

Tehran plays down suspected Israeli attack, signals no retaliation

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TEHRAN:

Explosions echoed over an Iranian city on Friday in what sources described as a suspected Israeli attack, but Tehran played down the incident and indicated it had no plans for retaliation – a response that appeared gauged towards averting region-wide war. The limited scale of the attack and Iran’s muted response both appeared to signal a successful effort by diplomats who have been working round the clock to avert all-out war since an Iranian drone and missile attack on Israel last Saturday. Iranian media and officials described a small number of explosions, which they said resulted from Iran’s air defences hitting three drones over the city of Isfahan. Notably, they referred to the incident as an attack by “infiltrators”, rather than by Israel, obviating the need for retaliation. An Iranian official told Reuters.

there were no plans to respond against Israel for the incident. “The foreign source of the incident has not been confirmed. We have not received any external attack, and the discussion leans more towards infiltration than attack,” the official said. Israel said nothing about the incident. It had said for days it was planning to retaliate against Iran for Saturday’s strikes, the first-ever direct attack on Israel by Iran. Countries around the world called on Friday for both sides to avert further escalation. China said that it will “continue to play a constructive role to de-escalate” tensions in the Middle East.