

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space for All: Decolonial Practices in Space (2)

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ARE SAFETY ZONES THE COMMENCEMENT OF COLONIZATION OR SPHERES OF
INFLUENCE IN SPACE?**Abstract**

Some space faring nations are advancing “safety zones” as a concept to avoid or mitigate harmful interference with lunar activities. This is not necessarily a new concept as terrestrial powers have previously used related concepts to create “spheres of influence” for economic and political purposes and to prevent “harmful interference” with their terrestrial activities. Examples include the: 1) Treaty of Tordesillas executed in 1494 in which Spain and Portugal allocated the “New World” between themselves, 2) the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 also known as the Congo Conference in which European powers agreed to “regulate” Africa among themselves during what is known as the “New Imperialism Period,” and more recently, 3) the 1945 Yalta Conference which created spheres of influence following conclusion of World War II. When considered in the historical context, the implementation of safety zones may inadvertently be the commencement of exporting colonization or “spheres of influence” into outer space.

This paper will analyze the safety zones concept in light of terrestrial history and the Outer Space Treaty. It will also discuss what parameters, if any, may be necessary to ensure that the safety zone concept does not, intentionally or unintentionally, mutate into a form of colonization or spheres of influence in the space domain.