

Study: Napoleon duped the British

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A British academic has found evidence Napoleon duped the British by planting false intelligence concerning Copenhagen, Denmark.

Thomas Munch-Petersen of University College London said Napoleon started a rumor that France was mobilizing its navy to conquer Ireland in a two-step attack, including seizing the Danish navy and using it to help attack Ireland. That false report resulted in the British terror bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807.

The attack itself is a historic landmark -- the first deployment of terror tactics on civilians to cause a nation's surrender and also the first example of rockets being used in Europe.

"The attack's largely been forgotten, and even brushed under the carpet by the British," said Munch-Petersen. "I think it's important that we put it back on the map again. It has definite relevance to readers today and people will see the parallels with the intelligence that led Britain to war in Iraq. That too was a pre-emptive attack that was founded on shaky intelligence and the credulity of politicians."

The finding, published as part of the bicentenary of the bombardment of Copenhagen, appears Munch-Petersen's book "Defying Napoleon."

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