


# Gordon Brown's winter of discontent

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown made light of a bid to force him out of office just months before a general election, but the failed putsch has exposed a behind-the-scenes power struggle with at least six cabinet ministers reportedly wanting Brown to quit



**Geoff Hoon, Patricia Hewitt:** Main conspirators. Former ministers under Brown's predecessor, **Tony Blair**, texted letters to their colleagues calling for secret ballot on Brown's leadership

**Alistair Darling:** Chancellor's plan to reduce Britain's soaring £178bn deficit overruled by prime minister, who wants to boost public spending ahead of election

**Harriet Harman:** Deputy Labour leader is frustrated at Brown's dithering over election strategy. Harman is said to be angry over lack of respect shown to her by Brown's staff

**Peter Mandelson:** First Minister deeply resents PM's reliance on Schools Secretary **Ed Balls'** agenda of high public spending and class war attacks on Tories

**David Miliband:** Foreign Secretary and leadership contender's relationship with PM has always been tense. Offered lukewarm support for Brown after failed coup

**Bob Ainsworth:** Defence Secretary – close friend of Hoon and Darling – feels he has little support from PM. Leaks reveal Brown considered three others for top defence job

**Douglas Alexander:** International Development Secretary, once PM's most cherished protege, feels sidelined. Relationship began to sour after 2007 debacle over ***election that never was***