Write a narrative account analysing the ways in which the US government policy towards the Plains Indians developed between 1835-1851

You may use the following in your answer:

* Permanent Indian Frontier (1834)
* Indian Appropriations Act (1851)

You must also use information of your own. 8 marks

* Why?
* What?
* Impact
* Link to the next point

Due to the hostility and violence that had occurred under President Jackson’s Indian Removal Act in 1830, the US government signed the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act in 1834 in order to keep Indians and whites apart. The aim was to create a permanent border or ‘frontier’ for Indian Territory in order that they could live peacefully. It would also separate the United States in the east from the British and Mexican territories in the west. The US army would police the border to protect the Indians from any settlers. The impact of this was it showed that America had an expansionist policy and was keen to be aggressive in its aims to acquire land. This then led to many looking to the Mexican territory in the South-West, in particular Texas, as potential territory to expand into.

In 1845, the US government formally annexed Texas as part of the United States which, combined with border disputes, sparked a war with Mexico in 1846. By 1848, the Americans had been victorious and had won large amounts of land in the west including California and Oregon. The impact of this was that instead of the Indian Territory dividing Indians from the whites in the east, they were not sandwiched in the middle of American territory. This then led to many white settlers travelling through Indian land to reach the new land of California and Oregon. The US government had to now ensure safe passage for these travellers.

In order to ensure this safety and keep them apart, the US government passed the Indian Appropriations Act in 1851. It provided the government with money to pay for moving Indians onto reservations. Hunting lands were also allocated so they could still hunt. The impact of this was that the Indians became more reliant on the US government especially when on reservations. Their culture was also damaged too as many turned to farming in order to survive on this land.