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- The war in Kosovo featured three discrete sides, each with its own objectives: (1) Belgrade sought to defend its sovereignty and the status quo, (2) Kosovo Albanians sought independence by posing as victims of Serbian oppression, (3) the West sought to insert troops in Kosovo in order to forestall what it saw as an impending resort to ethnic cleansing
- The West was determined to introduce NATO forces into Kosovo, preferably by a negotiated agreement, but by force, if necessary
- Without the NATO intervention, the fighting would have continued indefinitely, with VJ winning conventional encounters, but failing to wipe out the KLA or its claim to popular support.
- There is not a consensus within the team about the legal basis for NATO intervention. This is not unexpected, given the current flux in defining international humanitarian law and each NATO member state's own legal interpretation. What is clear is that each concluded for one reason or another that intervention was justified and, at the very least, not unlawful.
- NATO considered international law in conducting operations, although there may still be questions about the use of cluster munitions, which have not yet been fully addressed
- By contrast, Belgrade's military, special police, and paramilitary forces intentionally committed a substantial number of war crimes in the process of expelling a UNHCR-estimated 1.3 million civilians from their homes. A relatively small number of ethnic Serb and Albanian Kosovars fled NATO bombs.
- At Rambouillet, NATO presented a plan for ending hostilities in Kosovo, which would be safeguarded by its forces. Once the Albanian leadership had accepted it, NATO's proposal essentially became an ultimatum to Belgrade, which called its bluff by refusing to negotiate substantive issues. In sticking to their respective positions, both sides incorrectly assumed a brief conflict.