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CLOSED FOR OPERATIONS: NON-INTERFERENCE ZONES AND THE CADENCE OF THE NEW  
SPACE RACE

**Abstract**

This paper will explore the concept of non-interference zones for space activities and how this concept produces an inevitable constraint on policy and decision makers planning future space activities. Generally, non-interference zones are volumes of space around spacecraft and/or space activities determined by a set of criteria that creates a location or relative position of exclusivity for the operator. The murky question of whether this idea is in accordance with the outer space treaty system and/or US law and policy is gaining some clarity. And while the legal considerations are important, the realities of physics and mathematics place a limitation on the flexibility of the criteria for non-interference zones to handle the proliferation of new operators and activities, and this raises the important question about the degree of exclusivity that is permissible and expected. This issue will have major implications for future mission and architectural designs and set the development cadence of space settlement on a celestial body. Adjusting to the space environment will be key to ensure successful operations on the Moon or other celestial bodies, but the physical limitations of the space environment highlight the need to keep discussions surrounding the cadence of this new space race ongoing because, eventually, we will run out of space.