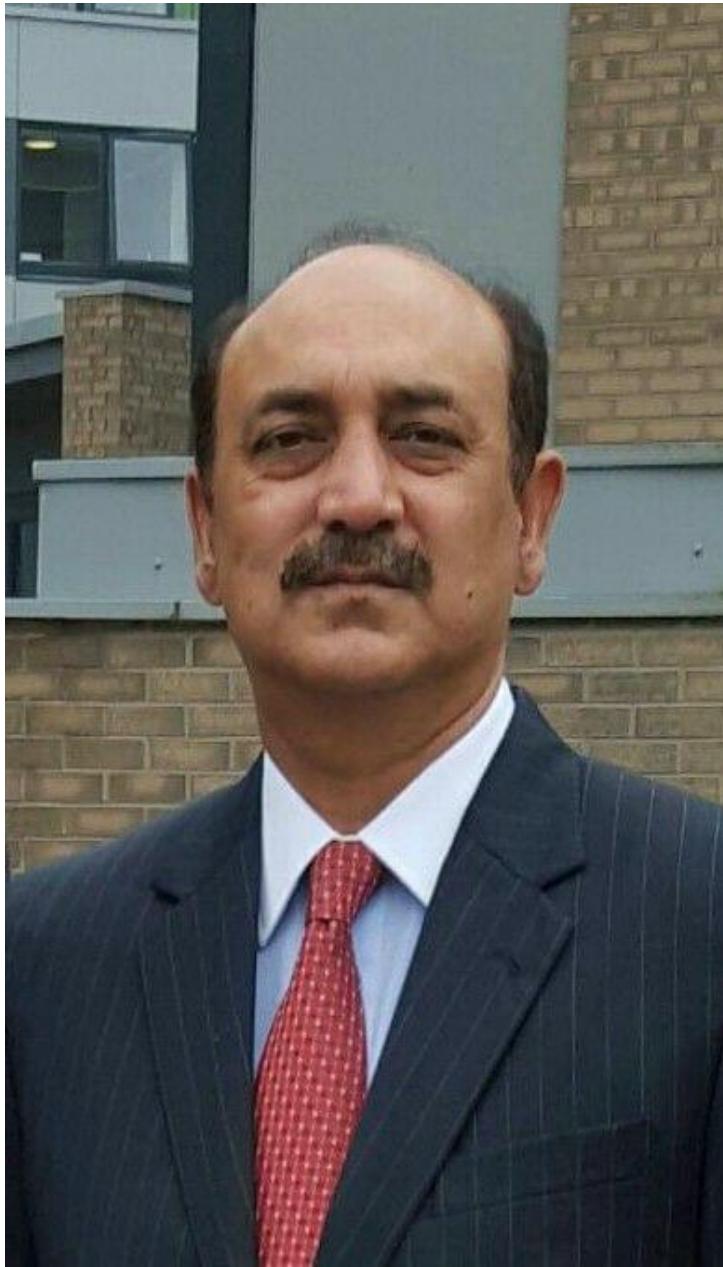


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## Between Thriller and Propaganda



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These days, a “Dhurandhar” film is being screened in Indian cinemas and on the international circuit that is based on Pakistan’s internal affairs.

Here’s a review of the Indian movie Dhurandhar from a Pakistani perspective, keeping it balanced and analytical rather than emotional or partisan.

Dhurandhar has positioned itself as a high octane espionage thriller, drawing heavily from the familiar India and Pakistan intelligence rivalry. From a Pakistani viewer’s standpoint, the film feels less like a neutral spy drama and more like a dramatized patriotic narrative influenced by contemporary political themes in India.

The film presents Pakistan in a largely one-dimensional manner, where characters connected to its institutions are often depicted as hostile or morally questionable, without meaningful attempts to humanize them or explain their actions beyond antagonism toward India.

For Pakistani viewers, this approach reinforces a familiar Bollywood pattern in which Pakistan serves primarily as a narrative tool rather than a fully realized country with social complexity, internal discourse, or civilian viewpoints. From this perspective, Dhurandhar exhibits a noticeable narrative imbalance: Indian intelligence officials are consistently portrayed as principled, strategic, and morally upright, while ethical grey areas, such as covert operations,

cross border interventions, and their impact on civilians—receive little scrutiny. Pakistan, meanwhile, is seldom shown reacting to Indian initiatives and is instead cast as the constant provocateur.

This approach may appeal to domestic audiences in India, but for Pakistani viewers it comes across as more propagandistic than grounded in realism.

From a Pakistani perspective, Dhurandhar is most disappointing in its lack of nuance. A more layered narrative, one that included civilian experiences, competing national interests, or shared regional consequences that could have transformed the film from overt nationalism into genuinely impactful cinema.

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