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Yemen Envoy Says Saudis, UAE Inclined to Divide Yemen

Yemen's Ambassador to UNESCO Ahmad al-Sayyad has [given an interview to Al-Jazeera](#) in which he accused Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates of having a “hidden inclination to divide Yemen” in the future.



UAE forces on Socotra

The comments come amid growing concerns from the Hadi government, which is theoretically backed by Saudi Arabia and to a lesser extent by the UAE. Officials have expressed growing concern about the UAE for seizing airports and seaports, as well as briefly taking over the island of Socotra.

The UAE has downplayed these incidents, but has been openly backing secessionist groups in southern Yemen. They are also known to have ambitions to be a regional power,

particularly in the Gulf of Aden, which would be helped by them securing some permanent bases in southern Yemen.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, seems primarily interested in the defeat of the Shi'ite Houthi movement in northern Yemen, and of ensuring that there is no Shi'ite presence along their disputed border with Yemen. Though the Saudis nominally support the Hadi government, it is mostly as a way of justifying intervention in Yemen, and they've also felt totally comfortable keeping Hadi under a state of house arrest for months on end.