“The fundamental principle behind Republican foreign policy during the years 1921 to 1933 was isolationism”. How far do you agree with this statement?

* Point
* Evidence
* Explanation
* Links to the question and between factors

I disagree to a large extent that the underlying principle behind US foreign policy was isolationism. Although the public did want a return to normalcy and isolationism in the wake of WWI, this was not ‘fundamental’ to US foreign policy because it conflicted with the overriding desire of Republican governments, and indeed the public, to secure US economic supremacy. At the end of WWI, there was a feeling of ‘never again’ amongst voters; five million men had been drafted into the US army for a war that they had no ideological stake in. Voters no longer supported Wilson’s bid to make the world ‘safe for democracy’ by creating collective security. His failure to win domestic support for intervention meant that the US Senate refused to ratify US membership of the League of Nations (which Wilson had created) in 1920. Although this signalled a desire to remain out of foreign conflicts, isolationism, successive Republican governments recognised that it was in their economic interest to intervene abroad. Indeed, the US intervened abroad to facilitate European political and economic stability. In 1924, Vice President Charles Dawes agreed The Dawes Plan with Germany, which reduced Germany’s reparations payments over a longer period of time and helped to rescue Germany from the Ruhr Crisis and hyperinflation with a loan of 800 million gold marks. In 1929, the Young Plan further reduced reparations to £1.8 million (originally £6.6 billion). These agreements, far from isolationist, aimed to protect the US economy. Firstly, the US needed to facilitate German economic recovery in order to recover its own war debts from Britain and France, who had been lent substantial sums during WWI. Furthermore, a politically stable co-operative Europe would prevent disruption to US trade. Germany would also provide an important market for US exports and trade. Although it can be argued that popular isolationism was an influence on US foreign policy, it was continually overridden by the more pragmatic interests of maintaining US trade interests, without which there would not have been the economic prosperity throughout the 1920s that kept successive Republican governments in office.

1. Use the key to identify the structure of the paragraph
2. Why is it difficult to distinguish between evidence and explanation?
3. What is the difference between the evidence you used at GCSE and now at A Level?
4. What ‘valid criteria’ is used to substantiate the judgement?
5. Highlight / underline any good phrases, connectives and facilitating words you can steal.
6. Predict the problems you will have in exams