



Ambassador (ret.) John W. Limbert

Retiree Representative



John Limbert is Class of 1955 Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the U.S. Naval Academy. During a 34-year career in the Foreign Service, he served mostly in the Middle East and Islamic Africa, including tours in Algiers, Tehran, Dubai, Conakry, Djibouti, and Khartoum. He was ambassador to Mauritania (2000-03) and president of the American Foreign Service Association (2003-05). He also served two tours in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. He retired from the post of Dean of the FSI language school in 2006. In 2009-2010, while on leave of absence from the Naval Academy, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Department's Bureau of Near East Affairs. From 2010-2015, he served as chairperson of AFSA's Awards and Plaques Committee. His foreign languages are Arabic, French, and Persian.

John Limbert is a native of Washington D.C. He earned his Ph.D. from Harvard University in History and Middle Eastern Studies. Before joining the Foreign Service he taught in Iran as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kurdistan Province (1964-66) and as an instructor at Shiraz University (1969-72). He has written numerous articles and books on Middle Eastern subjects including *Iran at War with History* (Westview Press, 1987), *Shiraz in the Age of Hafez* (University of Washington Press, 2004), and *Negotiating with Iran Wrestling the Ghosts of History* (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2009).

John Limbert holds the Department of State's highest award – the Distinguished Service Award – and the department's Award for Valor, which he received in 1981 after fourteen months as a hostage in Iran. He is married to the former Parvaneh Tabibzadeh and has two children and four grandchildren.