

《前FBI局长詹姆斯·科米听证会比NBA季后赛还受欢迎？》

With many of the US's national broadcast networks promoting live coverage, bars and pubs are opening their doors early for the upcoming live broadcast of Former FBI Director James Comey's testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Thursday.

It is rare that a congressional testimony, which is usually considered boring and lengthy, to suddenly become an event that can even steal the thunder of a major sporting event like the ongoing NBA finals.



File photo of former FBI Director James Comey testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. /VCG Photo?

It will be the first time for the former FBI director to speak in public since he was abruptly fired by US President Donald Trump last month, and the third time Comey has captured the public attention in less than a year.

The Senate Intelligence Committee released a seven-page statement from Comey on Wednesday, which reveals

parts of the detailed conversations between him and President Trump.

The conversations focused mainly on the FBI's investigation into the possible Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, and the alleged collusion between the Trump campaign, former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, and Russia.

Comey said Trump had asked him to drop the probe of Flynn. "I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go. He is a good guy. I hope you can let this go," Comey quoted Trump in the statement.



Combined profiles of US President Donald Trump and former FBI director James Comey. /VCG Photo

According to Comey, Trump has asked him for loyalty during a dinner on January 26. In a phone call between them on March 30, the US president described the Russian investigation as a cloud that was impairing his ability to "act on behalf of the country," and asked about how to "lift the cloud," said Comey.

However, whether the revealed conversations could lead to impeachment remain unclear. According to US federal law, the impeachment case could be built on obstruction of justice, but not on whether one succeeds in impeding an investigation.

The Guardian quoted Senator Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat from Connecticut, saying that, "the pressure brought to bear on Comey could very well amount to obstruction of justice depending on the intent and motive."

Trump's attorney made a response to Comey's statement on Wednesday, saying that the President is pleased that the former FBI director finally confirmed in public that he was not under investigation in any Russia-related probe.



File photo of US President Donald Trump smiling during a meeting. /VCG Photo

The New York Times has called the testimony "Must-See TV", while CNBC called it the third episode of a "Comey's testimony movie," and named it, "James Comey III: The Last Crusade."

The Wall Street Journal said Comey's statement is so rich in detail that it reads like a screenplay, and the Los Angeles Times ran a story named, "Trump fires Comey: A screenplay in five acts."



VCG Photo

Trump is also expected to watch the live coverage of Comey's testimony, and many even anticipated that he could possibly tweet live to comment on it.

According to the New York Times, a sports bar in Washington even plans to dole out a free round of beers and alcohol every time Trump blasts out a tweet. They have also prepared a screen to display Trump's twitter feed while running the live coverage of the testimony.

"They really should declare a national holiday," Sally Quinn, the journalist and the doyenne of Washington's social circuit, was quoted by the New York Times as saying, "since no work is going to get done."