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"no" vote in to row's

reierendum, and the impli-

cations of an Andries

Treurnicht-led CP government.

cannot fully be assessed, but it is

safe to say SA would face inter-

national isolation much more

severe than it endured in the

apartheid era.

SAls infrastructure would run

down. There would be tearful con-

flict, and in the end the terms of a

transfer of power to a black majority

or an all.black government would be

of a "take it or leave it" nature.

Speaking to a conservative farm-

ing community in the southern Free

State on Thursday. Foreign Minister

Pieter Botha sketched the full implica-

tions of isolation in stark terms. cut-

ting out the double- h of past gov-

ernment denials o the effect of

sanctions.

Reading from the US Comprehen-

sive Anti-Apartheid Act, and trout

previously "secre " documents. he

told of the huge battle to find mar-

kets for SA and to keep

export-based industries' unemploy-

ment figures as low as possible.

The majority of the 360 audience

listened intently, and showed some

horror. but still some of the

rightwingers refused to accept his

standpoint. saying he was exaggerat-

ing and that sanctions would not be

reintroduced.

A trusu'ated Botha responded: "I

can give you an explanation and a

description of what lighting sanc-

tions is like, but I cannot give you the

ability to comprehend."

The CP campaign has been based

on a seductive t. With the

resurgence of nationalism through-

out the world since the collapse of

communism. and especially the dis-

solution oi the Soviet Union and the

ugly nationlist war in Yugoslavia, it

has todged the issues to make its

partition plan look respectable and

in step with the international mood.

CP moderates have attempted to

hide the CP/HNP/AWB alliance's

unacceptable lace by t in; to con-

vince voters that old-sty e apartheid

would not be reintroduced. Treur-

nicht has gone so far as to say this on

public platforms.

High voter turnout

could be crucial to

referendum result

But the short and intense cam-

Eaign has taken its toll. and the mask

as often slipped. Inconsistencies in

CF statements have been exploited

by i'yes" vote campaigners. most uo-

tably by DP leader Zach de Beer. Though the CP/HNP/AWB alliance continued to draw strong support in many areas. there was evidence last week that voters were no longer being taken in by the simplistic message that "yes" would be a vote for communism, while CP speakers made no satisfactory attempt to spell out their own policies. and the consequences of voting "no". Even so. it has been difficult for observers to read the voters' mood. In the CP territory of Harrismith. people say they will vote "yes". while in so-called liberal areas. such as Johannesburg's northern suburbs. some voters say they feel inclined to vote "no". They put forward a variety of reasons. including those being exploited by the CP - crime, the recession and tear of a black, ANC-dominated government.

It is becoming more evident that Treurnicht and the CP blundered when they entered into an alliance with the neo-Nazi AWB. and the NP and DP can be thankful for their lapse. If there is one thing frightening voters more than the possibility of communists in a future government it is the AWE. with its swastika-like emblem and its

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masked and sinister Ystergaarde. The AWB hijacked a right-wing solidarity meeting in Pretoria and totally disregarded the authority of police. Later their leader. Eugene Terre'Blanche. warned in a TV interview that his organisation was prepared for armed insurrection. At Treurnicht's meetings the uniformed "Iron Guard" have acted as ushers. The NP has not missed the chance to exploit this ugly side of the right-wing effort. and its poster and advertising campaign, focused on the violent and destructive armed wing of the alliance, has been starkly effective. It shows a "terrorist" in a balaclava holding a pistol the three 75 of the AWB emblem alongside a swastika. with the words: "one can stop this man." The advertisement certainly provides a good reason for voting "yes" tomorrow.

I would have voted 'no'. but it is impossible for me to do so now. because I would be all in; myself with neo-Nazis." one liarney resident told a Business Day reporter. The sentiment was echoed by many of her neighbours.

NP secretary-general Stollé van der Merwe predicts the right wing will splinter after the referendum, especially if it is convincingly defeated. Other political analysts

agree the tensions within the CP are too strong to cover up and contain. They feel the "pragmatists" led by Koo: van der Merwe and Cellill Plenaar are champing at the bit to take the party into negotiations. while deputy leader Ferdi Hanzererg and his followers remain close to the HNP position.

CP speakers have regularly espoused positions and policies in public that directly contradict official published policy. and MP5 are a bit at sea in trying to pinpoint what the CP actually stands for

Rosettenville NP MP Shell...

Camerer says she has canvassed her constituency and among the liberal section the "yes" vote is "80% strong", while the more conservative section is split 50/50. Camerer says 15 60% majority is on the cards for her "yes",

Springs MP Piet Coetzer is also very optimistic. He would regard 60% majority as a "landslide", and 55% majority as "decisive".

The CP's Koos van der Merwe predicted on a radio talk show that voters would win by 52% to 48%.

Independent analysts have warned that a tie factor has to be taken into account in canvassing, and NP election officials say that in the last general election it was 20%. G

Prof Lawrence Schlemmer, of the Centre for Policy Studies at the HSRC, warns that complacency or a stayaway due to voter uncertainty and insecurity could result in a very narrow "yes" victory. Even so, and taking the tie factor into account, he believes the "yes" vote will win,

The percentage poll would be a crucial factor in determining the size of a majority. Opinion surveys based on the 1993 referendum, when there was a percentage poll of about 72%, indicate a 5779-4370 "yes" majority. If the poll goes up to 80%, this could increase to more than 60%.

However, Schlemmer says if the "yes" vote wins with less than 53% of votes cast, the referendum could intensify the crisis that led to the calling of the poll in the first place.

The NP is worried that people will not bother to vote, believing a "yes" victory is assured, and Zach de Beer is also concerned about apathy. He has used this as one of the main thrusts of his campaign - "I beg you please to come and vote 'yes'".

Most political analysts tend to think the "yes" vote will be 55%, but at the same time they acknowledge it is virtually impossible to assess how the referendum will go.

It is generally agreed, however, that the higher the poll the greater the chance of a convincing "yes"