determining whether a person is related to another person, the constructive ownership rules of section 318 shall apply, and the attribution rules of section 267(c) also shall apply to the extent they attribute ownership to persons to whom section 318 does not attribute ownership.

(3) Disregard of participation of conduit entity—(i) Authority of district director. The district director may determine that the participation of a conduit entity in a conduit financing arrangement should be disregarded for purposes of section 881. For this purpose, an intermediate entity will constitute a conduit entity if it meets the standards of paragraph (a)(4) of this section. The district director has discretion to determine the manner in which the standards of paragraph (a)(4) of this section apply, including the financing transactions and parties composing the financing arrangement.

(ii) Effect of disregarding conduit entity—(A) In general. If the district director determines that the participation of a conduit entity in a financing arrangement should be disregarded, the financing arrangement is recharacterized as a transaction directly between the remaining parties to the financing arrangement (in most cases, the financed entity and the financing entity) for purposes of section 881. To the extent that a disregarded conduit entity actually receives or makes payments pursuant to a conduit financing arrangement, it is treated as an agent of the financing entity. Except as otherwise provided, the recharacterization of the conduit financing arrangement also applies for purposes of sections 871, 884(f)(1)(A), 1441, and 1442 and other procedural provisions relating to those sections. This recharacterization will not otherwise affect a taxpayer's Federal income tax liability under any substantive provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. Thus, for example, the recharacterization generally applies for purposes of section 1461, in order to impose liability on a withholding agent who fails to withhold as required under § 1.1441–3(j), but not for purposes of § 1.882–5.

(B) Character of payments made by the financed entity. If the participation of a conduit financing arrangement is disregarded under this paragraph (a)(3), payments made by the financed entity generally shall be characterized by reference to the character (e.g., interest or rent) of the payments made to the financing entity. However, if the financing transaction to which the financing entity is a party is a transaction described in paragraph

(a)(2)(ii)(A)(2) or (4) of this section that gives rise to payments that would not be deductible if paid by the financed entity, the character of the payments made by the financed entity will not be affected by the disregard of the participation of a conduit entity. The characterization provided by this paragraph (a)(3)(ii)(B) does not, however, extend to qualification of a payment for any exemption from withholding tax under the Internal Revenue Code or a provision of any applicable tax treaty if such qualification depends on the terms of, or other similar facts or circumstances relating to, the financing transaction to which the financing entity is a party that do not apply to the financing transaction to which the financed entity is a party. Thus, for example, payments made by a financed entity that is not a bank cannot qualify for the exemption provided by section 881(i) of the Code even if the loan between the financed entity and the conduit entity is a bank deposit.

(C) Effect of income tax treaties. Where the participation of a conduit entity in a conduit financing arrangement is disregarded pursuant to this section, it is disregarded for all purposes of section 881, including for purposes of applying any relevant income tax treaties. Accordingly, the conduit entity may not claim the benefits of a tax treaty between its country of residence and the United States to reduce the amount of tax due under section 881 with respect to payments made pursuant to the conduit financing arrangement. The financing entity may, however, claim the benefits of any income tax treaty under which it is entitled to benefits in order to reduce the rate of tax on payments made pursuant to the conduit financing arrangement that are recharacterized in accordance with paragraph (a)(3)(ii)(B) of this section.

(D) Effect on withholding tax. For the effect of recharacterization on withholding obligations, see §§ 1.1441-3(j) and 1.1441-7(d).

(E) Special rule for a financing entity that is unrelated to both intermediate entity and financed entity—(1) Liability of financing entity. Notwithstanding the fact that a financing arrangement is a conduit financing arrangement, a financing entity that is unrelated to the financed entity and the conduit entity (or entities) shall not itself be liable for tax under section 881 unless the financing entity knows or has reason to know that the financing arrangement is a conduit financing arrangement. But see § 1.1441–3(j) for the withholding agent's withholding obligations.

(2) Financing entity's knowledge—(i) In general. A financing entity knows or has reason to know that the financing arrangement is a conduit financing arrangement only if the financing entity knows or has reason to know of facts sufficient to establish that the financing arrangement is a conduit financing arrangement, including facts sufficient to establish that the participation of the intermediate entity in the financing arrangement is pursuant to a tax avoidance plan. A person that knows only of the financing transactions that comprise the financing arrangement will not be considered to know or have reason to know of facts sufficient to establish that the financing arrangement is a conduit financing arrangement.

(ii) Presumption regarding financing entity's knowledge. It shall be presumed that the financing entity does not know or have reason to know that the financing arrangement is a conduit financing arrangement if the financing entity is unrelated to all other parties to the financing arrangement and the financing entity establishes that the intermediate entity who is a party to the financing transaction with the financing entity is actively engaged in a substantial trade or business. An intermediate entity will not be considered to be engaged in a trade or business if its business is making or managing investments, unless the intermediate entity is actively engaged in a banking, insurance, financing or similar trade or business and such business consists predominantly of transactions with customers who are not related persons. An intermediate entity's trade or business is substantial if it is reasonable for the financing entity to expect that the intermediate entity will be able to make payments under the financing transaction out of the cash flow of that trade or business. This presumption may be rebutted if the district director establishes that the financing entity knew or had reason to know that the financing arrangement is a conduit financing arrangement. See Example 6 of paragraph (e) of this section for an illustration of the rules of this paragraph (a)(3)(ii)(E).

(iii) Limitation on taxpayer's use of this section. A taxpayer may not apply this section to reduce the amount of its Federal income tax liability by disregarding the form of its financing transactions for Federal income tax purposes or by compelling the district director to do so. See, however, paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section for rules regarding the taxpayer's ability to show that the participation of one or more intermediate entities results in no

significant reduction in tax.