

recognized on the transfer to the extent reflected in earnings and profits), or

(2) The total amount of U.S net equity transferred (directly or indirectly) by the foreign parent to the domestic subsidiary in one or more prior section 351 or 381(a) transactions.

(f) *Effective date.* This section is effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 1986.

[T.D. 8223, 53 FR 34059, Sept. 2, 1988, as amended by T.D. 8432, 57 FR 41659, Sept. 11, 1992; 57 FR 49117, Oct. 29, 1993; 57 FR 60126, Dec. 18, 1992; T.D. 8657, 61 FR 9341, Mar. 8, 1996]

§ 1.884-3T Coordination of branch profits tax with second-tier withholding (temporary). [Reserved]

§ 1.884-4 Branch-level interest tax.

(a) *General rule*—(1) *Tax on branch interest.* In the case of a foreign corporation that, during the taxable year, is engaged in trade or business in the United States or has gross income that is ECI (as defined in § 1.884-1(d)(1)(iii)), any interest paid by such trade or business (hereinafter “branch interest,” as defined in paragraph (b) of this section) shall, for purposes of subtitle A (Income Taxes), be treated as if it were paid by a domestic corporation (other than a corporation described in section 861(c)(1), relating to a domestic corporation that meets the 80 percent foreign business requirement). Thus, for example, whether such interest is treated as income from sources within the United States by the person who receives the interest shall be determined in the same manner as if such interest were paid by a domestic corporation (other than a corporation described in section 861(c)(1)). Such interest shall be subject to tax under section 871(a) or 881, and to withholding under section 1441 or 1442, in the same manner as interest paid by a domestic corporation (other than a corporation described in section 861(c)(1)) if received by a foreign person and not effectively connected with the conduct by the foreign person of a trade or business in the United States, unless the interest, if paid by a domestic corporation, would be exempt under section 871(h) or 881(c) (relating to exemption for certain portfolio interest received

by a foreign person), section 871(i) or 881(d) (relating, in part, to exemption for certain bank deposit interest received by a foreign person), or another provision of the Code. Such interest shall also be treated as interest paid by a domestic corporation (other than a corporation described in section 861(c)(1)) for purposes of sections 864(c), 871(b) and 882(a) (relating to income that is effectively connected with the conduct of a trade or business within the United States) and section 904 (relating to the limitation on the foreign tax credit). For purposes of this section, a foreign corporation also shall be treated as engaged in trade or business in the United States if, at any time during the taxable year, it owns an asset taken into account under § 1.882-5(a)(1)(ii) or (b)(1) for purposes of determining the amount of the foreign corporation’s interest expense allocated or apportioned to ECI. See paragraph (b)(8) of this section for the effect of income tax treaties on branch interest.

(2) *Tax on excess interest*—(i) Definition of excess interest. For purposes of this section, the term “excess interest” means—

(A) The amount of interest allocated or apportioned to ECI of the foreign corporation under § 1.882-5 for the taxable year, after application of § 1.884-1(e)(3); minus

(B) The foreign corporation’s branch interest (as defined in paragraph (b) of this section) for the taxable year, but not including interest accruing in a taxable year beginning before January 1, 1987; minus

(C) The amount of interest determined under paragraph (c)(2) of this section (relating to interest paid by a partnership).

(ii) *Imposition of tax.* A foreign corporation shall be liable for tax on excess interest under section 881(a) in the same manner as if such excess interest were interest paid to the foreign corporation by a wholly-owned domestic corporation (other than a corporation described in section 861(c)(1)) on the last day of the foreign corporation’s taxable year. Excess interest shall be exempt from tax under section 881(a) only as provided in paragraph (a)(2)(iii) of this section (relating to treatment of certain excess interest of banks as

interest on deposits) or paragraph (c)(3) of this section (relating to income tax treaties).

(iii) *Treatment of a portion of the excess interest of banks as interest on deposits.* A portion of the excess interest of a foreign corporation that is a bank (as defined in section 585(a)(2)(B) without regard to the second sentence thereof) provided that a substantial part of its business in the United States, as well as all other countries in which it operates, consists of receiving deposits and making loans and discounts, shall be treated as interest on deposits (as described in section 871(i)(3)), and shall be exempt from the tax imposed by section 881(a) as provided in such section. The portion of the excess interest of the foreign corporation that is treated as interest on deposits shall equal the product of the foreign corporation's excess interest and the greater of—

(A) The ratio of the amount of interest bearing deposits, within the meaning of section 871(i)(3)(A), of the foreign corporation as of the close of the taxable year to the amount of all interest bearing liabilities of the foreign corporation on such date; or

(B) 85 percent.

(iv) *Reporting and payment of tax on excess interest.* The amount of tax due under section 884(f) and this section with respect to excess interest of a foreign corporation shall be reported on the foreign corporation's income tax return for the taxable year in which the excess interest is treated as paid to the foreign corporation under section 884(f)(1)(B) and paragraph(a)(2) of this section, and shall not be subject to withholding under section 1441 or 1442. The tax shall be due and payable as provided in section 6151 and such other sections of Subtitle F of the Internal Revenue Code as apply, and estimated tax payments shall be due with respect to a foreign corporation's liability for the tax on excess interest as provided in section 6655.

(3) *Original issue discount.* For purposes of this section, the term "interest" includes original issue discount, as defined in section 1273(a)(1).

(4) *Examples.* The application of this paragraph (a) is illustrated by the following examples.

Example 1. Taxation of branch interest and excess interest. Foreign corporation A, a calendar year taxpayer that is not a corporation described in paragraph (a)(2)(iii) of this section (relating to banks), has \$120 of interest allocated or apportioned to ECI under § 1.882-5 for 1997. A's branch interest (as defined in paragraph (b) of this section) for 1997 is as follows: \$55 of portfolio interest (as defined in section 871(h)(2)) to B, a nonresident alien; \$25 of interest to foreign corporation C, which owns 15 percent of the combined voting power of A's stock, with respect to bonds issued by A; and \$20 to D, a domestic corporation. B and C are not engaged in the conduct of a trade or business in the United States. A, B and C are residents of countries with which the United States does not have an income tax treaty. The interest payments made to B and D are not subject to tax under section 871(a) or 881 and are not subject to withholding under section 1441 or 1442. The payment to C, which does not qualify as portfolio interest because C owns at least 10 percent of the combined voting power of A's stock, is subject to withholding of \$7.50 ($\$25 \times 30\%$). In addition, because A's interest allocated or apportioned to ECI under § 1.882-5 (\$120) exceeds its branch interest (\$100), A has excess interest of \$20, which is subject to a tax of \$6 ($\$20 \times 30\%$) under section 881. The tax on A's excess interest must be reported on A's income tax return for 1997.

Example 2. Taxation of excess interest of a bank. Foreign corporation A, a calendar year taxpayer, is a corporation described in paragraph (a)(2)(iii) of this section (relating to banks) and is a resident of a country with which the United States does not have an income tax treaty. A has excess interest of \$100 for 1997. At the close of 1997, A has \$10,000 of interest-bearing liabilities (including liabilities that give rise to branch interest), of which \$8,700 are interest-bearing deposits. For purposes of computing the tax on A's excess interest, \$87 of the excess interest ($\$100 \text{ excess interest} \times (\$8,700 \text{ interest-bearing deposits} / \$10,000 \text{ interest-bearing liabilities})$) is treated as interest on deposits. Thus, \$87 of A's excess interest is exempt from tax under section 881(a) and the remaining \$13 of excess interest is subject to a tax of \$3.90 ($\$13 \times 30\%$) under section 881(a).

(b) *Branch interest—(1) Definition of branch interest.* For purposes of this section, the term "branch interest" means interest that is—

(i) Paid by a foreign corporation with respect to a liability that is—

(A) A U.S. booked liability within the meaning of § 1.882-5(d)(2) (other than a U.S. booked liability of a partner within the meaning of § 1.882-5(d)(2)(vii)); or

(B) Described in § 1.884-1(e)(2) (relating to insurance liabilities on U.S.

business and liabilities giving rise to interest expense that is directly allocated to income from a U.S. asset); or

(ii) In the case of a foreign corporation other than a corporation described in paragraph (a)(2)(iii) of this section, a liability specifically identified (as provided in paragraph (b)(3)(i) of this section) as a liability of a U.S. trade or business of the foreign corporation on or before the earlier of the date on which the first payment of interest is made with respect to the liability or the due date (including extensions) of the foreign corporation's income tax return for the taxable year, provided that—

(A) The amount of such interest does not exceed 85 percent of the amount of interest of the foreign corporation that would be excess interest before taking into account interest treated as branch interest by reason of this paragraph (b)(1)(ii);

(B) The requirements of paragraph (b)(3)(ii) of this section (relating to notification of recipient of interest) are satisfied; and

(C) The liability is not described in paragraph (b)(3)(iii) of this section (relating to liabilities incurred in the ordinary course of a foreign business or secured by foreign assets) or paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section.

(2) [Reserved]

(3) *Requirements relating to specifically identified liabilities*—(i) *Method of identification.* A liability described in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section is identified as a liability of a U.S. trade or business only if the liability is shown on the records of the U.S. trade or business, or is identified as a liability of the U.S. trade or business on other records of the foreign corporation or on a schedule established for the purpose of identifying the liabilities of the U.S. trade or business. Each such liability must be identified with sufficient specificity so that the amount of branch interest attributable to the liability, and the name and address of the recipient, can be readily identified from such records or schedule. However, with respect to liabilities that give rise to portfolio interest (as defined in sections 871(h) and 881(c)) or that are payable 183 days or less from the date of original issue, and form part of a larger

debt issue, such liabilities may be identified by reference to the issue and maturity date, principal amount and interest payable with respect to the entire debt issue. Records or schedules described in this paragraph that identify liabilities that give rise to branch interest must be maintained in the United States by the foreign corporation or an agent of the foreign corporation for the entire period commencing with the due date (including extensions) of the income tax return for the taxable year to which the records or schedules relate and ending with the expiration of the period of limitations for assessment of tax for such taxable year. A foreign corporation that is subject to this section may identify a liability under paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section whether or not it is actually engaged in the conduct of a trade or business in the United States.

(ii) *Notification to recipient.* Interest with respect to a liability described in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section shall not be treated as branch interest unless the foreign corporation paying the interest either—

(A) Makes a return, pursuant to section 6049, with respect to the interest payment; or

(B) Sends a notice to the person who receives such interest in a confirmation of the transaction, a statement of account, or a separate notice, within two months of the end of the calendar year in which the interest was paid, stating that the interest paid with respect to the liability is from sources within the United States.

(iii) *Liabilities that do not give rise to branch interest under paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section.* A liability is described in this paragraph (b)(3)(iii) (and interest with respect to the liability may not be treated as branch interest of a foreign corporation by reason of paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section) if—

(A) The liability is directly incurred in the ordinary course of the profit-making activities of a trade or business of the foreign corporation conducted outside the United States, as, for example, an account or note payable arising from the purchase of inventory or receipt of services by such trade or business; or

(B) The liability is secured (during more than half the days during the portion of the taxable year in which the interest accrues) predominantly by property that is not a U.S. asset (as defined in §1.884-1(d)) unless such liability is secured by substantially all the property of the foreign corporation.

(4) [Reserved]

(5) *Increase in branch interest where U.S. assets constitute 80 percent or more of a foreign corporation's assets*—(i) *General rule.* If a foreign corporation would have excess interest before application of this paragraph (b) (5) and the amount of the foreign corporation's U.S. assets as of the close of the taxable year equals or exceeds 80 percent of all money and the aggregate E&P basis of all property of the foreign corporation on such date, then all interest paid and accrued by the foreign corporation during the taxable year that was not treated as branch interest before application of this paragraph (b)(5) and that is not paid with respect to a liability described in paragraph (b)(3)(iii) of this section (relating to liabilities incurred in the ordinary course of a foreign business or secured by non-U.S. assets) shall be treated as branch interest. However, if application of the preceding sentence would cause the amount of the foreign corporation's branch interest to exceed the amount permitted by paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section (relating to branch interest in excess of a foreign corporation's interest allocated or apportioned to ECI under §1.882-5) the amount of branch interest arising by reason of this paragraph shall be reduced as provided in paragraphs (b)(6)(ii) and (iii) of this section, as applicable.

(ii) *Example.* The application of this paragraph (b)(5) is illustrated by the following example.

Example. Application of 80 percent test. Foreign corporation A, a calendar year taxpayer, has \$90 of interest allocated or apportioned to ECI under §1.882-5 for 1993. Before application of this paragraph (b)(5), A has \$40 of branch interest in 1993. A pays \$60 of other interest during 1993, none of which is attributable to a liability described in paragraph (b)(3)(iii) of this section (relating to liabilities incurred in the ordinary course of a foreign business and liabilities predominantly secured by foreign assets). As of the close of

1993, A has an amount of U.S. assets that exceeds 80 percent of the money and E&P bases of all A's property. Before application of this paragraph (b)(5), A would have \$50 of excess interest (i.e., the \$90 interest allocated or apportioned to its ECI under §1.882-5 less \$40 of branch interest). Under this paragraph (b)(5), the \$60 of additional interest paid by A is also treated as branch interest. However, to the extent that treating the \$60 of additional interest as branch interest would create an amount of branch interest that would exceed the amount of branch interest permitted under paragraph (b)(6) of this section (relating to branch interest that exceeds a foreign corporation's interest allocated or apportioned to ECI under §1.882-5) the amount of the additional branch interest is reduced under paragraph (b)(6)(iii) of this section, which generally allows a foreign corporation to specify certain liabilities that do not give rise to branch interest or paragraph (b) (6)(ii) of this section, which generally specifies liabilities that do not give rise to branch interest beginning with the most-recently incurred liability.

(6) *Special rule where branch interest exceeds interest allocated or apportioned to ECI of a foreign corporation*—(i) *General rule.* If the amount of branch interest that is both paid and accrued by a foreign corporation during the taxable year (including interest that the foreign corporation elects under paragraph (c)(1) of this section to treat as paid during the taxable year) exceeds the amount of interest allocated or apportioned to ECI of a foreign corporation under §1.882-5 for the taxable year, then the amount of the foreign corporation's branch interest shall be reduced by the amount of such excess as provided in paragraphs (b)(6)(ii) and (iii) of this section, as applicable. The rules of paragraphs (b)(6)(ii) and (iii) of this section shall also apply where the amount of branch interest with respect to liabilities identified under paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section exceeds the maximum amount that may be treated as branch interest under that paragraph. This paragraph (b)(6) shall apply whether or not a reduction in the amount of branch interest occurs as a result of adjustments made during the examination of the foreign corporation's income tax return, such as a reduction in the amount of interest allocated or apportioned to ECI of the foreign corporation under §1.882-5.

(ii) *Reduction of branch interest beginning with most-recently incurred liability.*

Except as provided in paragraph (b)(6)(iii) of this section (relating to an election to specify liabilities that do not give rise to branch interest), the amount of the excess in paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section shall first reduce branch interest attributable to liabilities described in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section (relating to liabilities identified as giving rise to branch interest) and then, if such excess has not been reduced to zero, branch interest attributable to the group of liabilities described in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section. The reduction of branch interest attributable to each group of liabilities (i.e., liabilities described in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section and liabilities described in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section) shall be made beginning with interest attributable to the latest-incurred liability and continuing, in reverse chronological order, with branch interest attributable to the next-latest incurred liability. The branch interest attributable to a liability must be reduced to zero before a reduction is made with respect to branch interest attributable to the next-latest incurred liability. Where only a portion of the branch interest attributable to a liability is reduced by reason of this paragraph (b)(6)(ii), the reduction shall be made beginning with the last interest payment made with respect to the liability during the taxable year and continuing, in reverse chronological order, with the next-latest payment until the amount of branch interest has been reduced by the amount specified in paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section. The amount of interest that is not treated as branch interest by reason of this paragraph (b)(6)(ii) shall not be treated as paid by a domestic corporation and thus shall not be subject to tax under section 871(a) or 881(a).

(iii) *Election to specify liabilities that do not give rise to branch interest.* For purposes of reducing the amount of branch interest under paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section, a foreign corporation may, instead of using the method described in paragraph (b)(6)(ii) of this section, elect for any taxable year to specify which liabilities will not be treated as giving rise to branch interest or will be treated as giving

rise only in part to branch interest. Branch interest paid during the taxable year with respect to a liability specified under this paragraph (b)(6)(iii) must be reduced to zero before a reduction is made with respect to branch interest attributable to the next-specified liability. If all interest payments with respect to a specified liability, when added to all interest payments with respect to other liabilities specified under this paragraph (b)(6)(iii), would exceed the amount of the reduction under paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section, then only a portion of the branch interest attributable to that specified liability shall be reduced under this paragraph (b)(6)(iii), and the reduction shall be made beginning with the last interest payment made with respect to the liability during the taxable year and continuing, in reverse chronological order, with the next-latest payment until the amount of branch interest has been reduced by the amount of the reduction under paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section. A foreign corporation that elects to have this paragraph (b)(6)(iii) apply shall note on its books and records maintained in the United States that the liability is not to be treated as giving rise to branch interest, or is to be treated as giving rise to branch interest only in part. Such notation must be made after the close of the taxable year in which the foreign corporation pays the interest and prior to the due date (with extensions) of the foreign corporation's income tax return for the taxable year. However, if the excess interest in paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section occurs as a result of adjustments made during the examination of the foreign corporation's income tax return, the election and notation may be made at the time of examination. The amount of interest that is not treated as branch interest by reason of this paragraph (b)(6)(iii) shall not be treated as paid by a domestic corporation and thus shall not be subject to tax under section 871 (a) or 881 (a).

(iv) *Examples.* The application of this paragraph (b)(6) is illustrated by the following examples.

Example 1. Branch interest exceeds interest apportioned to ECI with no election in effect.

Foreign corporation A, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, has interest expense apportioned to ECI under § 1.882-5 of \$230 for 1997. A's branch interest for 1997 is as follows:

(i) \$130 paid to B, a domestic corporation, with respect to a note issued on March 10, 1997, and secured by real property located in the United States;

(ii) \$60 paid to C, an individual resident of country X who is entitled to a 10 percent rate of withholding on interest payments under the income tax treaty between the United States and X, with respect to a note issued on October 15, 1996, which gives rise to interest subject to tax under section 871(a);

(iii) \$80 paid to D, an individual resident of country Y who is entitled to a 15 percent rate of withholding on interest payments under the income tax treaty between the United States and Y, with respect to a note issued on February 15, 1997, which gives rise to interest subject to tax under section 871(a); and

(iv) \$70 of portfolio interest (as defined in section 871(h) (2)) paid to E, a nonresident alien, with respect to a bond issued on March 1, 1997.

A's branch interest accrues during 1997 for purposes of calculating the amount of A's interest apportioned to ECI under § 1.882-5. A has identified under paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section the liabilities described in paragraphs (ii), (iii) and (iv) of this example. A has not made an election under paragraph (b)(6)(iii) of this section to specify liabilities that do not give rise to branch interest. The amount of A's branch interest in 1997 is limited under paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section to \$230, the amount of the interest apportioned to A's ECI for 1997. The amount of A's branch interest must thus be reduced by \$110 (\$340-\$230) under paragraph (b)(6)(ii) of this section. The reduction is first made with respect to interest attributable to liabilities described in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section (i.e., liabilities identified as giving rise to branch interest) and, within the group of liabilities described in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section, is first made with respect to the latest-incurred liability. Thus, the \$70 of interest paid to E with respect to the bond issued on March 1, 1997, and \$40 of the \$80 of interest paid to D with respect to the note issued on February 15, 1997, are not treated as branch interest. The interest paid to D is no longer subject to tax under section 871(a), and D may claim a refund of amounts withheld with respect to the interest payments. There is no change in the tax consequences to E because the interest received by E was portfolio interest and was not subject to tax when it was treated as branch interest.

Example 2. Effect of election to specify liabilities. Assume the same facts as in *Example 1*

except that A makes an election under paragraph (b)(6)(iii) of this section to specify which liabilities are not to be treated as giving rise to branch interest. A specifies the liability to D, who would be taxable at a rate of 15 percent on interest paid with respect to the liability, as a liability that does not give rise to branch interest, and D is therefore not subject to tax under section 871 (a) and is entitled to a refund of amounts withheld with respect to the interest payments. A also specifies the liability to C as a liability that gives rise to branch interest only in part. As a result, \$30 of the \$60 of interest paid to C is not treated as branch interest, and C is entitled to a refund with respect to the \$30 of interest that is not treated as branch interest.

(7) *Effect of election under paragraph (c)(1) of this section to treat interest as if paid in year of accrual.* If a foreign corporation accrues an interest expense in a taxable year earlier than the taxable year of payment and elects under paragraph (c)(1) of this section to compute its excess interest as if the interest expense were branch interest paid in the year of accrual, the interest expense shall be treated as branch interest that is paid at the close of such year (and not in the actual year of payment) for all purposes of this section. Such interest shall thus be subject to tax under section 871(a) or 881(a) and withholding under section 1441 or section 1442, as if paid on the last day of the taxable year of accrual. Interest that is treated under paragraph (c)(1) of this section as paid in a later year for purposes of computing excess interest shall be treated as paid only in the actual year of payment for all purposes of this section other than paragraphs (a)(2) and (c)(1) of this section (relating to excess interest).

(8) *Effect of treaties—(i) Payor's treaty.* In the case of a foreign corporation's branch interest, relief shall be available under an article of an income tax treaty between the United States and the foreign corporation's country of residence relating to interest paid by the foreign corporation only if, for the taxable year in which the branch interest is paid (or if the branch interest is treated as paid in an earlier taxable year under paragraph (b)(7) of this section, for the earlier taxable year)—

(A) The foreign corporation meets the requirements of the limitation on

benefits provision, if any, in the treaty, and either—

(1) The corporation is a qualified resident (as defined in § 1.884-5(a)) of that foreign country in such year; or

(2) The corporation meets the requirements of paragraph (b)(8)(iii) of this section in such year; or

(B) The limitation on benefits provision, or an amendment to that provision, entered into force after December 31, 1986.

(ii) *Recipient's treaty.* A foreign person (other than a foreign corporation) that derives branch interest is entitled to claim benefits under provisions of an income tax treaty between the United States and its country of residence relating to interest derived by the foreign person. A foreign corporation may claim such benefits if it meets, with respect to the branch interest, the requirements of the limitation on benefits provision, if any, in the treaty and—

(A) The foreign corporation meets the requirements of paragraphs (b)(8)(i)(A) or (B) of this section; and

(B) In the case of interest paid in a taxable year beginning after December 31, 1988, with respect to an obligation with a maturity not exceeding one year, each foreign corporation that beneficially owned the obligation prior to maturity was a qualified resident (for the period specified in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section) of a foreign country with which the United States has an income tax treaty or met the requirements of the limitation on benefits provision in a treaty with respect to the interest payment and such provision entered into force after December 31, 1986.

(iii) *Presumption that a foreign corporation continues to be a qualified resident.* For purposes of this paragraph (b)(8), a foreign corporation that was a qualified resident for the prior taxable year because it fulfills the requirements of § 1.884-5 shall be considered a qualified resident with respect to branch interest that is paid or received during the current taxable year if—

(A) In the case of a foreign corporation that met the stock ownership and base erosion tests in § 1.884-5(b) and (c) for the preceding taxable year, the foreign corporation does not know, or

have reason to know, that either 50 percent of its stock (by value) is not beneficially owned (or treated as beneficially owned by reason of § 1.884-5(b)(2)) by qualifying shareholders at any time during the portion of the taxable year that ends with the date on which the interest is paid, or that the base erosion test is not met during the portion of the taxable year that ends with the date on which the interest is paid;

(B) In the case of a foreign corporation that met the requirements of § 1.884-5(d) (relating to publicly-traded corporations) for the preceding taxable year, the foreign corporation is listed on an established securities exchange in the United States or its country of residence at all times during the portion of the taxable year that ends with the date on which the interest is paid and does not fail the requirements of § 1.884-5(d)(4)(iii) (relating to certain closely-held corporations) at any time during such period; or

(C) In the case of a foreign corporation that met the requirements of § 1.884-5(e) (relating to the active trade or business test) for the preceding taxable year, the foreign corporation continues to operate (other than in a nominal degree), at all times during the portion of the taxable year that ends with the date on which the interest is paid, the same business in the U.S. and its country of residence that caused it to meet such requirements for the preceding taxable year.

(iv) *Treaties other than income tax treaties.* A treaty that is not an income tax treaty does not provide any benefits with respect to branch interest.

(v) *Effect of income tax treaties on interest paid by a partnership.* If a foreign corporation is a partner (directly or indirectly) in a partnership that is engaged in a trade or business in the United States and owns an interest of 10 percent or more (as determined under the attribution rules of section 318) in the capital, profits, or losses of the partnership at any time during the partner's taxable year, the relief that may be claimed under an income tax treaty with respect to the foreign corporation distributive share of interest paid or treated as paid by the partnership shall not exceed the relief that

would be available under paragraphs (b)(8) (i) and (ii) of this section if such interest were branch interest of the foreign corporation. See paragraph (c)(2) of this section for the effect on a foreign corporation's excess interest of interest paid by a partnership of which the foreign corporation is a partner.

(vi) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the application of this paragraph (b)(8).

Example 1. Payor's treaty. The income tax treaty between the United States and country X provides that the United States may not impose a tax on interest paid by a corporation that is a resident of that country (and that is not a domestic corporation) if the recipient of the interest is a nonresident alien or a foreign corporation. Corp A is a qualified resident of country X and meets the limitation on benefits provision in the treaty. A's branch interest is not subject to tax under section 871(a) or 881(a) regardless of whether the recipient is entitled to benefits under an income tax treaty.

Example 2. Recipient's treaty and interest received from a partnership. A, a foreign corporation, and B, a nonresident alien, are partners in a partnership that owns and operates U.S. real estate and each has a distributive share of partnership interest deductions equal to 50 percent of the interest deductions of the partnership. There is no income tax treaty between the United States and the countries of residence of A and B. The partnership pays \$1,000 of interest to a bank that is a resident of a foreign country, Y, and that qualifies under an income tax treaty in effect with the United States for a 5 percent rate of tax on U.S. source interest paid to a resident of country Y. However, the bank is not a qualified resident of country Y and the limitation on benefits provision of the treaty has not been amended since December 31, 1986. The partnership is required to withhold at a rate of 30 percent on \$500 of the interest paid to the bank (i.e., A's 50 percent distributive share of interest paid by the partnership) because the bank cannot, under paragraph (b)(8)(iv) of this section, claim greater treaty benefits by lending money to the partnership than it could claim, if it lent money to A directly and the \$500 were branch interest of A.

(c) *Rules relating to excess interest—(1) Election to compute excess interest by treating branch interest that is paid and accrued in different years as if paid in year of accrual—(i) General rule.* If branch interest is paid in one or more taxable years before or after the year in which the interest accrues, a foreign corporation may elect to compute its

excess interest as if such branch interest were paid on the last day of the taxable year in which it accrues, and not in the taxable year in which it is actually paid. The interest expense will thus reduce the amount of the foreign corporation's excess interest in the year of accrual rather than in the year of actual payment. Except as provided in paragraph (c)(1)(ii) of this section, if an election is made for a taxable year, this paragraph (c)(1)(i) shall apply to all branch interest that is paid or accrued during that year. See paragraph (b)(7) of this section for the effect of an election under this paragraph (c)(1) on branch interest that accrues in a taxable year after the year of payment.

(ii) *Election not to apply in certain cases.* An election under this paragraph (c)(1) shall not apply to an interest expense that accrued in a taxable year beginning before January 1, 1987, and shall not apply to an interest expense that was paid in a taxable year beginning before such date unless the interest was income from sources within the United States. An election under this paragraph (c)(1) shall not apply to branch interest that accrues during the taxable year and is paid in an earlier taxable year if the branch interest reduced excess interest in such earlier year. However, a foreign corporation may amend its income tax return for such earlier taxable year so that the branch interest does not reduce excess interest in such year.

(iii) *Requirements for election.* A foreign corporation that elects to apply this paragraph (c)(1) shall attach to its income tax return (or to an amended income tax return) a statement that it elects to have the provisions of this paragraph (c)(1) apply, or shall provide written notice to the Commissioner during an examination that it elects to apply this paragraph (c)(1). The election shall be effective for the taxable year to which the return relates and for all subsequent taxable years unless the Commissioner consents to revocation of the election.

(iv) *Examples.* The following examples illustrate the application of this paragraph (c)(1).

Example 1. Interest accrued before paid. Foreign corporation A, a calendar year, accrual

method taxpayer, has \$100 of interest allocated or apportioned to ECI under § 1.882-5 for 1997. A has \$60 of branch interest in 1997 before application of this paragraph (c)(1). A has an interest expense of \$20 that properly accrues for tax purposes in 1997 but is not paid until 1998. When the interest is paid in 1998 it will meet the requirements for branch interest under paragraph (b)(1) of this section. A makes a timely election under this paragraph (c)(1) to treat the accrued interest as if it were paid in 1997. A will be treated as having branch interest of \$80 for 1997 and excess interest of \$20 in 1997. The \$20 of interest treated as branch interest of A in 1997 will not again be treated as branch interest in 1998.

Example 2. Interest paid before accrued. Foreign corporation A, a calendar year, accrual method taxpayer, has \$60 of branch interest in 1997. The interest expense does not accrue until 1994 and the amount of interest allocated or apportioned to A's ECI under § 1.882-5 is zero for 1997 and \$60 for 1998. A makes an election under this paragraph (c)(1) with respect to 1997. As a result of the election, A's \$60 of branch interest in 1997 reduces the amount of A's excess interest for 1994 rather than in 1998.

(2) *Interest paid by a partnership—(i) General rule.* Except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (c)(2) (i) and (ii) of this section, if a foreign corporation is a partner in a partnership that is engaged in trade or business in the United States, the amount of the foreign corporation's distributive share of interest paid or accrued by the partnership shall reduce (but not below zero) the amount of the foreign corporation's excess interest for the year to the extent such interest is taken into account by the foreign corporation in that year for purposes of calculating the interest allocated or apportioned to the ECI of the foreign corporation under § 1.882-5. A foreign corporation's excess interest shall not be reduced by its distributive share of partnership interest that is attributable to a liability described in paragraph (b)(3)(iii) of this section (relating to interest on liabilities incurred in the ordinary course of a foreign business or secured predominantly by assets that are not U.S. assets) or would be described in paragraph (b)(3)(iii) of this section if entered on the partner's books. See paragraph (b)(8)(v) of this section for the effect of income tax treaties on interest paid by a partnership.

(ii) *Special rule for interest that is paid and accrued in different years.* Paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section shall not apply to any portion of a foreign corporation's distributive share of partnership interest that is paid and accrued in different taxable years unless the foreign corporation has an election in effect under paragraph (c)(1) of this section that is effective with respect to such interest and any tax due under section 871(a) or 881(a) with respect to such interest has been deducted and withheld at source in the earlier of the taxable year of payment or accrual.

(3) *Effect of treaties—(i) General rule.* The rate of tax imposed on the excess interest of a foreign corporation that is a resident of a country with which the United States has an income tax treaty shall not exceed the rate provided under such treaty that would apply with respect to interest paid by a domestic corporation to that foreign corporation if the foreign corporation meets, with respect to the excess interest, the requirements of the limitation on benefits provision, if any, in the treaty and either—

(A) The corporation is a qualified resident (as defined in § 1.884-5(a)) of that foreign country for the taxable year in which the excess interest is subject to tax; or

(B) The limitation on benefits provision, or an amendment to that provision, entered into force after December 31, 1986.

(ii) *Provisions relating to interest paid by a foreign corporation.* Any provision in an income tax treaty that exempts or reduces the rate of tax on interest paid by a foreign corporation does not prevent imposition of the tax on excess interest or reduce the rate of such tax.

(4) *Example.* The application of paragraphs (c)(2) and (3) of this section is illustrated by the following example.

Example. Interest paid by a partnership. Foreign corporation A, a calendar year taxpayer, is not a resident of a foreign country with which the United States has an income tax treaty. A is engaged in the conduct of a trade or business both in the United States and in foreign countries, and owns a 50 percent interest in X, a calendar year partnership engaged in the conduct of a trade or business in the United States. For 1997, all of

X's liabilities are of a type described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section (relating to liabilities on U.S. books) and none are described in paragraph (b)(3)(iii) of this section (relating to liabilities that may not give rise to branch interest). A's distributive share of interest paid by X in 1997 is \$20. For 1997, A has \$150 of interest allocated or apportioned to its ECI under § 1.882-5, \$120 of which is attributable to branch interest. Thus, the amount of A's excess interest for 1997, before application of paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section, is \$30. Under paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section, A's \$30 of excess interest is reduced by \$20, representing A's share of interest paid by X. Thus, the amount of A's excess interest for 1997 is reduced to \$10. A is subject to a tax of 30 percent on its \$10 of excess interest.

(d) *Stapled entities.* A foreign corporation that is treated as a domestic corporation by reason of section 269B (relating to stapled entities) shall continue to be treated as a foreign corporation for purposes of section 884 (f) and this section, notwithstanding section 269B and the regulations thereunder. Interest paid by such foreign corporation shall be treated as paid by a domestic corporation and shall be subject to the tax imposed by section 871 (a) or 881 (a), and to withholding under section 1441 and 1442, as applicable, to the extent such interest is not subject to tax by reason of section 884(f) and this section.

(e) *Effective dates—(1) General rule.* Except as provided in paragraph (e)(2) of this section, this section is effective for taxable years beginning October 13, 1992, and for payments of interest described in section 884(f)(1)(A) made (or treated as made under paragraph (b)(7) of this section) during taxable years of the payor beginning after such date. With respect to taxable years beginning before October 13, 1992, and after December 31, 1986, a foreign corporation may elect to apply this section in lieu of § 1.884-4T of the temporary regulations (as contained in the CFR edition revised as of April 1, 1992) as they applied to the foreign corporation after issuance of Notice 89-80, 1989-2 C.B. 394, but only if the foreign corporation has made an election under § 1.884-1 (i) to apply § 1.884-1 in lieu of § 1.884-1T (as contained in the CFR edition revised as of April 1, 1992) for that year, and the statute of limitations for assessment of a deficiency has not expired for that

taxable year. Once an election has been made, an election under this section shall apply to all subsequent taxable years.

(2) *Special rule.* Paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2)(i)(A), (a)(2)(iii), (b)(1), (b)(3), (b)(5)(i), (b)(6)(i), (b)(6)(ii), and (c)(2)(i) of this section are effective for taxable years beginning on or after June 6, 1996.

(f) *Transition rules—(1) Election under paragraph (c)(1) of this section.* If a foreign corporation has made an election described in § 1.884-4T(b)(7) (as contained in the CFR edition revised as of April 1, 1992) with respect to interest that has accrued and been paid in different taxable years, such election shall be effective for purposes of paragraph (c)(1) of this section as if the corporation had made the election under paragraph (c)(1) of this section of these regulations.

(2) *Waiver of notification requirement for non-banks under Notice 89-80.* If a foreign corporation that is not a bank has made an election under Notice 89-80 to apply the rules in part 2 of section I of the Notice in lieu of the rules in § 1.884-4T(b) (as contained in the CFR edition revised as of April 1, 1992) to determine the amount of its interest paid and excess interest in taxable years beginning prior to 1990, the requirement that the foreign corporation satisfy the notification requirements described in paragraph (b)(3)(ii) of this section is waived with respect to interest paid in taxable years ending on or before the date the Notice was issued.

(3) *Waiver of legending requirement for certain debt issued prior to January 3, 1989.* For purposes of sections 871(h), 881(c), and this section, branch interest of a foreign corporation that would be treated as portfolio interest under section 871(h) or 881(c) but for the fact that it fails to meet the requirements of section 163(f)(2)(B)(ii)(II) (relating to the legend requirement), shall nevertheless be treated as portfolio interest provided the interest arises with respect to a liability incurred by the foreign corporation before January 3, 1989, and interest with respect to the liability was treated as branch interest in a

§ 1.884-5

26 CFR Ch. I (4-1-02 Edition)

taxable year beginning before January 1, 1990.

[T.D. 8432, 57 FR 41660, Sept. 11, 1992; 57 FR 49117, Oct. 29, 1992; 57 FR 60126, Dec. 18, 1992, as amended by T.D. 8657, 61 FR 9341, Mar. 8, 1996]

§ 1.884-5 Qualified resident.

(a) *Definition of qualified resident.* A foreign corporation is a qualified resident of a foreign country with which the United States has an income tax treaty in effect if, for the taxable year, the foreign corporation is a resident of that country (within the meaning of such treaty) and either—

- (1) Meets the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section (relating to stock ownership and base erosion);
- (2) Meets the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section (relating to publicly-traded corporations);
- (3) Meets the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section (relating to the conduct of an active trade or business); or
- (4) Obtains a ruling as provided in paragraph (f) of this section that it shall be treated as a qualified resident of its country of residence.

(b) *Stock ownership requirement—(1) General rule—(i) Ownership by qualifying shareholders.* A foreign corporation satisfies the stock ownership requirement of this paragraph (b) for the taxable year if more than 50 percent of its stock (by value) is beneficially owned (or is treated as beneficially owned by reason of paragraph (b)(2) of this section) during at least half of the number of days in the foreign corporation's taxable year by one or more qualifying shareholders. A person shall be treated as a qualifying shareholder only if such person meets the requirements of paragraph (b)(3) of this section and is either—

(A) An individual who is either a resident of the foreign country of which the foreign corporation is a resident or a citizen or resident of the United States;

(B) The government of the country of which the foreign corporation is a resident (or a political subdivision or local authority of such country), or the United States, a State, the District of

Columbia, or a political subdivision or local authority of a State;

(C) A corporation that is a resident of the foreign country of which the foreign corporation is a resident and whose stock is primarily and regularly traded on an established securities market (within the meaning of paragraph (d) of this section) in that country or the United States or a domestic corporation whose stock is primarily and regularly traded on an established securities market (within the meaning of paragraph (d) of this section) in the United States;

(D) A not-for profit organization described in paragraph (b)(1)(iv) of this section that is not a pension fund as defined in paragraph (b)(8)(i)(A) of this section and that is organized under the laws of the foreign country of which the foreign corporation is a resident or the United States; or

(E) A beneficiary of certain pension funds (as defined in paragraph (b)(8)(i)(A) of this section) administered in or by the country in which the foreign corporation is a resident to the extent provided in paragraph (b)(8) of this section.

Beneficial owners of an association taxable as a corporation shall be treated as shareholders of such association for purposes of this paragraph (b)(1). If stock of a foreign corporation is owned by a corporation that is treated as a qualifying shareholder under paragraph (b)(1)(i)(C) of this section, such stock shall not also be treated as owned, directly or indirectly, by any qualifying shareholders of such corporation for purposes of this paragraph (b). Notwithstanding the above, a foreign corporation will not be treated as a qualified resident unless it obtains the documentation described in paragraph (b)(3) of this section to show that the requirements of this paragraph (b)(1)(i) have been met and maintains the documentation as provided in paragraph (b)(9) of this section. See also paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section, which treats certain publicly-traded classes of stock as owned by qualifying shareholders.

(ii) *Special rules relating to qualifying shareholders.* For purposes of applying paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section—