

# Israeli Fires and Irish Skirmishers

by A.J. Caschetta

The [arrests](#) of dozens of suspects have inspired pundits to speculate about “[argued](#) were the result of an act of “pyroterrorism,” exacerbated when three fires combined into one and burned for weeks.

After the Australian fire, Daniel Pipes began [Arson Intifada](#)” was conceived in the late nineteenth century by Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa (1831-1915). Rossa, a founder of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (a forerunner to the Irish Republican Army), went into exile in New York City after being released as part of the [excerpted](#) in the paper’s subsequent disavowal), Rossa introduced the concept of hit-and-run arson attacks by what he called “skirmishers” – clandestine attackers, masquerading as civilians.

A “small and resolute band of men, say ten or a dozen” could terrorize England on a night when “the wind was blowing strong,” he maintained. “In two hours from the word of command, London would be in flames, shooting up to the heavens in 50 different places.” This initial conflagration of fires would surely overwhelm and distract London’s response teams. “Whilst this would be going on, the men could be still at work. The blazing spectacle would attract all eyes and leave the skirmishers to operate with impunity in the darkness.”

Rossa called for skirmishers to work with “each man setting about his allotted task, and no man, save the captain of the band alone, knowing what any other man was to do,” anticipating the modern practice of horizontal cell-based terrorist groups.

He understood that Irishmen had a critical advantage over

other enemies England faced. "Spaniards in the days of the Invincible Armada, and Zulus today, could not do what English-speaking Irishmen can accomplish...our Irish skirmishers would be well-disguised."

Like the skirmishers, the Palestinian terrorists "from long residence in the enemy's country know [its] cities well," operate in cells, and have learned to multiply the confusion and chaos of their attacks by hitting multiple targets simultaneously or by staging multiple bombs on a single target. A premeditated arson campaign suggests a further crystallization of these lessons.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has