China’s Great Power National Identity and Its Impact on China–Southeast Asia Relations*

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In his memoir, Jeffery Bader, the Senior Director for East Asian Affairs at the United States National Security Council from 2009 to 2011 (and long regarded as one of the top “China-hands” in the early Obama administration), spoke about the “emergence of a somewhat different China from the one the United States had been dealing with for several decades.” While dismissing overdramatized accounts of recent Chinese assertiveness, he nevertheless said that “beginning about 2008 and continuing into 2010 one could detect a changed quality in the writing of Chinese security analysts and Chinese official statements, and in some respects in Chinese behavior.” It was not just Bader. Many China-watchers also suspected that China had acted somehow differently since the financial crisis that hit the Western world most severely in the late 2000s; but coming from one of the top US officials in charge of dealing with China confirmed the thesis that this chapter wishes to make: that China is assuming a new identity — a

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