long way from being over; in many respects it is only just beginning. At some point China's politicians will fail in their attempts to manage it: something will get away from them. Already China's citizens are proving adept at finding ways through and around the firewalls created by the Chinese state. They are also finding novel and subversive ways to voice their anger at the politicians, often using symbols and gestures the censors are too slow-witted to pick up on. Technology moves faster than politics. When technology escapes from political control, politicians face a choice: do they adapt to the change, or do they insist that it adapts to them? In a democracy politicians have no choice but to adapt. In an autocratic regime like contemporary China, however pragmatic and technically adept its rulers, there is always the temptation to double down on the use of force for fear of losing control altogether.

The Chinese Communist Party has learned from its past failures. Nonetheless, from its own perspective, it is still too big to fail. What happens when its determination to hold on to power collides with the unruliness of the modern information technology age remains to be seen. It is the great unknown of the twenty-first-century politics.

THE NEW ARISTOCRACY

Could the engineers make a political comeback in the West? Since 2008 it has been tough for financiers to assert their legitimacy as political decision-makers. Might the wizards of the tech industry have a better chance? There are signs that the disdain of Silicon Valley for the squalid world of politics is starting to dissipate. Tech giants who once thought they were above the miserable business of lawmaking have begun to take an interest in how laws get made. They've noticed that laws are going to get made anyway, so they might as well spend some of their vast resources trying to get the laws they want. This is not entirely self-interested. Many tech billionaires have begun to think about what all that money is for. They don't simply want to do no evil. They'd like to try to do some good. They are discovering that it's hard to do lasting good without political help.

However, there is little sign that the people who built the new technology are interested in actually doing politics themselves, rather than paying someone else to do it for them. They'll lobby; they'll fund; they'll campaign. Some of them will dabble with old-fashioned tools of political influence: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has recently bought the venerable but impoverished *Washington Post*. But for now few have shown any interest in standing for office or offering their personal services to the government as agents of the state. It is nice to be able to influence Washington DC from Silicon Valley. But who wants to move from Silicon Valley to lead the relentless and poorly rewarded Washington life? The moves go the other way. In Britain, no one works for David Cameron who used to work for Google. But a number of people have gone to work for Google who used to work for David Cameron.

This isn't just a story about tech. Many people retain an interest in