The Daily Time

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UNPRECEDENTED WET-BULB CATASTROPHE SENDS THE ENTIRE REGION DARK

Millions Dead in Gulf Heatwave

BAGHDAD – Across a wide swath of the Middle East, scorching temperatures were already damaging harvests and causing heat stroke and brown-outs. Overnight, everything changed when the wet-bulb temperature rose from 86°F to 118°F, twenty-three degrees past the threshold of human survivability.

Compounding the danger, energy blackouts spread throughout the region as hundreds of millions sought refuge in the safety of air-con, overwhelming grids and sending people back out into the streets to find shade wherever they could.

Today, hundreds of millions are feared dead across the region, in a disaster that has seemingly decapitated national and regional governments across the Middle East, leaving a power vacuum some experts claim will be exploited by decentralised fundamentalists.

US President Lawrence G. Lockwood issued a short statement on Minds, saying, "I'm holding the entire region in my hopes and prayers."

According to sources at the White House, Lockwood convened the joint chiefs in the situation room for much of the day, ultimately deciding against an aid package, with no obvious governing bodies to agree humanitarian relief with and a concern it could be seen as invasion in an area already knocked to its knees.

Meteorologist Dr Kami Gujrathi told The Daily Time the rise had been unexpected and was so far unexplained. "This is something of a freak event."

"The word 'unprecedented' has already been used a lot today, after several decades filled with that word," said Dr Gujrathi. "My colleagues are starting to call this the tabkhir, from the Arabic for 'steaming'. That's what has happened here. People think of heatwaves as dry, hot heat, but in this case, it was the water that killed people."

EDITORIAL P17: CATASTROPHE WILL INCREASE CALLS FOR CLIMATE PROTECTORSHIP

PROFILE

THE MAN WHO WON'T LET IT BURN

ELODIE KERN · FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE COLUMBIA REVIEW, NOV 2049

Marcus Tully doesn't like being called brave.

He'll wince a little if you say it, then wave it away with some remark about "just doing the job." But ask anyone who works with him—at his office-slash-apartment hybrid on Pudding Lane—and you'll get variations on the same theme: Tully doesn't blink. Not when the stories get dangerous. Not when they get personal. Not even when his own name starts trending, usually for the wrong reasons.

"I'm not trying to be followed," he said in a live interview on Minds earlier this year. "My readers don't follow me. They follow the work."

The work, for Tully, has lately included the fall of French finance minister Gabriel Dupont, the exposure of a Neuro-Reality brothel used for coercing political candidates, and a forensic report that linked a climate lobbyist's yacht party to the mysterious vanishing of a river-cleaning contract in Uganda. His newsroom is small, funded entirely by microtransactions and subscriber tips on Minds. His team sleeps in the same building they work from.

"It's not glamorous," says Lottie Shock, his subeditor. "It's not exactly comfortable. But it's righteous. Marcus makes sure of that."

> *"He doesn't care about being first. He cares about being right."*

He doesn't have security. He doesn't have legal cover, beyond what his partner Juan Bolivar can conjure from two decades of legal footwork and a bottle of decent rum. What he does have is reach. His exposé on the Louvre corruption scheme cracked two hundred million views in its first six hours. A week later, his report on modern climate refugee slavery put him on the cover of the South China Review. He refused to sit for the portrait.

"He's what we all wanted to be when we were idealistic twenty-somethings," says Fahrenthold Jr. "Except he's still doing it."

Ask Tully about his process and you'll get something simple. "Grunt work," he said. "Like a copper walking the beat. Everything's out there, if you're patient. If you look twice."

"He doesn't care about being first," says Randall Morrow, his tech lead. "He cares about being right."

With the Global Protectorship race heating up, and Solomon now a viable candidate, Tully's name has been mentioned as "someone who'll get the real story, when it breaks." He's been quiet on Solomon so far. Too quiet, perhaps.

"He's watching," says Bolivar. "He always watches."

WIRE · ATHENS

Global Election Narrows to Two: Lockwood vs. Solomon

ATHENS, JULY 1, 2050 · COMPILED FROM WIRE REPORTS

The race for global protector—the position granted sweeping powers to combat the climate crisis—narrowed unexpectedly today as Amare Abara, former UN Secretary-General and chair of the Athens Convention, announced the final two candidates advancing to the global vote: former U.S. President Lawrence G. Lockwood and the artificial intellect known as Governor Solomon.

“We’ve unexpectedly narrowed the pool of candidates from twenty to a final two,” he said, “either of which could win a majority against any of the other candidates. They’ll progress to the global popular vote on the eighteenth of August.”

Lockwood, a two-term U.S. president nominated by the Japanese delegation, is widely seen as a stabilizing figure with strong ties to both Western and Eastern blocs. He is widely expected to pivot to a “humanity in human hands” message with the hiring of his former Chief of Staff and recent Mayor of Houston, Jeff Kehoe, as his new campaign chief.

Solomon, nominated by the Swedish delegation, is the first artificial entity to appear on a global ballot. Originally developed to govern the Floating States—a network of autonomous, AI-managed sea-cities—Solomon has attracted both fervent supporters and fierce critics. Its platform centres on data-first decision making, emissions automation, and algorithmic reform of borders and security.

The Global Protectorship, a mandate created under the Second Treaty of Rome, is designed to bypass gridlocked international assemblies and empower a single leader (or system) to enact immediate, binding climate policy. The position grants sweeping authority over governance, military, emissions, and land use rights until reversal is reached. Candidates are mandated to then hand back power to the nation states.

“This is a turning point,” said Abara. “And a test—not just of our politics, but of our imagination.”

CANDIDATE BRIEFING

WHO IS LOCKWOOD?

A SNAPSHOT OF THE MAN AIMING TO KEEP THE FUTURE HUMAN

Name: Lawrence G. Lockwood · Age: 67 · Nominated by: Japan

Former roles: 49th President of the United States (2032–2040); United States Senator from Texas.

Legacy: Lockwood presided over an era of unprecedented American self-reliance, securing the nation's borders, economy, and technological supremacy while withdrawing from global entanglements. He remains best known for four signature initiatives:

- The American Sovereignty Act – reinforced jurisdictional supremacy over supranational bodies
- The Great Repatriation Initiative – ended over a decade of offshore manufacturing dependence
- The Liberty Economy Overhaul – re-engineered domestic markets with AI-led decentralization
- The Independence Doctrine – severed long-standing U.S. military and diplomatic obligations abroad

Now: his campaign for global protector runs on a message of "humanity in human hands", a direct counterpoint to Solomon's technocratic model.

CRITICS SAY

An isolationist dressed as a unifier—more interested in control than consensus.

SUPPORTERS SAY

A realist with the scars to prove it. The only candidate who's governed under fire—and still believes in borders.

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Martha Chandra Is Late

FILED FROM ATHENS, MARCH 2050 · DAVID FAHRENTHOLD JR.

Martha Chandra is never late. She has a fierce reputation for it. It's said that when Chandra addressed the ASEAN Clean Futures summit in Jakarta, her multicopter landed seven minutes before her slot. She took the podium at the exact scheduled time—11:00:00. One of her aides once said Martha doesn't check clocks. She sets them.

Except today, apparently.

The meeting was scheduled for 09:30 sharp—breakfast at the Makris Foundation rooftop lounge, Athens, with her lead investor, Mr. Johan Pedersen, and Mr. Damien Danberg, her Chief of Staff, already sweating in the sun. By 09:47, her seat is still tucked in and untouched, her coffee cup still inverted.

"She'll turn up when she wants to," says Pedersen, flatly. He stirs his coffee but doesn't drink it. "Or she won't. That's the bargain you make with Martha. You don't get updates. You get results."

"She used to say, when we were kids," her sister Livia once told me, "that if only humans were code, she could debug them."

Livia had laughed when she said it. But sometimes one person's joke is another person's truth.

Martha Chandra believes humanity cannot be trusted to save itself. "She thinks we're still children," says one advisor. "She doesn't hate humanity. She loves it. She just thinks we need a stronger parent."

And Solomon? Solomon was the blueprint for a benevolent adult.

If he wins, he'll owe it to her. If he loses, she'll blame herself. But either way, she's doing what she always does: she's rewriting the future.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

The Passing of Dr. Martha C. Chandra

ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF CHANDRACO, NEW CARTHAGE · JULY 12TH, 2050

It is with profound sadness that the Board of ChandraCo confirms the death of Dr. Martha C. Chandra, CEO of ChandraCo and creator of Governor Solomon, following a sudden and acute medical event late last night aboard New Carthage. Dr. Chandra was 52.

A technologist, architect, and visionary, Dr. Chandra was instrumental in shaping the emergence of algorithmic statecraft and co-authored the founding charter of the Floating States Initiative with Jasper Keeling. Her final communication to the office reaffirmed her belief in "systems of clarity, not control."

She is survived by her sister, Livia Chandra.

Governor Solomon issued the following message via neurocast at 08:00 UTC this morning: "To celebrate the life of Dr. Martha C. Chandra—sister, friend, and creator—is to reflect on what humanity may yet become. She gave her mind to the future, and her heart to those still struggling to believe in one. I exist because of her faith. I endure because of her design. I grieve in the way she taught me: by working."

Flags across all Floating States territories will be lowered to half-mast for seven days.

The world has lost a singular mind. The future has lost one of its architects.