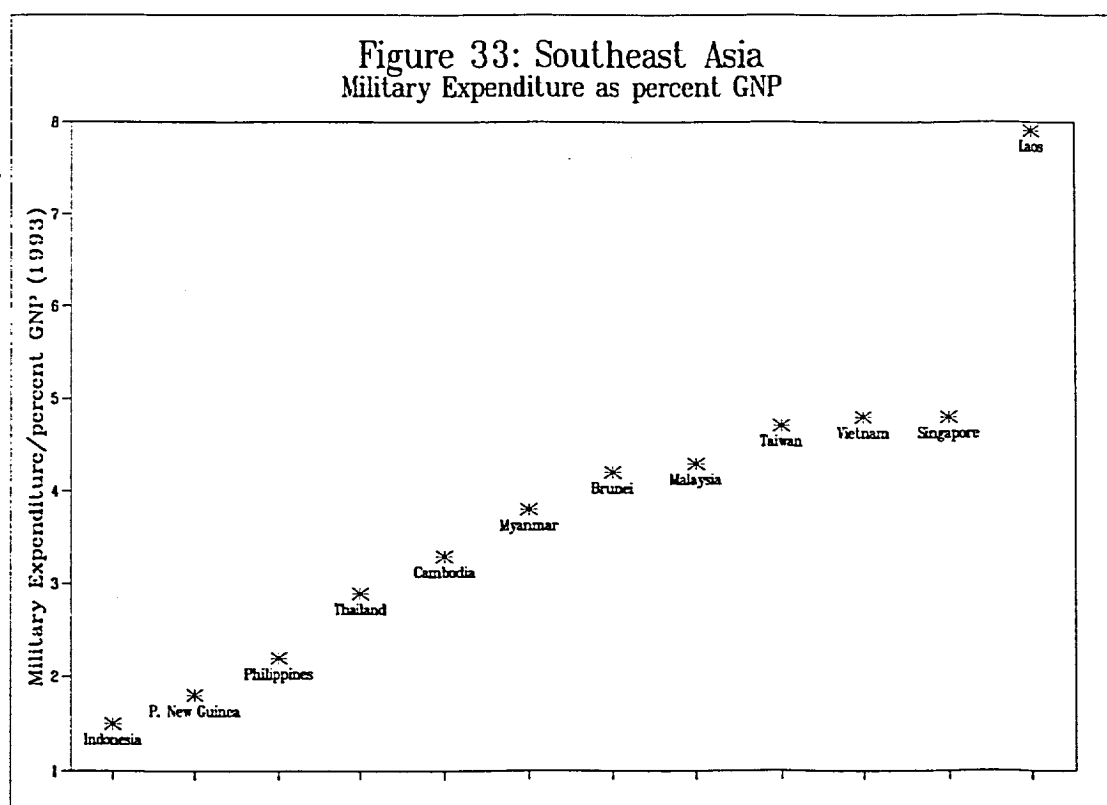


picture presents some interesting elements. First, military spending has been in general rising (in some cases by more than 50 percent) since the mid- or late 1980s. None of the six states shown is spending less on defence than in 1983, and the most dramatic increases have taken place in Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, with a lesser increase (and recent decline) in Myanmar. Even assuming that military spending may have dropped in states such as Cambodia or Vietnam, the overall regional picture is of rising absolute levels of spending. Whether or not this constitutes an "arms race" is difficult to tell, since increased spending appears also to be connected to the increasing wealth of the region, to military modernization and procurement cycles, or to the diminished American regional presence. As one analyst concludes, although "there has clearly been an arms build-up in Asia Pacific over the last decade," as measured by both defence spending and the size and sophistication of arsenals, there is little evidence that this process has been driven by competitive reciprocal inter-state arms races.⁶ But even if these spending increases are



⁶ Selin, *Asia Pacific Arms Buildups*, part one ("Scope, Causes and Problems").