

## **A Russian Pays A Visit**

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By Maryellen Fillo

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It was a Russian who came to the World Affairs Council lunch at the Hartford Club Monday ... a pretty powerful one whose goal was not only to break bread with a room full of area leaders, but to drum up even more business between the two countries.

Mikhail V. Margelov, chairman of the Committee for Foreign Affairs and adviser to Russian President Vladimir Putin, broke any character stereotypes by being anything but cold and distant as he talked with area business leaders.

``The Russia of today is not the second edition of the old Soviet Union," said Margelov, who spent his time here touring Hartford, one of five cities he is visiting this week as part of a business outreach program.

``We are not adversaries anymore. And we are countries that are just 55 miles apart," he said referring to the distance between the Alaskan and Russian coastlines. ``It is time for a contract marriage between us."

He didn't have to work the crowd too hard, however, for there were several business representatives who touted their longstanding relationships with Russia.

``I think we want to raise the profile of Russia," said Lisi Kaufman, a senior vice president with United Technologies Corp., whose Otis Elevator unit was recently awarded contracts for three large commercial projects in Russia.

``We want to promote Russia as a place to invest," added Pratt & Whitney vice president David C. Manke, whose company also does business there, ``rather than a place you read about on the front page of the newspaper."

Margelov, who is traveling with Eugene K. Lawson of the U.S.-Russia Business Council, toured the capital city and had dinner at Max's Downtown on Sunday night as part of his brief stop here before heading to Cincinnati and Detroit.

``Your capitol building is beautiful," he said, adding that it is much different from government buildings in his country.

``But your city is very nice."