

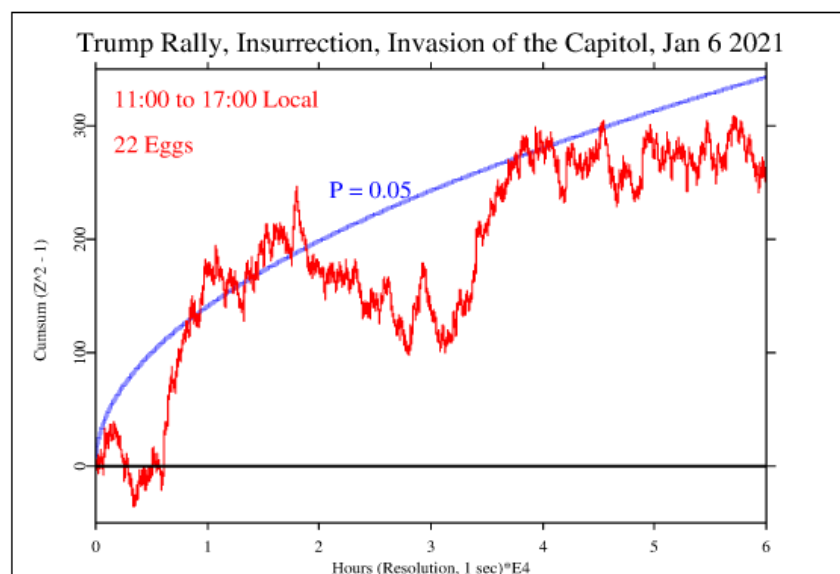
## GCP Response to Attack on US Capitol

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### Rally and riot

On January 6 2021, both houses of the United States Congress were in joint session to receive the votes of Presidential Electors from the 50 States. That morning, large numbers of people from across the country gathered in a rally to hear President Trump speak at about 11:00. The crowd heard him encourage them to march on the Capitol to support certain members of Congress who were going to oppose the acceptance of votes from “swing states” that had chosen Biden as the winner. The crowd did march on the Capitol and became a rioting mob which overwhelmed the police presence. They breached barriers and broke through doors and windows to enter the Capitol building, occupying the chambers and ransacking offices until police reinforcements took control two hours later.

For me and for most citizens this was shocking and saddening; it was barely believable. As Michael Steel, the former Republican National Committee chairman put it, "Did that really just happen?" Many people, not only in the US but around the world shared the emotions. I set up an analysis of GCP data collected during these events, which I posted on the GCP Facebook page with a description, including my observation that during the rally, President Trump incited his followers to take action and march on the Capitol. Thousands did so and they became a mob that violently invaded the Capitol, forcing the evacuation or sequestering of the Vice President and members of the Senate and House. I watched this desecration of symbols of democracy by citizens of this country with tears and deep sadness. I saw the disastrous effect of months and years of propaganda designed to support fascistic notions opposed to democracy. I think the data from the GCP network were pushed away from their normal random behavior in trends that reflect our shared emotional reaction to this historical moment. Here is a picture of the GCP data during a 6-hour period beginning with the Trump rally.



This trace may reflect the powerful engagement of people in the US and around the world, though such graphs always show a combination of noise and possible signal. The data from the GCP instrument have a small ratio of signal to noise, so interpretation is necessarily uncertain and we have to accept

that an apparent effect – a departure from the expected level trace – might be actually random variation. But in the context of 20 years of such research, the picture does suggest a mass consciousness reacting to the shock of seeing a mob threaten the central institution of the world's oldest representative democracy.

### **Reflection on the news**

Since January 6, I have been watching news and thinking about how this tragic but deeply evocative social and political disaster could have happened. It certainly demands reflection and efforts to understand the implications. I have no scientific data to help with such questions, and it isn't an area where my expertise provides answers, though any insights I may have are shaped by my long years watching the world through the lens of the Global Consciousness Project – and even more by my conviction that there is an unconscious connection that unites the peoples of this planet. I like to imagine and hope that we are at the rough beginning of a steep climb out of insularity and opposition into a world of shared intention and cooperation, the first glimmerings of a true global consciousness.

But first we have to see where we are. There is a disinformation virus that is infecting the populace. The propagation rate has been higher in the last few years, and continues to be so high we can virtually watch the new memes hatching, then fledging, ready to fly as part of the multidimensional sketch of the way things are. We now must ask of news and especially social media threads what is real vs what is invented but taken up in many minds as a fantasy infection. Such a virus spreads easily in crowds, especially focused crowds with attitudes and energy. We had on January 6th an invitation to a rally by and for President Trump, to coincide with the joint session of Congress meeting to finalize Joe Biden's win, and it turned into a march on the Capitol. The disinformation virus claiming the election was stolen, that it was fraudulent, was starkly present. As a result, the rally became a rioting mob who marched up the steps and forced their way into the building where our congress was at work. The house and senate members were required to shelter in place, then evacuate while the mob of Trump supporters turned insurrectionists invaded. It was a moment of infamy, broadcast around the world from the center of American democracy.