

and how the administration will need to handle the inquiry.

"Among those in attendance was longtime Trump Organization attorney Michael Cohen, who came down from New York to attend. Cohen declined to comment when reached Thursday afternoon. McGahn and his team, one official said, is urging the White House - and Trump - to be cautious in its comments with a special prosecutor involved. McGahn has begun explaining to aides in detail about records retention and potential requests, two people familiar with the conversations say. One objective: to keep Trump from hurting himself any further. Two senior administration officials said they believed Trump's letter firing Comey was a mistake. White House spokespeople declined to comment. ... Mueller's appointment has put the administration in bunker mode - and there is a growing realization, officials say, that life in the administration will grow more difficult in the months to come. Some aides have begun reaching out to lawyers to see if they need counsel, according to one attorney who has spoken to several of them." <http://politi.co/2ryv64H>

JARED FOR THE WIN! -- "\$110 Billion Weapons Sale to Saudis Has Jared Kushner's Personal Touch," by NYT's Mark Landler, Eric Schmitt and Matt Apuzzo: "On the afternoon of May 1, President Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, welcomed a high-level delegation of Saudis to a gilded reception room next door to the White House and delivered a brisk pep talk: 'Let's get this done today.' Mr. Kushner was referring to a \$100 billion-plus arms deal that the administration hoped to seal with Saudi Arabia in time to announce it during Mr. Trump's visit to the kingdom this weekend. The two sides discussed a shopping list that included planes, ships and precision-guided bombs. Then an American official raised the idea of the Saudis' buying a sophisticated radar system designed to shoot down ballistic missiles.

"Sensing that the cost might be a problem ... Mr. Kushner picked up the phone and called Marilyn A. Hewson -- the chief executive of Lockheed Martin, which makes the radar system -- and asked her whether she could cut the price. As his guests watched slack-jawed, Ms. Hewson told him she would look into it, officials said. Mr. Kushner's personal intervention in the arms sale is further evidence of the Trump White House's readiness to dispense with custom in favor of informal, hands-on deal making. It also offers a window into how the administration hopes to change America's position in the Middle East, emphasizing hard power and haggling over traditional diplomacy." <http://nyti.ms/2rl2QWf>

COMING UP: HILL GOP-WHITE HOUSE CLASH -- "U.S. could get first paid family

leave benefit under Trump budget proposal," by WaPo's Danielle Paquette and Damian Paletta: "President Trump's budget proposal next week will include a new benefit for America's working parents, one Democrats have long championed and Republicans have long opposed: paid family leave. The president's first detailed budget request on Tuesday will seek funds for the creation of a program to grant mothers and fathers six weeks of paid leave after the birth or adoption of a child, two senior White House budget office officials said." <http://wapo.st/2qYVPuu>

MNUCHIN'S TAX REFORM PLAY -- Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is trying to ignore all the noise about Trump and Russia keep his eye on the prize: a major tax reform package. Mnuchin met Thursday with Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee, has huddled with Rep. Richie Neal (D-Mass.), ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, and has stepped up outreach to K Street. "There's an emphasis on engagement at the trade association level and with industry groups," according to a source familiar with the agency's strategy. The "listening sessions" tactic is similar to the strategy House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy has employed over the years to meet with lawmakers and others to discuss the substance of legislative packages, but not push policy on them.

THE JUICE ...

-- **SPOTTED: COREY LEWANDOWSKI** having lunch Thursday at the Hay-Adams. ... **LAURA INGRAHAM** having dinner last night at Ristorante La Perla in Georgetown. ... **SEN. ED MARKEY (D-MASS.)** and **TED OLSON** of Gibson Dunn last night at Cafe Milano.

-- **ISRAELI PM BENJAMIN NETANYAHU** met with Aerosmith yesterday. *Video from Jerusalem* <http://bit.ly/2q31RVC>

TRUMP'S FRIDAY -- He is meeting with OMB Director Mick Mulvaney at 11 a.m., and leaves for Saudi Arabia on a nine-day voyage to the Middle East by 2:10 p.m.

PLAYBOOK READS

PHOTO DU JOUR: President Donald Trump and Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos shake hands during a news conference in the East Room of the White House on May 18. | Andrew Harnik/AP Photo