

Beat: Politics

IN SPAIN ETA ACTIVISTS ACCUSED OF PLANNING A MISSILE ATTACK ON A PLANE

ACCUSED OF-ATTEMPTED TERRORIST KILLINGS-

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USPA NEWS - Four suspected members of the Basque separatist organisation ETA went on trial in Spain Wednesday accused of planning a missile attack on a plane carrying then prime minister Jose Maria Aznar in 2001....

Four suspected members of the Basque separatist organisation ETA went on trial in Spain Wednesday accused of planning a missile attack on a plane carrying then prime minister Jose Maria Aznar in 2001.

The four face prison terms of up to 72 years each if convicted of the charges that include 'attempted terrorist killings' and 'belonging to an armed organisation', at Madrid's National Court which handles terrorism cases.

ETA is blamed for more than 800 killings in its campaign of bombings and shootings to create an independent Basque homeland in northern Spain and southwestern France.

In October, 2011 it declared a 'definitive end to armed activity'. But it has refused to formally disband or disarm and police say about 20 members are still active.

The four, now aged between 55 and 61, are accused of plotting three attacks against a plane carrying Aznar in the northern Basque Country before regional elections.

The four had planned to shoot down Aznar's plane on April 29, 2001 when he was launching an electoral campaign in the Basque city of Bilbao.

Two other attempts were made on May 4 and 11, 2001, according to the charges, before they decided the missile launchers were defective.

He survived an ETA car bombing in Madrid in 1995 when he was leader of the opposition. The car's armour plating protected him but one woman was killed and another 15 people were wounded.

A trial of 35 members of Basque separatist parties including Batasuna, ETA's banned political wing, began on December 3. The defendants are accused of carrying out political activities to back ETA.

Source : AFP

What is ETA (BBC oct. 2011)

'For four decades, the armed organisation Eta has waged a bloody campaign for independence for the seven regions in northern Spain and south-west France that Basque separatists claim as their own....Euskadi Ta Azkatasuna, Eta, whose name stands for Basque Homeland and Freedom, first emerged in the 1960s as a student resistance movement bitterly opposed to General Franco's repressive military dictatorship....'

Ruby BIRD

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