Orbiting "Earth-Safe" Atomic Explosives for Defense Against Asteroids

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High Earth orbit is the best place to put a system of missiles carrying atomic explosives for destroying or deflecting incoming Asteroids or Comets. Ideally, two groups of these devices would be in both equatorial and polar orbits. From these two orbits, they can be launched in nearly any direction in less than 48 hours. To launch a response from the Earth's surface could take weeks or months.

Current designs for atomic weapons require the use of chemical explosives to initiate and enclose the preliminary chain reaction. Instead of explosives, the design for atomic explosives that would defend Earth would use the speed differential between an incoming Asteroid or Comet and the device. The device would use the speed differential or impact energy to assemble and detonate the device. The devices relatively fragile construction would not permit it to enter the Earth's atmosphere intact.

There are currently international treaties that wisely bar the orbiting of atomic weapons. Negotiations can be begun that would permit the orbiting of these "Earth-Safe" nuclear devices. Before launch, they would be inspected to verify that they lack chemical explosives and are incapable of being used against the Earth in an EMP, air-blast, or ground impact mode. In this article, I give a plausible example of an atomic explosive that is physically incapable of attacking targets on the Earth's surface.