

# Security to Seal Off House During Debate

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Spurred by threats against Congress and its individual members, House leaders are drafting plans for the tightest security measures ever imposed at the Capitol building, to be effective during the House impeachment debate.

Majority Whip John J. McFall (D-Calif.), chairman of a special bipartisan committee on procedures, said the plans contemplate virtually sealing off the House end of the Capitol.

Access would be limited to persons who must conduct business there and admission would be controlled by electronic screening devices like those used at airports, McFall said.

All packages, briefcases and equipment would be searched.

Tourists and the general public would be admitted to other parts of the building, including the Senate side. Exactly where the strict security line would be drawn is still to be determined.

One proposal under consideration is for twice-daily sweeps of the immediate vicinity of the House chamber by police, security agents and dogs trained to sniff out explosives.

Installation of electronic surveillance devices in the tunnels connecting the Capitol with House office buildings began months before the impeachment proceed-

ings were contemplated. These are expected to be in full use.

There would be no shutting of tourists in and out of the public galleries overlooking the chamber.

The press section would be expanded to accommodate a portion of an expected huge influx. In the remaining gallery space, some seats would be reserved for the executive branch and the diplomatic corps, while the rest would be allotted to guests of representatives and senators, each of whom would be restricted to one ticket.

Ordinary press credentials would be suspended for the duration and a limited number of special passes issued.

Officials said threatening letters and messages peaked during and after the broadcast proceedings of the House Judiciary Committee.

"Some are no doubt crank letters, but how can you tell?" one official commented.

The special security measures are expected to go into effect a few days before the scheduled start of the impeachment debate, Aug. 19. The debate is scheduled to conclude Aug. 29.

If a Senate trial results from the House action, officials said, similar security measures undoubtedly will be imposed on that side of the Capitol.