Statement by Walter White on Louisiana Lynching

"Today the nation learned of the lynching of still another Negro veteran. According to reported figures this raises the year's total of victims of southern lynching to 16. This rapidly rising wave of barbarism against defenseless Negroes has now assumed such alarming proportions as to present a national crisis. NAACP investigators are uncovering many more unreported instances of lynch action in the south where all signs point to an organized program calling for the extermination of Negroes who dare expect to exercise those rights guaranteed them under the federal constitution. Negroes who wore the uniform of their country overseas are the primary targets in this program. They must either submit and 'stay in their place' or die.

The NAACP and many other organizations have appealed to the President and the Attorney General time after time asking them to provide protection to these defenseless Negroes who only a short time ago were protecting our nation with their lives. It seems terribly significant that not one single member of a lynch mob has been even apprehended by either the state or federal law enforcement agencies. Negroes, particularly the battle-trained veterans have by this time completely lost faith in their government which leaves them to the mercies of the mob. It becomes increasingly evident that they must soon resort to armed resistance in defense of their very lives.

It seems to me that Secretary Byrnes who asserts his determination to secure peace in a free world at the Paris conference should regard this explosive situation with the gravest concern if he is to convince delegates from the other nations of that determination. It is imperative that Mr. Byrnes act immediately to secure peace in the United States."
Immediate Release, Aug 16

The following messages were wired to President Truman, Attorney General Tom Clark and Governor Davis of Louisiana:

**President Truman:**

"NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT COLORED PEOPLE SHOCKED AT LYNCHING YESTERDAY IN MINDEN, WEBSTER COUNTY, LOUISIANA, OF NEGRO VETERAN WORLD WAR II. IMPERATIVE IMMEDIATE ACTION BY UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATE AND ENFORCE FULL AUTHORITY OF THE LAW UPON MEMBERS OF MOB. INCREASING VIOLENCE OF LYNCHING NEGROES MANDATORY YOUR PUBLIC STATEMENT RE SUCH ATROCITIES. IMPERATIVE CONGRESS BE CALLED TO WASHINGTON ENACT ANTI LYNCHING LEGISLATION. WITH SAFETY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AT STAKE EVERY EFFORT MUST BE USED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PUT AN END TO MURDER BY MOB VIOLENCE."

**Attorney-General Tom Clark:**

"NAACP SHOCKED AT LYNCHING REPORTED YESTERDAY IN MINDEN, WEBSTER COUNTY, LOUISIANA, OF NEGRO VETERAN WORLD WAR II. IMPERATIVE IMMEDIATE ACTION BY UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATE AND ENFORCE FULL AUTHORITY OF THE LAW UPON MEMBERS OF MOB. INCREASING VIOLENCE OF LYNCHING NEGROES MANDATORY YOUR PUBLIC STATEMENT RE SUCH ATROCITIES. IMPERATIVE CONGRESS BE CALLED TO WASHINGTON ENACT ANTI LYNCHING LEGISLATION. WITH SAFETY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AT STAKE EVERY EFFORT MUST BE USED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PUT AN END TO MURDER BY MOB VIOLENCE.

"PLEASE ADVISE WHAT STEPS BEING TAKEN DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RE INVESTIGATION THIS MATTER."

**Governor Davis:**

"DISCOVERY OF WEEK OLD LYNCHING OF NEGRO VETERAN WORLD WAR II, MINDEN, WEBSTER COUNTY, LOUISIANA, BRINGS TOLL VICTIMS MOB VIOLENCE TO SIX IN 1946. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE URGES YOU USE FULLEST EXTENT OF YOUR AUTHORITY AS GOVERNOR FOR VIGOROUS INVESTIGATION AND APPREHENSION OF MEMBERS OF MOB. HAVE TODAY WIRED PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES AND ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR FULL INVESTIGATION BY FEDERAL AUTHORITIES. WILL YOU PLEASE WIRE WHAT STEPS BEING TAKEN BY STATE OF LOUISIANA."