Usually people who came said to us, "Yes, we are sorry that happened. They shouldn't have done that." But I refused them and said, "Sorry, we can't give you a visa because we have an order not to give visas to Iranians. You can go back to Tehran and scream in the same way they are screaming "death to America" around the embassy. Go and shout, "Open the embassy" so you can get your visa. We said, "Tell your government to open the embassy so you can get visas there. Anyhow, that was a hard job I had, but I was so happy refusing because they didn't know who I was.

In Jeddah we knew the Iranian ambassador and the other embassy people. Some had been working they before the revolution and had been assigned there by the Shah's regime. They were so kind to me because they knew me, and, and the children. They would call s to see how we are doing and sometimes they invited the children to play with their kids.

We had good relations before I left. I think most of them had to leave too. I think many retired early.

Q: There was a big purge of government.

LIMBERT: Then when John was released he called me from Wiesbaden at noon and we talked on the phone and he spoke to the kids. We told him, "We are flying tonight to the United States." The same night we flew to the States but at the embassy we had a very, very nice ceremony with taking the yellow ribbon down ...

Q: What did you observe in John when you saw him and started talking to him? Had he changed?

LIMBERT: No, his personality was so nice because he was worried for me and he was worried for me and our kids. He was worried for my family too because he used to stay in Tehran with my sister. The day they took over the embassy he was talking to my sister on the phone. That was the problem but no, no he did not change; he lost about 45 pounds. He lost weight but looked good and he was calm. Of course, he was anti those revolutionary groups and anti-regime. but he had a physical checkup in Wiesbaden.

Q: How did your children react?

LIMBERT: The children were very good. During the whole 444 days I was watching them very carefully so they not get upset or worried. I told them they are in the embassy but they don't let them get out. I don't want them to listen to the news or watch TV and at the school I mentioned to the teachers and school people not to mention anything about hostages at the school. They were very good about that. Actually when they saw the psychiatrist she said the kids were very good, very knowledgeable and relaxed.

Q: So then what did you and John do?

LIMBERT: Then we were here because they gave John three-months leave; all hostages were given three-months leave. We traveled around and we went to California and visited my family. Many states invited us but we couldn't go to most of them. We went to Hawaii and were guests of the state government. They hosted us very nicely, they put us in a good hotel We came back to Los Angeles and from Los Angeles we took a train to San Francisco and then we went to Yosemite National Park. We were in Los Angeles because my family was there: my mother, two of my brothers, my sister. I and the children had been there in April '80, at the time of the failed rescue mission...

Q: Well '80 was when they tried the rescue mission.

LIMBERT: I was in LA. It was one of my trips to come and visit with the State Department's Iran desk. Then I took the kids to Los Angeles to visit my family. One night about one o'clock in the morning I was listening to the last news before I went to bed and I heard President Carter come on and mention about the rescue mission and that

the rescue mission had failed. I was shaking because I was so sorry for those eight people who lost their lives. But I was happy they didn't make it to Tehran because they never, never could have rescued the hostages because of the situation and location of the embassy and the busy streets and the difficulty finding the hostages in the large compound. I'm sure if they could get into the embassy most of the hostages would have been killed. In some ways, I was sorry for those eight Marines and airmen who lost their lives but I was happy they couldn't make it to Tehran. That night I couldn't sleep. I called right away to the State Department Iran desk and they said, "Yes, that's happened. Fortunately, the hostages are okay." After that they moved the hostages to different cities and provinces They blindfolded them, put them in a car with three or four guards and took them to different cities and places. John went to Isfahan. I think John knew the roads, even blindfolded. After that he said, "When they moved us out of Tehran I knew where we were going." The roads were familiar to him because we had traveled that road a lot from Tehran to Shiraz through Isfahan. They took him to Isfahan and they kept him there. Most hostages were in different cities and areas although a few stayed in Tehran. After that they moved them back to Tehran to Evin Prison and then kept them there for a long time. John, himself, was nine months on solitary; it was sad and it was hard.

Q: That must have been terrible.

LIMBERT: But the good thing is he knew the language and he overheard the guards talking to each other in Persian. Sometimes the guards got careless and left newspapers in the bathroom. John found them and took them to his room and read them. When he read it and he told by tap code through the wall to the Marines what's going on. That how he understood about the rescue mission. Until then he didn't know why they'd moved him.

Q: Well how about when you got back to Washington?

LIMBERT: We got back to Washington at Andrews Air Force base. We got there and by bus they brought us by the State Department there was a big parade that day and it was wonderful with millions of people on the street and then after that they took us to Marriott Hotel in Chrystal City. We were there for about four days. We were there as guests of Marriott for four days and then we went home. We stayed with my sister-in-law. The department gave John and his colleagues three months leave and we traveled around the U.S. including to Texas, Florida, California, and Hawaii.

Then John was looking for his next assignment. We went to California; we were there and then we got a call from personnel in the State Department. They said, "We heard you want to leave the State Department go teach at Harvard?" John said, "I haven't decided yet, but yes Harvard called me as soon as I got back and asked me to go there and teach." Because he has his doctorate, they wanted him for the Middle East section. John said, "Yes, I haven't decided yet. I don't know what I want to do. They told him, "Oh, your dad, Harvard Crimson, and Boston Globe have all said that you are going to teach at Harvard." John said, "Yes but I haven't decided. I don't know if I want to teach or leave the State Department." Then they called back the next day and said, "If you want to teach

we have a teaching job for you back in the States.” John said, “What is that?” They said, “Go to West Point, or to the Naval Academy in Annapolis.” John said, “OK. When I come back I can decide what I’d like to do. I would like to see both places.” For two months we traveled. We went to Yosemite Park, Hawaii, and other places. When we were back in Washington one day John said, “We saw West Point when we were there for four days. Let’s go see Annapolis.” We went and we saw Annapolis and we loved it. It was beautiful. I said, “John that’s a teaching job that’s great for you because you can talk and will keep you busy.” John was so happy and called back and said, “I will take the post at the Naval Academy.” August ’81 he started there. We moved there, we had a nice small bungalow on the grounds and found the children new public schools. We put the kids in school and John started teaching. I stayed home because I didn’t have any job yet. I said, “For three months I see what happens with the kids, get settled with the school and John settled with his teaching job. Then after three months I looked for a job that I wanted to do. I couldn’t sit at home so I went and I worked at a JC Penney’s. I worked there as a cashier and salesperson. I worked there only about maybe eight months. We stayed there until ’84. In 1983 the Naval Academy wanted us to renew for another year and the State Department they pushed for us to leave because it was only a two-year assignment. John said he wanted to stay another year and we stayed until ’84. In ’84 we were assigned to Djibouti.

Six months before Djibouti we started studying French ourselves and after that we took three months of French with FSI. We came to FSI in Rosslyn and studied French and drove back to the Naval Academy every day. At the same time I took the consular course because I was familiar with consular work, the regulations, and the visa categories. Then I said, “Okay I’m going to take a consular course.” I took a consular course and I got my degree or what do you call it?

Q: Certification.

LIMBERT: Certification. Then I was certified by consular course and after that we took French and I had my consular certificate and John had his French and in ’84 we went to Djibouti. Before we went to Djibouti that summer we were thinking what should we do with the kids. Kids were now thirteen and fifteen years old and in junior high. I said, “We can’t take them to Djibouti because Djibouti there are only French schools, and because of security we wanted them to be somewhere safe. We looked around for boarding schools all over. The children looked at literature for some schools and said, “No, no, we don’t like that.” There was one of the schools which was in Switzerland and because my oldest brother was in Geneva with United Nation World Health and his two kids had gone to school in Switzerland. We talked to them and we said, “Oh, send them to College de Lemman in Geneva. College de Lemman was half boarders and half day students. I didn’t want the kids to be there because they would see some kids go home after school to their parents and they’d be sad. I don’t want that. We looked around and we found a school called Aiglon College. We checked with the State Department and the FLO office. Someone was there who knew about the schools and said, “This is a very good school and you can put them there; it is a British system.” We applied and signed them up in that school. Aiglon College is a British system and they get A levels and O level and full

board, They could come home over month-long holidays. It was very good. We flew to Geneva in September and stayed with my brother. We then drove to Aiglon College. Aiglon College is near Aigle, just after Montreux on the mountain in a ski resort area. We took the kids there and they saw the school and were so happy because they could ski in the winter. The second semester term they had to ski everyday two hours. Swiss law requires everyone learn to ski in school. They were happy and we put them in that school. The sad part was we had to leave them there and go to Djibouti. The kids were happy they said first, "Put us in boarding school and you go anywhere you want; go to Djibouti yourselves." The good thing about that school was that after every two-three months of studying they had one month vacation in December vacation. Then in March-April. In the summer they had two months vacation; that was very good. Each term they had twice a parents' weekend and we flew to Geneva and drove to Aiglon and then we were there for children for parents weekend and that was nice, that was very good. At the first Christmas came they home and had to fly themselves. They had to go to Paris to catch Air France to Djibouti. We had two years there and in Djibouti I started work in the administrative section and I did work in personnel helping them and I did work with the consulate. Then they put me as CLO and I was CLO officer too.

Q: CLO means Community Liaison Officer.

LIMBERT: Community Liaison Officer. That helps the family in the embassy and I was so happy to do that because I helped lots of families. Djibouti was a kind of place that was hard to keep the officers and family members happy.

Q: Yeah it is kind of desolate and small.

LIMBERT: Very small and desolate and John's job was DCM and he was a very good DCM.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

LIMBERT: The first ambassador was Alvin Adams and I learned a lot watching what the ambassador and ambassador's wife were doing – what to do and not do. Sometimes you learn.

Q: Oh yes.

LIMBERT: Sometimes you learn what to do and what not to do. I learned a lot that year because I was busy myself. As the DCM's wife but I had lots of responsibility at the embassy to keep everybody happy in a harsh and desolate place. John and I both worked very hard to keep people happy. The second year we were there it was very interesting because I was a CLO officer and I was helping many of the families.

We had about four or five wives with children who were stuck at home, they couldn't do anything, and were desperate to do something. I did my best for them to find what would keep them happy. The second year when we were in Djibouti I asked them, "What would

you like to do?" They said, "We want to go somewhere at least for one day out of Djibouti, because the location is very difficult." Where to go? Ethiopia with famine, civil war, and a Communist government? Getting to Kenya was difficult and very expensive.

But one night we were at the Iraqi ambassador's house. Then U.S. and Iraq had very good relations, although there were some awkward moments about Iran. We were at their house for dinner and the Saudi ambassador was there too with his wife. At dinner and I asked him, "If I want to take four ladies to Jeddah how can I do that? Can you give us a visa?" I wanted to take a group of embassy spouses to the shopping malls in Jeddah for a change-of-scenery. He said, "Yes, if you want I can help you." It was so nice of the Saudi Ambassador. I came back the next day and I saw the families and wives and we got together and I asked them, "Do you want to travel?" They said, "Oh yes." "Do you want to go to Jeddah?" They said, "Oh yes, we heard there is a big shopping mall there. Can we go there?" Let's find a long weekend." I told them, "We'll leave the kids with their fathers and I'll take you to Jeddah. I've already spoken to the Saudi ambassador and he promised to give us a visa." They all agreed. Then I called again the Saudi ambassador and said, "Can we get a visa to go on these days?" I gave him the dates and he said, "Yes, but at least one man has to travel with you because five women alone can't go. There has to be one man." I said, "Okay." Then I came to the embassy and I saw the architect from OBO who had come to Djibouti to see the future plans for the embassy. I asked him, "Can you come with us to Jeddah?" He said, "what for?" I knew he wasn't doing much in Djibouti, so I said, "It will be a good break for you and I can get a visa. He said, "Okay, let me think about it." I said, "No, just let me know so I can arrange the trip for these ladies."

Then I sent a cable to the State Department's CLO office because I was CLO I had to get permission from them. In those days they kept urging us to help families as best we could. I sent a cable and said, "I would like for three days to take four ladies and myself to Jeddah to do some shopping. I have already arranged for visas." As you know, visas for Saudi Arabia are never easy. They sent a very nasty cable saying, "Why are you doing this? We don't have money for that." I was so upset to see that instead of supporting and help. Later I met the person who sent that message and told her she made a mistake. At the time I responded, "If you cannot help us with transportation we will pay it ourselves. There should be no cost for lodging, since I already spoke to the consulate in Jeddah. In its compound there are many apartments that have been empty since the Embassy shifted to Riyadh in '84 Would you please let me take these four ladies they are really desperate and their families are falling apart." FLO never answered so we just went and bought our tickets.

Q: This is...

LIMBERT: Yes. I was really upset. That gentleman, the architect, said, "Okay." I took his passport, my passport and those of the four ladies and sent them to the Saudi ambassador and he gave us visas. We arranged a three-day weekend and the fathers took care of the kids for four days. We flew to Jeddah and took a taxi and then we went to the consulate compound where with the CLO office in the compound I arranged for their

apartments to stay. There was a lot of empty housing on the compound. We did shopping and the ladies were so happy. We took them to a big shopping mall and they bought everything from door knobs to TVs to clothes to shoes to anything they needed. They did a big shopping. Then after three days we returned to Djibouti. All the husbands were at the airport with their children who were desperate for their moms to get back. They were happy and that part of my life made me so happy because I made all those families happy. They needed a break; they needed something.

Q: For somebody reading this to visualize this little triangle of desert out there is Djibouti and is surrounded by not very many countries; Eritrea and Ethiopia.

LIMBERT: Of course it had very hot weather. At ten o'clock at night was 100-120 degrees and one couldn't play tennis during the day -- only in the evening. Mothers had to be with small children, and there was nowhere to go. Only the Sheraton Hotel had a swimming pool where they could go on a weekend. Using the pool was quite expensive as I remember. The women were stuck at home with children all day that trip really helped them a lot. I was so happy I could do that. I felt it was my duty.

Q: Let's talk a little about your work in Djibouti. What were and I can only think of the Danakil Tribe or something I mean it was basically a French military base.

LIMBERT: It was a French military base and for a mission they were there. The French Foreign Legion was there, but there were other units as well: the marines, the military assistance mission, etc. Each unit had a party at least once a year. Ambassadors and their wives could go, John and I could go, but others didn't have any place to go. Social activities were nil and I felt so sorry for some of the wives who got stuck at home. There were occasional parties on visiting French ships with dancing and music. If you didn't speak French or weren't invited there was almost nothing else. You could go to desert and do some camping but for swimming you had to drive a long way and some places were difficult to reach. Most of the roads were not good.

Q: Who was the second ambassador?

LIMBERT: The second ambassador was very, very nice ambassador it was John Ferriter. His wife came from Italy, I think; they were very, very nice people. He was so nice and so good in the embassy and the employees were very happy to see him. We were there until '86 when we left.

Q: Was there much in the way of contact with the Djiboutians?

LIMBERT: Yes, yes.

Q: What were they like?

LIMBERT: They were very, very nice people of different backgrounds -- some Arab, some Somali, and some Afar (Ethiopian). In the diplomatic corps, there were only about

twelve embassies only and most of them had only two or three people at the embassy. There was a British honorary consul who came right out of a Graham Greene novel. Social activity for us was good because we had dinner parties with other diplomats. The Russians entertained well, except when their government decreed that no vodka should be served. Caviar and wine don't go together well. When John was chargé a couple of times we would entertain a lot and we actually did a July 4th party. It went very well. One of my jobs was taking care of the embassy grounds and keeping it green. We found some grass that did well in that climate, and the president's palace wanted to know how we did it. I did a little of everything. I worked with the gardeners;, I helped in the consulate; I did CLO work; and I worked in personnel. I was happy at the same time and I got consulate commission and the same time I got top-secret security clearance. That --combined with my French and Arabic -- helped me to do a lot at the embassy.

Q: Well you were there from when to when?

LIMBERT: From '84 to '86.

Q: Were there any incidents or problems?

LIMBERT: There were some incidents with the Libyans. Relations with Libya were bad, and that was also the time of Reagan's bombing raid on Libya. The second year we had marine guards, and they were afraid something was going on in the city. They also believed the embassy was being watched.

Q: How about the French military how did they treat you?

LIMBERT: Very well. They were very good with us. We had about four Americans in the French Foreign Legion there. The French military were very, very nice but the language was tough for us after only three months' training at FSI. I remember that about a week after we first arrived the ambassador went on leave after a week and John was chargé. Then the next night we were invited on the French ship and then they had a big, big party. We got there and we said hello. As soon as we opened our mouths they said, "Do you speak French?" We said, "Yes a little bit." Everyone spoke very fast and it was sometimes hard to follow the conversation. We could communicate some, but those evenings could be exhausting. After that we made lots of friends with the French Embassy and military people. We became very good friends with one officer and his family. They were a very nice family and we have remained friends with them. We still communicate. When he retired they moved to Tahiti. In 2009 we visited Tahiti and we stayed with them. Every few months we get an email and family picture of their children and grandchildren. We made very good friends there.

Q: Was there any reflection of any contact with Iran while you were there?

LIMBERT: No, no because the contact was completely cut off. After my family all left nobody stayed there. Before that my brother left, my other brother left, my sister left everyone left. I didn't have any family there so no contact.

Q: How about the situation in Iraq did that involve you at all?

LIMBERT: During or after that? No.

Q: I mean Iraq hadn't invaded Kuwait had it at that point?

LIMBERT: No. That happened '89 when we were in Dubai; we had gone back there in '88. That was very interesting we were in the eye of the storm. In '86 we got home leave. We came to the States and in '86 we went to Algiers, Algeria.

Q: What was John doing there?

LIMBERT: In Algiers he was chief in the political section.

Q: What was the situation in Algiers when you were there because at one point foreigners and others were getting their throats cut weren't they?

LIMBERT: In '86 security was good and we could travel. I liked Algiers and I like the city of Algiers and I liked the shore and Mediterranean area; it was beautiful. But in Algiers you couldn't find anything in the shops. The first day we arrived our colleagues said, "Okay we take you to supermarket." We walked in and there was a line for people to get into the market. There was nothing on the shelves but leaking jars of honey and some nasty-looking pasta. They said, "This is it." There were two pieces of something on one shelf. We could go the local free market and get some fresh vegetables and meat, but the prices were extremely high. Beef was the equivalent of \$20/kilo. It was helpful that we had a consumable allowance and could bring things with us. During our summer leave from Algiers the power went out and we lost everything perishable. Locally it was hard to find sugar yoghurt, coffee, and cooking oil. There was lots of olive oil, however. We hired a lady to work for us, I gave her money to go shopping because she could go and find things to buy. I wanted to go myself and in any assignment we went I was the one, myself, the next day took a car and went in the city and look around and see what was going on and find things. Also I could speak Arabic but their Arabic was different it was hard for them to understand me; they were thinking I was Tunisian and that I'm speaking with a Tunisian accent. But it was very difficult at the beginning.

At the embassy they didn't need consular work but DIA there hired me because I had Top Secret clearance. It was downstairs at the embassy and, of course, we were working downstairs behind a locked door. I helped them with the typing, with the reporting and then I had to take reports to John, have him sign it and send it out. Doing that was a little bit hard for me.

At the end of the second year (I don't know if John mentioned this, maybe not), one day I was working in the DIA section, downstairs, and I saw John with the Security officer come in and say, "Parvaneh let's go we have to go home early and we have to pack and leave." I said, "What's happening? Did you get into argument or something?" He said,

“No, I will tell you. Let’s go.” The security officer said, “Yeah, let’s go and we are trying to get a ticket for you tonight both of you to fly out.” I said, “Fly where?” “Fly to Washington.” I said, “Is anybody dead, something happen?” John said, “No, I will tell you.” I said, “Okay. But I have to go to Geneva first because Algiers was two hours to Geneva and I have to go to Aiglon College I want to see our son before I go to the States and I want to tell him I am going to the States. Otherwise he will get worried.” Our daughter was in college in the U.S. and we could tell her there. We went home and John said, “Yes, we got a report they are going to assassinate us and the other (young) political officer. We need to get out.” The ambassador said, “Get out soon.” We talked to the State Department and they said, “Let them get out.” John and me and John’s assistant political officer, those three were named to be assassinated.

Q: Who said they were going to do this? What was the threat?

LIMBERT: It was a threat from a group of Ben Bella’s supporters. They opposed the current Algerian government and embarrass it by killing Americans. I don’t know if John mentioned this or not in his interview.

Q: I’m not sure.

LIMBERT: We said, “Okay.” Then we went home and packed and we left the house and at nine o’clock we went to the airport, we flew to Geneva and we went by train and bus directly to the school and it was midnight. When we got to the school everybody was sleeping. We went there and got the housemaster of our son’s dorm, and he opened up and said, “Oh my God what are you doing here?” We told him the problem, that we have to go to the States and we want to let you know if our son asks you let them know. We waited until the morning when our son woke up and we told him we are going to Washington. He was worried why we were going. We said, “Nothing happened, we have something to do at the State Department.” Then we went to the States. We went to the States and the embassy and department said, “Okay, you stay in the States until we give you clearance to go back.” We travelled on Thanksgiving Day. I remember that at noon we got to Dulles Airport we called John’s sister and said, “Hello, happy Thanksgiving.” They said, “Oh sorry unfortunately you are not here we are having all the family here.” Which we said, “Oh, we are here, we are in Dulles we are coming to your place.” They were surprised and we went there. Our daughter had joined them from college and we gave her a modified version of the story.

Everyday John was talking to the State Department going and finding out what’s going on. They were worried, “What’s happening, what happened?” It took a week we didn’t go back, two weeks we didn’t go back and John’s family kept asking, “What happened John are you in any trouble at the embassy? They kicked you out?” They were worried and we couldn’t say what had happened we didn’t want to tell them what happened. We said, “Oh, it’s all okay.” Then we went to California, visited my family again and we stayed there. They kept saying, “Why are you here in the middle of the year what’s going on?” I said, “Nothing, we have leave they gave John another leave.” Anyhow, it took about two months exact until they found those people in Italy in Rome. They arrested

them, they got them and then everything was open, they gave us our release and we went back to Algiers.

Q: You didn't need that.

LIMBERT: We didn't need that after John's problem in Iran. I said, "John, why is it that anywhere we are some problem happens?" Anyhow we went back and the rest of our tour we stayed in Algiers; we traveled we visited much of the country." The second year was so nice and we had lots of visitors and we helped them; who was visiting us? I think we had...

Q: Who was the ambassador?

LIMBERT: The ambassador was Craig Johnstone, very nice ambassador, very, very nice. His wife Janet was nice too and very good. The first year in '86 when we were there President Carter and Mrs. Carter came to visit. We were helping him and the ambassador's wife asked me to help her a lot. When President Carter came John and I asked for fifteen minutes to talk separately with President and Mrs. Carter. We saw them and sat down and we talked. I thanked him because he had done for John's release.

Q: He was the ex-president at this point wasn't he?

LIMBERT: Yes he was ex-president. This was after. President Reagan was president and then President and Mrs. Carter they came to Algiers and the Algerians received them very well. One night at the ambassador's residence he gave a big dinner with the top Algerian military adviser it was very nice. Mrs. Carter wanted to visit the orphanage and ambassador's wife asked me if I would like to sit in the car with Mrs. Carter. I said, "No, you are the ambassador's wife you should sit in the car." She said, "No, you know her and she knows you that is the best you sit with her." That was a very nice offer. She was a very generous person.

Q: What was your impression of Mrs. Carter?

LIMBERT: She is an excellent lady she is wonderful. The whole time in the car from the embassy to orphanage she was talking about her daughter; she wanted her to put nice clothes on but she didn't want to; she was in college. She talked very nice about family and her family and my family it was so nice to talk with her. We went to orphanage and visited orphanage. She was so nice to meet the people and kids and then we went back to the embassy. That was a nice visit with President and Mrs. Carter.

Q: What about your contacts with Algerians?

LIMBERT: Algerians they were distant. Unlike other Arabs, it could be hard to get close to them. They had bad memories from foreigners they did not want to get very close. We got to know one Algerian business man and his family, since we had met his son in Djibouti. Our son played tennis with the son of one of the former FLN leaders (he had an

American wife) but the father kept his distance. We also got to know Ambassador and Mrs. Redha Malek. He had been the Algerian ambassador in Washington during the hostage crisis when he and other Algerians helped a lot. We wanted to find him, and because by then he was retired, it was easier for him to meet with us. We found him, we called him, we invited him and his wife and they invited us to their place and it was very nice; just a few regular Algerians. Algerians the military and also Algerian diplomats were difficult to get close to. They kept their distance.

Q: I've heard of that. Could you get around the town much?

LIMBERT: Yes, we could.

Q: Did you get to the Kasbah?

LIMBERT: Yes, actually it was interesting. We went to Kasbah when President Carter and Mrs. Carter were there, we took them to Kasbah. They saw the Kasbah and took lots of pictures; we have a lot of nice pictures from there in those days. And that 15 minute meeting with them that was interesting.

Q: Did you get involved in doing any visas?

LIMBERT: Not in Algeria actually. In Algeria I did the DIA work, and also I helped them a little bit when they needed help in the consulate; but not very much. There was not much consular work to do there.

Q: In Algeria were observing people talking about Algerians going to France and their problems there?

LIMBERT: Oh yes. Actually the French people they didn't let the Algerian people do anything. When the French ruled, the Algerians did not learn to do anything but the most basic work. The French did everything themselves. Even the postmen and trash men were French. The Algerians produced wine and the French took it to France and bottled it there and sold it as a French wine. Once our son was there for a visit and he had a tennis racquet and was playing tennis and his racquet broke and he wanted to restring it. Then we went to look around for string we couldn't find any. We went to one flower shop which was run by a former Algerian tennis champion. We went to the flower shop and asked, "Do you know how to string the tennis racquet." He said, "Yes, but you have to bring the string and I can do it. I don't have the string myself." We asked, "Where can we get the string set." He said, "Go to that bakery across the street. The bakery has the string, you buy the string from the bakery and come back, and bring it to me." They imported things and they hid their work from the authorities.

Q: Did you have any kind of contact with Algerian women?

LIMBERT: Yes.

Q: How were they treated, how is Islam and women working out?

LIMBERT: They were mostly at home. They had some teachers at school, they had to have teachers but mostly they were at home and did not have very much jobs in those days. Maybe now they have but I don't know but in those days they were not very much open.

Q: It's a pretty country isn't it?

LIMBERT: Beautiful country, beautiful I really liked Algeria the coast was beautiful was really nice, good and just beautiful but we had to drive to Moroccan border to Oujda to shop and bring back things; a one-day trip. It was far to go and shop and bring back every two weeks we did that; lots of people did it. Some people at the embassy got together and one person went and did all the shopping and came back. But the fish was very good you could go to the fish market and buy nice fish. There were some vegetables at the beginning but nothing other than that because Algerians after French left there was nothing left for them to do. They didn't know agriculture; they didn't know anything that was the problem.

Q: The people you met were mainly French?

LIMBERT: They were mostly the other diplomats, yes, there were other diplomats we could meet and be socially busy with them and invite them to dinner parties like regular other places.

Q: But then you went back to Washington?

LIMBERT: No. In 1988 we went to Dubai where John was Consul General.

Q: Oh, just at the right time.

LIMBERT: The right time -- the invasion by Iraq in 1990.

Q: Let's talk first about Dubai.

LIMBERT: '88 we went back to Dubai, John was appointed consul general in Dubai, and I started working in the consulate again because I had a consular commission and I had a top secret security clearance and I helped the consulates that way. I didn't work full time I worked part time 20 hours a week. This wasn't very much because I had other duties to do as the consul general's wife. I did work in the consulate because of my Persian and I helped a lot in that case especially with the junior officers coming and I was standing next to them and talking in Persian.

Q: Dubai, of course, is the center of trade really.

LIMBERT: Trade and business.

Q: It was coming back and forth.

LIMBERT: It was coming back and forth.

Q: On the Straits of Hormuz.

LIMBERT: Oh yes, yes. Those Iranians there were a lot and also because we were there before in '75-'76 and we had made lots of friends in Dubai among both Iranians and other people there. Iranians were there from before and all of our old friends were there. We met our friends again and it was like coming home. It was very good for us because I thought people had left Dubai. When we were there originally many had just small businesses but when we went back in '88 they had high rise buildings and their business had greatly expanded. Their business had changed but their personalities didn't change. That was nice. They were so happy to see us because I was Iranian they thought I was like them, like family. We still we know some of them very well there. Being back and seeing them was very interesting. We saw how much they had developed and how much their business grew. For me it was so easy to see the Sheiks wives and go visit them all the time with most of the other consuls' wives. We went and visited Sheik's sisters and families and wives and they invited us for dinner; just the women. It was so good to see most of them they received us very well.

Q: The big money hadn't gone to their heads?

LIMBERT: No, no the big money didn't change them. For example we knew two Dubaian brothers who were regular businessmen who had a big, big shopping mall. They owned so much but they were still the same people. We invited them to our home and they usually came; they invited us to their houses and it was so nice. Their business and family they were together. I heard now those families, those brothers, are estranged. Many families eventually changed because of too much money.

Q: Yeah, that's the real problem.

LIMBERT: It finally got to their heads as you said.

Q: Well then did you have much to do with the big expatriate community not necessarily just American but the Filipino's and all of them. I mean this must...

LIMBERT: There were Filipino's because they were helping companies, it was mostly housekeepers but our housekeeper was our cook who was Pakistani. Our housemaid was from Thailand and they were very nice couple.

Q: How were they treated?

LIMBERT: Very well we treated them like family really.

Q: I mean did the government treat the expatriate community I'm particularly thinking of the laboring people.

LIMBERT: It is a little bit hard but some of them like Indians who are there are rich. The Indians there make money a lot and the top rich Indians. The Pakistani expats are okay but it was hard for the laborers.

Q: Many Americans there?

LIMBERT: Many Americans there and there used to be a lot in the oil industry. There were many British, of course, is more but 85 percent of the population is expat, not Emirates'. The Emiratis are maybe 15 percent of the country.

Q: Well let's talk about what Iraq was doing and its effect on you all.

LIMBERT: That's a lot. Before Iraq we had lots of connections and relationships because John was consul general and that was so easy for him to contact other rulers of Emirates and others and we used to go visit them actually and visit them with families, their wives and they were so easy to receive us. We met them and had dinner or lunch with them and a couple we invited and they came to Dubai it was nice to get to know them and to be with the local Dhabians and Iraqis. Not only Iranians there some of the Iranians became Dhabians or Emiratis later on.

Q: Well what happened when Iraq invaded Kuwait?

LIMBERT: That was July-August '90 I was traveling with my daughter. She was 21 years old and that was her 21st birthday. She had wanted to travel by herself and I said, "No way." Or with one or two friends and I said, "No." She said, "No friends can go and I want to travel myself." I said, "I go with you anywhere you go and I don't want you to go alone." She said, "Mom, I want to go to Damascus, I want to go to Turkey and I don't want to go to expensive hotels I want to go regular hotels." I said, "Okay, anything you do, any hotel you choose we go." Then I said okay. We were going to go to the States after that for my niece's wedding and my son stayed with John for the summer. John was in Dubai and he was going to travel with him to the States while I went with our daughter. We went to Damascus and stayed there for two nights. I said, "Oh you are going to stay in Sheraton." "No, no, no." "Okay just once we stay here." Then we stayed in the Sheraton and we saw Damascus; those days Syria was very peaceful. We visited Damascus and then two days later we hired a taxi and drove to Aleppo. We went to Aleppo and then she found a hotel that was not nice and finally we found a nice hotel. We stayed in Aleppo and visited everywhere with no problems. Then we took a bus to Adana in Turkey and in Adana we had a consulate there. Then we went to consulate and I said, "We are traveling I just wanted to let the consular officer know. We are traveling and this is our passport and address and we are traveling in Turkey." They said, "Fine, everything is okay," and Turkey in those days was easy to travel and of course very beautiful. We traveled to southern Turkey and got to Izmir and after Izmir we were on a bus then I heard from the radio in Turkish that they said, "Saddam invaded Kuwait," and

I heard in Turkish because I understood it a little bit. I said to my daughter, “Mani it looks like Saddam has invaded Kuwait, let’s go call dad and see what’s going on.”

I called John and I said, “We are near Izmir and we are going to Istanbul and I’m going to come back.” John said, “No, no, no you go to the States with Mani.” I said, “No way. I don’t want to leave you alone.”

The consulate in Istanbul helped me buy a ticket back to Dubai and I sent our daughter to the States to the wedding. I said we are going there later and I flew back to Dubai. I flew back to Dubai I arrived and went home and heard Sheik Muhammad the ruler of Dubai had told the people that since the American consul general’s wife came back, that means here is safe and don’t worry.

They said on the local radio that everything is safe in Dubai. Anyhow I stayed and we sent our son to the States for the wedding and his college, and I stayed there with John. We were there day and night and coalition formed. It set up air bases in Dubai and Sharjah. I could not do very much at home but mostly I was in the consulate working my job and also with the coalition. We had lots of ship visits; we had lots of Navy people in our house all day and night. We were also receiving military people in the camp and I visited with John lots of camps. Among the local schools those days there were two or three handicapped schools and I had already been helping them very much. I helped them with the Marines with the ship visit and I asked the ships, “Can you help us with the schools?” Then I took them there and they painted the school for them and fixed the grounds which were in bad shape.

When the coalition formed the wives of all the consuls whose countries were allied to help Kuwait. There was me and the wives of consuls from Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, and of course Kuwait. These women all helped with the visiting servicemen. They were women that started making the coalition to work with the ships. Once I invited all the consul general’s wives at home and we had a nice gathering. A reporter was there and wanted to take a picture. He took a picture and I asked the wife of the Saudi consul to be in the photo. I told her, “I would like to be in the picture with us.” She said, “Oh, they are going to put it in the newspaper. I am not allowed to have my picture in the newspaper.” I said, “I would like you to be with us in the picture.” She said, “I have to get permission from my husband.” She called her husband the Saudi consul general and said, “Parvaneh wants me to be in a picture with her. Is it okay?” He said, “Anything Parvaneh says is okay. You should listen to her. Have your picture with them and it is okay to be in the newspaper.” I still have the magazine and newspaper from those days. He took a picture and called it the Women’s Coalition and we helped with the group. We visited the airbase near Dubai. One of the F-16 pilots, a US Air Force colonel, showed me how they flew and what they were doing. It was scary but a very good experience for me.

Q: Were you concerned over a possible Iranian attack across the Strait of Hormuz?

LIMBERT: No, no. The Iranians were not doing anything. The Iranians were afraid themselves. Yeah, the Iranians were not doing anything but they did have problems with the Strait of Hormuz and they had those islands in dispute with Emirates as you know.

Q: Tunb Islands.

LIMBERT: Yeah, but that invasion had happened back in 1971.

Q: You must have seen a tremendous buildup of military.

LIMBERT: Oh my god we had military all together from the beginning to the end we had 95 ship visits, do you believe it? I have 95 hats from those ships. We invited them to the house, or we went to visit the ships and we have a hat as a souvenir. We did have them a lot in the house because the military people they didn't have anywhere to go and needed to get off the ship. They came by the house, they sat by the swimming pool, and we took care of them as best we could. At Thanksgiving dinner 1989 we had around 85 military people in our house; 85 military from four generals and admirals and Navy people in our residence and the yard. Then for Christmas we had 95.

Q: Where did you get the food?

LIMBERT: Locally, we bought food and believe me I don't want to say this but I preferred to spend our own money for this purpose. We had ORE but ORE was not helping that much and I was happy to give the cook money to shop and serve these people because of the sacrifices our military colleagues were willing to make. We had to help them.

I helped as much as I could. I'll never forgot Christmas night. A Marine General, I don't remember his name, got up and spoke about going and fighting and dying and it was so sad. Thank God they did very well. Four Marines I remember. I visited ships and I saw those Marines sitting and crying they were afraid, young about 20, 21, 23 years old. One Marine I was talking too he was sad sitting and crying and I said, "Why are you crying?" He said, "Oh I left my girlfriend and I'm sorry I'm here and I'm afraid if I die or something." I said, "You are not dying you are going to help, you are doing good job for your country." I sat down for a half an hour and I spoke. Finally the man said, "Thank you Ma'am so much you spoke to me."

Q: Well it is so important. How did you find the staff of the consulate general?

LIMBERT: Very nice, very good group all were very nice people. FSNs were very good with knowledge, the Egyptian secretary we had was fantastic. She knew everybody; she knew how to contact these people. Our Indian driver was also excellent. He was so conscientious and very nice. FSNs they were very good. I appreciate all those FSNs who work at the embassies overseas. They are part of us and they do the best job they can. We need them always.

Q: Oh boy, do we.

LIMBERT: We need them really.

Q: Well they are our initial contact with the country wherever we are.

LIMBERT: No the consulate staff was excellent, the consular officers they were so good, security officer was excellent everybody was good and they were working hard I think because John was nice to them also. That's important if the boss is good, if the boss appreciates and knows how to deal with the employee the employee knows how to react and how to answer. It is nice. Not because John is my husband and I am talking good about him. He is very, very nice person. He is very solid and he deals with people very nicely he never hurts anybody.

Q: What were the Abu Dhabians and others think? Did they think that Saddam Hussein was going to...were they worried about him?

LIMBERT: Oh of course Abu Dhabians were worried. Dubai and the whole Emirates' were all worried. They were afraid Saddam is taking over all the way to Saudi Arabia you know.

Q: There was real concern that they might keep going into the Eastern province.

LIMBERT: Yes, that's why they were afraid; I remember all the consulates they came over and talked to John and John talked to them; meeting with them. It was a horrible and tough time that we went through. The Iraqi invasion was bad. Thank God our military did the right job.

Q: I think from Abu Dhabi the military did quite well too didn't they?

LIMBERT: Oh yes Abu Dhabi helped their bases were open and they helped a lot.

Q: Well then at the end did things change? All of a sudden all the U.S. military forces kind of leave you?

LIMBERT: Yes they had to leave they had to go back to the States or their bases anywhere they were. But ship visits continued. There was much going and coming in those very active days.

Q: Did it get awfully quiet after they left?

LIMBERT: After they left it was quiet but people had to prepare they were still worried as they were not completely relaxed to say, "Yeah they are finished," but still they were worried.

Q: Again you were worried about Saddam were you looking across the Straits of Hormuz or Iran wondering if they were going to move something? Did you feel Iran was doing anything?

LIMBERT: No, they had fought with Iraq for eight years they didn't need that again. Bahrain was always worried about Iran. The Omanis did not worry at all. Thank God it was done fast and it didn't take very long.

Q: How much after the war with Iraq was over what did you do and how long were you there?

LIMBERT: We were there until 1991 when we came back to the States and spent a year in Cambridge, Mass. After the war ended in early 1991, we stayed in Dubai until the summer and life got normal again. Everybody was happy and they now knew the value of Americans and American military. That helped a lot and we were much respected there that was so good to see. Hopefully, the relations now stay good.

Q: Well I think this is a good place to stop. We'll pick this up you left Abu Dhabi went to?

LIMBERT: We left Dubai in '91; we went back to the States to Cambridge. John went one year to Harvard.

Q: Okay. Today is the 13th of September 2016 with Parvaneh Limbert and we just left was it Abu Dhabi?

LIMBERT: No, we were in Dubai during the Gulf War.

Q: So where are we going now?

LIMBERT: We are still a little bit in Dubai before we went to another post in the summer of 1991.

Q: Do you have anything more to say about Dubai?

LIMBERT: During the Gulf War we worked with the anti-Saddam coalition. I was responsible, with encouragement from my husband, to work with the wives of the other consuls general and have a means to help refugees and help local schools, especially those for handicapped children. We had gathered once a week together and we discussed what we should do and what not to do. The best part of that was we became very close with all the wives of the Arab consuls general from Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. We got together a lot and got to know each other very well and help each other and plan what to do and what not to do. At the same time, during our three years in Dubai I helped local handicapped schools because they had a lot of handicapped schools, including children with severe learning disabilities. People didn't talk about it much, but there was a high rate of mental disability among Emirati children and people thought it was a result of frequent intermarriage. I got help from the US Navy ships that were

visiting and they provided Marines and sailors to visit to the schools, where they would paint, clean, and plant flowers. That was so good to get into the community that way.

That was part of my work. In the consulate I was also doing a part-time job interviewing the visa applicants

Q: What was the government of Dubai doing for handicapped children?

LIMBERT: They had the schools, they had teachers, and they were feeding them. But the schools were not well-maintained. There was social stigma involved. For me that work was satisfying because I wanted to be in the society and I wanted to help. It was a good way to be with some of the parents, to meet some other people. I was so happy because the other consuls and their wives trusted me. They knew I am a friend not an enemy. That was very good. We have very good memories with the Dubaians, even with the Sheiks and their wives....

Q: At this point of time were the wives of the consuls general and the sheiks were they pretty well educated?

LIMBERT: Yes actually most of them were, especially the sister of Sheik Sultan of Sharjah. She was very, very open-minded and very intellectual and wanted to be with people. We would visit her once a month. We would visit Sheik Muhammad's wife and Sheik Maktoum's wife and they gave a dinner to all wives of the consuls general. I think in this case, in the Foreign Service as a spouse you get into the community more than the officers themselves. They look at the officers as officials but not the wives. You can go and visit with them, sit with them and talk to them and anything they want to say freely they can tell you. We also associated family-to-family with some of the Dubaians. I think they saw me as almost a family member.

Q: Often particularly in the time that I come from and pretty much the diplomatic network was run by men almost completely. The wives were a wonderful intelligence network underneath they knew...

LIMBERT: What was going on.

Q: ...what was going on. And also far better connected...

LIMBERT: That's right.

Q: ...than the men right?

LIMBERT: That's right, yes, yes. In that setting, the women were open. They could say anything they wanted.

Q: Did you feel that life was changing in the Islamic and particularly the Arab world for women?

LIMBERT: At that time not very much. During the Gulf War it was not. I think after the Iranian Revolution of course it changed a lot but not at that time.

Q: Well you left there in...

LIMBERT: We left in '91 and we came back to Cambridge and we went to the Center for International Affairs, which was at Harvard.

Q: That was at the Kennedy School.

LIMBERT: It's separate from the Kennedy School and now called the Weatherhead Center. But we went to many excellent programs at the Kennedy School. We had a very nice year over there with the lecturers from all over. The program included diplomats from all over the world many of whom were there with their spouses. For one year we were in Cambridge. We had lectures, went sightseeing and traveled. They had a nice program for us actually. At that time Governor Dukakis had recently run for president and did a very interesting session. He had lunch with us. We brought our brown bags and we sat and talked about his plans and his losing presidential race. That was a very good year because it was home and we didn't have social obligations. In the summer of 1992 we went to Washington, and both of us took jobs at FSI. We came to FSI and I went to work in testing unit.

Q: In what?

LIMBERT: In the language testing unit.

Q: Oh yes.

LIMBERT: In '92. Then FSI was still was in Rosalyn. I was there for about six months and then we moved here to Arlington in '92. I worked in the testing unit and it was very good. I worked with the students coming to test and help them organize and scheduled all the programs there and report their grades. After that we moved to FSI here, that was '93. It was a big change from Rosalyn to here.

Q: Oh yes. By the time you got back to Washington were you glad that you had decided to stay in was it Jeddah during the time of the hostage crisis rather than come back here?

LIMBERT: Yes, I think because of the children. I didn't want to bring the children then to the States. If you remember you were in the States by that time or were you somewhere overseas?

Q: I was in Naples, Italy.

LIMBERT: During that period I came to the U.S. three times. I brought the children and once I had a meeting with Secretary Muskie. Then I would go back to Saudi Arabia with

the children. I came another time and met with the Iran desk. met some of the other wives and had medical checkup. The third time they took all the wives and parents to San Francisco for a big meeting. They wanted to tell us what was happening during the hostage crisis. Actually anything they were saying was not new. I already knew as much or more than they did.

I didn't want to stay in the States because the atmosphere was not good. It was so bad every night the news would talk about day one, day two or day 300 something The TV was covering events that way and I didn't want the children to get upset and hear those words. The State Department at the beginning wanted to bring me back to the States with children and I said, "No, I'm going to stay there I have a job at the embassy. I'm so busy and the kids have good schools and I want to stay in Jeddah." The schools were watching the kids so they didn't hear some kind of thing against Iran or against the U.S. or anything. I preferred to be there and the kids away from the news. Whenever they came home during the day after school they came to my office. They'd say, "Did you hear from dad? I would say, "Yes, dad is in Tehran, still at the embassy. They don't let them go out because of the bad security. I couldn't tell them he was in prison because the kids would get worried. They were nine and seven years old.

Q: I also think if you would have been there you would have been involved with one of the wives groups which got quite hostile towards the State Department. It's only natural but you've got to be mad and somebody isn't doing something and the organization that you belong to become the object and that's not very healthy.

LIMBERT: Exactly. That's another reason I stayed there. Fortunately, we had a great, great ambassador and DCM in Jeddah -- both them and their wives. The ambassador every other day he walked to the house took the kids to play golf and kept them busy. The embassy people, the staff, were so nice. I could say they were better than my own family because they were so nice to the children and to me. I really had an easy time during that because of the staff and my location there. My environment was easy and good.

We had lots of visitors my God. Every month we had Senators, Congressmen coming to visit and that's what kept me busy. Every Thursday the ambassador went to visit King Fahd and when he came back to the office his secretary would call me and say, "The ambassador wants to go shopping with Senator so-and-so. He wants you to go with them because you can speak Arabic and you can talk to them."

I mentioned before that once John Connally came and he invited me for lunch and we sat and talked. He wanted to know if I was Republican or Democrat. I know he was Democrat before and then turned to Republican because when he was Democrat he was a governor of Texas, when he got his arm shot when Kennedy was killed. He showed me his arm and said, "Oh yes, this is what happened to me when I was in that limousine when President Kennedy was shot.

While I was there many of the Saudis, particularly those from the foreign ministry and its protocol office were very helpful to me. Also, and most important, the people at the Iranian were also very kind. The Iranian ambassador, his wife, and the political officer and his wife were close friends. Before the revolution, during the Shah's time, we had a good relationship during. They invited us to their homes and even after the revolution even when John was a hostage, they invited me and children into their house. It was very nice and the Iranian ambassador, Reza'i was his name, would call every week to see how I was doing. When he left Saudi Arabia he didn't stay in their foreign ministry. He didn't want to go back, and he went to the States.

Q: When you were in Dubai how did the wives of the various officials that you were involved with, feel about Iran?

LIMBERT: You know, that depended on the person. The Saudi's were okay with Iran (not like now) and they had good relations during the Shah's. All the Arab countries had good relations with Iran. The Emiratis, they were good too because they had still good relations after the revolution. Iranian businessmen were there a lot and coming and going, no problem.

Q: Well then you were here working with FSI for how long?

LIMBERT: From '92 to '94.

Q: And then what?

LIMBERT: We went to Guinea, Conakry. John was DCM there and I was consular officer. That was a tough job for me eight hours on my feet. I was working in the consular section because before we went to Djibouti we took the French course. Also, again we did some French refreshment and then with my Arabic and French especially I used French a lot there during my work.

Q: What was Conakry like?

LIMBERT: Conakry is very, very rich and poor at the same time. I remember the night we arrived in Conakry we flew to the airport; of course, people from the embassy were there at the airport. They had our car and driver pick us up and we started driving to the city my God it was dark. The sidewalk was lined with stalls lit by candles. There were no lights and ladies were sitting with their baskets selling things. The streets were bumpy and the car was going up and down and I held John's hand and I said, "Oh my God what we did do and why are we here?" John said, "It's okay don't worry, we are together that's fine. You get busy and start working." They took us to the house which was the former DCMs house. It had been a nightclub, a disco. They turned it into the DCMs house and that night for us they put on any lights they could have, chandeliers, to make the house light. We went in and at the end of the night I was turning lights this side that side and it was so dark. The yard was filthy, the pool was a disgusting mess and I woke up and I said, "John, I'm not going to live here. If you want to stay in Conakry I'll leave my job

and I'll go back to the States." John said, "Okay, let's see what's happening." Then we went to the embassy and I started work. Before we left for Guinea, State FBO had told us...

Q: FBO is foreign buildings operations, it is the...

LIMBERT: Yes, Foreign Buildings Operation doing all the embassy's building and providing things. We went to FBO we wanted to see the picture of the house and residence and what we needed for the house. They told us they said, "The house is not nice and they told me I don't think you will like the house. If you find a nice house any price range we will rent it because this one is so bad. They knew that and they told us and John said, "Yes." John said, "FBO told us we should go look for a house." I said, "Okay I'm not going to start work until I find a house."

It took me about a month and fortunately we had other consular officers who were working and they didn't need me that much. We looked all over and finally one day the driver took me to one street and I saw kind of like a mansion with steps going up like those marble steps. I went, "Oh my God this is apartment building. This is apartment building I would like to get the full floor apartment building is better." I went in with the driver and GSO officer was with us actually. I saw one Lebanese man standing there and I said, "Hello," I felt he was Lebanese and I started speaking Arabic. I said, "We are from the American embassy we are looking for a place to rent." He really liked my approach and then he said, "This is house I built for myself and I have another house down front by the ocean and that is one flat, one story and my wife doesn't like it; they want to move in here. But if you like that house or this house you can rent it." I said, "I like this because it has a nice view of the ocean even though we are directly on the water." He said, "Okay, let's see." I said, "If you rent to embassy with good price," I did a bargain from the first day, "We will rent it. I like this place and I want to rent this one." He said, "Okay I will have to call my wife and see if she agrees with that." He called his wife right away and she said, "Okay, if we are American embassy I'm sure it will be rented forever and we don't have to get another rental. Okay." Then I told the GSO people we are agreed let's go to the embassy and send an email to FBO and tell them this is the house and this is the price." They agreed, we rented it and we moved into the house.

Q: How wonderful.

LIMBERT: It was very good and then from FBO they started sending the materials and furniture and everything; believe me I fixed that DCM's residence like a palace. It was so nice and any DCM that came after that they were so happy with the building and their wives and children were very happy. That was so good, it was away from the street and some areas but we liked it because we had a guard and security there that was good. Then we rented and stayed there for three years in Conakry.

Q: What was Guinea like?

LIMBERT: Guinea as a country is the same time it is rich the same time it is poor because all they have is stolen. A very corrupt place. Nothing goes to the government and nothing goes to the people. It goes somewhere nobody knows. They have diamonds, they have gold, they have bauxite, they have tropical fruits and fish. But at the same time I don't know into whose pocket it goes. It was very sad to see the way people live.

Q: So many of those countries particularly along that area had a lot of military unrest was there any problems?

LIMBERT: We had two coups while we were there. The first one soldiers mutinied and attacked the palace. We were working downstairs because our consular officer was on the first floor where the visa applicants came in. John's office was on the second floor. We were there and suddenly we heard the gunshots all over from here to there and the security officer ran down and said right away, "Close the office and get upstairs." We got upstairs and they said go home and they sent most of the staff and FSNs home and some of the wives they were working there, the CLO office and several others home. At the time the ambassador was not there and John was the chargé. The security officer and admin officer stayed at the embassy. All the marine guards came in as well.

We got into the car and went home. From home I called John and once I called him I said, "John what are you doing?" He said, "I am under the desk and the bullets are going over the table, going over the head from this window to that window." The palace was so close and the street was chaos. John got stuck there so I told the cook right away make lots of food and pack it and an embassy driver came and took it to the embassy anyway he can get them some food because they may be staying overnight at the embassy because they can't get home. Anyhow, it took about a couple days before the coup the government took hold of the rebellions and that was very scary even once they stopped our security officer and head of the of the Marines. Then they got them on the street they almost took them to prison but they said, "We are with the embassy we have nothing to do with you," and they let them go. That was another time it was also they started a coup but that one was easy to control it. But Guinea for us was okay because always John and me anywhere we went we made a home for ourselves. We were also happy that the kids were not with us and we are sure they were safe back in the States.

Q: Where were they going to school?

LIMBERT: They were at the university. Our daughter was at Brown and our son was at MIT but they were in the States at college which was very good for us.

Q: These coups did they make much of a difference in the country?

LIMBERT: Oh yes.

Q: Who was doing the coup?

LIMBERT: Military officers.

Q: It was all military?

LIMBERT: All military. After that it got easy again and '95 and '96 it was okay and I was working in the consular for eight hours a day. The thing was my relations with the foreign ministry and protocol were very good. I knew how to interview the people and talk to them. Even if I refused them, I would do so very politely, with a good face and they were not angry. In the city everybody knew my status as a consular officer they were careful and polite. Once John was chargé and ambassador was on leave he went to the foreign ministry for a meeting. When he went to the foreign ministry one of the employees there said, "I think I know you. Aren't you Mrs. Limbert's husband?" They thought I was more important than he was because always in a country they look at the consular officer as more important than anybody else.

Q: I was a consular officer throughout my career and I hated to go to a cocktail party because they couldn't care less about the ambassador they would come to me applying for visas. They didn't have a visa but they wanted one of their friends, I've got a nephew and all that. I hated to go.

LIMBERT: Yes, me too. Sometimes because for the reception we had and always was someone from this embassy, from that embassy asking and they invited the Guineans. I'd say to John, "I'm not going." He'd say, "No you are my wife now you are not consular officer." I said, "They think I am. They don't care."

In Guinea we once had a visit from former Washington Mayor family of Marion Berry and his wife. In Guinea there are also thousands of people with the family name Berry. Marion Berry when he was mayor he came to Conakry with his wife and a group from Washington. We gave them a dinner and you know how many Mayor Berrys were sitting at that table? There was Marion Berry. We had two Mayor Berrys from two communes of Conakry, one of them was Madame and one of them was Monsieur Berry and we had three Mayor Berry's sitting at the table. It was really funny for us. At the same time it was good, at the same time it was bad. One of those Berry's was the one always in the reception as soon as he saw me from a distance, as you said, he didn't go to anyone he came toward me and discussed the visa and who didn't get a visa and why didn't they didn't get a visa and can this one get visa?" That part of being a consular officer is very hard. You have to face people and know what to say and what not to say.

Q: That is very hard and you are saying no to people which basically it is a perfectly legitimate reason to say no but to them this is so important and you are standing in their way. It's not easy.

LIMBERT: It is not easy, but I had a good relationship with the Guinean immigration office.

Q: Were the Guineans going to any particular city or place in the States?

LIMBERT: They go to Indiana. Mauritians they go to another place and anyone that gets a visa they go there because all the Guineans go to Indiana.

Q: Did you do much traveling?

LIMBERT: Yes, actually we did a lot of traveling in the beautiful countryside and jungle, a wonderful, wonderful area. They had the beautiful city of Dalaba. We used to go there it was beautiful, a higher place, no humidity, green I always tell the government people would you please move your capital to that place. Make that the capital city not Conakry, Conakry is a long city by the ocean and hot and humid, six months rain and showers everywhere is mold and no sun and six months is hot and dry. But that city was so beautiful, cool and nice anytime we ever had any parties with the Guinean government officer were there I'd say why you don't move to that city. That's the best place for a capital. But the ocean they liked it, there was good fish there, we were fishing a lot and we caught Barracudas. Actually, I caught many Barracudas the size of myself it was so big, five feetlong. When I caught it was so hard for me to pull it out.

Q: It would make one be a little bit leery about swimming.

LIMBERT: Yeah and the swimming was good.

Q: Well for the Barracuda.

LIMBERT: No the Barracudas they are not dangerous they are not like sharks. No, Barracudas have the big teeth.

Q: I know that.

LIMBERT: Actually how many Barracudas I caught and we brought home and our cook cleaned it and the teeth John took them out and made a frame for me with a lure full of tooth marks that I caught the fish and he framed for my birthday. It was nice the Barracuda meat is very, very good.

Q: Did you all go swimming?

LIMBERT: We did swim but we had one swimming pool at the ambassador's residence that's all.

Q: Who is the ambassador?

LIMBERT: Ambassador during that time was Joe Saloom when we went there. He left in 1996 and then we had Tibor Nagy.

Q: We can always fill this in. Were there many Americans coming to visit? Coming back for their roots from Indiana say?

LIMBERT: Oh yes. Guineans yes they traveled a lot. Actually those who were in the States they could come back and forth.

Q: Did you have problems with Americans in trouble? Consular problems?

LIMBERT: Very few. We had Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: How did you find the Peace Corps there?

LIMBERT: They had a good group of Peace Corps and the director of Peace Corps was a very good friend. She wanted to visit some of the Peace Corps volunteers at their posts, and asked me to go with her. So we traveled together and we checked the Peace Corps volunteers how they lived, what they do, and what the Guinean government provided them for housing.

In one place we went I was not happy to see the way this Peace Corps volunteer lived. He was very young, a nice young man, and he was not very happy himself in that place. We went to his room and it was so filthy, dark, with cockroaches all over on the wall. I really got upset. I said, "We don't want him to stay here." The director of the Peace Corps didn't want him there either, and she asked me to say something when the prefect (local governor) invited us for lunch at his house. We went to his house, we saw he had Stalin's picture on the wall and had studied in Russia. A lot of Guineans had studied in Russia and they come back after that. He had studied in Russia. I don't know if had been there during Stalin's time. I doubt it. I saw that and thought oh my God, what can we expect from someone with Stalin's picture in his house? I asked him, "Why this Peace Corps volunteer doesn't have a good house?" He looked at me and thought who am I? The director of Peace Corps said, "This is Mrs. Limbert our consular officer and as soon as she said consular officer he woke up and realized he was talking to Embassy people, to officials. Then said, "Oh yes we will change and do this." I said, "No, we are taking him away from here you are not getting any more volunteers." He said, "We promise in a week we will change his place." I said, "In one week. After one week if he doesn't have a good house, a good place to live, we will take him out and you are not getting anymore." The director of Peace Corps after we came out said, "Parvaneh I'm glad you were with me and you said so. If I say something he doesn't listen and they don't do it." Then after a week they gave him a good place, housing which was cleaner and nicer."

We traveled a lot we went all the way to the North to the border of Algeria near what they called Western Sahara. Once from Conakry to Ivory Coast. John and the political officer drove and went to the Ivory Coast for the program; I and his wife flew directly to Abidjan. In Guinea we traveled a lot.

Q: What was the tribal pattern there? So many of these countries are sort of half and half; half Muslim and half either Animist or Missionary.

LIMBERT: Guineans are mostly Muslim but they are not type of fanatic type of Muslim. When we arrived on the street by the road you see the ladies naked sitting and washing themselves. It was really, really a backward country.

Q: Did we have much interest in the place I mean the United States?

LIMBERT: For bauxite.

Q: Bauxite.

LIMBERT: Bauxite and iron they had good iron and bauxite.

Q: Well you were there for what two years?

LIMBERT: Three, we were there three years and we came back in '97. From '97 to 2000 we came back to FSI again and John was in the department's senior.

Q: And what were you doing?

LIMBERT: I went back to program systems in SLS (School of Language Studies) and I was working there also. I didn't want to do more consular here and I went back to FSI. I preferred to be in FSI than do the consular work.

Q: How did you find FSI, the spirit of it?

LIMBERT: Very good, very good. FSI is a nice place to work. We both loved it John and I had been there before, in 1992-94. It is a nice place to work and the atmosphere is nice and people are nice and friendly. I was working in SLS on program systems and I was helping the teachers a lot and planning programs. The teachers all loved me and I have a good memory they had a good memory of me. Then from 1997-2000 I was there and John was in the senior seminar, at the United Nations, and in the Office of Counterterrorism. Then we went overseas in 2000 and John was assigned as ambassador in Mauritania.

Q: To where?

LIMBERT: Mauritania.

Q: Oh yes, now Mauritania is an interesting place could you talk about Mauritania?

LIMBERT: Mauritania is really a nice place it was easy at the beginning. People were like a Bedouin people they moved to the city and they still had the type of Bedouin life; they were very nice people. We traveled a lot because with John's job as ambassador he traveled every week to see the Peace Corps volunteers and check on projects. We had Peace Corps volunteers in Mauritania also and they had difficulties with the bad roads,

hard languages, and communication but they were not in danger. Perhaps later they had a hard time, but not while we were there.

But we were there and I went back to consular work. In Mauritania I did not work as a consular officer because John was ambassador there and I was the ambassador's wife. The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) told me, "We'll put you on leave but we'll need you as a consular rover when you go there. If we need you we give you assignment and you travel to different countries.

When we went to Mauritania that was interesting we started work there. The second month I was there the consular officer changed and they didn't have anyone there. From consular affairs they said, "We don't care if you are the ambassador's wife or not. We need you to work for us one month at the embassy and I did work one month at the embassy until the consular officer arrived and he replaced me. Then after that they said, "Okay." For two months I was in Mauritania I was ambassador's wife and two months consular officer in Benin; they gave me orders and I went to Benin. I came back and was here another two three months and then another two months I went to Ethiopia to Addis and I went another two months to Niger. I had an assignment to Cape Verde. In Cape Verde I went actually the first year also for two months and then the second year again I went as a consular rover to Cape Verde also two months. This was good and once John also came over for a visit.

Q: It's pretty isolated isn't it?

LIMBERT: It is isolated and a beautiful country and all those islands are beautiful and the people very, very nice. The Cape Verdean language is kind of Portuguese.

Q: They also have close ties to Rhode Island aren't they?

LIMBERT: Yes, they have close ties with Rhode Island because they were whalers originally. They came to the States as whalers and then they went to Rhode Island and they stayed there and made their homes there. A lot of Cape Verdeans are in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We used to get a lot of cables from Congressman Barney Frank in Cape Verde to help the Cape Verdeans when they wanted to get a visa. Some of them I had to refuse. There was, for example, an old man about 80 years old with a young lady. He came to get a visa for her. I said, "Why are you going to take her to the States?" He said, "I'm going to marry her and I am taking her to the States." I said, "What is your job? What do you have?" He said, "I have a bar and she is working for me and I am bringing my wife." I said, "Unfortunately, she is not qualified for that. You are going to use her and she is not going to the States." I refused her. I did not give a visa to that young lady with that man.

Q: I don't think I could bring a young girl; look I'm 88 now you'd probably refuse any young girl I would be taking.

LIMBERT: You don't bring her because you are consular officer; you know that. No, that was very difficult and there were lots of such cases. I'm sure you know how hard it is to recognize these people when you talk to them, when you interview them and then you read their face and what they say they are right, they are wrong you have to be a psychologist sometimes.

Q: And guests.

LIMBERT: And guests, yeah.

Q: It's very difficult, very difficult.

LIMBERT: It was interesting but I traveled a lot because in those days it was not difficult, it was safe for me to get on the plane and fly all the way to maybe another post like Paris and then go to Ethiopia.

Q: Were you concerned about flying African airlines?

LIMBERT: No, I wasn't afraid. That was so interesting for me and John was saying, "You're brave."

Q: Was there any problem with terrorists or that sort of thing?

LIMBERT: Yes. In Mauritania security was okay until the Iraq invasion beginning in the spring of 1993. The State Department asked John to go to Iraq for two months. It was John and some other ambassadors from different areas whom they collected and sent to Iraq; They "invited" them to go to Iraq. I was there and also we had a very good DCM and he took care of the embassy he was in charge and I didn't travel then because John was there and I didn't want to travel. The radio and newspaper always in Mauritania in French, in Arabic they mentioned that Ambassador John Limbert is in Iraq and went to Iraq and helping the U.S. government with the invasion. That was a little bit scary to put what kind of reaction into the people's minds in the country. Some they were pro, some they were against. I was so worried; John was there for two months to two and a half months. He came back and when he came back that was the summer of 2003 it was almost the end of our tour, fortunately. When you were there John came back and he said, "Here is so good, here is so quiet."

A week after he came back we were sleeping at night it was two o'clock in the morning suddenly we heard the guns and a tank and oh my God the bullets all over. I woke up and said, "John, oh my God the terrorists are after us." That was the only time I was afraid in Mauritania. I turned off all the lights and I said, "John go under the bed don't go by the window and I checked what was going on. I was afraid because the reaction in the country maybe the terrorists were after us because John is back. It was so dark and I went to the phone and I couldn't dial. I was looking for my glasses and John was looking for his glasses. I said, "John you don't get up I'm going to call the gate guard at the embassy compound." I called and said in French, "What is going on?" They said, "They attacked

the president's palace." The president's palace wall is exactly next to the embassy, most of those African countries the president's palace is next to the American embassy. I said, "John, you lie down they are attacking the president's palace, it is not for us, we are safe, let me call the other ambassadors. I called the Spanish ambassador and I told him that the president's palace was attacked and then I called the German ambassador they were close by the neighbors. The lady who was my friend and she was advisor to presidents and she was working in the president's office and she called me and said, "Parvaneh what is going on?" I said, "You are working for the president and what you are asking me what's going on? You find out yourself they are attacking your president's palace." She said, "Oh my God, I didn't know that." I said, "Yes, you know that." She didn't know but she was my friend and she called me asking me. I said, "No, your president's palace is under attack." Anyhow, in the morning we got out we made our dining room the office and then John called the State Department and we arranged the room. Everybody, the employees, they came, some they could get in the embassy but not all of them. The security officer's residence was on the other side of the palace and how he got to our house I don't know. He called and John said, "Get your wife and your kids and bring them to the embassy to our residence. The security officer after a couple of hours could get out in some way from the back and to our residence and brought his wife and his children. We put them there and gave them a room and they stayed with us for a few days until the coup was resolved. Anyhow, that was the tough part of Mauritania.

Q: Were the coup leaders successful?

LIMBERT: No. The president escaped from the back door of his palace and went to his own military unit and then they started working with his military unit with this group who attacked and fought him. The president himself took over and took control.

Q: What was Mauritania like because as a...

LIMBERT: It is hot, sometimes humid and sometimes dry but all desert, sand. There are beautiful sand dunes if you like sand dunes. We traveled we went to the north a little bit because John always wants when he goes to a country he wants to travel to see the country and people. He wants to be with people he wants to know what they are doing and that was very good. We traveled a lot.

Q: Was the Polisario Movement effective?

LIMBERT: Yes, the Polisario Movement was there and John was involved with that actually. We had a visitor who was working with the Polisario.

Q: Do you remember the name?

LIMBERT: I don't I forgot.

Q: Did you ride camels at all?

LIMBERT: Yes, they invited us to the provinces and we went and we rode the camels.

Q: And sleep out in tents and all?

LIMBERT: Yes in one city we slept in a tent because the tent was inside the wall and all around it was guards, they had lots of guards anywhere we went they really had guards and security the government because they felt responsible. There was not a problem but they thought it better to be safe. Usually the host country should be responsible.

Q: Well how about the foreign embassies the North Koreans were around there weren't there?

LIMBERT: The North Koreans they were not but there were Koreans there. The Chinese were there but no Iranians. By then they had good relations with the Israeli's, the Israeli ambassador was there, the Egyptians and actually the Egyptian ambassador, Israeli ambassador, French ambassador and John they were always playing tennis always in our compound. They played together. After we left I think they broke relations with the Israeli's and they opened relations with Iranians that was 2004.

Q: Were the Moroccans a presence?

LIMBERT: Yes. They had a good Moroccan ambassador there. We had a good visit and they had very nice Moroccan institute type beautiful building the nicest building with beautiful tiles and things. I started painting when I didn't do consular rover and I was there with the wives of the Spanish ambassador, the German ambassador and one French lady we sat and painted. Some local Lebanese wives and we really had a group started painting and we had the art show in that Moroccan institute, it was interesting. It was a beautiful institute with the tile work and we had our first art show there.

Q: Well you are quite an artist too aren't you?

LIMBERT: Pardon.

Q: You are quite an artist yourself?

LIMBERT: Yes.

Q: Tell me on these various times in Mauritania were you painting?

LIMBERT: Yes, yes I started painting there and I started I mentioned with the Spanish ambassador's wife and German and French and Lebanese lady. We started doing art ourselves and we then had a nice show and exhibition and I took a lot of pictures of Mauritania and I did art and painted from that. Some of them I still have. I said, "When I retire I do art work." That I prepared for myself for when I retired for the future, which is the best. Then in 2003 we came back to the States and then after I went and worked at the

passport agency. I didn't want to do anymore consular work and I went to passport office and I was working there full time.

Q: How did you find that?

LIMBERT: It was tough. When I work I'm a type of person and I like everything to be organized the files be nice and, of course, the passport agency was so busy and the director was a nice lady, everybody was nice but it was not organized. The files were hard to find and the file cabinet was a mess that was a little bit hard for me to work over there. Then in 2004 John and I went to Iraq on assignment.

Q: You went where?

LIMBERT: To Iraq and it was somewhere outside of Baghdad I had an assignment to work there and I worked there and John was working there too. We went there for two months.

Q: What was that like?

LIMBERT: That was tough the tent inside of military compound type with MREs, military food, water not good, hard to sleep in the tent and that was a little bit difficult. We did our duty very well and then we came back. When we came back I said, "John I'm going to work one more year and then I retire. I worked until 2005 and I retired after that.

Q: At age 65? How old were you then?

LIMBERT: I retired in 2004; yeah I was the age of 65.

Q: What were you doing just before you retired?

LIMBERT: I was in Iraq. I was working in the passport agency and then when they gave me an assignment to go to Iraq and I went for two months and came back and worked another year in the passport agency. Then I retired.

Q: What was the problem at the passport agency about getting things organized?

LIMBERT: It was not organized for me to; of course, it was a big, big...

Q: It's a huge operation.

LIMBERT: It's a huge operation.

Q: And the heavily loaded work load this was before the summer.

LIMBERT: Actually, I'll tell you my supervisor was not nice. He didn't like me from the beginning and I didn't like him from the beginning. Because I was consular officer, I was

different and he was different; that was the worst part of it. The other people were nice and at the end they gave a very nice retirement party for me when I left. Really they were so nice to me when I left. I left very happy, but I didn't want to work there anymore. I was really tired.

Q: What was John doing did he come back to Annapolis?

LIMBERT: No, John came back to the State Department in 2005 after AFSA.

Q: So after you left the passport agency what did you do? You retired?

LIMBERT: I retired in 2005. I said to my friends at the passport agency when they asked why I was retiring, "I don't want to work anymore and I want to retire." They said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "I am going to do art work." They said, "That's a job?" I said, "That's not a job. It's fun and relaxing. I'm doing something for myself." That really helped me a lot because I was really tired of doing...

Q: Well you need something that you enjoy doing to keep you going you are an active woman.

LIMBERT: Yes, after that and I said, "I can enjoy my life more. I have done my duty for my government."

Q: You certainly did.

LIMBERT: I did serve my government and my country. and I couldn't do any more than that.

Q: How did you feel during these later years about your Iranian connections? I mean this is your mother country and all sorts of things are happening there. Were you getting any particular feedback from people who had been there and all that?

LIMBERT: Of course, of course. We see some Iranians when they come to the U.S. for vacation or something. Those whom we know, they call and talk. I have a high school friend who comes to the U.S. and calls and talks. I also have a college friend who does the same. They come and visit me and they talk and tell me all about their life there and what is happening. But their point of view may be different from...

Q: Well of course I mean they are there. How do they see the future what are their thoughts?

LIMBERT: They have given up. They say, "We want to make a good life for ourselves. We don't care what our country is doing or with whom they are fighting. We are just too tired to care." People mostly they say that. They say they are tired of our situation that we want to make a life for ourselves. We don't care about the country. Regular people, they love the United States, they love Americans, and they can't do anything. We see some

Americans who go on a tour there and they come back and they say, “They love us they want to invite us to their home, they have regrets about what has happened and what those people did taking over the embassy”. They have regrets and are not happy.

But what can they do? They can't go fight with the government because they are under control and it is dangerous for them. They make their lives easier for themselves. They have parties and behind closed doors they drink, dance, and sing. They do anything they want. But if they can get out they go travel but unfortunately they are stuck with a government like this. But in the last few years we appreciated President Obama and his efforts. He always wanted to have peace with Iran; he wanted to have good relations especially with Secretary Kerry who is doing a great job. Still, the government is in control and I think they are afraid to have relations. They say if we have relations the U.S. will again get involved in our country.

Q: Do you get the feeling that it's still the city educated dwellers and the not so educated dwellers out in the countryside and the villages?

LIMBERT: Actually the people now they are much better educated than during the Shah's time. Regular people I mean not higher class. There was a strong educated middle class of professionals – doctors and engineers – under that Shah. Now the lower class families are much better educated. They are open now with the satellite dish, with the TV, computers, emails and all these. They are very open now they are more educated. If you watch some Persian programs, the young people – 17 and 18 years old -- speak beautifully about their country. They speak about what they are doing, what's happening, and what they want to have. They are more open and educated than before at that level. Villagers have moved into the towns and the people from the small towns have moved to Tehran, a bigger city. Everyone has one or two jobs to survive because of inflation. But we appreciate President Obama and Secretary Kerry. We appreciate their efforts and what they have done with the relations so far. President Obama, before he was elected, when he was Senator, said, “We should have open relations and do something about Iran's nuclear program” And he did.

Q: Well what have you done since retirement?

LIMBERT: Art work and travel. I traveled twice to France for the art work and I did art there. I've also traveled to Italy with a group of painters. We have now a very good gallery in Crystal City with about 40 artists. We do art work there we put on shows. It's a beautiful gallery for monthly receptions. We also have about 140 artists belonging to Arlington Artist Alliance. Once a month we have meetings to improve the arts and we have about 15 or 16 venues, where we show our work.

Q: Do you get a feeling I know my wife was a teacher in English as a Second Language, but she felt that at the high school level or even lower there really wasn't much in the way of teaching of art at the public schools.

LIMBERT: That's true.

Q: Do you have any ties to the schools?

LIMBERT: Not many here. Actually I did some art work when I was in high school. I think art is in my genes because I have one cousin who is a very famous artist in France. I think it was in my genes to do art. Always I wanted to do it.

Q: Oh yes I'm sure. When you say art what particular form?

LIMBERT: Painting, water colors and acrylic. I do abstract and now I do landscape, collages and I do anything I like; different things, which is good. I'm more busy now than I was as a consular officer.

Q: I'm sure you are.

LIMBERT: Also it is a big effort because it doesn't have much income but it keeps me busy doing something.

Q: And also you are making beauty.

LIMBERT: Yes.

Q: One can't discount this and it must give you great satisfaction.

LIMBERT: When I finish my one painting and I look at it I think oh my God I did that? It makes me so happy. When John goes anywhere for a talk or speech I am usually free to travel with him. Wherever we go I take pictures and I come home and I paint from those pictures.

Q: Well it is wonderful to have something to do. For example I do this and I have a great feeling of satisfaction I'm getting your impressions and all and we are doing this with thousands of people. One can keep going and as I said before I am 88 now but...

LIMBERT: That's great 88. This is great what you are doing especially listening to what people did in real life.

Q: We are getting and feeling we are doing a great benefit for historians in the future.

LIMBERT: Yes, thank you, and it's really FSI is so nice. I have a very good memory of working at FSI in here. It is the best place to work.

Q: The thing is the people who are involved in foreign affairs one thing and all are the cream of the cream, crème de la crème, and now is there anything else? What about your children having gone through all of this what are they up to these days?

LIMBERT: I'm so happy I am still in good shape and I can visit my children and grandchildren. I love to be with my grandchildren. Our daughter is an anthropologist and she has a doctorate in anthropology and teaches at Queens College. Actually she is now the chair of the department and her husband teaches Central European history, at Queens College also. They have two kids ten years and seven years (who is going to be eight in two weeks). The grandchildren are going to very good public schools in New York -- in Queens -- and they are happy with the children's schools. It is good they are in New York where we can go visit them they can come to Washington.

Our son works in Geneva. He has a Masters from Wharton and this Swiss oil trading company which got to know him through the company he had worked for and at conferences. to the Swiss company they asked him when he gets his Masters to go work with them. So he is working now in Geneva and he lives there with his Polish wife and two children, also ten and seven years old. We see them every six months. They come here or we go there.

As a matter of fact this past summer we had a very nice trip with all the children and grandchildren to Croatia. We talked and I said, "John, what should we do for our wedding anniversary this year because it is going to be our 50th anniversary?" John said, "What do you think we should do?" I said, "Let's get some place and take the children and grandchildren to spend a with them." We chartered a 100-foot motor-sailer (called a "gulet") in Croatia and we went to Geneva and stayed with our son and his kids for four days and together we flew to Croatia and our daughter, her husband, and her kids came from New York. There were ten of us. We boarded the gulet from Dubrovnik and sailed up the Dalmatian coast to Split. We visited five islands and slept on the gulet; It was a beautiful trip for our children and grandchildren for a week. We all had a great time. Until we can do it we should enjoy ourselves and our children and our grandchildren. John is still teaching at the Naval Academy two days and he goes there three days a week. He is free the rest of the week. He also gives lectures at different places and we just came back from Salt Lake City Utah, where we were invited by the University. John gave a speech and I love being free to travel. At the same time I am so busy with art.

Q: Incidentally you might tell your daughter the anthropologist that if she is interested in studying a tribe she can study the Foreign Service as a tribe because with our oral histories we talk also a lot about the beginnings. We've got the profession covered very much, a couple thousand oral histories and it is all on the internet.

LIMBERT: Actually John has told her about to read some. Her PhD was about Oman and she went there and she researched and lived there for a year and a half in a small town of Bahla with an Omani family; lovely people. We went there while we were in Conakry. We went for a of couple weeks and visited her and saw how she was living with this family and doing her research. Her book called "In the Time of Oil" was published by Stanford University and it turns out the Omanis love her book. That's a good thing. She should read the oral histories and see about our tribes.

Q: I have to close this and I want to say how this will work. We will send you a transcript, it's been transcribed all along but it's a rough transcript and so I hope you will edit it...

LIMBERT: I know lots of things I forgot to add in.

Q: If there are things you didn't put in and felt that you didn't talk enough about this and want to have another session I am happy to. We want to get this in and then after you have edited it and all we will put it in final form and give it to the Library of Congress but mainly on our website. Our website averages about 70,000 hits a month from all over the world. The word will get out. Anyway, I want to thank you very much.

LIMBERT: Of course, thanks so much.

Q: I really enjoyed this.

LIMBERT: It was useful.

Q: It was fun.

End of interview