

CIA Hiring Hotshot Civil Rights Lawyer

Washington — The Central Intelligence Agency has hired Arnold & Porter, a Washington law firm, as outside counsel on the agency.

A CIA spokesman confirmed yesterday that agency officials have concluded negotiations with Mitchell Rogovin, a partner in the firm and one of Washington's best known civil liberties lawyers. Rogovin, a former assistant attorney general, will be in charge of Arnold & Porter's work for the CIA.

It could not be learned immediately why William E. Colby, the director of the CIA, and his advisers had decided to retain outside counsel.

A senior official of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence said that he was puzzled by the agency's decision to seek outside counsel.

"I just don't know what it means," he said. "The CIA has access now to Justice Department attorneys, and they have their own legal staff."

A number of lawyers noted that there was no legal bar to the hiring of outside private counsel by the agency; it was further noted that many law firms in Washington have handled legal matters in the past under the direction of the CIA's office of legal counsel.

Since leaving the Justice Department in 1969, Rogovin has been considered one of the most aggressive civil liberties lawyers in Washington.

He is general counsel of Common Cause, the independent lobbying group, and headed its highly publicized and effective civil law suit against the Nixon Administration's Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Rogovin also serves as counsel to the Institute for Policy Studies, a liberal policy group, and is counsel for the institute's lawsuit against Nixon administration officials stemming from alleged illegal wiretaps.

He is counsel to two of the leading anti-war and anti-military lobby groups in Washington, the United Serviceman's Fund and the Lawyers Military Defense Committee. He is vice chairman of the board of trustees of the Center for Law and Social Policy, a leading Washington public interest law firm.

Rogovin also is serving as co-chairman, along with William D. Ruckelshaus, former deputy attorney general, of the newly created Council for Public Interest Law, a foundation-backed attempt to make public interest law firms a permanent part of the nation's legal system.

New York Times