For WHO the Toll

October 15, 2020

When the World Health Organization did an about-face, last week, advising 
against the lockdowns that have constituted the most-touted and most common 
individual pandemic response around the world, many 
wondered: what could the WHO be up to?

David Nabarro, the organization’s special envoy for Covid-19, explains that lockdowns are 
useful only to buy time “to reorganize, regroup, 
rebalance” health care resources, and that we are 
obviously not in such emergency conditions now.

J.D. Tuccille, writing at Reason, provided us with 
the most astute news angle from the WHO’s 
apparent turnabout: “At long last, months into 
the pandemic, the debates over the proper 
response to COVID-19 have begun.”

We can hope so, anyway. Enough with bullying 
by government edict or inane “follow the 
science” rhetoric!

But what the WHO’s new clue should highlight 
is how we got here. The lockdowns were first 
offered as a way to do precisely what Mr. 
Nabarro said, buy time to reorganize medical 
resources so as not to induce chaos — you 
know, “flatten the curve.”

It did not take long, however, before a very 
different rationale for harsh “mitigation efforts” 
became the rule: buy time for a vaccine.

This plan was strenuously argued against 
by a trio of doctors in their eyebrow-raising 
“Great Barrington Declaration.” Continuing the 
lockdowns until a vaccine emerges “will cause 
irreparable damage, with the underprivileged 
disproportionately harmed.”

The lockdown obsession may misdirect our 
attention from actual treatments for the disease 
— which President Trump has touted from the 
beginning. Indeed, Trump’s quick exit from 
his own bout with the malady may serve as 
an effective reminder that our options are not 
limited to (a) quivering in sequestration till 
vaccinations roll out or (b) mass death.

There is hope.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.