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When we come back, we'll get some different views on the issues we've raised as we talk live with Adm. Bobby Inman, former deputy director of the CIA, and with Time magazine diplomatic correspondent Strobe Talbott, who's written a highly acclaimed book about the Reagan administration and arms control.

KOPPEL: Joining us live now from our affiliate KVUE in Austin, Texas, Adm. Bobby Inman, former deputy director of the CIA and an expert on so-called 'Star Wars' antimissile technology. And in our Washington bureau, Strobe Talbott, whom I knew from a different incarnation as diplomatic correspondent for Time magazine. He is now their Washington bureau chief. More to the point,
he is author of 'Deadly Gambits,' the definitive book on arms control negotiations. Adm. Inman, let me begin with you. Let me try analyzing, which I
used to do years ago, what our Soviet friend said from Canada a moment ago. I interpret that as being if things go badly, then that's the way the United States wanted it to be in the first place. If we wanted it to go well, it is within our power to do that. ADM. BOBBY INMAN (former deputy CIA director): You're exactly on target. One other correction I would make. In sort of letting the U.S. always be the one who moves out to new areas for new weapons, Soviets are the ones with the operational antisatellite system. The U.S. does not have an operational one.

KOPPEL: Why do you think the Soviet Union initiated or agreed to come to those talks? INMAN: The Soviets painted themselves into a corner with the propaganda
campaign they had going in Western Europe to block the deployment of the cruise missile and the Pershing. When the shoot-down of the Korean airliner caused that whole effort to collapse, they didn't have an easy retreat. But they're practical people. They believe there is a genuine prospect that the strategic defense initiative would work, and I believe that concern, that fear is the primary factor in the initiative that they've now started for a new round of talks.

KOPPEL: Strobe Talbott, let me ask you. Does it really matter whether it will work or not work as long as the Soviets believe that it might? STROBE TALBOTT (arms control expert): Well, I think that's... Your, your question suggests a good point. The very danger that it might work, that is, an American strategic defense initiative might work, obviously casts a whole pall of uncertaintly over
their own military planning. And also, Ted, they have to worry a great deal whenever the United States moves into a whole new area of military technology. Perhaps 'Star Wars' might be disappointing to those who hope that it'll give us an inpenetrable defense of our populations. But who knows what other military benefits it might give to the United States that the Soviets would then have to contend with? They are very frightened of American technology, and 'Star Wars' is a kind of apotheosis of that, and therefore terribly worrisome to them.

KOPPEL: All right. If you were responding to Alexander Podakin, and, indeed, there's no reason why he can't jump in right now, and he has said to us it is really in American hands to make this thing go well beyond the kind of limited goals that, that I sketched out earlier, you would say what? Was the question so vague, Strobe? It was to you. TALBOTT: Sorry. I wasn't sure it was to me,
Ted.

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KOPPEL: It is. TALBOTT: Yeah, I think that there is certainly an opportunity there for, for these talks to lead to very significant reductions in offensive weaponry, which is one of the possibilities.

KOPPEL: What would the United States have to do, foreswear 'Star Wars'? TALBOTT: Well, perhaps... It's not about to do that, so that's, that question really doesn't arise in the context of the talks that are going on now. The Reagan administration has made absolutely clear that 'Star Wars,' in the words of Robert MacFarlane, the president's national security adviser, is not a bargaining chip. However, down the road, as it becomes a little clearer what the United States really has in mind when it's talking about the strategic defense inititiative, if it becomes apparent, for example, that what we have in mind is some kind of more limited plan to defend our strategic offensive weapons, then it might be possible to have some kind of trade off back and forth
between offense and defense. Now, it's not at all certain, of course, that the Soviets will sign on to that. Nor is it certain that that's what the administration will eventually come to.

KOPPEL: Mr. Podakin, let me just be absolutely clear that I understand your position and how it reflects the Soviet position. In order for these talks to be successful, in order for them to move on to a really useful next stage, is it
possible for the Soviet Union to anything constructive right away, or must the first step, from your point of view, come from the Soviet, ah, come from the United States? PODAKIN: Well, I wouldn't be able to tell you right away who is
supposed to make the first step. The first step has been done, as far as we are
concerned.

KOPPEL: And that is what? PODAKIN: That is the beginning of talks. This is the first, major step, and if the next step is done in the direction of limiting
the arms stockpiles, of curbing the arms race, of preventing it from going into new areas, that would be the positive development we are looking for, and that is exactly the whole idea behind the talks. Other than that, we didn't have other goals of going for the talks. The talks were called exactly to minimize the threat of the war, to stop the new technology, destructive, nuclear whatever, sophisticated technology going into space and so on. And if the two sides would be able to find some common grounds in this particular framework, there is a good chance that we might see a better world weeks from now or months
from now.

KOPPEL: Adm. Inman, if that is indeed the framework, how do you, how do you rate the chances then? If it requires that at some point or another the United States indicate a willingness to step back from, from research into, into strategic defense initiative, is it realistic? INMAN: Standardly, we've not agreed to cut off research in arms control agreements. We've not gone forward with deployments or hopefully reduced forces. (sic) My understanding, sitting down here in my quiet Southwestern part of the U.S., is that what we're expecting to see out of Geneva is the framework for talks that are gonna run for

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one, two, maybe three years before we see an actual agreement. It seems to me that the question really is are we going to have several different negotiations going on at the same time, or will we try to do it all in one major package? The U.S. has six to eight years of research before we really are in the position
to make any kind of judgments on deployment of the strategic defense intiative.

KOPPEL: If that is so, Adm. Inman, then clearly we would not be in a position... I mean, if you're saying the research is gonna go on anyway, then, then how can you negotiate something away the research--I'm gonna say this badly--for which the research hasn't yet even been done? INMAN: You would... What you will actually negotiate away is the decision to deploy, and with the ABM treaty... We did not actually cut off research in the ABM area. We made a decision not to proceed to deploy, and frankly I think the Soviets would settle for that. They'd be happy if we didn't do the research. They worry about its outcome. But what they're out for here is to get a treaty that would preclude the deployment of the strategic defense initiative.

KOPPEL: Gentlemen, it is almost impossible to try to discuss in the space of 20
minutes or so what will take months, maybe years, to negotiate, but I'm very grateful to the three of you for joining us this evening. Thank you. I'll be back in a moment.

KOPPEL: Tomorrow on World News Tonight, Peter Jennings will again anchor from Geneva with full coverage of the second day of the U.S.-Soviet talks on the issue of arms control negotiations. That's our report for tonight. I'm Ted Koppel in Washington. For all of us here at ABC News, good night.